

DPRK MILITARY EXERCISES GIVE WAY TO FARMING

While North Korea's food crisis grows, large scale agricultural projects are underway across the country as the planting season peaks. Not only in the more remote areas, but even along the front line, the North Korean military is taking part in these large scale agricultural undertakings, bringing military exercises practically to a halt.

It was reported by the Chinese press on May 28th that North Korean government and Workers' Party organizations have joined hands with regional farming communities by dispatching groups of workers to these rural areas. Additionally, average citizens living in urban areas are also volunteering to help farmers, and are collecting waste and sending it to farms to be used in place of chemical fertilizer.

The North Korean government is emphasizing the need to create high-yield corn and rice seeds and is pushing for the development of agricultural technology and farming practices. Authorities are also proclaiming that potatoes and beans are the answer to the North's food shortages because of their resistance to harsher weather and their ability to grow in soil otherwise unfit for agriculture.

A military contact revealed that "North Korean troops stationed on the front line and in the rear guard are participating in [these] large-scale agricultural projects," and, "the amount of agricultural assistance being given [by the military] has increased significantly compared to previous years." The source went on to say that because of this, DPRK military units are carrying out almost no military exercises.

Each year, beginning in August, North Korea carries out military exercises, and then focuses on battle readiness inspections in May and June. During this time, the military carries out a wide range of training for artillery battalions, naval fleets, ground forces, and air force squadrons.