

To: Director, Humanitarian Information Unit

From: Alexis Q. Student

Subject: Conflict between the Republic of Cucumber and Pumpkinland

Recommendation:

The USA should use trade agreements to persuade the Republic of Cucumber to end its support of the Tomato Liberation Front and improve its relations with neighboring Pumpkinland.

Justification:

Approximately 10 percent of the Republic of Cucumber's population is ethnic Pumpkin. This group of approximately 4 million people is concentrated in Cucumber's northwestern provinces and is denied the legal protections granted to other citizens of the country (Alexander, 37). Endemic poverty and political persecution of the ethnic Pumpkin in Cucumber are driving anti-government rebel activity near Cucumber's border with Pumpkinland. If pro-Pumpkin rebels continue to demonstrate military effectiveness against Cucumber's central government, Pumpkinland will increase its support of the rebellion in the hopes of gaining control over Cucumber's extremely valuable gold deposits.

In an attempt to counter Pumpkinland's support of rebels, Cucumber provides safe haven and financing to the Tomato Liberation Front (TLF), whose bases are located inside Cucumber territory. Recent cross-border attacks by the TLF against Pumpkinland have strengthened the influence of ultranationalist figures within Pumpkinland's government (Freedom Watch, 52). If a TLF attack causes a major loss of life during the next round of national elections, the winning candidates will likely push for a military response by Pumpkinland against TLF bases within Cucumber. A military incursion into Cucumber would also serve to strengthen the position of pro-Pumpkin rebels inside Cucumber.

Increased trade between Cucumber and Pumpkinland will reduce the risk of a full-blown war between the two countries. Cucumber has gold that can be used to purchase oil from Pumpkinland, while Pumpkinland, if it modernizes its oil production facilities, can use revenue from oil exports to purchase food crops grown in northwestern Cucumber. An improved standard of living in this area of Cucumber will weaken support for anti-government rebels and make Cucumber less likely to continue its support for the TLF. The USA can broker trade agreements between the Cucumber and Pumpkinland by providing credit arrangements that will spur investment and boost trade.