

Discontent Increases in North Korea

The Daily NK is reporting that complaints against the Kims are increasing. (<http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=7243>). This semi-juxtaposes to the articles previously about Kim selling steel to the PRC and reallocating money from the military budget to light industry. But the downfall of North Korea is still food.

A source from Hyesan reported today, "People say that the reason why we have such hard lives is because the leader puts weight only on the military while paying no attention to the people's lives."

"How good would it be if he used just a tenth out of what he invests in the military on our lives? Kim Jong Eun acts more harshly towards the people than his father," the source added, explaining that this belief stems from the fact that since Kim Jong Eun appeared the people's lives have gotten worse due to strengthened regulations, more lectures etc.

A source from Shinuiju said that, "Now what the state says is not trustworthy. We do what we can to survive. That's all. If we can make money, no one is reluctant to do it, even though the state is opposed."

Please read the entire article for more important information.

Analysis. No wonder the North is pressing so hard for the resumption of Mt Kumgang tours and increased production from the Kaesong Industrial complex. They need food somewhat desperately. They must also look forward rather quickly to the upcoming Spring Planting. They must start contracting soon for fertilizer and maybe seed. It has been reported in other places that the North had to use military stocks last year to prevent widespread hunger. It is unknown if they have rebuilt those stocks to the point where they can again release rice to the people.

The Unification Ministry of the South is undoubtedly aware of the worsening food situation. That is why the ministry appears to be changing tactics and appealing directly to the people of the North to cause the reunification of Korea. Apparently the North has not done a whole lot to prevent the South's message from getting through. That may not last.

Even though no official request for talks has been made by the North, that should happen soon. The North has definitely noticed the increase in military cooperation between Japan and the South. They are rather obviously depending on the PRC to help redress this imbalance. But the Japanese are already taking steps to redress the imbalance between their forces and the PRC's.

If no talks take place by the end of January or the South tells Kim to go pound sand, we may be looking at another provocation shortly thereafter. Since the focus of the North's provocations has been the western islands, I would expect something different this time.