

### CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

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#### ABSTRACT:

The denuclearization of North Korea is a major strategic goal of the U.S. Department of Defense. China has the most influence over North Korea. It is thus crucial that the United States understand any substantive alterations in Chinese attitudes towards North Korea, which may lead Beijing to curb North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Reigning in North Korea's nuclear program is an important American concern. The United States has for many years called on China to constrain North Korea's development of nuclear weapons. But, China has historically not been willing to do so, because it prioritized stability on the Korean peninsula and wished to keep a buffer state between itself and U.S.-allied South Korea. Recent Chinese activities, such as the stoppage of North Korean coal transfers, suggest a willingness to employ more coercive measures. This study will assess whether Chinese attitudes towards North Korea have lately undergone any significant changes, and how this may impact the mechanisms China might employ to restrain North Korea.

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