

DPRK PROMOTES MULTIFACETED TRADE TO BOOST EXPORTS

The latest issue of the North Korean publication “Economic Research” (2008, issue no. 1) highlights the need to restructure North Korea’s trade system in order to meet the demands of the capitalist market. The journal quotes Kim Jong Il as saying, “[We] need fresh improvement, in our own manner, of the basic Socialist economy’s trade system of yesterday, meeting the current demands being faced due to the capitalist market.”

Therefore, the journal stresses, “As the socialist market crumbles, and given the demands of the capitalist market as [our] focus shifts to overseas economic relations, what is currently needed for the development of overseas trade is improvement of our own style to the trade system that can ensure large profits.

The journal goes on to recommend that, in order to meet these new demands of the international capitalist market, “the most important thing is improving the import-export system based on the foundation of an self-reliant national economy.” It states that raw materials should not be sold as-is, but rather should be turned into processed goods and then sold, that goods popular on the international market should be manufactured for export, and that niches should be chosen in which North Korean goods can dominate the international market.

However, the journal also says, “If individual offices trade with capitalists outside the scope of government controls, ‘reform’ and ‘opening’ sought by the imperialists would occur, and the nation’s economy could liberalize and capitalize...International trade must take place orderly under the uniform control and guidance of the nation.”

The journal asserts that even though a variety of offices are engaged in trade, they must first receive government permission, follow government guidelines, and operate in a government-created environment. The central government must standardize prices and designs of selected export goods from each trading company.