North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1966-2008

By Narushige Michishita

Price: $130.00  Add to Cart

ISBN: 978-0-415-44943-4
Binding: Hardback
Published by: Routledge
Publication Date: 23rd September 2009 (Available for Pre-order)
Pages: 256

About the Book

This book examines North Korea's nuclear diplomacy over a long time period from the early 1960s, settling its dangerous brinkmanship in the wider context of North Korea's military and diplomatic campaigns to achieve its political goals. It argues that the last four decades of military adventurism demonstrates Pyongyang's consistent, calculated use of military tools to advance strategic objectives vis-à-vis its adversaries. It shows how recent behavior of the North Korean government is entirely consistent with its behavior over this longer period: the North Korean government's conduct (rather than being haphazard or reactive) is rational — in the Clausewitzian sense of being ready to use force as an extension of diplomacy by other means. The book goes on to demonstrate that North Korea's "calculated adventurism" has come full circle: what we are seeing now is a modified repetition of earlier events — such as the Pueblo incident of 1968 and the nuclear and missile diplomacy of the 1990s. Using extensive interviews in the United States and South Korea, including those with defected North Korean government officials, alongside newly declassified first-hand material from U.S., South Korean, and former Communist-bloc archives, the book argues that whilst North Korea's military-diplomatic campaigns have intensified, its policy objectives have become more conservative and are aimed at regime survival, normalization of relations with the United States and Japan, and obtaining economic aid.

Reviews

"In North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1966-2008, Dr. Narushige Michishita provides a unique, refreshing and extremely well researched study of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) idiosyncratic military/political strategies and doctrines. . . . Dr. Michishita's book is highly recommended to both the serious student of the DPRK and the general reader interested in gaining a better understanding of this dangerous and volatile nation." -Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., author of The Armed Forces of North Korea and A History of Ballistic Missile Development in the DPRK

"Michishita dissects four decades of North Korean military adventurism to demonstrate Pyongyang's consistent and calculated use of military tools to advance strategic objectives vis-à-vis its adversaries. Rather than being irrational or unpredictable, North Korea emerges in these pages as a proactive but no less dangerous actor in the international system. Michishita's scholarship is compelling and important." - Michael J. Green, Former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for Asia, National Security Council

"It is an excellent, comprehensive and important addition to the literature on North Korean policies and actions. It sheds new light on many disputed episodes, to the benefit of scholars, journalists and interested citizens." - Don Oberdofer, a Distinguished Journalist in Residence at Johns Hopkins University's Nitze School of Advanced International Studies and the author of The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History

"Thinking that a second Korean War is all but improbable, we are often guilty of downplaying North Korea's military activities. Fortunately, Narushige Michishita has undertaken a comprehensive study of Pyongyang's military-diplomatic campaigns, providing the analysis and linkage to North Korea's overall foreign policy objectives. The case studies he cites are rich with detail and provide the critical element in understanding what otherwise might appear as random, unconnected acts of military adventurism by Pyongyang. Michishita's North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1966-2008 is a valuable resource for negotiators and scholars alike should have." - Charles L. (Jack) Pritchard, former ambassador and special envoy for negotiations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the author of Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb

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Narushige Michishita is Assistant Professor of the Security and International Studies Program at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) in Tokyo, Japan. Previously, he served as senior research fellow at the National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense and assistant counsellor at the Cabinet Secretariat for Security and Crisis Management of the Government of Japan.

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