

Briefing note: for the forthcoming east asia summit



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Briefing for the forthcoming East Asia Summit His Excellency Sir Wen Jiabao Jia Qinglin (Advisor on Political affairs) Issue: The North Korean government has almost become a pariah state on account of its continued Nuclear Program despite objections from all over the world. Being a neighboring state, for China it is proving detrimental on a range of issues besides the nuclear threat.

Relevant Facts:

- i. North Korea has been a long standing ally of China. This association can be traced back to more than half a century. In the past our country has supported North Korea through the toughest of times.
- ii. In fact there was a period when the efforts to isolate North Korea were blocked by China at many international forums.
- iii. North Korean government receives humanitarian assistance and aid for its energy requirements from China. We've been doing this as part of our commitment to the human rights and as a responsible nation.
- iv. But some of the events in the past couple of years have hinted towards North Korea's diplomatically challenging moves, which have put China in great difficulty.
- v. On account of such moves from North Korea China had to agree to the UN Security Council Resolution No-1718 in October 2006 for imposing sanctions against Pyongyang.
- vi. North Korea's continuing moves towards enriching its nuclear arsenal is not only a challenge for the world peace, but it's a challenge for China as well. The country has been facing terror related activities in some corners of the country; therefore encouragement of weapons of mass destructions (WMDs) at its borders will not be a good idea for peaceful coexistence. North

Korea needs to be told in no uncertain terms that the manner, in which the nuclear program is being encouraged, is not a healthy sign for strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.

vii. North Korea's Missile launch in recent months has further aggravated the tension like situation.

viii. Actions of the North Korean government like the arrest of two female US journalists on flimsy grounds, has not helped the North Korean cause. It is worthwhile here to mention that the former US President Bill Clinton had to personally intervene in the matter for the release of these two journalists.

ix. China is emerging as a strong and responsible nation amongst the global community. We need to further strengthen this belief so that we are able to invite quality investment from different countries/ companies around the globe for an all round development of country and its people.

x. China has been able to improve its image amongst the global community with the successful organization of the Olympic Games 2008. We need to sustain this advantage. Supporting North Korean government at this hour will result in denting the image of China.

Consideration and Policy Option

We are committed to peaceful coexistence with our neighbors, but at the same time, we need to take care of the emerging role of China in world affairs. Blindly supporting North Korea for all its actions is strategically a bad move. Efforts must be initiated to bring North Korea on the discussion table with its neighbors at least. While we do not subscribe to whatever some countries like US or UK has to say about North Korea, but the government of the day in North Korea needs to be told in no uncertain terms that if they expect support from the neighboring countries in matters concerning

strategies, then the country must respect the interests and sentiments of the neighbors as well. The other key partners in the East Asian summit are Japan and South Korea, both not having very healthy relationship with the North Korean dispensation, for a variety of reasons. Therefore while working out a solution we need to take into consideration all these aspects.

The policy options before China are;

1. Apply sanctions on North Korea in line with the UN resolutions passed so far.
2. Apply diplomatic pressure on North Korea to make it realize the futility of its insistence on treading a lone course and instead sign a regional treaty.
3. Seize the opportunity in the forthcoming 'official goodwill' visit (of a delegation led by Wen Jiabao) from 4-6 Oct, 2009 and ink out a bilateral agreement. North Korea would also not like to waste the opportunity. Though marking the 60th anniversary of China-North Korea friendship and commemoration of the China-North Korea friendship year are the stated objectives in the media, the general perception around the world is that, such a high ranking official from China would not visit North Korea, if there are no assurances of easing positions from North Korea. This would pave the way for the six-nation (or six-party) nuclear talks. This option appears to be most practical in view of some recent conciliatory gestures from North Korean government.

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