



US Department of State
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Brief
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China/North Korea: Food Aid? (S)

[redacted] recently told a visiting Japanese researcher that China had sent a huge shipment of grain--one of the experts said 500,000 tons--to North Korea in late February and early March. [redacted] that same expert added that Beijing had quietly dropped its prohibition on barter trade along the border, a measure that could result in Chinese traders selling another 200,000 tons to the DPRK. (S)

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COMMENT: Beijing may have concluded that the food situation is worsening in the North, requiring additional PRC assistance. Rumors persist of an increase in refugees entering China, a disturbing trend for Chinese officials. Beijing also is committed to providing enough help to prevent widespread starvation or unrest and keep the Pyongyang regime afloat.

[redacted]

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[redacted] the expert's totals seem highly inflated. (S/NF)

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