



DPRK ORDERS FOOD SHORTAGE COUNTERMEASURES

Following the recent launch of a rocket, Pyongyang rejected a letter signed by the UN Security Council president condemning North Korea, and amid announcements that it would restart its nuclear programs, the regime, anticipating that already weak relations with the international community will not be resolved quickly, ordered each province to plan policies regarding food supplies for June and July.

The North Korean Ministry of Agriculture suggested there may be a shortage of food supplies, and has sent word to each regional farming community accounting committee, calling on them to establish countermeasures. In the order handed down to each unit, North Korean authorities stressed the planting of potatoes, barley, and other foodstuffs to provide sustenance until the start of the fall harvest. Ultimately, authorities appear to have chosen not to accept food assistance from the United States or South Korea, but as of yet, there have been no large disturbances amongst the people, and food prices in markets have shown no significant change.

The order stated, “Last year, because of the interfering maneuvers of the U.S. Imperialists and the south Korean puppet conspirators, fertilizer, oil and every other agricultural good was in short supply,” but stressed that Kim Jong Il was “on a march” to provide on-location guidance “at the forefront of the agricultural battle,” and that his “wise leadership would bring about surprising results.” It warned, however, that there was still “no small amount of concern” about resolving the food crises in the North.



In particular, the order warned that “thorough countermeasures need to be established for the food shortages that may occur between late June-July,” criticizing U.S. and ROK sanctions against the North for causing its chronic lack of food. It also noted the “huge international food crisis” being faced, claiming, “even if one did have money, there are no countries selling food,” and, “the villainous colonial plunder and environmental destruction of the imperialists” have caused “a monumental famine” the likes of which “have never been seen in the history of the world.”

Because of this, all farming units are to take it upon themselves to plant various grains and set up thorough countermeasures, and that workers on collective farms and factories, as well as those in each industry, are responsible for using side-laborers in order to quickly plant grains that can be harvested and eaten this year. According to the Chinese customs and statistics bureau, from December through January, North Korea imported 25,608 tons of fertilizer, 40 times more than during the same period a year before, in an apparent attempt to prepare in advance for the eventuality that South Korea would halt fertilizer aid.