The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus
In-depth critical analysis of the forces shaping the Asia-Pacific...and the world.

The Political Economy of Sanctions Against North Korea

By Ruediger Frank

Japan Focus is pleased to reprint Ruediger Frank's important study of the historical uses of sanctions in international diplomacy and alternatives to sanctions in reviewing the case of North Korea in the wake of that nation's nuclear test.

This article explores sanctions as a policy tool to coerce North Korea's behavior, such as by discontinuing its nuclear weapons program. It discusses the characteristics of sanctions as well as the practical experience with these restrictions on North Korea. It becomes clear that the concrete goals of coercion through sanctions and the relative power of the sending country to a large extent determine the outcome. Nevertheless, the general limitations of sanctions also apply, including the detrimental effects of unilateral and prolonged restrictions. It appears that the imposition of sanctions against the DPRK is unlikely to succeed. As an alternative way of changing the operating environment for North Korea, assistance deserves consideration. Despite many weaknesses, this instrument is relatively low in cost and risk, and can be applied continuously and flexibly.

Read the article here.

This article is reprinted from Asian Perspective, Vol 30, No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 5-36. It can be found online at www.asianperspective.org.

Ruediger Frank is a Korea specialist who teaches East Asian Economy and Society at the University of Vienna.

Created by Datamomentum