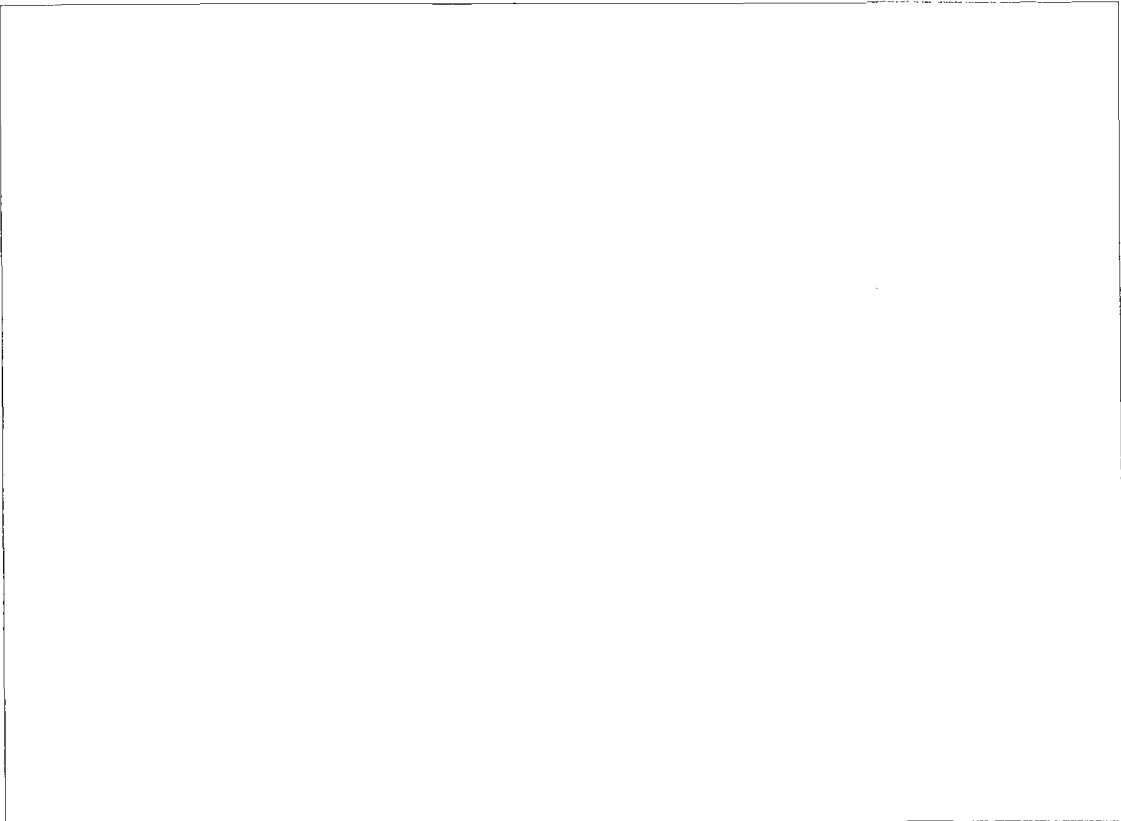


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11. KOREA. Top North Korean military planners may not be in Pyongyang:
A 17 November plain text message from the Manchurian-Korean border town of Manpo (Manpojin) to the "Central Fuel Control Office" in Pyongyang ordered that office to ensure the issuance of "three tons of gasoline and nine tons of mobile oil to Home Affairs Department . . . to reconstruct the road and bridges." The message states that this is to be done "by order of Military Committee." (SUEDE AS CM IN 54026, 18 Nov 51)

Comment: Of considerable significance in this message is the reference to "Military Committee." With the outbreak of war, the North Korean Government set up a "Supreme Military Committee" charged with conducting military operations. Although this message cannot be interpreted as confirming the location of this high-level strategy body in Manpo, it does suggest that an administrative body with the minimum authority of allocating fuel in Pyongyang is located there.

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Comments: Trade of this nature falls within the normal pattern of grain-deficit northeastern Korea. This is the first recent evidence, however, that such trade is continuing.

14. North Korean coal production suffers from labor troubles: Two North Korean plain-text messages of 15 and 17 November reveal a shortage of labor for mines in coal producing areas of North Korea. A Kanggye message to the "Production Ministry" in Pyongyang states that "due to the shortage of labor power in the Tokohon mine, I must stay here." Another message from Kwannae at the mouth of the Chongchon river to the "Mine Control Bureau" in Pyongyang reports that "there is much trouble in the production because of the laborers." (SUEDE AS OM IN 53651, 16 Nov 51)

Comments: While the Tokohon mine is well identified as an anthracite coal producer, no mine is known to be located at Kwannae. There is, however, some low grade lignite produced in the Sinanju area just east of Kwannae. A further possibility is that the Kwannae mine exploits alluvial deposits of monazite which occur with some frequency in this area.

A shortage of labor, particularly skilled labor, has been chronic in North Korea since the end of World War II. The exigencies of the current war have diverted a major portion of all manpower into the military, with a consequent further aggravation of the labor problem.

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