



China's Relationship with the Two Koreas: Insecurity, Nuclear Weapons and Distraction

Robert Kelly

Pusan National University



Despite China's rise, Beijing has struggled to build alliances. It faces a ring of regional states, from North Korea to India, deeply wary of its intentions. China's awkward relationship with both Koreas reflects that. It has proven unable to capitalize on Korean resentment toward Japan and pull either Korea into its orbit definitively. Beijing has been unable to prevent North Korean nuclearization or alignment with Russia, and it is so unpopular in South Korea, that the South cleaves to the US despite Trump's disinterest for allies. This talk argues that China's ambitions in the East and South China Seas are constrained by its refusal to accommodate in northeast Asia.

February 11, 2026

1:50-2:45pm

For details, contact Dr. Chris White
white.3941@osu.edu



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

EAST ASIAN STUDIES CENTER