

North Korea's nuclear development program has been all over the headlines of world news lately. Why do we think China is the country capable of resolving the North Korean threat to world security?

Five important factors to consider:

1. Common border
2. Historical background
3. Ethnic and cultural ties
4. Ideology and Security
5. Economy

# 1. Common border

The geographic location of Korean Peninsula has conditioned its history

China and North Korea share a 1,416-kilometer long border that corresponds to the course of the Yalu and Tumen rivers.



# Goguryeo (37 A.C-668) Balhae (698-926)



# Common border

Much of the China-North Korea trade goes through the port of Dandong, the "*lifeline to the outside world.*"

**Dandong** (Liaoning Province China) lies on the Yalu River delta and is the **largest city on the border.**

On the other side of the river is the city of **Sinuiju** in the North Pyongan Province of North Korea.



# Common border

- There are 205 islands on the Yalu. North Korea possesses 127 and China 78.
- Due to the division criteria, some islands such as Hwanggumpyong Island belong to North Korea but are on the Chinese side of the river.
  - There is a significant number of ethnic Koreans living on the Chinese side of the border, particularly in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture.

# Common border

- In the 1950s and 1960s, many ethnic Koreans in Northeast China crossed the border into North Korea to escape economic hardship and famine in China.
  - In recent years, the flow of refugees has reversed, with a considerable number of North Koreans fleeing to China.

## 2. Historical Background

China's involvement in the Korean peninsula has historical roots which reach back *far earlier than 1950*

In 108 BC, the Han dynasty defeated the northern part of the Korean peninsula and installed four commanderies.

Three commanderies fell within a few decades, but the Lelang remained as a center of cultural and economic exchange with successive Chinese dynasties for four centuries, until it was conquered by Goguryeo in 313.

# Historical Background



In the sixth century, the **Goguryeo kingdom** ruled central and northern Korea and a vast portion of Manchuria and Siberia. Goguryeo was the rival force of the **Sui Dynasty**, which mobilized more than **1 million soldiers** to conquer the Goguryeo. The expedition proved disastrous.



# Historical Background



The rulers of the Tang (668-676) were allies of Goguryeo, which controlled Manchuria and Siberia.

The Tang allied Silla Kingdom (57 BCE-935 CE) in 668, and conquered Goguryeo.

But later, Silla defeated the Tang with the remnant forces of Baekje, and unified the three kingdoms.



# Historical Background

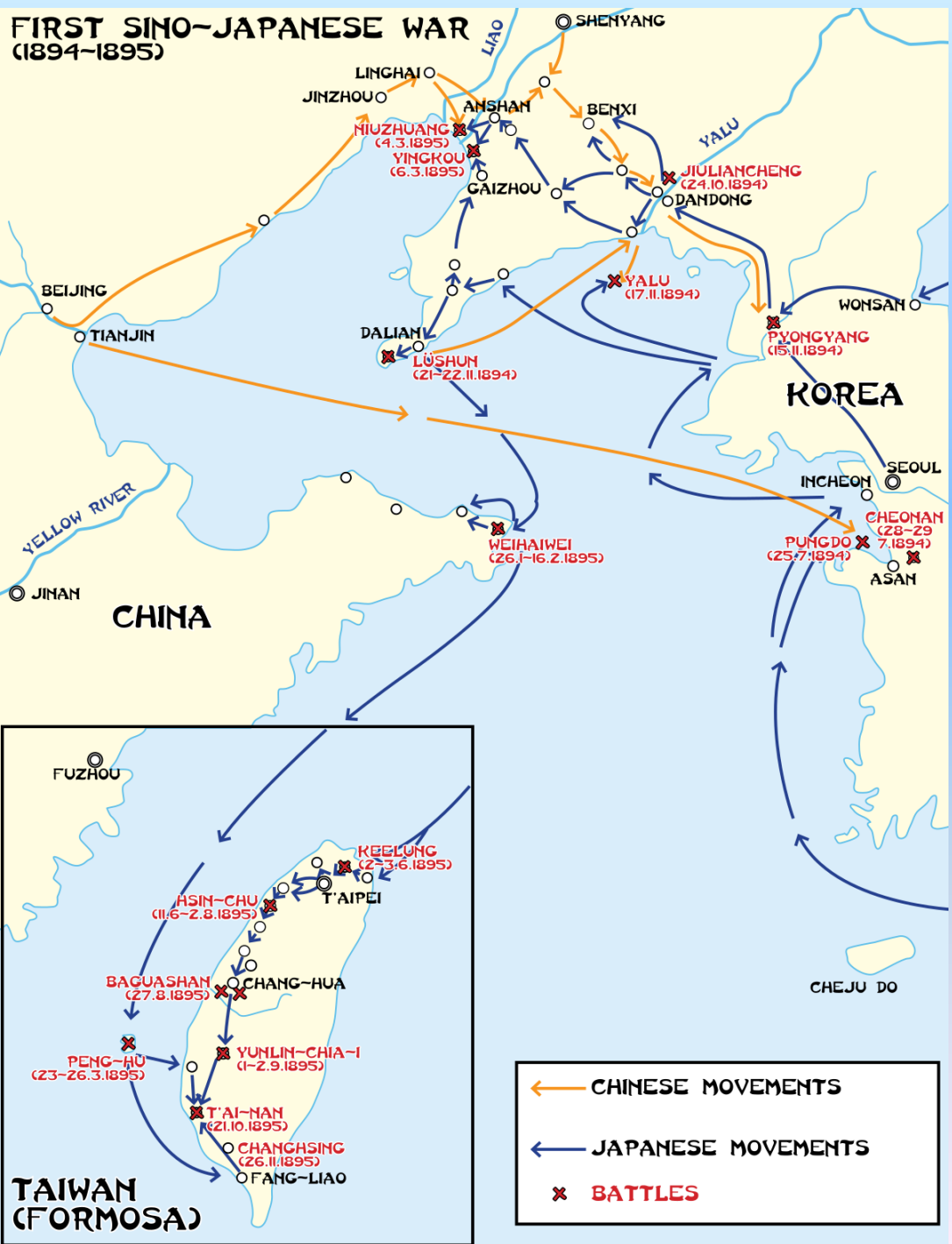
In the 13th century, the **Mongol Yuan** Dynasty allied with Goguryeo to invade the Japanese islands. A wind storm which was called “Divine Wind” protected Japan from its invaders.

Between 1592-1598, the **Ming Dynasty** sent troops to help the Korean Chosun dynasty from the two invasions from Toyotomi Hideyoshi of Japan. The combined armies of the Ming and the Koreans managed to repel the Japanese attack.



The Japanese landing on Busan

**FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR (1894-1895)**



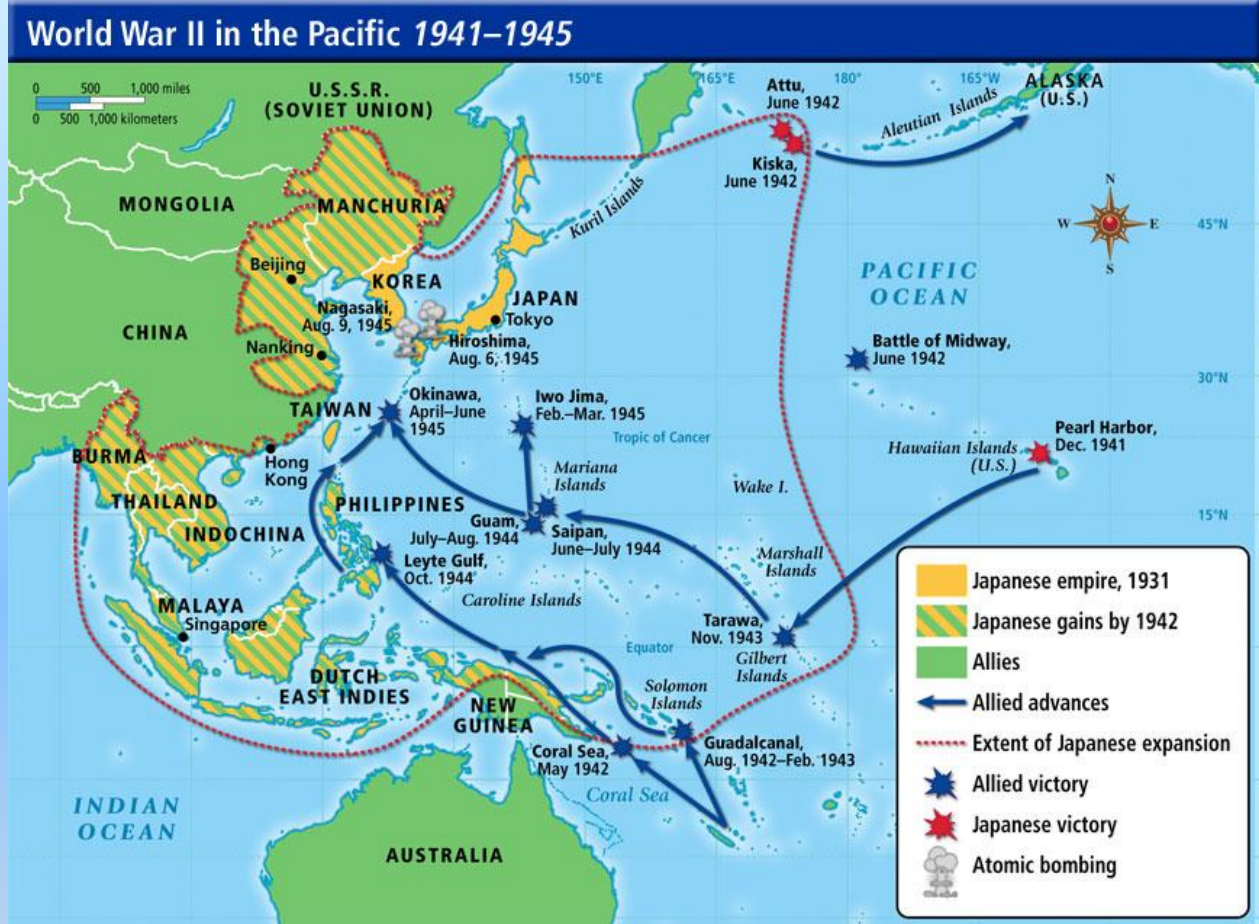
The political and economic rivalry between Qing Dynasty and Japan over Korea led to the Chinese-Japanese War (1894 - 1895).

The Shimonoseki Treaty consolidated Japan's influence on Korea. China ceded Taiwan & Liaodong to Japan.



During the Pacific War 1941-45, the Korean Liberation Army allied Chinese forces against Japan.

Under Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek leaders agreed on the independence of Korea, signed in Cairo Declaration (1943)



Chiang Kai-shek's government of China was defeated by the communist regime of Mao Zedong in 1949.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK 1948) exchanged diplomatic recognition on October 6th, 1949

The last Chinese military intervention was the Korean War. A total of 2.97 million Chinese soldiers fought and around 180,000 were killed.

**In 1961, the PRC and the DPRK signed the Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid with validity until 2021.**



**Stalin &  
Leader  
Kim Il  
Sung 1948**



### 3. Ethnic and Cultural ties

Because of its geographical proximity, Korea has been greatly influenced by the Chinese civilization, borrowing from its written language, arts, religions, and models of government administration.

The introduction of Confucian thought from China still remains a fundamental part of the Korean society, shaping its moral system, way of life, and social relations among people, and is also the basis for much of the legal system.

Archaeologists reveals that Korean ethnic groups lived in Manchuria, Siberia, China, and the Korean peninsula in the Neolithic period.

During the Goguryeo and Balhae dynasty, Korean ethnic people continued living there until the territory was later absorbed by China.

The first large scale immigration of Koreans into North-Western China did not occur until the 19th century In the present day, a minority of around 2 million Koreans live in China.

# Korean ethnic groups in China



## 4. Ideology and Security

Ever since the PRC and the DPRK exchanged diplomatic recognition on 6 October 1949, they became firm allies. China's backing and support of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un has been vital to North Korea's development.

Although the ideology today is not as strong as it was during the Mao era, it is still a factor present in today's relations.

Support for North Korea, considering the American presence in the region is pragmatic and reinforced by ideological justification. China knows that if North Korea collapses, US-soldiers stationed in South Korea will pose a threat. North Korea's collapse would destroy China's strategic buffer between China and South Korea, where around 29,000 U.S. troops and marines are stationed

Beijing has supported UN Security Council Resolutions which imposed sanctions on Pyongyang. Nevertheless there is doubt regarding how committed China is to implementing trade restrictions. China has opposed such harsh international sanctions on North Korea in the hope of avoiding regime collapse and a refugee influx into its border.

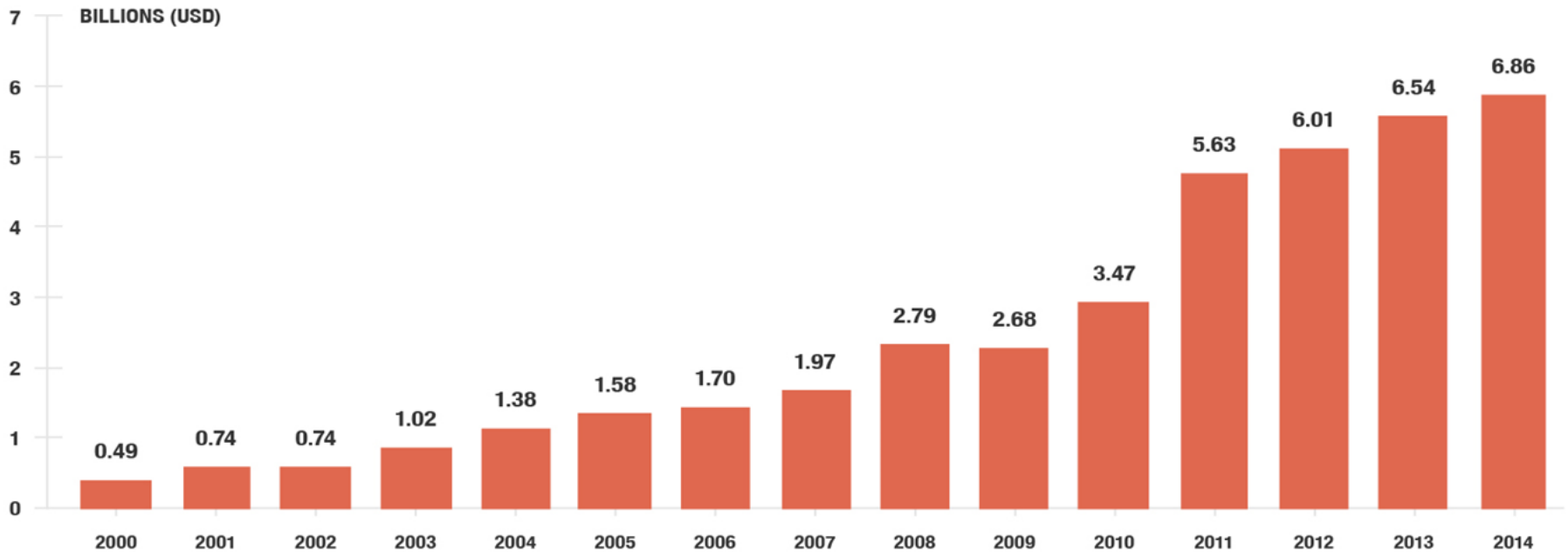
Chaos on China's borders is a real worry for Chinese politicians: specifically the idea of hundreds of thousands of refugees going into China's economically weak northeast region.



# 5. Economy

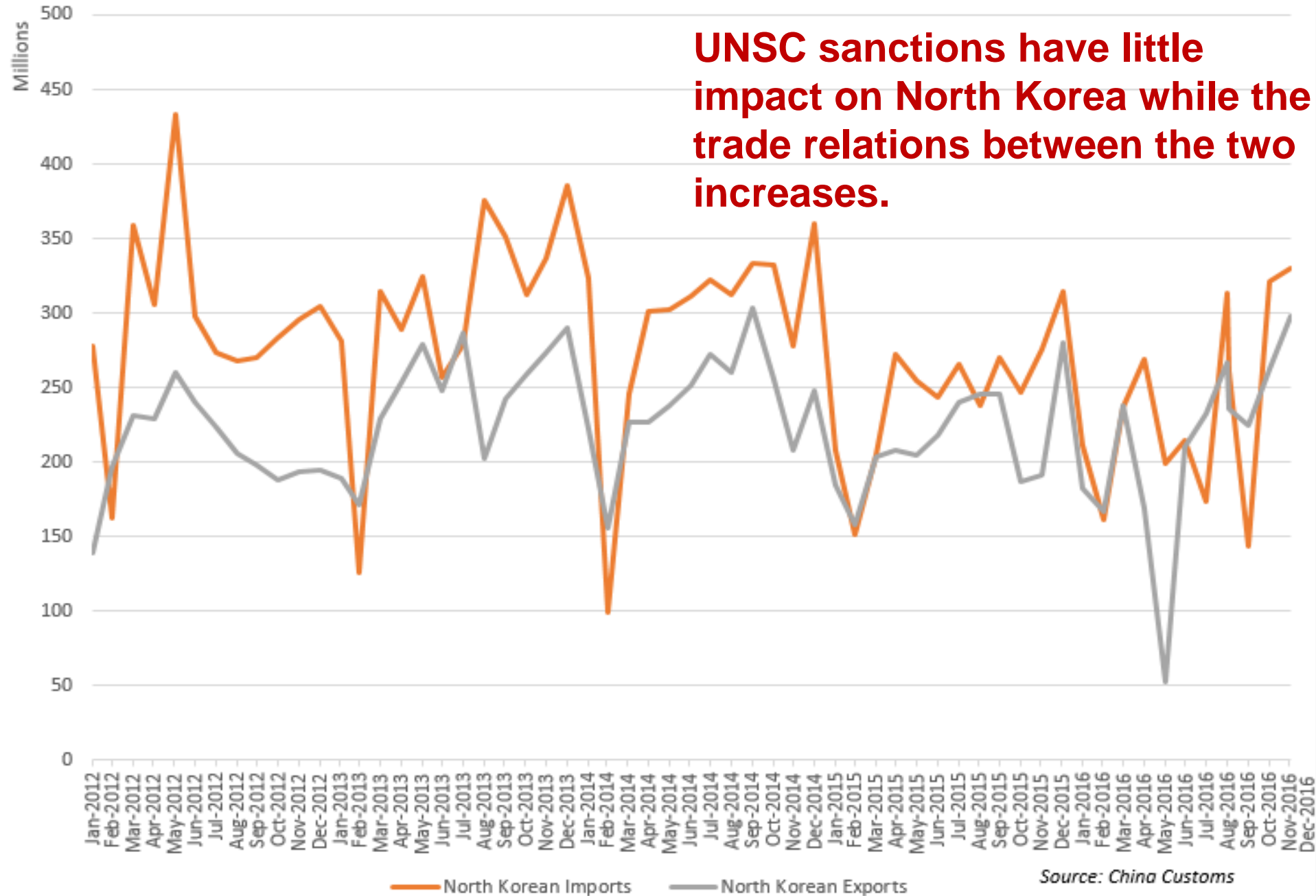
It has been reported that the trade volume 2016 between China and North Korea amounted to 5.51 billion USD, representing approximately 91.5% (previously around 70%) of North Korea's total trade volume. (ITC of the WTO) As sanctions are implemented, North Korea's dependence on China deepens.

## CHINA-NORTH KOREA TRADE VOLUME



# North Korea-China Trade, \$US

**UNSC sanctions have little impact on North Korea while the trade relations between the two increases.**



Source: China Customs