



Trump Tweets Trouble for North Korea (Again)

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On Saturday, Donald Trump ranted at China (again), complaining that they are not doing enough to control North Korea. Trump complained that China is making lots of money from trade with the U.S., as if they “owe” us for it. But isn’t trade supposed to be mutually beneficial? And isn’t it?

Politico reported the [new attack](#).

President Donald Trump on Saturday slammed China for failing to restrain North Korea, who in recent days has expanded the reach of its nuclear arsenal, despite past administrations striking what he described as favorable trade deals with the foreign state.

“I am very disappointed in China. Our foolish past leaders have allowed them to make hundreds of billions of dollars a year in trade, yet they do NOTHING for us with North Korea, just talk. We will no longer allow this to continue. China could easily solve this problem!” Trump wrote in a series of tweets. . .

Trump said then that China could use its influence over North Korea to convince the country to tamp down its nuclear ambitions.

Sure, China probably “could” restrain North Korea, but why? It’s not like North Korea is threatening China. North Korea’s actions really have no impact on China at all, except to distract the United States and our allies from other issues—such as China’s increasing military might, and their setting up artificial islands in international waters, so they can claim those areas as their property.

Let’s look at this from another angle. Let’s say Canada got fed up with Russia’s interference in western elections, and for at least tacitly allowing other illegal activities online. What if Canada threatened Russia to stop its cyber war, or Canada would attack Russia directly. Would the United States “restrain” Canada? No, of course not! We’d say it’s none of our business, even though we are Canada’s main trading partner. The truth is that we would secretly (or maybe not secretly) cheer them along.

And what about the argument that China “owes” us, because of our trade? That’s not the view of Chelsea Follet—of the conservative Cato Institute, in an [article](#) with the headline, “Trading with China Makes US (and Them) Richer.”

The 2016 presidential election has brought with it an increased interest in U.S. trade with China, with political figures like Donald Trump prominently focusing on the alleged

“harm” done by China to the United States. Here are the three main arguments that trade-skeptics use regarding China and reasons why those arguments are wrong.

1) Trade-skeptics often claim that trade with China is “taking American jobs.” However, in most cases American and Chinese workers are not competing for the same jobs because they do different kinds of work. . .

2) Many people are concerned about China’s so-called currency manipulation. China, they claim, is keeping the value of the yuan artificially low relative to the U.S. dollar. That means that Americans pay less for Chinese goods. As HumanProgress.org board member Mark J. Perry puts it, “The ‘manipulation’ of China’s currency is actually to the distinct advantage of millions of American consumers (especially low-income Americans) and U.S. businesses buying products and inputs made in China.” . . .

3) China trade-skeptics often claim that trade leads to the exploitation of Chinese laborers and makes them worse off. However, as Cato’s Johan Norberg wrote, “Western activists rail against ‘sweatshops, but among researchers and economists from left to right there is a consensus that these jobs are the stepping stones out of poverty.” Lest we forget, the United States and Europe had their own sweatshops during the Industrial Revolution.

So if this is all meaningless bluster by Trump, why? The Guardian points to the timing, calling it a diversion that U.S. conservative media could trumpet.

Conservative news outlets in the US appeared to relish Trump’s decision to assail Beijing for its alleged role in North Korea’s missile and nuclear programs.

“Trump rips China on Twitter,” ran a Fox News headline.

Beijing is likely to be less amused. “To some extent, I think Trump’s tweets are a bluff. But the Chinese government has to take this seriously,” said Li Yonghui, an international relations expert from Beijing’s Foreign Studies University. . .

Yang said Trump’s latest China tweets were partly a diversionary tactic to distract public attention from the Obamacare defeat and partly a negotiating tactic designed to increase pressure on Beijing on issues such as North Korea and trade.

China is most of all interested in stability. They have billions of people, and they don’t want to see change at home or abroad. That is the key to China’s unwillingness to get involved. There’s nothing in it for them, and the risks are huge.

China offered no immediate reaction to Trump’s Twitter challenge. But Ben Rhodes, a foreign policy adviser under Barack Obama, rejected Trump’s claims about Chinese inaction on North Korea.

“It is not at all true that China can easily solve this problem and this is a very dangerous and destabilizing approach,” he wrote on Twitter.

In a surprising move, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson also put blame on Trump’s buddies in the Kremlin.

Tillerson also pointed the finger of blame at Beijing and Moscow.

“As the principal economic enablers of North Korea’s nuclear weapon and ballistic missile development program, China and Russia bear unique and special responsibility for this growing threat to regional and global stability,” he said in a statement.

Tillerson’s comments are sure to anger Russia and China. Earlier this month Beijing rejected claims from US president Donald Trump that it had a responsibility to do more to rein in its ally. “I think this either shows lack of a full, correct knowledge of the issue, or there are ulterior motives for it, trying to shift responsibility,” Geng Shuang, a foreign ministry spokesman, told reporters.

Tillerson’s statement is available from the State Department.

Meanwhile, China is getting fed up with Trump’s rants.

China has rejected Donald Trump’s repeated calls for it to do more to rein in North Korea’s nuclear programme, saying the “China responsibility theory” must stop. . .

Geng Shuang, a foreign ministry spokesman, without naming a specific person or country [said] “I think this either shows lack of a full, correct knowledge of the issue, or there are ulterior motives for it, trying to shift responsibility.”. . .

They worry the fall of the regime would lead to chaos, with thousands of refugees pouring over the border.

“All parties must meet each other halfway and China had made significant efforts and played a constructive role,” Geng added. . . “Asking others to do work, but doing nothing themselves is not OK,” Geng said. “Being stabbed in the back is really not OK.”

The bottom line is North Korea is OUR problem, not China’s, and not Russia’s. And the reason it is our problem is that we never signed a peace treaty after the Korean War (1950-53), and North Korea has felt threatened by US for the more than half-a-century since.

China in part blames the US and South Korea for heightened tensions on the peninsula, citing frequent military exercises and a recently deployed anti-missile system.

The longer anxiety and fear continues in a country, the worse the paranoia and irrational response. It is 60 years too late to sit down with North Korea. How about if the self-proclaimed “Great Negotiator” (Trump) negotiates a settlement to end this nonsense.