

# **CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

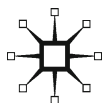
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# CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

WHO MAKES IT, AND HOW IS IT MADE?

Edited by **Gilbert Rozman**

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CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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## PREFACE

2012 marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between South Korea and China. The normalization of relations between the former Korean War enemies symbolized the end of the Cold War. It was the culmination of the ROK's *Nordpolitik* and the PRC's Reform and Open policy. Since then, South Korea-China relations have made tremendous strides. At the time of normalization, the bilateral trade volume was a mere US \$6 billion. In 2011, it surpassed the US \$200 billion mark. Prior to normalization, the bilateral relationship had been in a deep freeze ever since the PRC's foundation in 1949. By 2008, the bilateral relationship had been upgraded to a strategic cooperative partnership. By any measure, South Korea-China relationship has been a source of unprecedented economic prosperity and regional stability in Northeast Asia for the past 20 years.

At the same time, deepening bilateral relations, coinciding with the rapid expansion of both countries' national power, has inevitably created conflicts across a range of fields, from trade and security, to history and culture. In particular, Chinese reactions, or lack thereof, to North Korean provocations has deeply unsettled South Korean policy makers as well as the public. South Korea had long been working under the assumption that increased trade and human exchange would eventually bring China around to see things from South Korea's vantage point. Given the phenomenal growth in bilateral trade and the equally explosive growth in human exchange (e.g. 70,000 South Korean students currently study in China, while almost an equal number of Chinese students study in South Korea, making up the largest cohort of foreign



students in the respective host countries), all in the face of the ever erratic and provocative North Korean behavior, such “complacency” was perhaps understandable.

However, Chinese response in the wake of the sinking of the *Cheonan* and the Yeonpyeong Island shelling have shattered this view. Rather than condemning North Korean actions or using its influence to curtail further provocations, China wilfully ignored them while feigning neutrality between the two Koreas. It became clear to South Korea that, when it comes to the Korean peninsula, China intends to maintain its two-track approach: for economic ties, South Korea, but for strategic ties, North Korea. There would be no spill-over effect.

Since then, the South Korean government as well as the public began a serious review of the bilateral relationship as well as of the nature of China’s rise and its implication for South Korea, inter-Korean relations, and the region. The question, Who makes China’s foreign policy, and how is it made? has suddenly become critical. Given the opacity of China’s top foreign policy-decision making process, the question takes on added urgency.

Of course, South Korea is not the only country pondering this question. As China’s power and influence continues to grow at a breathtaking pace, foreign policy and security experts everywhere are also asking the same question. The Asan China Conference 2011 was organized to gather together some of the world’s leading experts on China’s foreign policy to provide answers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the conference participants for the insightful and stimulating discussions. In particular, my gratitude goes to Professor Gil Rozman for taking on the arduous task of an editor. Ms Kim Jungjin flawlessly took care of the logistics from beginning to end. The publication department at Asan, led by Mr. Choi Booil, and assisted by Ms Park Joo-young, also deserve recognition for producing this handsome volume.

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Seoul, November 2012