

Reading Passage (228 Words): North Korea

North Korea has been acting aggressively toward its southern neighbor, and, despite the protest of most developed nations around the world, it continues a campaign to produce nuclear weapons. There are several things that politicians and military leaders should consider when thinking about how to deal with North Korea.

First, since North Korea killed several South Korean citizens last week in shelling attacks on Yeonpyeong Island, political leaders and analysts have called the country evil and insane. Most will readily agree with these assertions.

Second, the U.S. has the means to pressure China into forcing North Korea to stop its nuclear initiatives. Thus, the United States can use diplomacy in sending envoys to China so that the two countries can find the best solution to force North Korea to give up its quest to produce a nuclear weapon.

Third, increased economic sanctions, as many are calling for now, will cause the Kim regime to be more cooperative or be replaced. For example, currently, due to United Nations sanctions imposed on North Korea on its exports and imports, it is unable to import oil, and it cannot export many of its manufactured products. These limitations are hurting North Korea's economy, so it is very likely that its citizens will force its government to do what the US and other developed countries are asking it to do.

Writing Prompt: Summarize the lecture showing how they oppose the claims made in the reading passage?

Lecture (359 words): Misconceptions about North Korea

Let's take a closer look at some of the things you just read about North Korea. Things are not always as they seem.

What is surprising is not North Korea's actions but that the West and South Korea were so ill-prepared and don't seem to understand the logic behind the North's attacks. The attacks are not the actions of an insane regime. They are coolly calculated measures to gain power. If North Korea didn't attack and appear crazy, no one would care about it, and it would become forgotten, similar to smaller countries like Laos. Instead Kim Jong Il plays the part of the loose cannon and thereby gains attention and clout for his country, pressures China to give more aid, and even gets visits from former American presidents like Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, all of whom make him appear more powerful to North Korean citizens.

Furthermore, if anything, the more frustrated America gets about North Korea, the better it is for the Chinese, because all that tension helps to create a buffer against American hegemony. Therefore, I reject the claim that the US has the means to pressure China to do anything. Since the shelling last week, Chinese media has broadcast North Korea's statements that the South attacked first. China's Premier, Wen Jiabao, has appealed for a peaceful solution, a return to the six-party talks (which will help China gain more power, as it is seen as the only rational player with close ties to North Korea), and has been careful not to criticize the North. In other words, in the current situation, North Korea is playing the useful role of a buffer state for the Chinese.

Lastly, economic sanctions, though they further impoverish ordinary North Koreans, bolster the power of Kim and his close coterie of family and friends. Sanctions are a tenet of American diplomacy that should be shelved--permanently. "Sanctions won't bring North Korea to its knees," said Kim Keun-sik, a specialist on North Korea at Kyungnam University in Seoul. "The North knows this very well, from having lived with economic sanctions of one sort or another for the past 60 years."