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## DPRK: Food Situation Grim (U)

The just-completed harvest in North Korea will supply only 80 percent of the grain needed to meet minimal subsistence requirements, [redacted] it is up about 15 percent over last year's harvest, which was the worst in 20 years. North Korea will require at least [redacted] tons of food imports to meet bare subsistence needs, assuming that food is equally and efficiently distributed. (C)

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Congressman Hall, at a November 17 press conference discussing his fourth visit to the DPRK, noted the food situation was better but still "very critical," according to a communique. Hall said UNICEF officials in North Korea reported one-third of all babies in the North are seriously malnourished and two-thirds of all children suffer from stunted growth. Nongovernmental organizations in Pyongyang told him aid is getting through and there is no evidence of major diversions to the military. (U)

**Comment:** Despite relatively good weather and a significant effort to boost agricultural output, shortages of such inputs as fertilizer have kept yields down. The North Koreans have introduced measures to give farmers incentives to produce more as well as to track responsibility--some of these measures are reminiscent of reforms in China. Hall and other visitors report that people in Pyongyang appear relatively well fed and that the regime's priority is keeping the capital supplied with food. (C)

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