

China's Foreign Policy toward North Korea: the Nuclear Crisis

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Abstract

The North Korean nuclear issue has become a threat to the security of both Northeast Asia and even the world at large. As China has been widely perceived as North Korea's "only ally" and the most economic and trading partner, China has long been expected to play a major role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Despite the friendly relations between the two countries, China has adopted a changing policy towards North Korea in the recent years. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to elaborate on the specific policies adopted by China in the past several years, highlighting the steps taken to slow down the North Korean nuclear proliferation. Meanwhile, it is also expected to unveil the age-old relationship between China and North Korea while identifying Chinese strategic interests in North Korea both today and historically. Moreover, the key factors that will determine China's future policy towards North Korea are also to be analyzed at the end. Secondary data sources like reports, academic journals, books and newspaper articles had been used to collect data and qualitative data analysis had been used for the purpose of data analysis. China had to make changes in its policy in order to counteract North Korea's increasing nuclear capabilities. Accordingly, China had supported the framework of the Six-Party Talks, imposed economic sanctions, and also had supported the effort to denuclearize North Korea by adopting several UN resolutions as well. Moreover, China's foreign policy measures towards North Korea emphasize its own determination to safeguard the national interests of China at a large scale. Because of North Korea's geostrategic location in Northeast Asia, its geopolitical stability is important to maintain border security of China. Unstable North Korea would challenge China's dominance in the region. Therefore, China's strategic interests in North Korea have also mattered in implementing new foreign policy measures towards North Korea. In addition, economic cooperation between China and North Korea, China's nuclear policy and U.S. pressure on China's policy have become the key determinants of future North Korea – Chinese relations.

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