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국제학석사학위논문

**Analysis of Japan-North Korea Negotiations
under the Koizumi and Abe Administration**

고이즈미와 아베 정권 하에서의 북·일 교섭 분석

2015년 2월

서울대학교 국제대학원

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under the Koizumi and Abe Administration**

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Abstract

Analysis of Japan-North Korea Negotiations under the Koizumi and Abe Administration

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In contrast with conventional understanding of the existing literature on Japanese foreign policies which are known to be reactive to international context, this paper focuses on the explanatory power of domestic factors within Japan and their effects on the development of Japan-North Korea negotiations. Within the three historical events in Japan-DPRK relations including the first Japan-DPRK summit of 2002, the second Japan-DPRK summit of 2004 and the Stockholm meeting of 2014, external factors surrounding Japan including the low level of security threat from North Korea, the deterioration of relations between Japan and its neighbors and lastly its consensus with the United States on North Korean policy are not found to be common in the time periods. Instead, Japanese domestic factors including the willpower of strong leaders on Japan-DPRK negotiations, a stable cabinet with a right-wing tendency, growing public disappointment on these administrations, and the closed nature of policymaking towards North Korea without significant involvement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are proved to be facilitating factors in light of their correlation with the three breakthroughs in Japan-DPRK relations. Although U.S. and South Korea's influence on Japan's policy towards North Korea cannot be underestimated, this paper argues that the aforementioned combination of domestic factors facilitated the Koizumi and Abe administrations to take a bold initiative towards North Korea by decreasing the influence

of these external factors.

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Keywords: Japan-DPRK relations, diplomatic normalization, abduction issue, Koizumi, Abe, Japan-DPRK summit, Stockholm Agreement

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I . Introduction

At the end of May 2014, it was reported that there had been a three-day talk session between director-general level foreign ministry officials of Japan and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) which had taken place in Stockholm, Sweden from the 26th to the 28th of May 2014. After the informal talks between Japan and North Korea in Shenyang, China on the 3rd and the 19th of March and an official negotiation in Beijing at the end of March, the Stockholm meeting made substantial progress when North Korea reversed its earlier insistence that the Japanese abductee issue had been already settled.¹ The content of the agreement from the Stockholm meeting is as follows: First of all, both countries developed a consensus in order to settle the unfortunate past of Japanese colonial rule over the Korean peninsula and current bilateral issues finally aiming at the normalization of diplomatic relations following DPRK-Japan Pyongyang Declaration of 2002. North Korea accepted the Japanese demand on a comprehensive inquiry from North Korea on the remains of the Japanese nationals who died in North Korean jurisdiction before and after 1945 and the remaining Japanese, Japanese spouses, victims of abduction and missing persons and agreed to set up a special investigation committee. In exchange, Japanese delegates also agreed to lift its unilateral sanctions such as bans on travel and monetary transfers to North Korea and entry of North Korean ships as well as providing humanitarian assistance to Pyongyang.

Considering the tense atmosphere in Northeast Asia with remaining

¹ Korea Institute for National Unification, *Bukil Stockholm Habeui wa Dongbukah Jeongse* (Japan-DPRK Stockholm Agreement and Northeast Asian Political Environment), KINU 14-03, (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, September 2014), pp.1.

historical legacies and antipathy, it was even predicted that Japan-DPRK Stockholm Agreement would introduce “a new phase in Northeast Asia’s political environment.”² While Washington, Tokyo, Seoul and even Beijing promised to continue a punitive response against the third North Korean nuclear test conducted in early 2013, the recent rapprochement between Tokyo and Pyongyang was enough to surprise their neighbors. Since the recent bilateral agreement between North Korea and Japan was to resolve the Japanese abductee issue, a humanitarian issue that the government of Japan had made a priority when dealing with North Korea for decades for the return of all Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea during the 1970s and 1980s, three capitals including Washington, Seoul and even Beijing expressed their support on the settlement of the issue through official channels but they must have been suddenly startled with by an independent approach from Tokyo. Especially, media from Seoul was shocked at the Stockholm Agreement because the agreement was made while the historical animosity between Tokyo and Seoul had reached a record peak and inter-Korean relations had not shown any clue that relations would improve in a near future. Even the Japanese engagement approach toward North Korea was described as “back stabbing” South Korea as two states which have bitter relations with Seoul hold each other’s hands.³

Receiving full attention from neighboring countries, through several follow-

² Min Cho, “North Korea-Japan ‘Stockholm Agreement’: Prelude to an Upheaval in Northeast Asia - Pyongyang’s Exit Strategy and Abe’s Ambitions,” *Korea Institute for National Unification*, Co 14-07, June 16, 2014, pp.1, (accessed October 31, 2014); available from http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_05_01.jsp?page=1&num=155&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=EINGINSIGN&ses=&category/

³ Cheol-hee Park, “[Gigo] Hanguk eui Duitongsu Chin Bukil gan Yoksa Cheongsan Waegyo ([Contribution] Japan-DPRK Diplomacy for the Liquidation of the Past Stabbing South Korea in the Back),” *Maeil Kyungjae (MK Business News)*, June 01, 2014 (accessed October 31, 2014); available from <http://news.mk.co.kr/column/view.php?year=2014&no=847551>

up meetings after the Stockholm Agreement, Japan eventually sent its official delegates led by the Director General Ihara Junichi of Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau to Pyongyang on the 27th of October 2014 in order to assess North Korea's investigation into the fate of the remaining twelve Japanese citizens who were officially recognized as the abductees by the Japanese government. The four-day visit by the Japanese delegation marked the first time in a decade that delegations of North Korea and Japan held an official meeting in Pyongyang after former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro visited Pyongyang in 2004. Although it took ten years for Japan to hold an official meeting with North Korea in Pyongyang and to launch North Korea's investigation probe, there were frequent governmental contact between these two countries during the Koizumi administration for the normalization of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Japan and the efforts culminated in two Japan-DPRK summits in 2002 and in 2004 respectively.

The first Japan-DPRK summit was held on the 17th of September 2002 in Pyongyang between Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and Chairman Kim Jong-il. It was viewed by most as a historical event in that the summit was held 57 years after the Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula ended and 12 years after the Japan-DPRK normalization talks initiated. In addition, Koizumi and Kim signed the joint declaration titled Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration designed for an early normalization of diplomatic relations with the promise of Japan's provision of economic assistance including humanitarian aid to North Korea to seek a comprehensive solution to security matters including nuclear and missile issues.⁴

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration*, September 17, 2002 (accessed September 15, 2014); available from http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n_korea/pmv0209/pyongyang.html

Regarding the Japanese abductee issue, furthermore, Kim Jong-il gave an apology for abducting thirteen Japanese citizens. Considering the continuous denial by Pyongyang on the engagement of the North Korean government in the Japanese abductee issue, Kim Jong-il's acknowledgement on the abduction of thirteen Japanese citizens meant significant progress within Japan-DPRK negotiations. As Kim Jong-il notified the death of eight Japanese nationals, Koizumi led the agreement on the temporary return of five survivors to Japan after the first Japan-DPRK summit, which eventually resulted in their permanent return. Again on the 22nd of May 2004, Prime Minister Koizumi made a second landmark visit to Pyongyang. During this meeting, both leaders agreed to continue their efforts for the establishment of diplomatic relations based on the Pyongyang Declaration. After Koizumi delivered the grave concerns of the international community concerning the North Korean nuclear program in the meeting, he returned with five children of the Japanese abductees and arranged a meeting between Soga Hitomi and her family members in exchange for his pledge to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea.⁵

Similar to the recent Stockholm Agreement, two big developments which generated significant momentum in the history of Japan-DPRK bilateral diplomatic relations were often explained in international context such as post-cold war narratives and détente of inter-Korean relations. For example, it was often regarded that the first Japan-DPRK summit was possible because of the improvement of inter-Korean relations and the second Japan-DPRK summit made possible because Six-Party Talks relieved the tensions within the Korean peninsula. Regarding the recent

⁵ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Koizumi Cabinet E-mail Magazine*, No.141, May 27, 2004 (accessed September 17, 2014); available from <http://japan.kantei.go.jp/m-magazine/backnumber/koizumi/2004/0527.html>

improvement of Japan-DPRK negotiations, furthermore, it was considered that the deterioration of China-Japan relations as well as ROK-Japan relations drove Japan to take hands with North Korea as a breakthrough in the diplomatic isolation of Japan in Northeast Asia. In other words, external factors concerning Japan became more critical in explaining the Japan-DPRK relations due to the continuous sidelining of Japan in North Korea related issues. Despite the fact that Japan-DPRK relations were under the influence of the international community, however, the Japan-DPRK summits of 2002 and 2004 in addition to the recent Japan-DPRK agreement cannot be explained by international factors alone.

In contrast with other research and papers, this paper will focus more on the explanatory power of Japan's domestic factors rather than international context regarding the developments of Japan-DPRK negotiation. By comparing the Japanese domestic political situation as well as the external environment during two administrations, one of the former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, this paper will try to answer the question why only two prime ministers, Koizumi and Abe, were able to make progress in Japan-DPRK relations. In answering the question, this paper will prove that the external factors of Japan including a low level of security threat from North Korea, the Japanese deterioration of relations with its neighbors and a consensus with the United States on North Korean policy did not always work as a necessary condition for the breakthrough between Japan-DPRK negotiations throughout the timeframe. Rather, domestic variables within Japan such as willpower of strong leaders on Japan-DPRK negotiations, a stable cabinet with right-wing tendency, growing public disappointment on these administrations, and the closed nature of Japan's North Korean policymaking without heavy involvement of Ministry of Foreign Affairs were

found to be in common on all three developments of Japan-DPRK negotiations. Furthermore, the time period that cannot be explained by international factors will be analyzed through Japan's domestic factors in order to prove the superiority of the internal factor over the external factor in explaining the big three developments in Japan-DPRK relations. Based on the domestic variables, counterfactual analysis will be introduced by proving why subsequent prime ministers following Koizumi and before the second Abe administration could not make progress on Japan-DPRK relations. After elaborating the limitations of the study regarding the influence of U.S. and South Korean factors which should not be ignored in explaining the Japan-DPRK relations, the prospects of the recent Japan-DPRK negotiations on the abductee issue and its implication forward will be discussed at the end of the paper.

1. Literature review

The mainstream studies on Japanese foreign policies have concentrated on the international context in that Japanese foreign policy has been highly reactive to external factors. Especially, the U.S.-Japan alliance has been considered as a linchpin in the foreign policies of Japan. Furthermore, the increasing effort of Japan in extending its military role has been regarded as Japanese response to the security environment of Northeast Asia arising from North Korean nuclear and missile threats as well as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) military buildup of China. In particular, the influence of these external factors has been found significant during the Koizumi administration. Furthermore, it has been largely predicted that this trend will continue while Japan focuses on these two external factors including regional environment as well as its alliance with the United States when making its foreign policies.

T.J. Pempel introduces Japan's new directions in its strategic policies under the Koizumi administration.⁶ The two characteristics under the Koizumi administration include an increase in its own military posture different from Japan's past concentration on economic diplomacy and the advancement of security collaboration with the United States. These new policies were a direct result of the changes in domestic, regional and global conditions. However, Pempel argues that the Japanese movement toward a "normal" country embracing a more active military role of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) together with strengthening bilateral ties to the United States would create tense relations between Japan and its neighboring countries, most notably China and North Korea.

Michael J. Green analyzes that a closer strategic, ideational and economic convergence between the United States and Japan was made under the Koizumi administration and predicted the strong bilateral relationship would continue.⁷ Although the firm friendship between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro boosted bilateral cooperation between these governments on war on terror, in detail, Green speculates that the U.S.-Japan alliance will continue to rise further against the threatened Asian environment particularly due to North Korean nuclear and missile tests and China's military buildup. As the United States and Japan share common universal values and deepen their economic cooperation, moreover, a closer U.S.-Japan relationship was expected to continue even after Koizumi stepped down from the post.

⁶ T.J. Pempel, "Japanese Strategy under Koizumi," in *Japanese Strategic Thought toward Asia*, ed. Gilbert Rozman, Kazuhiko Togo & Joseph P. Ferguson (New York: Palgrave, 2007), Chapter 5, pp.109-136.

⁷ Michael J. Green, "U.S.-Japan Relations after Koizumi: Convergence or Cooling?," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.29, no.4 (Autumn, 2006): pp.101-110.

In addition to the general analyses on Japanese foreign policies with the emphasis on the U.S. influence as well as Northeast Asian regional context, the majority of previous research into Japanese policies toward North Korea also focuses on the external factors of Japan to the detriment of Japan's domestic factors. Jung-wha Shin points out that the aim of Japan's North Korean policy has been on the extension of its influence in East Asia.⁸ In specific, Japan has pursued the establishment of diplomatic relations with North Korea through economic compensation in the early 1990s and through a summit meeting in 2002 in order to increase its leverage over U.S.-DPRK relations. Even after the normalization attempt failed due to opposition from the United States in 2002, Japan tried to maintain its influence on North Korean nuclear issue by stressing the resolution to the Japanese abductee issue in the Six-Party Talks and checking Chinese leverage on North Korea.

Young-chul Chung analyzes how Japan and North Korea could have started the negotiation on the normalization of diplomatic relations in the early 2000s.⁹ Chung points out the start of the Japan-DPRK negotiation under the post-Cold War context in that Japan sought to liquidate past Cold War legacies by transforming diplomatic relations with Pyongyang. Furthermore, Chung emphasizes that a combination of factors including the inter-Korean summit in 2000, North Korea's positive approach to Japan and Koizumi's will in establishing diplomatic ties with North Korea gave an impetus for the normalization talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang. Chung argues that the development was made in the crossroad between

⁸ Jung-wha Shin, "Ilbon Waegyo eui Byunwha wa Daebuk Jeongchaek: Joonghaek Gukga rosueui Yonghyangryok Hwakdae (The Changes in Japan's Diplomacy and the Policy toward North Korea: Extension of Influence as the Core State)," *Ilbon Yeongu Nonchong*, vol.38 no.0 (2013): pp.277-299.

⁹ Young-chul Chung, "Bukil Gwangye eui Gwagoe wa Hyunjae: Myungbun gwa Shili eui Waegyo Jeonryak (The Past and Present of Japan-DPRK Relations: The Diplomatic Strategy for the Justifications and Interests)," *Bukhan Yeonguhak Hoebo*, vol.9, no.1 (2005): pp.157-380.

North Korea's diplomatic strategy of pursuing interests rather than the justification and Japan's diplomatic strategy seeking justification rather than interests.

Different from mainstream research on Japan-DPRK relations, Ki-wan Lee even denies the influence of both domestic and international factors on Japan's North Korean policy.¹⁰ By examining the policy changes of Japan toward North Korea during the first Abe administration, the government of Democratic Party of Japan and the second Abe administration, Lee asserts that there was no fundamental change in Japan's North Korean policy pursuing the resolution of nuclear, missile and abduction issue in a package deal even though there were subtle differences influenced by internal factors such as the policy orientation of each administration and domestic political dynamics as well as external factors including the level of security of the Korean peninsula and U.S. policy toward North Korea.

As previous research did not pay much attention to Japanese domestic factors but rather focused on the external environment of Japan, this paper will introduce several domestic variables within Japan which worked as facilitating factors for the developments of Japan-DPRK relations. With the comparison of Japan's external factors, it will be elaborated how Japan was able to make a breakthrough in the negotiations with North Korea through the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, the second summit in 2004 and the Stockholm meeting in 2014.

2. Research Methodology

In this paper, two levels of analysis on the factors will be made with the use of comparative methodology. First of all, each factor will be analyzed under the three

¹⁰ Ki-wan Lee, "Ilbon eui Jeongchi Byunwha wa Bukil Gwangye (The Political Change of Japan and Japan-North Korea Relations)," *Gukjae Gwangye Yeongu*, vol.18, no.2 (October 2013): pp.75-100.

timeframes. Needless to say, these three events including the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, the second Japan-DPRK summit in 2004 and the Stockholm meeting in 2014 can be considered as significant developments of Japan-DPRK relations as they were introduced earlier. As a consequence, the timeframes of the study will be set before and after the three events. In specific, the first timeframe will mainly cover from the start of Koizumi administration on the 26th of April 2001 to the first Japan-DPRK summit on the 17th of September 2002. The second timeframe will encompass the period between the first Japan-DPRK summit and the second Japan-DPRK summit in order to explain preconditions for Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang. The third timeframe mainly spans from the start of the second Abe administration on the 26th of December 2012 until the Stockholm meeting at the end of May 2014. As Japan-DPRK negotiations of the Japanese abductee issue is in progress, however, the time span will be extended to the recent visit of Japanese delegation to Pyongyang at the end of October 2014. As a result, Abe's cabinet which this paper refers to is the second Abe administration from on the 26th of December 2012 until now. Instead, the first Abe administration from September 2006 to July 2007 will be dealt in counterfactual analysis with the explanation why Prime Minister Abe could not achieve a tangible result in Japan-DPRK relations during his first term. By checking the correlation of each of Japan's domestic and international factors with the three timeframes, in short, the validity of each factor in explaining the improvement in Japan-DPRK relations will be examined. In other words, a factor can be considered as a necessary condition for the developments of Japan-DPRK negotiations when the factor is found in all three timeframes.

The other analysis is a comparison between internal and external factors of Japan. After the timeframe comparison is complete, whether the common factors

found in all three timeframes belong to Japan's domestic or external factors will be analyzed. In other words, if the valid factors were found more under the internal category of factors than that of external factors, the explanatory power of Japanese domestic factors can be assessed as more influential than its external factors. Throughout the paper, therefore, the next chapter will answer the blanks in table 1 and the third chapter will answer the blanks in table 2 in order to prove my hypothesis that the facilitating factors for the developments in Japan-DPRK negotiation lie in domestic factors of Japan commonly found in the Koizumi and second Abe administrations rather than in the external factors of Japan. Furthermore, I will elucidate that the Japanese domestic factors facilitated the Koizumi and Abe administrations to take a bold approach toward North Korea by reducing the influence of international context.

<Table 1: External factors of Japan on the Developments of Japan-DPRK Negotiations>

	Low level of security threat from North Korea	Deterioration of relations between Japan and its neighboring countries	Consensus with the United States on North Korean Policy
1 st Japan-DPRK Summit (2002)	X	X	X
2 nd Japan-DPRK Summit (2004)	O	X	△
Stockholm Meeting (2014)	X	O	●

<Table 2: Domestic factors within Japan on the Developments of Japan-DPRK Negotiations>

	Strong will of leaders on Japan-DPRK negotiations	Cabinet stability with right-wing tendency	Growing public disappointment in the administration	Closed Nature of Japan's North Korean Policymaking
1 st Japan-DPRK Summit (2002)	O	O	O	O
2 nd Japan-DPRK Summit (2004)	O	O	O	O
Stockholm Meeting (2014)	O	O	O	O

II. External Factors of Japan **on Japan-DPRK Negotiations**

1. Low Level of Security Threat from North Korea

It is often regarded that Japan would not have been able to start a dialogue with North Korea when the security threat from North Korea was high. Soon after North Korea conducted nuclear tests or missile launches, for instance, any country would be hesitant to be the first to reach its hands out to the troublesome state. There are a number of reasons for states taking a hawkish stance toward North Korea conducting military activities and provocations. First of all, the use of harsh criticisms or sanctions can bring a deterrent effect by teaching North Korea that its military provocation results in international humiliation as well as the loss of its national interests. Also, domestic public opinion as well as political power groups would not allow a government to approach North Korea instead of punishing the counterpart. In addition to domestic politics, neighboring countries and international communities planned to coordinate together in pressurizing North Korea to abandon their nuclear and missile program so it would be difficult to break international cooperation by taking a unilateral soft-line approach. Especially, for Japan, a representative of developed countries as well as democratic peace-loving countries, it would be difficult to tolerate North Korean nuclear and missile issues and to start negotiation with North Korea for the sake of its national interest. As North Korea's nuclear and missile capability could reach Japanese territory, above all, Japan has perceived North Korea as a national as well as regional security threat as explained in White Papers of

Japan.¹¹ In consideration of these reasons, it can be assumed that when the security threat from North Korea was reduced, it would be much easier for Japan to start negotiations with North Korea. However, this section will reveal that the low level of security threat from North Korea is not a precondition for the progress in Japan-DPRK negotiation results. Even when the threat level from North Korean nuclear and missile program were elevated, Japan made a decision to continue or even start negotiations with North Korea.

First of all, the first Japan-DPRK summit was held on the 17th of September 2002 when North Korean nuclear issues was at a high. Although the first North Korean nuclear crisis which had started from North Korea's announcement of its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the 12th of March 1993 culminated in the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, commonly known as Geneva Agreed Framework in October 1994, it turned out that the North Korean nuclear issue was not completely resolved. According to an unclassified CIA report to the United States Congress, it was revealed in June 2002 that North Korea began seeking large quantities of centrifuge-related materials in 2001 and acquired equipment suitable for uranium feed and withdrawal systems with a goal of building "a plant that could produce enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year when fully operational."¹² Based on the data collected, President George W. Bush of the United States sent his Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage to Tokyo to inform about North Korea's secret highly enriched uranium

¹¹ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Houei Hakusho (Defense of Japan 2002)*, 2002, (accessed September 05, 2014); available from http://www.clearing.mod.go.jp/hakusho_data/2002/honmon/index.htm

¹² The Director of Central Intelligence, *Unclassified Report to Congress, January-June 2002*, Central Intelligence Agency, 2002, pp.6, (accessed September 17, 2014); available from https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/archived-reports-1/jan_jun2002.html#5

(HEU) program in a meeting with Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro of Japan on the 27th of August 2002.¹³ In specific, Armitage threatened Koizumi that the target of North Korea's nuclear weapon carried out by Rodong missile would be aimed at Japan because it was highly unlikely for North Korea to drop nuclear weapons on China and South Korea who were in friendly relations with Pyongyang at that time as well as to the United States due to lack of North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) technology.¹⁴ At the meeting, Koizumi also revealed his plan to visit Pyongyang in mid-September and he did not cancel his plan despite the warnings from the United States. In other words, Koizumi had been already notified by the United States regarding North Korea's suspected uranium program before he visited Pyongyang. Koizumi arrived for the first Japan-DPRK summit on the 17th of September 2002 even though he knew in certainty that North Korea was violating the Agreed Framework of 1994 with the promise of North Korea on its abandonment of nuclear programs. Koizumi no doubt expected that North Korea's program to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons would endanger peace and stability of its national, regional, and even international security environment with its Rodong and Taepodong missile.

Although Koizumi succeeded in adding the fourth clause of Pyongyang Declaration of 2002 that both Pyongyang and Tokyo would comply with all international agreements for the comprehensive settlement of denuclearization on the Korean peninsula, his visit to Pyongyang was aimed at the diplomatic normalization

¹³ Gilbert Rozman, *Japan's Relations with the U.S. and Its North Korean Option*, Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 2002, (accessed October 02, 2014); available from <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2002/12/japans-relations-us-and-its-north-korean-option>

¹⁴ Hajime Ozu, *Kaku buso suru kitachosen : nihon o nerau kaku no jittai (Nuclear-armed North Korea: the Reality of Nuclear Weapons Targeting Japan)* (Tokyo: Shin Kigensha, 2003), pp.90-91.

with Pyongyang while North Korean nuclear issue arouse again. Finally, the clandestine North Korea's HEU program rose to the surface when North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju voluntarily admitted North Korea's possession of the HEU program to James A. Kelly, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of East Asian and Pacific Affairs during his visit to Pyongyang in early October 2002. In his press statement, the spokesman from the U.S. State Department Richard Boucher urged North Korea to abandon its new program for nuclear weapons in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,¹⁵ causing the second North Korean nuclear crisis to begin. As Koizumi visited Pyongyang right before the outbreak of the second North Korean nuclear crisis, in short, his awareness of North Korea's HEU weaponization program was not a significant impediment for Koizumi to hold the historical summit with Kim Jong-il.

In contrast with the first Japan-DPRK summit in September 2002, the rising tension from North Korean nuclear and missile issue decreased before the second Japan-DPRK summit on the 22nd of May 2004. As the second nuclear crisis continued into 2003 with a series of events including North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on the 11th of January, the reactivation of its nuclear power facilities including the five-megawatt nuclear reactor at Yongbyon on the 5th of February, two surface-to-vessel missile firings on the 24th of February and the 10th of March, and its declaration of the possession of nuclear weapons on the 23rd of April, the security threat from North Korea seemed to be heightened till the first half of 2003. In response to the escalating missile and nuclear threats posed by North Korea, however, the Six-Party Talks were devised in order to find the peaceful resolution of

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, *North Korean Nuclear Program*, Press Statement, October 16, 2002, (accessed September 15, 2014); available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/14432.htm>

the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. As a multilateral negotiation with six member states consisting of North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia hosted by China, the first round of the talks were held from the 27th to the 29th of August 2003. Different from the previous trials through bilateral U.S.-DPRK negotiations to denuclearize North Korea, the Six-Party Talks were the first multilateral negotiation to achieve a common objective from the six countries. Even though the first round and the second round of the Six-Party Talks from the 25th to the 28th of February 2004 did not yield a substantial result on North Korean denuclearization but an agreement for a next round at the end of June that same year, the Six-Party Talks were effective in that North Korea did not make any further military provocations using its missile and nuclear capabilities. In this relatively relaxed environment, Koizumi made his second visit to Pyongyang on the 22nd of May 2004.

In addition to Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang, on the contrary, the recent decision of current Prime Minister Abe of Japan to resume negotiations with North Korea was also made when the tension from North Korean missile and nuclear threats was high. To be specific, North Korea successfully launched satellite Kwangmyongsong-3 on the carrier rocket Unha-3 on the 12th of December 2012 and conducted its third nuclear test on the 12th of February 2013. As Abe has long been inclined to a hawkish policy toward North Korea, Abe actively responded with pressures on Pyongyang in various ways. In specific, Japan led the adoption of the United Nations Security Council on the Resolution 2087 on the 22nd of January 2013 and the Resolution 2094 on the 7th of March 2013 respectively. Especially, it was reported that the Japanese ambassador to the United Nations, Nishida Tsuneo, played a decisive role in inducing unanimous agreement on imposing tougher sanctions on

North Korea by criticizing the passive role of China and Russia.¹⁶ In addition to the international sanction mechanism, the Abe administration decided to take unilateral sanctions against North Korea's missile launch and nuclear test. The punitive measures included the extension of the period on the ban on port calls by North Korean vessels as well as the ban on all imports and exports to and from North Korea and the freeze of assets of specific organization and individuals.¹⁷ In this regard, the Abe administration has been active in pressurizing North Korea by joining international sanctions and imposing unilateral coercive measures toward Pyongyang. While Abe enforced sanctions on North Korea, however, it was revealed that he sought a dialogue with North Korea at the same time. Only three months after the third North Korean nuclear test, Abe sent his special Cabinet advisor Iijima Isao to Pyongyang on the 14th of May 2013, to establish his own line of communication with North Korea in order to resolve the Japanese abductee issue amidst increasing international pressure on Pyongyang. Followed by this secret visit of Iijima to Pyongyang, bilateral negotiation had started between Japan and North Korea. In addition, there were a great number of short, mid-range rocket launches from North Korea including the Rodong missile test on the 26th of March 2014 till September 2014 but the Stockholm Agreement and other recent progress had been made regardless of North Korea's continuous military provocations. Thus, it is proved that Abe did not hesitate to make a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations even when North Korea escalated the tension surrounding the Korean peninsula with its nuclear and missile program.

¹⁶ Lee (2013), op. cit., pp.90.

¹⁷ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Measures Taken by Japan against North Korea* (Announcement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary), April 5, 2013 (accessed September 28, 2014); available from http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/decisions/2013/0405tyoukanhappyou_e.html

Different from the expectation that the escalation of tension from North Korea's security threat would deter the improvement of bilateral negotiation between Japan and North Korea, in conclusion, the Stockholm meeting in 2014 as well as Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang on September 2002 proved that the low level of security threat from North Korea was not a necessary condition for Japan to start negotiations with Pyongyang even though the second Japan-DPRK summit was held in a peaceful environment without North Korea's military provocation.

2. Deterioration of Relations between Japan and its Neighboring Countries

It is often considered that the reason Prime Minister Abe Shinzo of Japan went in hand with the Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un of North Korea lied in the external environment at that time of Japan in Northeast Asia. In other words, it is assumed that Abe utilized his approach to Pyongyang as a breakthrough from diplomatic isolation of Japan in Northeast Asia since the deterioration of relations with Seoul as well as with Beijing. After the second Abe administration started from the 26th of December 2012, the bilateral relations of Japan with its two neighboring countries, China and South Korea, had been seriously worsened due to Abe's provocative remarks and moves regarding historical issues.

In particular, Japan and South Korea have been recently spiraled into the worst relations in decades due to historical animosity. Abe's remarks on his historical perception brought huge antipathy in South Korea while the rise of Japanese rightist movement including hate speeches toward Seoul also increased anti-Korean sentiments in Japan. In addition to public antipathy, high-level talks between Seoul and Tokyo were also deadlocked after Abe's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. Even though the

long freeze between Korea and Japan seemed instantly thawed after the trilateral summit meeting in the Hague on March 25, 2014 among President Geun-hye of South Korea, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo of Japan and President Barack Obama of United States, the first face-to-face discussion for the leaders of South Korea and Japan in 22 months, the resolution on historical issues seemed a long way to go as the issues were not even included as an agenda at the meeting.¹⁸ Moreover, the comfort women issue has become a stumbling block for both Abe and Park to hold a bilateral summit. Despite continuous proposals from Abe for a Japan-ROK summit, Park refuses to talk with Abe without sincere acknowledgement and an apology from Japan on its past wrongdoings.

The bilateral relations between China and Japan have also become strained as China shares historical animosity toward Japan with Korea. Although the first summit was held in Beijing on November 10, 2014 between President Xi Jinping of China and Prime Minister Abe Shinzo of Japan on the sidelines of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, the atmosphere of the bilateral summit was rather frigid due to a number of issues. As China considers the Yasukuni Shrine as a symbol of Japan's militaristic aggression during half of the twentieth century as South Korea does, for instance, Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine honoring Japan's 2.5 million war dead including 14 class-A war criminals on December 2013, the first time in more than seven years that a prime minister of Japan had visited there, infuriated both Beijing and Seoul.¹⁹ In addition to Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, there are

¹⁸ Sang-hun Choe, "South Korean and Japanese Leaders to Join Obama at Meeting," *New York Times*, March 21, 2014, (accessed October 16, 2014); available from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/world/asia/south-korea-and-japan-agree-to-summit.html?_r=0.

¹⁹ Anna Fifield, "Japan's Abe avoids Yasukuni Shrine in hopes of meeting with China's Xi Jinping," *The Washington Post*, August 15, 2014, (accessed October 16, 2014); available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japans-abe-stays-away-from-yasukuni-in-hopes-of-meeting-with->

many other history-related issues which aggravate Japanese relations with China and South Korea. As both China and South Korea have territorial disputes with Japan over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea and Dokdo/Takeshima in East Sea respectively, likewise, the tension between Japan-China as well as Japan-South Korea can be easily escalated with historical issues.

Furthermore, these two countries, China and South Korea, due to their strained relations with Japan improved their bilateral relations with each other. Although there are a great deal of crucial reasons for both China and South Korea to strengthen bilateral relations other than their shared historical perception against Japan, the improvement of the bilateral relations must not have been welcomed from the Japanese perspective. As Japan needs U.S.-Japan-ROK cooperation against the rise of China, Japan may regard South Korea's developing friendly relations with China bothersome. While the bilateral Japan-ROK summit could not be held between Abe and Park, for example, President Park Geun-hye of South Korea has met President Xi Jinping of China five times during her term starting from the 25th of February 2013. Since Beijing and Seoul have made one voice in criticizing Abe's remarks and moves regarding historical issues by sharing historical animosity toward Japan, Japan must feel uncomfortable with the development of cordial relations between China and South Korea. In response to the improvement of relations between Beijing and Seoul, while Tokyo drifted apart from the two neighboring countries, Japan's rapprochement with Pyongyang can be considered as a well calculated countermeasure devised by Abe.

After the third North Korean nuclear test in 2013, moreover, South Korea and China observed the recent Japanese approach toward North Korea with wariness.

chinaxi.com/2014/08/15/f55bdcc8-ba8c-4c94-9ba2-032124c84a9a_story.html

After North Korea conducted a nuclear test on the 12th of February 2013, the Xi Jinping administration of China joined more actively in pressurizing Pyongyang including its relatively strongly worded denunciation and its support to resolution 2094 of the United Nations Security Council in the form of tougher sanctions on North Korea compared to its response after the second North Korean nuclear test in 2009. As even North Korea's onetime blood brother as well as powerful patron joined in international sanction mechanism for North Korean denuclearization, the expectation of international community on the effectiveness of the sanctions was heightened. Thus, the Stockholm Agreement, including the Japanese promise to lift its unilateral sanction as well as to provide aid in return for North Korea's thorough investigation into Japanese nationals who were abducted by North Korean spy agencies, would be worrisome for both China and South Korea. Regarding the coverage of the agreement, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide of Japan emphasized that the agreement is not related to the international sanctions from the resolution of the United Nations Security Council so that Japanese move does not fall out of step with international community.²⁰ However, it is evident that a Japanese unilateral ease on several sanctions could undermine the effectiveness of international sanctions by providing economic incentives to North Korea. Due to the wariness of South Korea and China toward Japan-DPRK negotiations on the Japanese abductee issue especially regarding the provision of Japanese economic incentives with the lift of its unilateral sanctions, as a consequence, Seoul and Beijing may be able to consider that Japan put both neighbors into trouble by distracting their and

²⁰ Elaine Lies & Tetsushi Kajimoto, "North Korea agrees to reopen probe into Japan abductees," *Reuters*, May 29, 2014 (accessed October 20, 2014); available from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/29/us-japan-northkorea-idUSKBN0E90TG20140529>

international efforts on disarming North Korea of nuclear weapons. With the deterioration of China-Japan relations and ROK-Japan relations together with the dangerous possibility of Japan-DPRK Stockholm Agreement undermining the regional effort on pressurizing North Korea toward its denuclearization, as a result, it is not strange to consider that Japanese bold approach toward North Korea was devised as a breakthrough in the diplomatic isolation of Japan in the Northeast Asia under the careful calculation of Abe.

When compared with the regional environment of Japan before the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, on the contrary, it can be clearly understood that there is no correlation between the improvement of relations between Japan and North Korea and the deterioration of Japanese relations with its neighboring countries. Although Japanese relations with China and Korea were strained in the beginning of Koizumi's tenure due to several historical issues including his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, his approval of controversial history textbooks and the Japanese ban on South Korean saury fishing boats from operating in waters around the Southern Kuril islands, however, Koizumi's foreign policy toward neighboring countries changed after September 11, 2001. As regional cooperation against the war on terror was necessary especially with Seoul, the other key ally of the United States in Northeast Asia, political contact among the highest level was made during the Japan-ROK summit on the 15th of October 2001 between Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea. Although the bilateral summit held within the six-hours of Koizumi's visit to Seoul could not solve a great deal of key issues, however, it was a breakthrough in the downturn of bilateral political contact between these two countries. A few days after the Japan-ROK summit, Koizumi and Kim Dae-jung held a bilateral summit again on the sidelines of October's Asia-Pacific

Economic Cooperation (APEC). In the meeting, bilateral issues including history related issues such as history textbook revision as well as Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and saury fishing issue were dealt with and these two countries were able to achieve a certain degree of agreement on several issues.

In 2002, the year of Japan-ROK national exchange, bilateral relations started to improve significantly thanks to co-hosting the 2002 FIFA World. For instance, the Japanese government decided to waive all visa requirements for Korean citizens visiting Japan during the World Cup period for thirty days at the longest regardless of the purpose of their visit.²¹ In addition, Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan made his second visit to South Korea for the successful cohost of the World Cup from the 22nd to the 24th of March 2002 for three days, which was much longer than his first visit to Seoul. On the fourth bilateral summit between Koizumi and Kim Dae-jung on the 22nd of March 2002, these two leaders of two countries agreed upon several issues including the cross attendance of the leaders on opening and closing ceremony and the establishment of Korea-Japan FTA Joint Study Group.²² In addition to the conclusion of the Invest Agreement for the development of economic relations between Japan and South Korea, the summit even confirmed Japanese support on a North-South dialogue as well as President Kim's "Sunshine Policy," South Korea's engagement policy toward North Korea, and a positive view of Seoul in Japanese normalization talks with Pyongyang.²³ In other words, Koizumi and Kim shared a

²¹ Young-i Lee, "[2002 World Cup] "World Cup Gigan Il Bangmun Hangukin Samsipil gan Viza Myunjae ([2002 World Cup] "Visa Waiver for Koreans visiting Japan for 30 days during the World Cup Period")," *Dong A Ilbo*, March 11, 2002 (accessed October 13, 2014); available from www.donga.com

²² "Koizumi Chongri Ohu Ihan (Prime Minister Koizumi's Departure from Korea in the Afternoon)," *Yonhap News*, March 23, 2002 (accessed October 14, 2014); available from www.yonhapnews.co.kr

²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Opening Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President Kim Dae Jung of the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Conference*, March 22, 2002

common view that Japan and South Korea needed to approach North Korea for the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula rather than adopt an oppression or containment policy. Even though Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on the 21st of April 2002, the visit did not give a serious impact on Japan-ROK bilateral relationship until their co-hosting of the World Cup.

As President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea maintained friendly relations with Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro of Japan as well as Chairman Kim Jong-il of North Korea, furthermore, he played an active role in persuading the leaders of both countries to hold the first Japan-DPRK bilateral summit based on his scheme of Korean reunification. According to *Mainichi Shimbun* published on the 1st of September 2002, a bureaucrat of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan reported that Koizumi's decision to visit Pyongyang was made after Kim Dae-jung reiterated that Koizumi should talk to Kim Jong-il because Kim Jong-il is not a strange man as he was known for rather he knows much about the world and decided everything concerning North Korea during Koizumi's visit to Seoul in March 2002.²⁴ From an article by *Asahi Shimbun* published on the 31st of August 2002, moreover, it was reported that Kim Dae-jung conveyed his message to Kim Jong-il by dispatching a presidential special envoy Lim Dong-won from the 3rd to the 5th of April, 2002 to North Korea that Kim Jong-il should start Japan-DPRK normalization negotiations with a flexible attitude on the Japanese abductee issue as well as historical settlement.²⁵ As a consequence, the active support of President Kim Dae-jung

(accessed September 16, 2014); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/pmv0203/state.html>

²⁴ Tae-kyu Oh, "[Bukil Hoedam] Kim Daetongryung I Bukil Dari Nwatta ([Japan-DPRK Summit] President Kim provided a bridge between Japan and North Korea)," *The Hankyoreh*, September 1, 2002. (accessed September 16, 2014); available from www.hani.co.kr

²⁵ *Ibid.*

through consistent persuasion in Pyongyang as well as Tokyo culminated in the first Japan-DPRK summit of 2002. As the first Japan-DPRK summit between Koizumi and Kim Jong-il was held thanks to the efforts of Kim Dae-jung and the bilateral relations between South Korea and Japan significantly improved in 2002, no correlation has been found between the deterioration of Japanese relations with South Korea and the first Japan-DPRK summit.

Before the second Japan-DPRK summit was held on the 22nd of May 2004, in addition, Japan-ROK relations between Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and President Roh Moo-hyun were relatively good even though it was not as productive as those of 2002 between Koizumi and Kim Dae-jung. At the start of the Roh administration, in particular, the bilateral relations between Japan and South Korea was quite friendly. In order to attend the inaugural ceremony of President Roh Moo-hyun on the 24th of February 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi even stayed a night in Seoul prior to the bilateral summit the next day.²⁶ After the first summit between Koizumi and Roh Moo-hyun, President Roh visited Japan and had a second summit on the 7th of June 2003. During the summit, both leaders agreed to promote the early start of the negotiations for Japan-ROK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the realization of a visa exemption for Korean citizens entering Japan, operation of flights between Gimpo Airport and Haneda Airport, early conclusion of Japan-ROK Social Security Agreement and the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement, the broader opening of Japanese popular culture, and the vitalization of sports, youth, and tourism exchanges

²⁶ Jin-oh Kwak, "Han Il Jeongsang Hoedam gwa Hangye (Japan-ROK summit and its limitations)," *Korea Institute for National Unification*, Co 06-10, October 2006, pp.1 (accessed October 30, 2014); available from <http://www.kinu.or.kr/>

between the two countries.²⁷ In the friendly atmosphere between Seoul and Tokyo, however, Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on the 1st of January 2004 and it brought formal complaints from China as well as South Korea. After Koizumi's provocative remarks regarding his insistence on visiting the Yasukuni Shrine every year on the 28th of February as well as the Japanese claim on Dokdo/Takeshima on the 10th of January, Roh Moo-hyun eventually called upon restraint from the Japanese leader making disrespectful remarks and moves during his Independence Movement Day speech on the 1st of March, 2004.²⁸ Even though Roh Moo-hyun did not name Koizumi during the speech, the speech was in fact targeted at Koizumi so the Japan-ROK relations were not as smooth as they were previously in 2002. Yet, the bilateral summit between Koizumi and Roh Moo-hyun on July 2004 announced a new stage of "shuttle diplomacy" as well as ministerial level meetings continued even after the exchanges of criticism against each other. Even though Japan-ROK relations eventually deteriorated in 2005 and the suspension of "shuttle diplomacy," since Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang on May 2004 was made before the bilateral relations seriously worsened, his visit was not connected to the deterioration of relations between Seoul and Tokyo.

Other than relations with Seoul, Japan was not diplomatically isolated in Northeast Asia when the second Japan-DPRK summit was held on the 22nd of May 2004. The cooperative relationship between Japan and its neighboring countries concerning North Korea began during the rounds of the Six-Party Talks. As a member

²⁷ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Joint Press Conference at the Conclusion of the Japan-Republic of Korea Summit Meeting Summary*, June 07, 2003 (accessed September 17, 2014); available from http://japan.kantei.go.jp/koizumispeech/2003/06/07seimei_e.html

²⁸ Kyo-jun Ihn, "No Daetongryung 3.1jul Baluhn.. Hanil Gwangye Pajang 'Mimyo' (President Roh's speech on March 1st.. Impact on Japan-ROK relations 'delicate')," *Yonhap News*, (accessed October 22, 2014); available from <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/>

of Six-Party Talks, Japan was able to assert Japanese security concerns as well as its position on the provision of energy as well as economic assistance to Pyongyang during the talks. At the first round of the talks from the 27th to the 29th of August 2003, Japanese delegates clarified their position that Japan would provide its economic assistance only after the resolution of a package of North Korean issues which included nuclear and missile issues as well as the Japanese abductee issue and the diplomatic normalization of relations with North Korea.²⁹ After the first round of the talks, as a consequence, North Korea required Japanese exclusion from the upcoming rounds of the Six-Party Talks on the 7th of October 2003 because North Korea expected that Japan would make use of the North Korean nuclear issue for its national interest.³⁰ In response to Pyongyang's proposal, Roh Moo-hyun opposed the exclusion of Japan from the Six-Party Talks and even required steady participation of Japan.³¹ Furthermore, the spokesperson from the Chinese Foreign Ministry also supported Japanese inclusion in the Six-Party Talks by advocating the current format of multilateral negotiation.³² As Japan's active participation in the Six-Party Talks and the support of South Korea and China over Japanese inclusion in the talks were found before the second Japan-DPRK summit, Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang cannot be considered independent from regional coordination for the resolution of the North Korean issue.

²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Rokusha Kaigou (Six-Party Talks)*, (accessed September 07, 2014); available from http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/n_korea/6kaigo/6kaigo_gh.html

³⁰ "Mi Gwanri "Buk Yukja Hoedam Bulung shi Anbori Hoebu Dwelsudo" (U.S. official "North Korea could be brought to UN Security Council if it does not participate in Six-Party Talks")," *Yonhap News*, October 09, 2003 (accessed October 13, 2014); available from www.yonhapnews.co.kr

³¹ "Roh Daetongryong, Bali Bangmun Kutnego Onul Guiguk (President Roh, returning back after his visit to Bali)," *Edaily*, October 09, 2003 (accessed October 13, 2014); available from www.edaily.co.kr

³² "Jungguk 'Yukja Hoedam Tul Jisok Huimang' (China 'favoring the current framework of Six-Party Talks')," *YTN*, October 09, 2003 (accessed October 14, 2014); available from www.ytn.co.kr/

Summing up, it has been often considered that Japan sought improved relations with North Korea as a breakthrough in the deterioration of relations with China and South Korea. However, the Japanese diplomatic isolation in Northeast Asia was not found in 2002 and in 2004 as a precondition for the development of Japan-DPRK relations. In 2002, Japan-ROK relations improved due to the co-host of World Cup and the leaders were able to reach an agreement on the bilateral issues including historical issues through successive summits between Koizumi and Kim Dae-jung. Furthermore, it was revealed that before the first Japan-DPRK summit, Kim Dae-jung persuaded the leaders of Japan and North Korea to hold a summit. Although the relations between Tokyo and Seoul deteriorated in 2005, the Japan-ROK relations were not strained before the second Japan-DPRK summit and both South Korea and China even called for Japanese cooperation in the Six-Party Talks. Thus, the correlation of Japanese deterioration of relations with its neighboring countries and the development on Japan-DPRK relations cannot be found.

3. Consensus with the United States on North Korean Policy

Japanese foreign policy is often regarded as “reactive” to the international environment or outside pressure instead of Japan deciding foreign policy based on its own principles or strategic consideration.³³ As Japan had long pursued the Yoshida Doctrine since the Second World War with its passive reliance on the United States for its security related matters as well as low profile diplomacy by prioritizing economic development,³⁴ in addition, Japan still needs a security guarantee from the

³³ Tae-hoon Kang, “Ilbon Waegyo Jeongchaek eui Dokjaseong gwa Hangye (The Diplomatic Autonomy of Japanese diplomacy and Its Limitations),” *Ilbon Hakbo*, vol.68, no.0 (August 2006): pp.272.

³⁴ David Arase, “Japan, The Active State?: Security Policy after 9/11,” *Asian Survey*, vol. 47, no.4

United States despite its continual effort in Japanese remilitarization. As a result, it is considered that Japanese autonomy in its foreign policy has a limited range towards diplomacy which does not collide with interests of the United States.³⁵ However, it is not necessarily true that Japan has sought a dialogue with Pyongyang only when the relations between North Korea and the United States were good. Although Washington did not block Japan-DPRK normalization talks in 2002 and 2004 or bilateral negotiations on the Japanese abduction issue in 2014, it was apparent that the United States stood against Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization in 2002.

As the appeasement policy of former President Bill Clinton failed to resolve the first North Korean nuclear crisis with the 1994 Agreed Framework for North Korean denuclearization in exchange for the provision of economic as well as political incentives, George W. Bush was skeptical in taking an engagement approach towards Pyongyang during the start of his tenure. Bush's firm stance toward Pyongyang was further hardened after the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 by labelling North Korea, Iran and Iraq as the axis of evil and condemned them of supporting terrorists with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, in specific, Bush accused North Korea as "a regime with missiles and weapons of destruction, while starving its citizens" continuously arming itself in order to "threaten the peace of the world."³⁶ In addition, Bush emphasized the importance of deterring the ambitions of these rogue states because the indifference on those states will lead to the proliferation of WMDs as

(July/August, 2007): pp.562.

³⁵ Kang, op. cit., pp.280.

³⁶ Office of the Press Secretary, the White House, *President Delivers State of the Union Address*, January 29, 2002 (accessed October 19, 2014); available from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

well as terrorists' acquisition of such weapons. In other words, Bush considered the arms produced by axis of evil as a direct danger to the United States and its allies and declared the war on terror against the world's dangerous regimes so that they cannot threaten the security of the United States and its allies with WMDs. In contrast with his predecessor, Bush recognized North Korea as a target to eradicate not a diplomatic partner for negotiation.³⁷ Furthermore, Bush reiterated the importance of international cooperation with the allies and friends of the United States by strengthening alliances and establishing new partnerships against the threats from rogue states and their terrorist clients with WMDs. At the critical time when Bush called upon the policy as well as military coordination especially with its allies to fight against "axis of evil" with the possession of WMDs under the "for us, or against us" dichotomy, it was evident that Bush would not be fully supportive of Japan's idea, an important ally of the United States together with the United Kingdom, starting normalization talks with North Korea as long as North Korea does not change its attitude on the proliferation of WMDs.³⁸

While Bush expressed his hawkish stance against North Korea by demonizing Kim's regime, Koizumi secretly pushed forward with his plan to visit Pyongyang. Considering Bush's hostility toward North Korea, it was apparent that Bush would stop Koizumi if Koizumi had notified his plan on the first Japan-DPRK summit to Bush in advance. As a result, preliminary negotiations between Japan and North Korea before the first bilateral summit were carefully conducted in secret

³⁷ Hyung-min Joo, "'Democratic Inconsistency' in the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," *Korea Observer*, vol.41, no.2 (Summer 2010): pp.278.

³⁸ Haruki Wada, Carol Gluck & Sang-jun Kang, 『*Nichi-Bei kankei*』 *kara no jiritsu: ku jūichi kara Iraku Kita Chōsen kiki* (Towards the Autonomy in U.S.-Japan Relations: from September 11, through Iraq War, to North Korean Crisis) (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2003), pp.197.

without any prior consultation with Bush and even without the knowledge of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that the information of the summit would not leak out.³⁹ In specific, it was in May 2002 when Koizumi had already made up his mind to visit Pyongyang, through continuous secret negotiations in the working level and it was at the end of August when Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang was specified at the director general-level of negotiations in Pyongyang but it was the 27th of August when Koizumi notified his plan to Richard L. Armitage, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State.⁴⁰ In other words, it was Koizumi's intention that he did not seek any in-depth consultation with Washington in advance regarding his visit to Pyongyang. If Koizumi planned to seriously consult with Bush, he would have discussed it with Washington before he made up his mind to visit Pyongyang. It was a mere notification that Koizumi announced his plan to Bush complete with details including where and when he would meet had been already settled with Pyongyang.

Furthermore, the reason that President Bush sent Deputy Secretary of State Armitage to Tokyo at the end of August 2002 was to notify North Korea's clandestine development on highly enriched uranium (HEU).⁴¹ Bush's message to Koizumi through Armitage implied that Japan should be aligned with the United States against North Korea in possession of weapons of mass destruction under Bush's grand narrative of "axis of evil" and "for us, or against us" dichotomy. However, Prime Minister Koizumi even regarded the concern of Bush over North Korean nuclear

³⁹ Kang, op. cit., pp.276.

⁴⁰ Cheol-hee Park, "Bukil Gwangye Gaesun gwa Dong Asia Gukjae Gwangye ui Donghak (The Improvement of Japan-DPRK Relations and Dynamics of International Relations in East Asia)," *Waegyo Anbo Yeongu*, vol.4. no.0 (December 2002): Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security, pp.322.

⁴¹ Rozman, op. cit.

program as “overacting” and did not change his plan to visit Pyongyang.⁴² Although Bush officially announced his support on Koizumi’s visit to Pyongyang by reiterating his concerns over weapons of mass destruction, missiles and conventional weapons during Koizumi’s visit to New York on the 13th of September 2002,⁴³ the Japan-DPRK summit must have been bothersome for Bush. According to Bruce Cummings, a high-ranking governmental official of Bush administration admitted that Bush’s official support on the first Japan-DPRK summit was made in order to conceal a discordance between Japan and the United States.⁴⁴ Cummings also stated that the diplomatic success of Japan from the summit was rather problematic to Bush because he did not regard “axis of evil” as a partner for negotiation.⁴⁵ Even though Bush had to express his support on Koizumi’s visit to Pyongyang officially, in short, it was evident that Bush would oppose Japan to establish its diplomatic relations with one of “axis of evil” possessing nuclear weapons. Eventually, the first Japan-DPRK summit could not result in diplomatic normalization of relations due to the rise of anti-North Korean sentiment among Japanese public regarding the Japanese abductee issue as well as Bush’s opposition after the second North Korea nuclear crisis when North Korea admitted its possession of HEU program to James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, during his visit to Pyongyang in October

⁴² Kun-young Park & Woo-sik Cheong, “Kim Daejung-Bush Jeongbu Shigi Hanmi Gwangye (U.S.-ROK relations under Kim Dae-jung and Bush administration: focusing on North Korean policies),” *Yeoksa Bipyung*, vol.86, no.0 (2009): pp.158.

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japan-US Summit Meeting (Summary)*, September 13, 2002, (accessed September 20, 2014); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/pfmv0209/us-summit.html>

⁴⁴ Hong-suk Yoon, “Sangho Jooeui wa Koizumi Jeonggwon ei Daebukhan Jeongchaek (Reciprocity and North Korea policy of Koizumi administration),” *Saegye Jiyeok Yeongu Nonchong*, vol.25, no.3 (2007): pp.188.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

2002.⁴⁶ Considering the absence of prior consultation with Washington during the Japan-DPRK negotiation process before Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang, however, it is proved that Koizumi visited Pyongyang despite Bush's extremely hostile stance toward Pyongyang. In other words, policy consensus between Japan and the United States toward North Korea was not a precondition for Koizumi to visit Pyongyang.

Compared to 2002, 2004 was rather an easier environment for Koizumi to resume negotiations with Pyongyang without intervention from Washington. First of all, before the second Japan-DPRK summit on the 22nd of May 2004, Six-Party Talks were initiated in August 2003 in order to achieve a complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea nuclear program after North Korea's nuclear program had been revealed in October 2002. As North Korean nuclear issue was dealt through multilateral mechanism and the United States was a key member of the negotiation, Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang might be more acceptable for Bush than his first visit when Bush had divided the world as terrorist groups versus allies and friends of the United States after the terrorist attack in September 2001 and even North Korea was suspected of developing its HEU program. As Japanese public attention on Japanese citizens abducted by North Korean spy agencies in 1970s and 1980s was highly amounted after Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang, moreover, Bush was able to understand the importance of the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue to the Koizumi administration. For instance, the more accommodating attitude of Bush's administration in 2004 can be found when Vice President Richard B. Cheney of the United States confirmed the significance of advancing the Six-Party Talks together with the necessity of the settlement of the Japanese abductee issue

⁴⁶ Shin (2013), op. cit., pp.289.

during his visit to Tokyo on April 12, 2004.⁴⁷ A few weeks before the second Japan-DPRK summit, furthermore, the visit of Abe Shinzo, Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party, to the United States in the early of May assumed that Japan tried to seek understandings from Washington on Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang regarding the resolution of Japanese abductee issue under the humanitarian point of view.⁴⁸ Former Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party Yamasaki Taku also met high ranked governmental official of the United States and asked the understanding from Washington by reiterating Japanese stance that Japan would not proceed the normalization of diplomatic relations with Pyongyang as well as the provision of economic assistance to Pyongyang unless there is no progress in the Six-Party Talks.⁴⁹ Compared to the U.S.-Japan coordination on North Korean nuclear issue before the first Japan-DPRK summit of 2002, in short, the bilateral coordination between Washington and Tokyo before the second Japan-DPRK summit of 2004 was more improved. Bush was able to relieve its worries over Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang regarding North Korean nuclear issue because the Six-Party Talks were also in progress to denuclearize North Korea.

In case of the second Abe administration assuming office on the 26th of December 2012, it was also easier for Japan to seek understanding from the United States regarding the resumption of Japan-DPRK negotiation on Japanese abductee issue compared to 2002. While Bush under the "axis of evil" scheme must have been

⁴⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Overview of the Meeting between Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Vice President Richard B. Cheney of the United States of America*, April 12, 2004, (accessed September 10, 2014); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/meet0404.html>

⁴⁸ Cheol-hee Park, "Ilbonin Nabchi Munjae wa Bukil Gwangye Jeonmang (Japanese abductee issue and the prospect on Japan-DPRK relations)," *The Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security*, May 30, 2005, pp.8 (accessed September 18, 2014); available from <http://www.ifans.go.kr>

⁴⁹ Katsuei Hirasawa, *Rachi mondai: tai Kita Chōsen gaikō no arikata o tou (Abduction issue: questioning Japanese policy toward North Korea)* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūjo, 2004), pp.108.

irritated by the attempt of Japan, the closest ally of the United States, to establish diplomatic ties with North Korea, one of the most dangerous rogue state with weapons of mass destruction, Abe's partner is Barack Obama who has less hostile stance against Pyongyang compared to his predecessor. Even though Obama administration's policy toward North Korea has been changed into more hard line compared to his pursuit of direct talks with North Korean regime which he had promised in his inaugural address, Obama's "strategic patience," a policy that the United States would wait for Pyongyang to make its first move toward denuclearization,⁵⁰ can be aligned with Japan-DPRK negotiations for the settlement of the Japanese abduction issue.

Furthermore, Obama had a great deal of imminent issues other than North Korean nuclear issues with the outbreak of civil wars throughout the Arab League started from Arab Spring Syrian Civil War and 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine. As Abe administration has pursued the right of collective self-defense which would be able to relieve the security burden of the United States in East Asia, Obama would approve Japanese engagement approach toward North Korea in a certain extent unless the approach impedes international coordination on pressurizing North Korea to abandon its nuclear program.⁵¹ Since China even joined in imposing sanctions on North Korea after the third North Korean nuclear test on the 12th of February 2013, the United States may be afraid of Japan relaxing of its unilateral sanctions on Pyongyang which potentially results in the collapse of international sanction mechanism against North Korea. However, Obama would recognize that Abe's aim

⁵⁰ Scott A. Snyder, "U.S. Policy Toward North Korea," *SERI Quarterly*, vol.6, no.1, January 2013 (accessed September 18, 2014); available from <http://www.cfr.org/north-korea/us-policy-toward-north-korea/p29962>

⁵¹ Korea Institute for National Unification (2014), op. cit., pp.15.

for the recent Japan-DPRK negotiation is mainly focused on the settlement of the Japanese abductee issue rather than normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea. Due to Abe's the other goal for Japanese remilitarization as well as Japanese public opinion on Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization, Abe would not be able to establish ties with Pyongyang in a near future. Also, Obama would be aware of the limits on the recent Japan-DPRK negotiations as more details on the prospects of Japan-DPRK negotiations will be introduced at the end of the paper. Summing up, these backgrounds assume that Obama is more open to Japan resuming the bilateral negotiations with North Korea compared to his predecessor.

Despite Obama's embracing attitude on Abe's approach toward Pyongyang, however, Abe did not ask a prior in-depth consultation with Washington regarding its resumption of negotiations with North Korea. On the 14th of May 2013, for example, a Special Cabinet Advisor Iijima Isao visited North Korea to call upon the immediate return of all Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea, full investigation on the Japanese abductee issue, and the handing over of criminals related to the issue in the meeting with Kim Yong-nam, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea.⁵² Regarding the surprising visit of Iijima to Pyongyang, U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Glyn Davis commented that he was notified nothing from Japanese counterpart that such a visit was planned in somewhat disappointed tone.⁵³ During the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral chief nuclear envoy meeting on the 7th of April 2014, moreover, South Korean representative

⁵² "INSIGHT: Iijima called on North Korea to return Japanese abductees immediately," *The Asahi Shimbun*, May 19, 2013 (accessed November 02, 2014); available from http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201305190028

⁵³ Berkshire J. Miller, "Abe's North Korean Riddle," *The Diplomat*, June 02, 2013 (accessed October 30, 2014); available from <http://thediplomat.com/2013/06/abes-north-korean-riddle/>

Hwang Joon-kook and U.S. representative Glyn Davies called for transparency in Japan's negotiation with North Korea after Japanese representative Ihara Junichi admitted that there was a secret meeting between Japan and North Korea in Beijing in March 2014.⁵⁴ Also, after the Stockholm Agreement was made between North Korea and Japan, the spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State mentioned that Washington received prior notice on the meeting rather than prior consultation.⁵⁵ In addition, Caroline Kennedy, U.S. ambassador to Japan, reaffirmed the support from the United States on the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue while emphasizing the priority of United States on North Korea lies in its abandonment of nuclear program among other issues.⁵⁶ All evidences above suggest that Abe has not pursued detailed consultation with Washington regarding Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations even though the wariness of Washington have been constantly found.

As it is seen above, consensus between Japan and the United States on North Korean policy was not a precondition for Japan to take a bold approach toward North Korea. In particular, the first Japan-DPRK summit was directly collided with the Bush's "axis of evil" narrative. Nevertheless, Koizumi was able to hold the first Japan-DPRK summit due to his late notification to Bush regarding his plan to visit Pyongyang. Compared to 2002, the second Japan-DPRK summit and the recent breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations were made in more accommodating stance of

⁵⁴ "S. Korea, US Urge Japan for Transparency in Talks with N. Korea," *KBS World*, April 09, 2014 (accessed November 01, 2014); available from http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_in_detail.htm?No=101810

⁵⁵ Korea Institute for National Unification (2014), op. cit., pp.15.

⁵⁶ "Kennedy Chu Nichibei Taishi: Rachi Kaiketsu e Nippon wo Shiji Tai Kitachosen 「Kakuga Sai Yuusen」 (U.S. ambassador Kennedy to Japan: U.S. support for Japan on the resolution of the abduction issue but U.S. North Korean policy puts 「Nuclear issue as top priority」)," *Mainichi Shimbun*, May 31, 2014 (accessed October 30, 2014); available from <http://mainichi.jp/>

Bush with the start of the Six-Party Talks as well as his recognition on the necessity of the resolution of Japanese abductee issue to Koizumi administration in 2004 and the relatively open posture of Obama under the strategic patience but still there was no sincere attitude of Japan seeking thorough consultation with the United States in prior to its decision to make developments in Japan-DPRK relations.

III. Internal Factors of Japan on Japan-DPRK Negotiations

1. Strong Will from Leaders on Japan-DPRK Negotiations

With consideration of the timeframes, there are two Japanese prime ministers who have achieved a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations. One is Koizumi Junichiro, former Prime Minister of Japan who visited Pyongyang twice in 2002 and in 2004, had a meeting with Chairman of the DPRK National Defense Commission, Kim Jong-Il and brought five abductees in 2002 and five children of the abductees in 2004. The other is Abe Shinzo, the current Prime Minister of Japan who took a bold initiative to proceed Japan-DPRK negotiations on Japanese abductee issue by reversing North Korea's existing stance that the Japanese abduction issue had been already settled and led the resumption of North Korea's investigation into Japanese nationals. In comparison with these two prime ministers, it can be found that both of them share a strong will to take an adventurous approach toward Pyongyang even though their aim on Japan-DPRK negotiations, as well as their perception, on North Korea are quite different.

Koizumi Junichiro was elected as prime minister of Japan by a sweeping majority of votes in the leadership election of Liberal Democratic Party on the 24th of April 2001. Similar to other former prime ministers elected after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Koizumi was also assigned to liquidate the Cold War legacies including the settlement of the Northern Territories disputes with Russia and the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea. Among the legacies, predecessors of Koizumi had concentrated on the retrocession of the four Northern Islands including Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu from Russia. In specific, 82nd and 83rd

Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro of Japan made an accord with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Krasnoyarsk called the Yashimoto-Yeltsin plan that the two leaders agreed to put their utmost effort to resolve the territorial disputes and conclude the peace treaty by the end of 2000.⁵⁷ In addition, Hashimoto's successor, Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo visited Moscow in November 1998 and agreed on the Moscow Declaration with Yeltsin reiterating the importance of the early settlement on the island disputes. Furthermore, Koizumi's predecessor, Mori Yoshiro issued the Irkutsk Statement with President Vladimir Putin of Russia in March 2001 reaffirming the significance of resolution of the disputes over the Northern Territories.⁵⁸ As Japan and Russia could not close the standpoint regarding the issue because Russia only agreed to return Shikotan and Habomai while Japan sought the return of the four disputed islands and continued to fail in concluding a peace treaty, in contrast with the former prime ministers, Prime Minister Koizumi in anti-Hashimoto faction did not put much effort on the Northern Territories issue after he emphasized his firm position that the conclusion of peace treaty with Russia would be only possible on the settlement of territorial disputes over all four islands in the very beginning of his term in April 2001.⁵⁹ As a result, Koizumi prioritized the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea, the only country where Japan had not established formal diplomatic ties in Northeast Asia.

Moreover, the escalation of a North Korean security threat fueled Koizumi's

⁵⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Press Conference by the Press Secretary April 17, 1998*, April 17, 1998 (accessed September 09, 2014); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1998/4/417.html#8>

⁵⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Northern Territories Issue*, March 1, 2011 (accessed September 09, 2014); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/territory/overview.html>

⁵⁹ Hisane Masaki, "Putin's Diplomatic Victory in Tokyo: Regional Perspective on Russia-Japan Relations," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, November 22, 2005 (accessed September 10, 2014); available from <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Hisane-MASAKI/2081>

determination for the improvement of Japan-DPRK relations. In the 1990s, North Korea continuously posed a grave threat to Japanese national and regional security with the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993 and its launches of Rodong and Scud missiles from 1993 and Taepodong-1 missile in 1998. As North Korea's Taepodong-1 missile was fired over Northern Japan on the 31st of August 1998, in particular, the threat perception in Japanese from North Korea rose significantly. Despite the missile and nuclear threats from North Korea, however, Japan had to rely on the United States for the resolution of the first North Korean nuclear crisis with the Agreed Framework in 1994 signed between Washington and Pyongyang which set aside Japan from the issues related to North Korea. Other than North Korea's nuclear and missile program, there were several North Korean issues which threatened the national security of Japan including the issues of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korean agencies as well as the intrusion of a suspected North Korea spy ships in 1999 and 2001. In response, Koizumi aimed to eradicate the security threats from North Korea in an active manner by clearing hostile relations with North Korea from early in his term. Summing up, the deadlock of the predecessors' effort for the resolution of Northern Territories issue with Russia as well as Koizumi's need to cope with security threats from North Korea resulted in his determination in normalizing diplomatic relations with Pyongyang.

On the other hand, current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo seeks to settle the issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese nationals as his first priority in Japan-DPRK relations rather than the normalization of relations with North Korea which is a long-term as well as comprehensive goal which former Prime Minister Koizumi longed for. Although Abe's goal for Japan-DPRK relations is more narrowed than that of Koizumi who started to deal with the Japanese abductee issue under the framework

of normalization talks, Abe understands like Koizumi that he needs to start negotiations with Pyongyang in order to achieve his aim. The attachment of Abe Shinzo to the Japanese abductee issue started from the fall of 1988 when the parents of Arimoto Geiko who had been abducted by North Korean agents visited the office of Abe's father Abe Shintaro to ask for help after they could not get any from the police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and even the Japan Socialist Party.⁶⁰ After Abe was elected as a member of the House of Representative in 1993 following his father's death, he was determined to resolve the abduction issue so he put effort into the establishment of a Parliamentary League for Early Repatriation of Japanese Citizens Kidnapped by North Korea called Rachi Giren with other Dietmen.⁶¹ Abe's obsession of the Japanese abductee issue was found during his visit to Pyongyang at the first Japan-DPRK summit accompanying Koizumi as a deputy chief cabinet secretary as well as a chief negotiator of the Japanese government on behalf of the families of the Japanese nationals abducted and taken to North Korea. After Kim Jong-il's announcement on the death of eight Japanese abductees on the 17th of September 2002, Abe strenuously insisted that Koizumi should reconsider signing the joint statement with North Korea without Kim Jong-il's acknowledgement on the state-level of engagement in abducting Japanese nationals and his apology.⁶² Abe's assertion eventually led to the apology of Kim Jong-il regarding his direct ordering in abducting Japanese nationals and Abe became a national hero due to his leading role in securing a confession from Kim Jong-il.⁶³ In other words, Abe's political asset

⁶⁰ Shinzo Abe, *Utsukushii Kuni e (Toward a Beautiful Country)* (Tokyo: Bunshun Shinsho, 2006), pp.44.

⁶¹ Abe, op. cit., pp.45.

⁶² Abe, op. cit., pp.50.

⁶³ Sin-cheol Lee, "Ilbon eui Woogyeongwha Noseon Gangwha wa Hanil Yeoksa Nonjaeng - Abe Jeongkwon eul Joongsim euiro - (A Study on Reinforcement of Right Line of Japan and the Argument

from early in his political career was built from his hawkish stance regarding the issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese nationals.

Since Japanese delegates returned from Pyongyang after the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, moreover, the fury of domestic media as well as the general public over North Korea's abduction of Japanese nationals erupted and the heightened antipathy toward North Korea consolidated Abe's hardline position against Pyongyang. When five surviving Japanese citizens who had been kidnapped by North Korean spies were temporarily returned to Japan on the 15th of October 2002 they were originally scheduled to transfer back to Pyongyang after two weeks, however, Japan refused to return the survivors to North Korea. Although North Korea responded to Japan's decision as a violation of the agreement between two countries, Japanese survivors were not returned to Pyongyang due to the predominance of the 'principle-firsters' including Abe asserting that the return of Japanese survivors are the matter of Japanese Cabinet's decision under the principle of the original sin over the negotiation-firsters such as Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda Yasuo and Director General Tanaka Hitoshi of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁴ During these process together with North Korea's acknowledgement on its nuclear possession on mid-October of 2002, anti-North Korean sentiment reached a peak and Abe became a popular symbol of hardliners on North Korea by developing his hawkish stance toward Pyongyang.

Furthermore, the different foci of Abe and Koizumi in dealing with North

about History between Korea and Japan -Focused on Abe Cabinet-," *Hanguk Geundaesa Yeongu*, Spring, vol.40, no.0 (March 2007): pp.225-226.

⁶⁴ Haruki Wada, "Recovering a Lost Opportunity: Japan-North Korea Negotiations in the Wake of the Iraqi War," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, May 2003 (accessed October 29, 2014); available from <http://japanfocus.org/-Wada-Haruki/2144>

Korea were clearly found during and after the second Japan-DPRK summit on the 22nd of May 2004. Although Prime Minister Koizumi put the priority on the resolution of Japanese abductee issue after the first Japan-DPRK summit and succeeded in returning back with five children of the abductee victims after the second summit, Koizumi spent most of the conference time on North Korean nuclear issue reflecting the grave concerns of the international community especially from the United States.⁶⁵ After the second visit of Koizumi to Pyongyang, in addition, there was a disagreement between Koizumi and Abe regarding the precondition for the resumption of normalization talks. In specific, Secretary-General of Liberal Democratic Party Abe expressed his opinion on the 24th of May 2004 that the result of North Korea's thorough investigation on the ten missing Japanese abductees should be released in prior to the resumption of normalization talks while Koizumi clarified that the North Korea's investigation on the missing people must be proceeded under the framework of establishment of diplomatic relations with North Korea.⁶⁶ It implies that Koizumi prioritized the normalization of diplomatic relations with Pyongyang over the resolution of abductee issue showing aimed to finish the normalization talks within his tenure whereas Abe steadily expressed his commitment on the resolution of Japanese abductee issue.

Although Abe became Prime Minister of Japan on September 2006 based on his political assets on his hawkish stance toward North Korea especially regarding the Japanese abductee issue, one year of his first term was not enough to resume talks with Pyongyang as North Korea conducted the first nuclear test on the 9th of October 2006 following its launch of Taepodong-2 missile on the 5th of July 2006. During the

⁶⁵ Park (2005), op. cit., pp.10.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp.14.

2012 general election campaign, instead, Abe promised the complete settlement of the Japanese abductee issue with North Korea.⁶⁷ As a result, public disappointment on the administrations ruled by Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) with their lukewarm policy toward North Korea brought landslide victory to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Abe became the Prime Minister of Japan again since the 26th of December 2012.⁶⁸ Abe's long devotion for the settlement of the Japanese abductee issue constructed his current dialogue approach toward North Korea even though he gained public support through his hawkish stance on North Korea. In other words, the recent resumption of negotiation with North Korea has been planned by Abe's strong will to resolve the Japanese abductee issue. During Abe's visit to Oita Prefecture on the 18th of May 2013, he reiterated his determination on resolving the abduction issue under his administration with the use of a combination of pressure and dialogue.⁶⁹

In conclusion, both current Prime Minister Abe and former Prime Minister Koizumi have and had a strong will and motives to start negotiation with Pyongyang. Although their focus are different in that the eventual objective of Koizumi on the bilateral negotiation was normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea whereas Abe is rather aimed for the complete resolution of Japanese abductee issue, both of them have and had strong will to achieve their goal within their tenure.

2. Stable Cabinet with Right-wing Tendency

In addition to the strong determination of the two Prime Ministers in negotiations with North Korea, two characteristics of the Koizumi and Abe Cabinets

⁶⁷ Il-whan Oh, "Ilbon eui Dae Hanbando Ejung Waegyo Dashi Sarananunga? (Is Japan's dual diplomacy toward the Korean peninsula reviving?)," *Tongil Hanguk*, vol.7, no.367 (July 2014): pp.29.

⁶⁸ Lee (2013), op. cit., pp.76.

⁶⁹ "INSIGHT: Iijima called on North Korea to return Japanese abductees immediately," op. cit.

including their right-wing tendency as well as the high level of cabinet stability worked as facilitating factors for intense Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiation. In order to achieve significant progress with North Korea on the diplomatic normalization as well as the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue, first of all, the ideological identity of the Japanese government should err on the conservative side when considering public opinion within Japan. It is because of the close connection to left-wing parties such as the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) with North Korea during the Cold War. In specific, the Japan Socialist Party, the largest opposition party in the 1955 system, only recognized North Korean Kim Il-sung regime as the legitimate government of the Korean peninsula and maintained cordial relations with Pyongyang. The ideological deviationism of the Japan Socialist Party toward the left even continued in the 1990s by refusing the 1965 normalization of relations between Japan and South Korea. As Japanese women who accompanied their ethnic Korean husbands to North Korea were found to be under severe hardships in North Korea in that most were not able to contact their relatives in Japan or to visit Japan freely under the strict control of Kim's regime and even some were in political prisoner camps, for these reasons Japanese public opinion of North Korea deteriorated from the 1970s. Japanese perception of North Korea became further aggravated as North Korea detained the crew of a Japanese vessel, the Fujisan Maru No.18 in 1983 and bombed Korean Air Flight 858 in 1987. In spite of these continuous North Korea's criminal acts, however, the Japan Socialist Party did not criticize North Korea regarding the Fujisan Maru No.18 incident and even denied North Korea's involvement in the bombing of a South Korean airliner.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Toshimitsu Shigemura, *Kita Chōsen no gaikō senryaku (Foreign Policy Strategy of North Korea)* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000), pp.93, 96.

Due to the sheltering by the Japan Socialist Party of North Korea, when Japanese politicians including the head of the Japan Socialist Party were found to receive more than one million dollars of political donations from Japan's pinball industry in 1989, a connection between the money and the North Korean government was suspected. Since the pachinko industry was owned by Korean residents in Japan, even American mass media reported that the money from the Japanese pinball industry had been used to develop North Korea's nuclear program despite the denial of the involvement from Chongryon, the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, in the pachinko scandal.⁷¹ As a consequence, the Japanese public started to perceive a connection between the Japan Socialist Party and the North Korean regime negatively. As the Japan Socialist Party continued to deny the existence of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea even after it became apparent that a North Korean agency had kidnapped Japanese nationals, the former supporters realized the socialists "were out of touch" and started withdrawing their support resulting in fewer than ten seats in Diet by the early 2000s.⁷² With the Japanese left-wing party's extreme siding with North Korea, therefore, it is evident that if the leftist government of Japan tried to start bilateral negotiations with the North Korean regime, it would have brought huge suspicion as well as criticism from the Japanese public with the fear of going against Japanese national interests. In short, the Japanese public would entrust only a right-wing government from Japan regarding North Korean issues. In this regard, the Koizumi and Abe administrations of the Liberal Democratic Party leaned towards a conservative tendency could be free from public suspicion of a Japanese dialogue

⁷¹ Ibid., pp.103.

⁷² Richard J. Samuels, "Securing Japan: The Current Discourse," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.33, no.1 (2007): pp.136.

toward Pyongyang.

In terms of cabinet stability, Koizumi was the fifth longest serving prime minister in the history of Japan for more than five years from April 2001 to September 2006. At the beginning of his term, Koizumi enjoyed high approval ratings in the seventies and even eighties with the highest around 85 percent of support rate in June 2001 according to a survey conducted by NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute.⁷³ In addition, Koizumi's high popularity led to a landslide victory of Liberal Democratic Party in the upper-house election in July 2001 and the victory brought the Koizumi administration to political stability.⁷⁴ After the election, Koizumi's approval rating was shortly in danger in the summer of 2002 but except for a quarter, Koizumi maintained a support rate in the fifties till the end of his term according to the opinion polls conducted by NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute.⁷⁵ As the Koizumi administration had a high level of cabinet stability during his term, Koizumi had enough time and power to realize his diplomatic goals. In other words, it can be implied that the cabinet stability with high support rate allowed Koizumi to pursue an adventurous move toward Pyongyang.

The second Abe administration shares similarities with the Koizumi administration in cabinet stability as well as a high support rate. According to Yomiuri Shimbun, approval ratings of the second Abe administration for 6 months after his

⁷³ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, *Seiji Ishiki Getsurei Chousa (2001nen) (Opinion Survey on Political Consciousness (the year of 2001))*, 2001, (accessed October 16, 2014); available from <http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/yoron/political/2001.html>

⁷⁴ Cheol-hee Park, *Koizumi Jeonggwon ui Daewae Gyuljung Nonri wa Hanguk ui Waegyo Daeung Jeonrayk (Koizumi administration's reasoning on making foreign policy and its strategy)* (Seoul: Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security, 2003), pp.33.

⁷⁵ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, *Seiji Ishiki Getsurei Chousa (2004nen) (Opinion Survey on Political Consciousness (the year of 2004))*, 2004, (accessed October 16, 2014); available from <http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/yoron/political/2004.html>

assumption to power was over 65 percent and even peaked 74 percent in April 2013.⁷⁶ The support rate of the second Abe administration is relatively high when compared to that of his predecessors after Koizumi. In terms of cabinet stability, the second Abe administration also stood out of the former prime ministers after Koizumi. After Koizumi left office on the 26th of September 2006, there were six prime ministers who barely served a year. On the contrary, the second Abe administration starting from the 26th of December 2012 served more than two years as of now which is the longest after Koizumi. Also, the impressive triumph of the coalition of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Komeito in July 2013 House of Council election with 135 out of 242 seats followed by the December 2012 victory in the House of Representatives election with 294 out of 480 seats expected the stability of Abe Cabinet because Abe does not need to run for an election until the summer of 2016.⁷⁷ As Abe intentionally called for the general election on the 14th of December 2014, two years ahead of schedule in order to boost public support on his controversial policies, surprisingly, of which LDP's victory in the election consolidated his power. As a consequence, Abe is expected to be one of the six prime ministers who served for four or more years after the Second World War.⁷⁸ In this regard, the assurance on cabinet stability and a high level of public support gave him enough time and power to pursue his goal in Japan-DPRK negotiations without suspending the negotiations due to a change of administration which will be more explained in the counterfactual

⁷⁶ “Naikaku Shijiritsu, Geraku 53% (10gatsu 24~25nichi Chousa) (Approval rating of the cabinet dropped by 53% (survey on October 24~25)),” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 27, 2014 (accessed October 30, 2014); available from <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/election/poll/>

⁷⁷ Mike Mochizuki & Samuel Porter, “Japan under Abe: toward Moderation or Nationalism?” *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.36, no.4 (Fall, 2013): pp.25.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.26.

analysis.

Summing up, the common characteristics of the Koizumi and the second Abe administration including a high level of cabinet stability as well as a right-wing tendency enabled both prime ministers to take independent diplomatic initiatives such as the resumption of bilateral negotiations with North Korea. As leftist political parties such as the Japan Socialist Party had extremely sided with North Korea without criticizing North Korea's misdeeds, ideological orientation of Koizumi and Abe in conservative camp did not incur public suspicion. Furthermore, both Koizumi and Abe's second administration maintained a high level of cabinet stability with a relatively high approval ratings compared to other prime ministers after Koizumi and before Abe's second term. With a relatively long tenure of both Koizumi and Abe administration, both prime ministers could make a tangible result from continuing Japan-DPRK negotiations.

3. Growing Public Disappointment in the Administrations

Although both Koizumi and the second Abe administration maintained a relatively high approval rating throughout their tenure compared to other prime ministers between them, Koizumi and Abe needed to cope with the increasing public disappointment in their cabinets. In specific, high popularity ratings shown when both prime ministers had begun the cabinet were decreasing due to their failure in the economic reforms as well as other political scandals. In order to reverse the downturn trend, both Koizumi and Abe chose North Korea as a solution. At the start of the Koizumi administration, Koizumi was rated 85 percent on June 2001, which was unprecedented of former prime ministers of Japan according to the statistics published

by NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute.⁷⁹ Different from the expectations of the Japanese people in Prime Minister Koizumi who was believed to revitalize Japanese economic growth which had been stagnated for twenty years, however, Koizumi's effort in economic regeneration was not able to bring a significant momentum and his tough economic reform package was not popular. Consequently, the approval rating of the Koizumi administration dropped by 39 percent on June 2002 according to the statistics published by NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute.⁸⁰

In order to recover domestic support, Prime Minister Koizumi decided to visit Pyongyang and hold a bilateral summit with Chairman Kim Jong-il in addition to his calculation on taking a lead to make changes in the Northeast Asian geopolitical environment.⁸¹ Even though Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang could have been a political gamble amidst the escalation of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, he was able to push his plan due to the public support in diplomatic normalization with North Korea. According to the poll conducted by Mainichi Shimbun on the 1st of September 2002, 58 percent answered in support of the resumption of normalization talks with North Korea and 59 percent answered in favor of the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea.⁸² In other words, Koizumi had an expectation that his visit to Pyongyang would bring public support in him. More than half a year of secret negotiations between Japan and North Korea from the end of 2001, above all,

⁷⁹ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (2001), op. cit.

⁸⁰ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, *Seiji Ishiki Getsurei Chousa (2002nen) (Opinion Survey on Political Consciousness (the year of 2002))*, 2002, (accessed October 16, 2014); available from <http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/yonon/political/2002.html>

⁸¹ Jung-wa Shin, "Bukhan eui Gukga Jeonryak gwa Bukil Gwangye (North Korea's national strategy and North Korea-Japan relations)," *Bukhan Yeonguhak Hoebo*, vol.12, no.2 (2008): pp.168.

⁸² Shin (2013), op. cit., pp.289.

North Korea promised to admit the existence of North Korea's abduction of Japanese nationals and its dispatch of spy ships to Japan in order to hold the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002.⁸³ Since the Japanese abductee issue received public attention again in the spring of 2001, Koizumi might have planned his visit to Pyongyang which guarantees North Korea's acknowledgement of its involvement in the Japanese abductee issue and spy ships because the Japanese public would credit his effort in inducing North Korea's acknowledgement.

After the first Japan-DPRK summit on the 17th of September 2002, in fact, there was a significant increase in the popularity rating of the Koizumi administration from 45 percent in August, 55 percent in September and to 64 percent in October 2002.⁸⁴ The increase was highly related to the positive evaluation of the Japanese public of Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang. According to an opinion survey conducted by Yomiuri Shimbun, 81.2 percent evaluated the first Japan-DPRK summit as positive while 13.6 percent responded negative with 5.2 percent of unanswered.⁸⁵ Regarding the necessity of Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization, furthermore, 20.5 percent answered that Japan should establish diplomatic relations with North Korea as soon as possible and 68.4 percent answered that Japan needs the normalization of relations with North Korea but should not be in hurry whereas 5.5 percent answered that Japan does not need to normalize diplomatic ties with North Korea with 17.2 percent of undecided and 5.7 percent of unanswered.⁸⁶ Moreover, the opinion survey conducted

⁸³ Haruki Wada & Soji Takasaki, *Kenshou Niccho Kankei Rokuju nensi (Examining the sixty-years of Japan-DPRK relations)* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2005), pp.222.

⁸⁴ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (2002), op. cit.

⁸⁵ Haruki Wada & Soji Takasaki, *Bukhan ul Eirunda (Reading North Korea)* (Seoul: Nokdu Publishing co., 2003), pp.290.

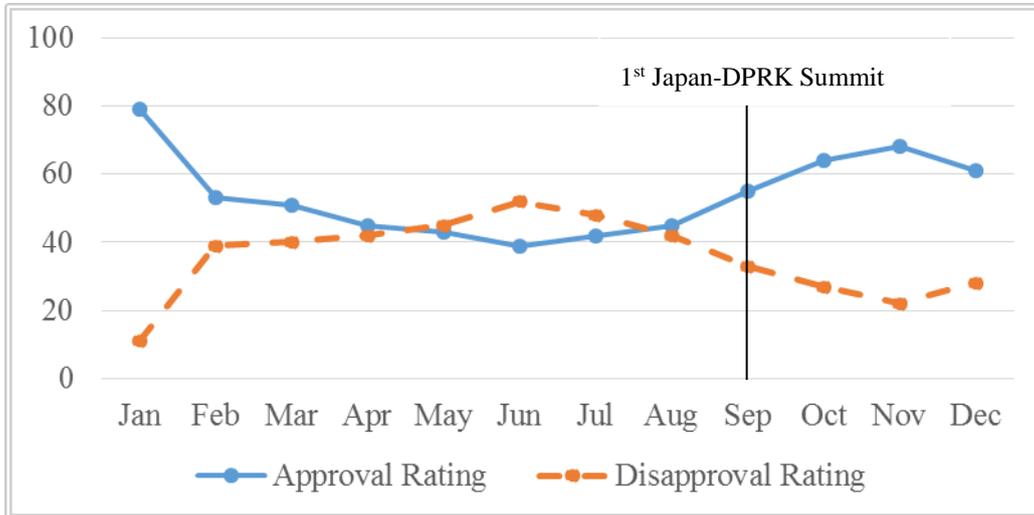
⁸⁶ Ibid.

by the Japanese Cabinet in October 2002 revealed that 66 percent of respondent supported the establishment of diplomatic relations with North Korea whereas 26 percent opposed the idea.⁸⁷ In other words, the positive public evaluation of the first Japan-DPRK summit, the public recognition of the necessity of Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization, and public support of the establishment of diplomatic normalization with North Korea must have brought public support to Koizumi and increased the approval rate of the Koizumi administration as Koizumi had expected before the summit. The reason of the increase in domestic support was often considered that Koizumi's independent diplomatic approach toward Pyongyang quenched the thirst of Japanese people desiring for Japanese diplomatic autonomy without the intervention of the United States.⁸⁸ Also, Koizumi's North Korean policy was welcomed as a proactive countermeasure on North Korea's security threats with continuous missile launches and suspicions over its nuclear development. Thus, Koizumi's plan to increase the approval rating of his administration through his North Korean policy proved successful as shown in the graph below even though his first Japan-DPRK summit eventually resulted in anti-North Korean sentiment with the rise of the Japanese abductee issue.

⁸⁷ Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, *Gaikou ni Kansuru Seron Chosa (Opinion survey on foreign policy)*, October 2002 (accessed October 18, 2014); available from <http://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h14/h14-gaikou/2-1.html>

⁸⁸ Jae-hyung Lee, "Bukil Gwangye eui Yoksajok Jomyong mit Yangguk Gwangye Jeongsangwha Jeonmang (Background of North Korea-Japan relations and prospects for diplomatic normalization between the two countries)," *Pyongwha Yeongu*, vol.12, no.1 (2004): pp.43.

<Graph: Changes in Approval Ratings of the Koizumi Administration in 2002 >



Following the pattern of the first Japan-DPRK summit, Koizumi accepted North Korea's proposal at the second Japan-DPRK summit which was expected to bring a positive effect in domestic politics and as a result, his second visit to Pyongyang was made on the 22nd of May 2004. Before his visit to Pyongyang on May, Koizumi's credibility was seriously undermined with pension scandals because he finally admitted his nonpayment into a national pension scheme before 1986 after his previous repetitive denials. In addition, several ministers of Koizumi's administration were also in trouble with pension scandal and for example, his Chief Cabinet Secretary, Fukuda Yasuo, had to resign after being proved as a non-payer. As the scandal could hurt his Liberal Democratic Party in July's upper-house elections, Koizumi planned to bring the family members of Japanese nationals who had been abducted by North Korean agencies in order to distract public attention from pension scandals as well as to boost domestic support on his party for the upcoming

elections.⁸⁹ This time again, Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang also had a high chance of winning public support. It was because North Korea had consistently clarified its intention to return back the eight family members of Japanese abductees since the unofficial talk in Beijing from the 30th to the 31st of December 2003 between Japanese Dietmen including Hirasawa Katsuei and Matsubara Jin, and five North Korean Foreign Ministry delegates including North Korean Ambassador Jong Thae-hwa and Vice Director Song Il-ho.⁹⁰ At the start of April 2004, one month before the second Japan-DPRK summit, as a consequence, Vice President Yamasaki Taku of Liberal Democratic Party and North Korean Ambassador Jong Thae-wha agreed on the terms that North Korea promised to return back eight family members of Japanese abductees in exchange for the Japanese provision of 250 thousand tons of food assistance to North Korea during the secret negotiation in Dalian, China.⁹¹ Considering the bilateral agreement from the prior arrangement with North Korea, Koizumi must have predicted that his second visit to Pyongyang with the return of the family members from North Korea would lead to the significant increase of public support in him. In other words, Koizumi pursued to utilize his second visit to Pyongyang to turn the unfavorable domestic political environment to his advantage by covering his pension scandals in the way that he made use of his first visit to Pyongyang in order to recover his support rate which had been dropped due to his inability to cope with prolonged economic recession.

⁸⁹ "Politics by Attrition: a Pension Scandal Threatens Junichiro Koizumi," *The Economist*, May 20, 2004 (accessed October 31, 2014); available from <http://www.economist.com/node/2695063>

⁹⁰ Hirasawa, op. cit., pp.60.

⁹¹ Jong-kook Lee, "Bukil Jeongsangwha Gyusub kwa Ilbon eui Dae 'Bukhan Jeongchaek' -Uekji aesoe Abryuk euro- (The normalization talks between North Korea and Japan and 'Japan's North Korean policy': from deterrence to pressure)," *Bukhan Hakbo*, vol.33, no.2 (2008): pp.196.

Different from Koizumi's expectation, however, the public evaluation on the second Japan-DPRK summit was not positive. According to survey data from the Yomiuri Shimbun on the 23rd of May 2004, although 63 percent was in support of the second Japan-DPRK summit, 70 percent of respondents were not satisfied with the result of the summit in that 56 percent opposed Koizumi's pledge on the provision of 250 thousand tons of food aid and 10 million dollars of medical assistance to North Korea.⁹² In addition to Koizumi's promise to provide North Korea with food aid and medical assistance, Koizumi was criticized with no concrete progress on the remaining ten Japanese nationals who the North claimed were dead despite North Korea's pledge on the reinvestigation on them and Koizumi's vow that Japan would not impose sanctions toward North Korea as long as North Korea observes Pyongyang Declaration.⁹³ Although Koizumi failed to boost public support on him as his approval rating was maintained from 53 percent in April, 53 percent in May and 54 percent in June,⁹⁴ it was evident that Koizumi planned that his second visit to Pyongyang with the return of abductee family members would increase public support as it had done in 2002.

Likewise, public disappointment in the current Prime Minister Abe has increased similar to that as former Prime Minister Koizumi faced in 2002 and 2004. Abe started his second term as prime minister at the end of December 2012 with 65 percent of support rate reaching a peak of 74 percent in April 2013 but the approval rating of his administration has been on steady downturn until July 2014 according

⁹² Hong-nack Kim, "Japanese-North Korean Relations Under the Koizumi Government," in *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival*, ed. Yong-whan Kihl & Hong-nack Kim (New York: An East Gate Book, 2006), pp.177.

⁹³ Wada & Takasaki (2005), op. cit., pp.224.

⁹⁴ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (2004), op. cit.

the Yomiuri Shimbun.⁹⁵ The decreasing support rate in Abe's administration has been attributed to public disappointment on his economic reforms, so called 'Abenomics.' For example, an Asahi Shimbun survey conducted in September 2013 revealed not only public discontent in Abenomics since only 16 percent sensed the improvement of economic conditions after the start of the second Abe administration compared to 80 percent who could not find any improvement but also public skepticism in that 84 percent of the respondents answered they are worried about the deterioration of Japanese economic conditions.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the rise of consumption tax in April 2014 resulted in a decrease in consumption and the trade deficit which continued for 22 months.⁹⁷ In addition to the public disappointment in Abenomics, his reinterpretation of the constitution to allow the right to collective self-defense confronted with public opposition. According to the telephone survey conducted by Asahi Shimbun in May 2014, for instance, 55 percent of the respondents oppose the Abe's plan for constitutional reinterpretation whereas only 29 percent supports it.⁹⁸

Faced with public discontent of Abenomics and Abe's reinterpretation of the constitution for the right of collective self-defense, Abe pursued negotiations with Pyongyang for the settlement on the Japanese abductee issue. Since Abe gained national popularity with his hardline stance on North Korea regarding the Japanese abductee issue in particular, it is evident that his political base would be undermined

⁹⁵ "Naikaku Shijiritsu, Jyoushou 64% (9gatsu 3~4nichi Chousa) (Approval rating of the cabinet increased to 64% (survey on September 3~4))," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 05, 2014 (accessed October 17, 2014); available from <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/election/poll/20140905-OYT8T50022.html#>

⁹⁶ Mochizuki & Porter, op. cit., pp.27.

⁹⁷ Oh (2014), op. cit., pp.29.

⁹⁸ "ASAHI POLL: 67% deem Abe's plan to reinterpret Constitution as 'improper'," *The Asahi Shimbun*, May 26, 2014 (accessed October 05, 2014); available from http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201405260032

if he could not make a tangible result on the issue. If Abe succeeded in making progress on the Japanese abductee issue, on the other hand, it will ensure him with a long-term seizure of power. In the preparation for the presidential election of the Liberal Democratic Party scheduled in September 2015 as well as both upper and lower house elections scheduled in 2016, Abe needed to start the negotiations with Pyongyang in order to show progress on the issue within the timeframe.⁹⁹ In other words, Abe needs to work on the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue in order to silence public discontent of Abenomics as well as his reinterpretation of the constitution regarding collective self-defense as Koizumi did before the first and second Japan-DPRK summit.

In conclusion, Abe and Koizumi had to face public discontent with a decrease in the approval ratings in their administrations and both of them expected their bold approach toward Pyongyang would increase domestic support. In response to public disappointment in Koizumi's administration due to the failure in his economic policy, Koizumi increased his approval rating with the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002 due to the recognition of Japanese public on the necessity of Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization as well as their support. Again in 2004, Koizumi made use of the second Japan-DPRK summit by returning back family members of Japanese abductees in order to cover his pension scandal and to win the upper-house election. Similar to Koizumi, Abe also had to deal with public discontent in Abenomics and his reinterpretation of the constitution regarding collective self-defense. As he gained a national popularity through the Japanese abductee issue, the recent resumption of Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations of the Japanese abductee

⁹⁹ Korea Institute for National Unification, *op. cit.*, pp.8.

issue is a fine device for Abe to increase public support.

4. Closed Nature of Japan's North Korean Policymaking

Similar to other parliamentary democratic states, the decision making power of the Japanese prime minister is considered relatively weak compared to other states under the presidential system. Due to the long reign of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), moreover, the prime ministership was rotated among major factions so the pattern of colorless prime ministers continued due to their main job of managing relations among the LDP's factions.¹⁰⁰ Compared to the bureaucracy in other states, furthermore, Japanese bureaucrats are famous for their heavy involvement in policy making.¹⁰¹ After the administrative reform package including "Law to Amend Cabinet Law" and the "Law to establish the Cabinet Office" was adopted by Diet in 1999, however, the power of the Japanese prime minister increased by means of setting the Diet and bureaucratic agendas.¹⁰² Moreover, Koizumi's personal charismatic characteristic ignoring faction politics in his Cabinet as well as his persistent popularity from Japanese public enabled the increase of his leadership in overall state affairs including Japanese foreign policy.

In addition, several political scandals of bureaucrats from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and politicians related to MOFA made it so Koizumi could easily pursue his diplomatic goals without the intervention of MOFA's influence. During secret working-level negotiations with Pyongyang, for example,

¹⁰⁰ Lee (2013), op. cit., pp.78.

¹⁰¹ Frances Rosenbluth & Michael F. Thies, "Politics in Japan," in *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, 9th edition. Gabriel A. Almond, G. Bingham Power Jr., Russel J. Dalton & Kaare Storm (New York: Longman, 2008), pp.344.

¹⁰² Arase, op. cit., pp.570.

Tanaka Makiko, the first female foreign minister designated by Koizumi, was in a showdown over the allegation that she had embezzled the salaries of her secretaries so Koizumi decided not to share the reports of the negotiations with her in fear of an information leak.¹⁰³ Furthermore, it was revealed in 2002 that Suzuki Muneo, a Dietman of Liberal Democratic Party as well as a former foreign vice minister who was actually managing Japan's foreign affairs, pressured MOFA to fund the Japanese Friendship House after accepting bribes from two companies in Japan's northernmost prefectures in 1999. With the political scandal of Suzuki Muneo, news about the criminal charges of Japanese bureaucrats from MOFA brought public dissatisfaction of the widespread corruption within the MOFA.¹⁰⁴

As the influence of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) was diminished due to the scandals, consequently, Prime Minister Koizumi could take a lead in foreign affairs including Japan-DPRK normalization talks. As Koizumi wanted to keep Japan-DPRK negotiations in secret, he made an order to Tanaka Hitoshi, director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of MOFA that the report line regarding the Japan-DPRK talks should be limited only to the prime minister, chief cabinet secretary, deputy chief cabinet secretary, minister of foreign affairs and the administrative vice minister.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Koizumi's decision to visit Pyongyang was made mostly within his Cabinet Office and to their knowledge of only a few bureaucrats from MOFA. Even though Tanaka Hitoshi and Hiramatsu

¹⁰³ Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: a Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), pp.23.

¹⁰⁴ Axel Berkofsky, "Corruption and Bribery in Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Case of Muneo Suzuki," *Japan Policy Research Institute*, JPRI Working Paper no.86, June 2002 (accessed October 29, 2014); available from <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp86.html>

¹⁰⁵ Hitoshi Tanaka, *Gaikou no Chikara (The power of diplomacy)* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun-sha, 2009), pp.103.

Kenji, MOFA's director of the Northeast Asian Affairs Division, led the secret contacts with North Korean bureaucrats on Japan-DPRK normalization of diplomatic relations, other high officials in MOFA even including the director general of MOFA's Bureau of North American Affairs were unaware of Koizumi's decision to visit Pyongyang which had been made in May 2002 until Koizumi's plan was notified in August 2002.¹⁰⁶ It was just a few days before U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage was informed of Koizumi's plan to visit Pyongyang so the late notice from Koizumi frustrated the bureaucrats from MOFA. These episodes proved that the first Japan-DPRK summit was decided in a highly secret manner mostly within Koizumi's Cabinet Office with his inner circle of political advisors. Also, the closed nature of Japan-DPRK negotiations before the first Japan-DPRK summit enabled the summit because Koizumi could avoid the intervention from Washington as explained in the previous chapter.

Bilateral negotiations between North Korea and Japan before Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang were similar with the pre-negotiations in 2002 in its closed nature. After more than a year of the suspension of government-to-government negotiations on diplomatic normalization since October 2002 after North Korea's allegation of its development of a highly enriched uranium program was revealed, it was an unofficial talk in Beijing on December 2003 between two senior members of the Federation of Diet Members for the Early Recue of Japanese Nationals Abducted by North Korea including Hirasawa Katsuei of the LDP and Matsubara Jin of the DPJ and five North Korean delegates including North Korean Ambassador Jong Thae-hwa and Vice Director Song Il-ho from North Korean Foreign Ministry that initiated the

¹⁰⁶ Kang, *op. cit.*, pp.276.

resumption of bilateral negotiation through MOFA.¹⁰⁷ During the talk, the reason that North Korea suggested the unofficial talk rather than official negotiations was revealed by Jong Thae-wha in that North Korea did not trust the Japanese MOFA because they did not keep their promise to bring back the five Japanese nationals who were supposed to return back to North Korea in 2002 after two weeks.¹⁰⁸ In other words, the unofficial talk was initiated by North Korea with the intention to exclude MOFA's involvement in the Japan-DPRK negotiation process. Even after the restart of the official negotiation, the decision of Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang and the terms of negotiation were decided in an inner circle of Cabinet Office together with a few bureaucrats from MOFA similar to the negotiation process in 2002. On the process of bilateral negotiations before the second Japan-DPRK summit, normal diplomacy was not conducted as MOFA could not function in its role due to the top-down decision making from Koizumi with his Cabinet Office.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, there was an attempt by Prime Minister Koizumi that he pursued an alternative channel rather than MOFA in delivering his message to North Korea. For instance, Koizumi's unilateral decision to convey his intention to visit Pyongyang in 2004 through Chongryon, the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, without any notice to MOFA even shocked top leaders of MOFA including Tanaka Hitoshi who had been in charge of official negotiations with North Korea.¹¹⁰ After all, Koizumi's secret as well as independent diplomacy resulted in his second visit to Pyongyang.

Compared to a great number of evidence of Koizumi's closed decision-

¹⁰⁷ Funabashi, *op. cit.*, pp.43-44.

¹⁰⁸ Hirasawa, *op. cit.*, pp.38.

¹⁰⁹ Lee (2008), *op. cit.*, pp.196.

¹¹⁰ Funabashi, *op. cit.*, pp.47.

making process in his first and second visit to Pyongyang, Abe's current approach toward North Korea lacked evidence to back up the closed nature of Abe's Cabinet in proceeding Japan-DPRK negotiations. Regarding the surprise visit of Special Cabinet Advisor Iijima Isao to Pyongyang on the 14th of May 2013 for the meeting with the head of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Yong-nam, however, it was found that Abe also sought secretive talks with North Korea as Koizumi had pursued before. The closed nature of Abe's decision-making of Iijima's visit to Pyongyang was revealed in that the visit was decided only within three people including Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide and Special Cabinet Advisor Iijima Isao.¹¹¹ According to the Asahi Shimbun news report, furthermore, a high-ranking official of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan commented on the 18th of May 2013 that he was not able to receive any prior notice regarding Iijima's visit to Pyongyang.¹¹² In other words, Abe tried to keep Iijima's meeting with North Korea's Number two leader in Pyongyang under wraps without sharing information with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. As a consequence, Abe's secret diplomacy bore fruit followed by the resumption of Japan-DPRK official negotiations in March 2014 and the Stockholm Agreement in May 2014. Looking at the results, Abe's leadership and the closed decision-making within his Cabinet of Iijima's surprise visit to Pyongyang led the progress in the Japan-DPRK negotiation of the Japanese abductee issue.

¹¹¹ Souichirou Tahara, *Abe Kaikouni Tedumarikan, Iijima Naikaku Sanyoga Houchoushita Shinno Nerai (Helpless Abe's foreign policy, the real objective of Special Cabinet Advisor Iijima's visit to Pyongyang)*, Nikkei Business Publications, May 24, 2013 (accessed November 04, 2014); available from http://www.nikkeibp.co.jp/article/column/20130524/351879/?ST=p_bizboard

¹¹² "Rachi Mondai Kaiketsu Mezasu Abe Shushou, Houchouwo Shudou (Prime Minister Abe aiming for the resolution of abduction issue led the dispatch to North Korea)," *The Asahi Shimbun*, May 19, 2013 (accessed October 29, 2014); available from <http://www.asahi.com/special/news/articles/TKY201305190010.html>

Summing up, it was proved that the closed nature of decision making by both Koizumi and Abe in Japan-DPRK relations resulted in the progress in Japan-DPRK relations. Due to the scandals involved with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2002, Koizumi was able to take a lead in Japan-DPRK negotiations without intervention from MOFA. Although Koizumi's decision making within Cabinet Office even humiliated bureaucrats from MOFA, his secret diplomacy facilitated his first and second visit to Pyongyang. Also, Abe pursued secrecy in making decisions in Japan-DPRK negotiations in that the visit of Special Cabinet Advisor Iijima Isao to Pyongyang was decided only by three people including Prime Minister Abe, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide, and Iijima. In this regard, the closed nature of decision making of the Koizumi and Abe administrations without intervention of MOFA enabled both prime ministers to take a bold approach toward North Korea.

IV. Analysis

1. Analysis and Assessment

The previous two chapters proved the correlations of three progresses in Japan-DPRK negotiations with several variables encompassing Japanese external and internal factors. The common denominator of both the Koizumi administration on the first and second Japan-DPRK summit in 2002 and 2004 and the second Abe administration on the Stockholm meeting in 2014 are willpower of strong leaders in advancing Japan-DPRK negotiations, growing public disappointment in these administrations, the characteristics of the administrations such as a right-wing tendency and high level of cabinet stability, and the decrease in the influence of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in making North Korean policies which are all domestic factors within Japan. Different from the expectation on the vulnerability of Japan's foreign policy to external environment, on the contrary, the external factors such as the low level of North Korean security threat, the Japanese relations with neighboring countries and the consistency with the United States on North Korean policy were not found to be common in all of the three time periods. As the factor analysis on each timeframe is explained in the previous chapters, this section will prove the explanatory power of Japanese domestic factors by analyzing why external factors could not be found consistently throughout the three time periods of the initiatives in Japan-DPRK negotiations.

First of all, the low level of security threat posed by North Korea did not show a close connection with the breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations. Although the second Japan-DPRK summit on the 22nd of May 2004 was held in a relatively peaceful environment surrounding the Korean peninsula with the start of

the Six-Party Talks from August 2003, Koizumi's decision of the first historical Japan-DPRK summit on the 17th of September 2002 was made despite his awareness on the North Korea's highly enriched uranium program right before the outbreak of the second North Korean nuclear crisis. As North Korea has successfully launched Rodong missile since 1993, Koizumi should have adopted oppression strategy rather than dialogue towards North Korea because North Korea's nuclear development in violation of the Agreed Framework of 1994 could be a direct security threat to Japan. Instead of taking a punitive measure on Pyongyang, the reason that Koizumi decided to visit Pyongyang in 2002 lies in his strong will on the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea and his motives to boost the public support on his administration. Different from his predecessors, Koizumi concentrated on resolving adversarial relations with North Korea rather than returning Northern Territories from Russia and he showed his firm determination on the diplomatic normalization with North Korea within his tenure. In addition, Koizumi had to deal with growing disappointment of Japanese public due to his failure in economic reform. As Japanese public was supportive of the idea of Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization before Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang, the first Japan-DPRK summit was not a dangerous political gamble for Koizumi. Similar to Koizumi in 2002, Abe also had to deal with the security threat from North Korea. In response to North Korea's rocket launch on the 12th of December 2012 and its third nuclear test on the 12th of February 2013, Abe actively joined in pressurizing North Korea by leading the cooperation from international community through the unanimous adoption of the resolutions of United Nations Security Council and imposed unilateral sanctions on Pyongyang. Considering his hardline stance on North Korea, however, Abe's decision on sending his envoy to Pyongyang only three months after the third North Korean nuclear test

shows his firm determination on the resumption of Japan-DPRK negotiation for the settlement of the Japanese abduction issue. The escalation of tension from the North Korean nuclear and missile threat would make the decision of Japanese leaders to start dialogue with Pyongyang difficult but it was not a decisive factor for both Koizumi and Abe to discourage their strong will and motives. Despite the high level of North Korea's military threat, both Koizumi and Abe was able to make a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations.

In addition, diplomatic isolation of Japan in Northeast Asia from the deterioration of Japanese relations with its neighboring countries including China and South Korea was irrelevant in explaining the decisions of Japanese prime ministers to resume negotiations with Pyongyang. Although the recent Japanese dialogue approach toward North Korea can be regarded as an excellent move for Japan to frighten both Beijing and Seoul at the time of the deterioration of Japan-China relations and Japan-ROK relations as well as the deterioration of China-DPRK relations and inter-Korean relations, however, it is wrong to judge that the reason that Prime Minister Abe pursued negotiation with Pyongyang lies in its uncomfortable relations with China as well as South Korea. Abe did not devise the Japanese rapprochement with North Korea under the careful intention to make friends with enemy's enemy from the very beginning. As explained earlier in the previous chapter, it was evident for Abe to start negotiation with Kim Jong-un for the complete resolution of the Japanese abductee issue which has been his diplomatic task even before he assumed office. Since Abe had expressed his strong will on the settlement of the issue even during his election campaigns, he needed to keep the promises that he had made before. Therefore, Abe's decision to make the Stockholm Agreement with Pyongyang at the time of poor relations with Beijing as well as Seoul can be

regarded as a mere coincidence. Even if Japan were in good relations with China and South Korea, Abe must have tried to negotiate with Kim Jong-un to achieve his diplomatic goal.

In contrast with the preconception that Japan's foreign policy should not collide with the interest of the United States, the consensus between Tokyo and Washington on North Korean policy was not a precondition for Japan to make a unilateral dialogue approach toward Pyongyang. Although President Bush and Obama expressed their support on Japan-DPRK negotiations in the official stage, Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang was made in the highly controversial environment. It is because the first Japan-DPRK summit contradicts with Bush's "axis of evil" narrative in that the closest ally of the United States started the normalization talks with its enemy state in possession of weapons of mass destruction. As it was evident that Bush would oppose Koizumi's idea to visit Pyongyang if Koizumi asked prior consultation with Bush, the reasons that Koizumi did not hold extensive consultation with the United States in advance and he even ignored Armitage's warning on North Korea's suspected highly enriched uranium program lie in Koizumi's strong will on the first Japan-DPRK summit. In addition to the Koizumi's conviction on the summit, the decrease in the influence of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan facilitated the accomplishment of Koizumi's diplomatic goal on North Korea. In order to realize his objective on North Korea undetected by Washington, Koizumi had to pursue the process of Japan-DPRK negotiations in secret. As a consequence, Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang was decided within his Cabinet Office surreptitiously in May 2002 but Koizumi notified his plan to other high officials in MOFA including the director general of MOFA's Bureau of North American Affairs in August 2002 right before the visit of Richard Armitage to Tokyo. The closed nature of Koizumi's decision-making

process before the first Japan-DPRK summit with a fear of information leakage was able to block the opposition from Bush. Before the second Japan-DPRK summit in 2004, Bush's recognition on the importance of the Japanese abductee issue for Koizumi together with the start of the Six-Party Talks enabled more acceptable attitude of Bush on the summit compared to 2002. Before the Stockholm Agreement in 2014, President Obama under the "strategic patience" as well as civil wars in Arab states and Ukraine Crisis together with Obama's recognition on Abe's strong will on the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue also made more flexible environment for Japan to start bilateral negotiations with North Korea. Despite the improved understanding from Washington on Japan-DPRK negotiations, Abe sent his envoy Iijima to Pyongyang in May 2013 without giving any prior notice to Washington. It was also possible because Abe made the decision only with his two advisors without any consultation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan as well.

Summing up, it was proved that the all the anomalies of external factors can be explained with domestic factors of Japan. First of all, the escalation of North Korean security threats could not deter Japanese approach for the improvement of Japan-DPRK relations. Koizumi decided to visit Pyongyang even after he was notified with the existence of North Korea's highly enriched uranium program before the second North Korea nuclear crisis in 2002. Abe also sent his envoy to Pyongyang only three months after North Korea conducted the third nuclear test in February 2013. The decisions were made from their strong will on Japan-DPRK negotiations and their motives to increase their approval rating which had been dropped due to the growing public disappointment in the administrations. Regarding the deterioration of Japanese relations with South Korea and China, in addition, it is often considered that Abe's decision to start bilateral negotiations with North Korea on the Japanese

abductee issue as a breakthrough in Japanese diplomatic isolation in Northeast Asia. Considering Abe's strong will on the complete resolution of the Japanese abductee issue, however, Abe must have tried to start negotiations with Pyongyang regardless of Japanese relations with neighboring countries. Also, consensus with Washington on North Korean policy was not necessary for Koizumi to visit Pyongyang. Despite Bush's de facto opposition on Japan starting negotiations for the diplomatic normalization with North Korea in collision with Bush's "axis of evil" narrative, Koizumi could hold a meeting with Kim Jong-il because he made a late notification to Washington regarding his visit and he made the decision in a secret way. Koizumi was so determined on his visit to Pyongyang that he even did not give a prior notice to the high-ranking bureaucrats in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan about his visit to Pyongyang in fear of information leak. In conclusion, strong will of Koizumi and Abe on Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations with their motives to increase the support rate which had been dropped enabled the breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations due to their high level of cabinet stability without significant intervention from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan despite the difficulties from outside. In other words, domestic factors of Japan have more explanatory power than external factors in explaining the major breakthroughs in Japan-DPRK relations such as the first and second Japan-DPRK summit as well as the Stockholm meeting.

2. Counterfactual Analysis

As the explanatory power of domestic factors of Japan over external factors on the progresses of Japan-DPRK negotiations was proved, this section will analyze the reason why other prime ministers of Japan after Koizumi administration and before the second Abe administration could not reach the breakthrough in the bilateral

negotiations with North Korea. After Koizumi stepped down from prime minister due to the limits of maximum two terms on the presidency of the Liberal Democratic Party, the first administration of Abe Shinzo started from the 26th of September 2006. As it was explained in the previous chapter regarding Abe's strong will on the complete resolution of the Japanese abductee issue, he put the Japanese abductee issue as one of the highest priority among his political tasks with the establishment of the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue by appointing himself as a chief.¹¹³ Despite his firm determination on the settlement of the abduction issue, however, Abe could not make a progress on Japan-DPRK relations on his first term because he had to concentrate on pressurizing Pyongyang after North Korea launched Taepodong-2 missile on the 5th of July 2006 and conducted its first nuclear test on the 9th of October 2006. In terms of cabinet stability, Abe lost public support from June 2007 and he eventually had to step down from office one year after the inauguration due to the defeat of his Liberal Democratic Party on the 21st upper-house election in July 2007. In other words, Abe's priority on pressurizing North Korea rather than trying dialogue for the resolution of the abduction issue during the first administration as well as his low level of cabinet stability deterred the resumption of Japan-DPRK negotiations.

After the first Abe administration, Fukuda Yasuo assumed office on the 26th of September 2007. Although Fukuda was a member of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), in contrast with Abe, he continued to pursue dialogue approach toward North Korea since he was a Chief Cabinet Secretary of Koizumi's Cabinet. Even though Fukuda also had a strong will to settle the abduction issue and even succeeded in holding working-level consultation with North Korea in June and August of 2008,

¹¹³ Lee (2013), *op. cit.*, pp.83-84.

however, he had to resign before the consultation bore any fruit. According to the press conference of Foreign Minister Komura Masahiko, the reason that North Korea suspended the establishment of the investigation committee was found to be the sudden resignation of Prime Minister Fukuda and North Korea wanted to delay the implementation of the investigation committee until the start of a new administration in Japan.¹¹⁴ In other words, the instability of Fukuda Cabinet with a low approval rating deterred the development on the Japan-DPRK negotiations on the Japanese abductee issue. After Fukuda, Aso Taro assumed office on the 24th of September 2008 with a 48 percent approval rating but only after three months, the support rate of his administration significantly dropped by 25 percent in December 2008 and the low level of approval rate continued until the end of his term according to NHK polls.¹¹⁵ In addition to the low level of cabinet stability, Aso had to take hardline policy toward North Korea after North Korea's missile launch on the 5th of April 2009 and its second nuclear test on the 25th of May 2009. In other words, a low level of cabinet stability together with the escalation of North Korean missile and nuclear threats prevented Aso from starting negotiations with North Korea.

After the defeat of the Liberal Democratic Party in the 45th general election in August 2009, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) brought an end to the long reign of the LDP. Even though Hatoyama Yukio reiterated the importance on the settlement of the Japanese abductee issue during the election campaign, the main concentration of his foreign policy was on reexamining its relations with the United States to an equal

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Gaimudaijin Kaiken Kiroku (Heisei 20nen 9gatsu) (Press conference by foreign minister (September of 2008))*, September 02, 2008 (accessed October 16, 2014); available from http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/kaiken/gaisho/g_0809.html#1-B

¹¹⁵ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, *Seiji Ishiki Getsurei Chousa (2008nen) (Opinion Survey on Political Consciousness (the year of 2008))*, 2008, (accessed October 16, 2014); available from <http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/yoron/political/2008.html>

partnership starting with the relocation of the U.S. Futenma Marine Corps Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture and realizing East Asian Community. Under the concept of Hatoyama's East Asian Community, Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization should be reconsidered under the context of its relations with Seoul rather than leaving it as an independent task for Japan,¹¹⁶ and the sinking of South Korean navy ship Cheonan by North Korean torpedo on the 26th of March 2010 impeded Japan to start normalization talks with Pyongyang. Although the Democratic Party of Japan is considered as centrist political party, DPJ was in coalition with the Social Democratic Party opposing the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue as a policy agenda of Hatoyama Cabinet.¹¹⁷ After all, Hatoyama had to resign due to public disappointment after he broke one of his key campaign promises regarding the relocation of the Futenma base altogether with his funding scandal. Summing up, Hatoyama failed to take the lead in the Japanese abductee issue due to his concentration on the reestablishment of U.S.-Japan relations and relations with neighboring countries, the low level of cabinet stability and the left-wing tendency of his coalition party.

After Hatoyama Yukio, Kan Naoto became prime minister of Japan from the 8th of June 2010. Since Kan had to deal with a great number of diplomatic tasks such as the restoration of ties with the United States and the management of escalating tensions surrounding Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands with China together in the outbreak of 2011 Tohoku earthquake and Tsunami and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, he could not spare time on initiating negotiations with North Korea.¹¹⁸ Due to the poor

¹¹⁶ Yoshihide Soeya, "Japan's Security Policy toward Northeast Asia and Korea: From Yukio Hatoyama to Naoto Kan," *Jeonrak Yeongu*, vol.49, no.0 (July, 2010): pp.55.

¹¹⁷ Lee (2013), op. cit., pp.87.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.88.

support rate from his ill handling of the aftermath of the March 11th Tsunami and the crisis at the Fukushima nuclear plant, Kan had to resign as prime minister. As a result, Noda Yoshihiko assumed office from Kan Naoto on the 2nd of September 2011. Since the approval rate of Noda's Cabinet significantly dropped at the end of 2011, Noda sought bilateral negotiations with North Korea on the Japanese abductee issue in order to increase public support.¹¹⁹ As a result, a senior-level talk was held between Japan and North Korea on the 15th of November 2012 in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, which was the first official dialogue since August 2008 but Noda's Cabinet had only one month before the general election on the 16th of December 2012 to make progress on the abductee issue.¹²⁰ As Noda's Democratic Party of Japan was defeated by Abe's Liberal Democratic Party in the election, Noda could not make any further development on the Japanese abductee issue due to his unstable cabinet.

Before Abe's second term, as it is seen above, former prime ministers commonly had the obstacle in making a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations, which is cabinet instability. The tenure of six prime ministers after Koizumi administration and before the second Abe administration was approximately one year on average. It is apparent that one year is not a long enough time period to make a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations on the abduction issue. Although few former prime ministers such as Fukuda Yasuo and Noda Yoshihiko who had a strong will and motives for the settlement of the Japanese abductee issue ended up in holding official negotiation with North Korea, for example, their resignation with the poor

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp.89.

¹²⁰ Daisuke Yamamoto, "North Korea agrees to continue talks on abductees," *The Japan Times*, November 18, 2012 (accessed November 20, 2014); available from <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/11/18/national/north-korea-agrees-to-continue-talks-on-abductees/>

approval rate as well as the defeat on the general election suspended the development of the negotiations. Also, the cabinets of Liberal Democratic Party including the first Abe administration and Aso administration prioritized in pressurizing North Korea so they did not seek serious effort on initiating negotiation with North Korea. In other words, their will on the resolution of the abduction issue was not strong enough to overcome their hardline position against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. The prime ministers of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Hatoyama Yukio and Kan Naoto, had to focus on other diplomatic and domestic issues allowing them little time to resume negotiations with North Korea. Especially, Hatoyama's DPJ was in coalition with the Social Democratic Party so it was not able to set the Japanese abductee issue as a policy agenda. In conclusion, it is proved that the domestic factors including cabinet stability, policy prioritization of leaders on the Japanese abductee issue and the ideological orientation of a ruling coalition also explain why prime ministers after Koizumi and before the second Abe administration were not able to make a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiation on the Japanese abductee issue as shown in the table 3 below.

<Table 3: Comparison among the Administrations after Koizumi and before the Second Abe Administration>

	Strong Will from leader on Japan-DPRK Negotiations	High Level of Cabinet Stability	Right-wing Government
The first Abe Administration	Δ (Priority over pressure)	X (Low support rate for a year of term)	O (Coalition between LDP and New Komeito Party)
Fukuda Yasuo	O (Led to working-level consultation (2008.06.28))	X (Sudden resignation from the low approval rating stalled negotiations)	O (Coalition between LDP and New Komeito Party)
Aso Taro	X (Priority over hardline policy against the second North Korean nuclear test (2009.05.25) and missile test (2009.04.05))	X (Low support rate & defeat in general election by DPJ)	O (Coalition between LDP and New Komeito Party)
Hatoyama Yukio	X (Priority over the relations with the U.S. and neighboring countries)	X (Low support rate with a less than a year of term due to his failure on closing Futenma base)	X (Opposition of Social Democratic Party on the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue as a policy agenda)
Kan Naoto	X (Priority on the restoration of relations with U.S. and domestic issues)	X (Low support rate from poor handling of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and Fukushima nuclear disaster)	● (Coalition between centrist DPJ and conservative People's New Party)
Noda Yoshihiko	O (Led to the agreement on the resumption of Japan-DPRK negotiation (2012.11.15))	X (Low support rate and the defeat in general election by LDP)	● (Coalition between centrist DPJ and conservative People's New Party)

3. Limitations

Considering the common variables for the first and second Japan-DPRK summits and the recent breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations, previous chapters

proved that the explanatory power of internal factors of Japan outweighs that of external factors of Japan including the escalation of North Korean military threats, Japanese diplomatic relations with Seoul and Beijing, and the policy discordance with Washington towards North Korea. Although the policy consensus with Washington towards North Korea as well as the improvement of Japan-ROK relations or Seoul's support on the breakthroughs in Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations was not found consistent in 2002, 2004 and 2013-2014, Japan has not been able to completely ignore the United States and South Korea in making North Korean policy. In fact, it is evident that the domestic factors of Japan such as high level of cabinet stability and right-wing tendency of government bolstered the autonomy of the Koizumi administration and the second Abe administration to realize the willpower of the strong leaders for making a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations, but both U.S.-Japan relations and ROK-Japan relations should not be underestimated in their importance of Japan's North Korean policymaking.

Even though two Japan-DPRK summits as well as the recent breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations were not definitely a glad occasion for the United States to welcome but Japan did not cross the red line that the United States could not be tolerated. It is because the United States and Japan maintained a highly intense relationship during the Koizumi administration and the second Abe administration. Especially, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro of Japan enjoyed so-called honeymoon relationship with the President George W. Bush of the United States so the first and the second Japan-DPRK summits could not be blocked by the United States based on their mutual trust. From the start of Bush administration, President Bush envisioned to strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship to the level of U.S.-British partnership based on the election-year report, "the United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature

Partnership” which is often called Armitage Report. Furthermore, the authors of the report mostly consisting of Japan specialists joined the Bush administration including Richard L. Armitage designated as a Deputy Secretary of State.¹²¹ The Bush’s scheme to place Japan into a central alliance partner in the trans-pacific region worked with the advent of the Koizumi administration in Japan, a strong backer of U.S. foreign policies.

Particularly, the Japanese response after the September 11 attack was swift as well as helpful enough to call Japan a key ally of the United States. Koizumi established the Office of Personal Management serving in a liaison role within the Crisis Management Center only forty-five minutes after the attacks in addition to making a personal call to Bush and expressing the provision of medical and logistics assistance in the fastest manner among other leaders.¹²² Two weeks after the attacks, Koizumi even visited the United States to express his support on the war on terror.¹²³ Koizumi announced a seven article directive including a historical proposal to dispatch the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) overseas to support American forces in the war against terrorism on the 19th of September, he submitted the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSML) so-called anti-terrorism bills to Diet on the 5th of October and the Diet enacted the bills on the 29th of October which was an unprecedented occasion for the Japanese Diet to pass the highly controversial bill into a prompt manner unlike other deals which usually take much longer in Japanese politics.¹²⁴ Consequently, Koizumi dispatched three convoy vessels to the Indian

¹²¹ Pempel, op. cit., pp.121.

¹²² Kent E. Calder, *Pacific Alliance: reviving U.S.-Japan relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp.136.

¹²³ Pempel, op. cit., pp.121.

¹²⁴ Mataka Kamiya, “Reforming the U.S.-Japan Alliance: What Should Be Done?” in *Reinventing the*

Ocean on the 26th of November to refuel the coalition vessels in the war against the Taliban and it was first time for JSDF to support American forces in combat and to be dispatched out of the Northeast Asia since 1945.¹²⁵ In return, Bush expressed his gratitude toward Japanese active support on the war on terror in his speech to the Japanese Diet on the 19th of February 2002 in that Japanese response to the terrorist threat manifested the strength of U.S.-Japan alliance which “has never been stronger.”¹²⁶ Right after the outbreak of the Iraq War in March 2003, furthermore, Koizumi also made an immediate response to dispatch JSDF to Iraq. In other words, Koizumi’s active support on U.S. military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq established a close military relations between the United States and Japan.

Other than security as well as military cooperation, bilateral economic relations between the United States and Japan were also closely connected during the Koizumi administration. For instance, U.S.-Japan Economic Partnership for Growth was established on the 30th of June 2001 in order to promote sustainable growth in both countries by addressing various economic issues and by providing a structure for cooperation on bilateral, regional and global trade issues.¹²⁷ Moreover, Japanese investment to the United States was substantial and rose during the Koizumi administration. In particular, Japan ranked first in terms of the value of foreign holdings of American long-term securities during the Koizumi administration and

alliance: U.S.-Japan security partnership in an era of change, ed. G. John Ikenberry & Takashi Inoguchi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.100.

¹²⁵ Pempel, op. cit., pp.122.

¹²⁶ U.S. Department of State, *President Discusses Unity Between the U.S. and Japan*, remarks by the President to the Diet, February 18, 2002 (accessed November 16, 2014); available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2002/8616.htm>

¹²⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *U.S.-Japan Economic Partnership For Growth*, June 30, 2001 (accessed November 15, 2014); available from http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/pmv0106/joint_e.html

even increased from approximately 411 billion dollars in 2002, 514 billion dollars in 2003, and to 736 billion dollars in 2004.¹²⁸ As the heavy capital flow from Japan during the Cold War enabled the macroeconomic flexibility for the Reagan administration to outpace the Soviet Union in defense spending which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the massive deal of Japanese investment in the United States during the Koizumi administration has been regarded as a key factor for Washington to afford the expensive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq without destabilizing the U.S. domestic economy.¹²⁹ Thus, two governments of the United States and Japan made an effort for the improvement of bilateral economic relations and the United States actually benefited from heavy capital flow from Japan.

In addition to the bilateral cooperation between Japan and the United States in security and economic fields, the personal bond between President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi could not have been better in that it was often regarded as a honeymoon period. For example, the close ties between Bush and Koizumi were represented in Bush's invitation of Koizumi into his Crawford, Texas ranch from May 22-23, 2003. The invitation to the Bush ranch was often considered as the highest level of intimacy that Bush served to Koizumi in response to Japanese support on U.S. foreign policies as the ultimate reward.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Koizumi was able to join the president's daily intelligence briefing, a privilege previously enjoyed only by British

¹²⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Securities (c): Annual Cross-U.S. Border Portfolio Holdings*, April 30, 2013 (accessed November 06, 2014); available from the Treasury International Capital System (TIC) website: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/data-chart-center/tic/Pages/fpis.aspx>

¹²⁹ Calder, op. cit., pp.102.

¹³⁰ Brad Glosserman, "U.S.-Japan Relations: Still on a Roll," *Comparative Connections*, vol.5, no.2 (July 01, 2003): pp.1. (Accessed October 31, 2014); available from <http://csis.org/publication/comparative-connections-v5-n2-us-japan-relations-still-roll>

Prime Minister Tony Blair.¹³¹ During the briefing, both Bush and Koizumi reiterated the importance of globalizing the bilateral relationship by using the word “alliance” explicitly which had been taboo before.¹³² During the Koizumi administration, summing up, every aspect of U.S.-Japan relations including the security, economic and personal ties between leaders could not have been better. If Japan maintained strained relations with the United States, Bush would have blocked Koizumi’s plan to visit North Korea. Considering the close bilateral relationship between Japan and the United States, however, Washington’s trust on Tokyo enabled Koizumi to visit Pyongyang without opposition from Bush even though Bush must not have welcomed Koizumi’s idea of establishing diplomatic normalization with North Korea.

Regarding the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, in addition, Japan shared rough information with the United States as well as South Korea on pre-negotiations between Japan and North Korea. Although Koizumi did not seek a thorough consultation or understanding from Washington on his visit to Pyongyang in advance as proved in the previous chapter, Washington at least was aware of the existence of under-the-table negotiations between Tokyo and Pyongyang. Tanaka Hitoshi, director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in charge of official negotiations with North Korea, stated in his book that he had offered rough briefings on Japan-DPRK negotiations to the U.S. delegations including Richard L. Armitage and James A. Kelly as well as ROK delegations on Japan-DPRK negotiations during the ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Coordination and

¹³¹ Ibid., pp.2.

¹³² U.S. Department of State, *President Bush Meets With Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi*, May 23, 2003, (accessed November 02, 2014); available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2003/20953.htm>

Oversight Group (TCOG) meetings.¹³³ As a result, in the fourth TCOG meeting of 2002 held in Seoul on September 7th, ROK delegations headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Lee Tae-sik and U.S. delegations headed by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly expressed their strong support of Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan to visit Pyongyang ten days before the summit.¹³⁴ However, it is also true that Japan did not share all information with the United States regarding the first Japan-DPRK summit beforehand. In particular, two issues including the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea and Japanese monetary compensation for North Korea's damage incurred during Japanese colonial rule were not topics of discussion with the United States.¹³⁵ Although the intense cooperation with the United States has been necessary regarding North Korean issue directly related to the peace and security of the Northeast Asian region, the abduction issue was not discussed closely with the United States due to the information leak as long as it was regarded that the abductee issue was concerned with the lives of Japanese nationals.¹³⁶ Despite the limited nature of information provided to the United States, in other words, Japan at least updated the United States with the minimum amount of information in order to prevent Washington from being exclusive or feeling betrayed by the surprising news of the first Japan-DPRK summit.

Ever since Japan notified Koizumi's plan to visit Pyongyang to the U.S. delegations for the first time during Armitage's visit to Tokyo at the end of August

¹³³ Tanaka, op. cit., pp.118.

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, *Joint Press Statement of the ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group*, Press Release, September 09, 2002 (accessed November 01, 2014); available from http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/press/pressreleases/index.jsp?menu=m_10_20

¹³⁵ Tanaka, op. cit., pp.118-119.

¹³⁶ Tanaka, op. cit., pp.123.

2002, Japan put sincere effort in seeking understanding from the United States. The day after Koizumi announced his plan of the first Japan-DPRK summit to Richard L. Armitage, for instance, Koizumi made a personal call to Bush to deliver his conviction directly. Tanaka Hitoshi quoted the comment of a high-level official in the Bush administration that the direct call from Koizumi to Bush calmed the voices of neo-conservatives in Washington in opposition to the Japan-DPRK summit.¹³⁷ It proved that the intimate relations between Bush and Koizumi enabled Koizumi to visit Pyongyang without explicit opposition from Washington even though Bush must not have welcomed Koizumi's plan of the Japan-DPRK summit indeed. After Koizumi's plan to visit Pyongyang was disclosed, Tanaka Hitoshi provided detailed presentations on the progress of Japan-DPRK negotiations to the U.S. delegations including Richard L. Armitage and James A. Kelly by sharing the draft of Pyongyang Declaration and he tried to reflect the concerns and opinions of the U.S. delegations at the pre-negotiations with North Korea.¹³⁸ As a result, Bush expressed his support on the Japan-DPRK summit at the official stage. Without Bush's demonstration of the support to Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang, it must have been difficult for Koizumi to proceed with his plan at the first Japan-DPRK summit. Therefore, it was found that Koizumi tried to offer detailed information to the United States and even made use of his personal bond with Bush in order to prevent opposition from the United States at the first Japan-DPRK summit after he revealed his plan to visit Pyongyang.

Similar to the Koizumi administration, Japan maintained close relations with the United States during the second Abe administration especially in security issues. First of all, President Obama confirmed his position on the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu

¹³⁷ Tanaka, *op. cit.*, pp.120.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Islands at Japan's behest. At the joint press conference with Obama and Abe held in Tokyo's Akasaka Palace on the 24th of April 2014, Obama stated that U.S.-Japan defense pact covers "all territories under the administration of Japan, inclusive of the Senkaku islands" and U.S. would not tolerate any attempt on the unilateral change of the status quo by use of force or coercion.¹³⁹ Although Obama stressed that it was not a new position, Obama became the first president of the United States to provide public commitment that the United States would stand squarely with Japan in case of the conflict between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Moreover, Abe and Obama shared the aim of Japanese collective self-defense for the mutual interest. Obama's endorsement of his desire for the reinterpretation of the Japanese peace constitution offered a boost in Japanese domestic politics for the collective self-defense. Michael Green of the Center for Strategic and International Studies reiterated the importance of the reinterpretation in the light of the revision of U.S.-Japan defense cooperation guidelines in that it would improve the joint response of Japan and the United States to the contingencies of the Korean peninsula and to the Chinese military aggression on the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Abe has worked to boost the defense spending every year during three years in his office whereas his predecessors had reduced the budget for more than a decade.¹⁴¹ Under the second

¹³⁹ Office of the Press Secretary, the White House, *Joint Press Conference with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe of Japan*, Press Briefings, April 24, 2014 (accessed November 18, 2014); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/24/joint-press-conference-president-obama-and-prime-minister-abe-japan>

¹⁴⁰ "Shinzo Abe inches closer to reinterpreting the pacifist constitution and strengthening Japan's alliance with America," *The Economist*, May 17, 2014 (accessed November 29, 2014); available from <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21602267-shinzo-abe-inches-closer-reinterpreting-pacifist-constitution-and-strengthening-japans>

¹⁴¹ Joseph E. Lin, Aaron Menenbun, & Jay Hallen, "A Trusted Partner for Peace," *U.S. News*, November 21, 2014, (accessed December 01, 2014); available from <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2014/11/21/strengthening-the-us-japan-alliance-is->

Abe administration, in other words, the security cooperation between Japan and the United States has been highly consolidated.

The U.S.-Japan bilateral cooperation between the Abe and Obama administration can be also found in other areas. For instance, Japan officially started negotiations for the membership of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on July 23rd, 2013. Considering the implementation of the TPP as one of the trade agendas of the Obama administration, Abe's decision to join the TPP negotiations two years after the former Prime Minister Noda officially announced Japanese interest in the trade agreement in 2011 would be more than welcome for Obama. Also, Japanese participation in the TPP bears significance for the United States which has a Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with more than a half of the TPP parties.¹⁴² Also, Abe and Obama worked in collaboration on the human rights issues including their support for the establishment of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea Human Rights Council Commission. Regarding the Japanese abductee issue, furthermore, Obama expressed his support for the resolution of the abduction issue and highly evaluated Abe's effort on the issue when he met relatives of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korean agencies in late April 2014.¹⁴³ Obama's support for the Japanese abductee issue as well as the improved relations between the second Abe administration and Obama administration must be convincing grounds for the absence of Japanese consultation with the United States on the Japan-DPRK

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¹⁴² Joshua Meltzer, "Japan to Join the Trans-Pacific Partnership – Finally!" *The Brookings Institution*, March 18, 2013 (accessed October 30, 2014); available from <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/03/18-japan-joins-trans-pacific-partnership-meltzer>

¹⁴³ Akihiko Kaise, & Atsushi Okudera, "Nations welcome Japan-N. Korea agreement on abduction issue, but wary on lifting sanctions," *The Asahi Shimbun*, May 30, 2014 (accessed November 19, 2014); available from http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201405300041

breakthrough regarding the Japanese abductee issue in advance. It was because Abe expected that Obama would not block Japanese dialogue approach toward North Korea even though Obama worries about the dissolution of international efforts for North Korean denuclearization on the other hand.

Considering the cordial U.S.-Japan relations between the Bush and Koizumi administrations as well as between the Obama and the second Abe administrations, therefore, Washington had concrete faith that Tokyo would not breach fundamental interests of the United States. In the light of Washington's previous stance toward Pyongyang in that Bush publicly denounced North Korea as an axis of evil and Obama welcomed China's further participation of international coercive measures toward North Korea's nuclear development, however, it is evident that the United States could not be absolutely supportive of Japan's approach toward North Korea even though Washington should have expressed its support on the Japanese effort in order not to disclose the discord with Tokyo. Despite these uncomfortable situations, the reason that both Koizumi and Abe were able to proceed their plans for the development of Japan-DPRK relations without opposition from Washington lies on the solid relationship between Japan and the United States. During the three timeframes, in other words, the United States believed that its closest ally would not develop the North Korean issue to the degree that it would be considered as a betrayal to the United States. Although both Koizumi and Abe did not seek prior consultation or permission from Bush and Obama on their plan with North Korea, therefore, pro-American tendency of Koizumi and Abe administration cannot be ignored in the absence of U.S. opposition in the breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations.

In addition to the U.S. influence in Japan-DPRK relations, the influence of South Korea should not be underestimated as well. Even though the previous chapter

revealed that Japan went to two Japan-DPRK summits in 2002 and 2004 and the Stockholm meeting in 2014 regardless of Japan-ROK relations, there are several cases before the first Japan-DPRK summit when Seoul could exert its influence in the process of Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations. For instance, the July 7 Declaration by former president Roh Tae-woo of Republic of Korea in 1988 for the reopening of a North-South dialogue and the improvement of relations between South Korea and socialist countries reversed previous opposition of South Korea in the improvement of Japan-DPRK relations during the Cold War. After high-level official talks between two Koreas on the 4th of September 1990, a joint Liberal Democratic Party-Socialist Party delegation of Japan headed by Kanemaru Shin, a former Deputy Prime Minister widely known as LDP's king-maker visited Pyongyang on September 24-28, 1990 and signed a joint statement for Japan-DPRK normalization of diplomatic relations with the ruling Korean Worker's Party. During the Kanemaru's meeting with Kim Il-sung, Kanemaru pledged an approval of Japanese Diet on providing reparation to North Korea for Japanese colonial rule before the normalization of diplomatic relations even by staking his political life on it.¹⁴⁴ While Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki sought the understanding from Seoul by explaining the purpose of the joint delegation's visit to Pyongyang as the release of two crew members of the Japanese freighter *Fujisan Maru* detained by North Korea and by promising close contacts with South Korea afterwards during the telephone talks with President Roh before the visit, Seoul changed its position on the visit into negative after Kanemaru made a sudden move toward the establishment of Japan-DPRK ties without giving any prior notice

¹⁴⁴ "WORLD IN BRIEF: NORTH KOREA: Japan Visitor Makes Vow on Reparations," *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1990, (accessed November 22, 2014); available from http://articles.latimes.com/1990-09-26/news/mn-920_1_north-korea

on the issue to Seoul.¹⁴⁵ Consequently, Prime Minister Kaifu had to reassure South Korea by clarifying the position of Japanese government in that Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations would be proceeded in close touch with South Korea and in line with the improvement of inter-Korean relations on 25 January 1991.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the first Japan-DPRK official negotiations for diplomatic normalization was held in Pyongyang at the end of January 1991 followed by seven negotiations prior to November 1992.

After the first North Korean nuclear crisis was resolved with the Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea in October 1994, Japan also pursued the resumption of bilateral negotiations with North Korea as President Kim Yong-sam started to seek the improvement of inter-Korean relations with the dispatch of a presidential envoy to North Korea. About that time, North Korea was suffering from chronic and acute food shortages due to a series of floods in July and August which were known to strike roughly one-fourth of its 22 million people.¹⁴⁷ In response, Japan promised to provide 300 thousand tons of rice to North Korea during the visit of Watanabe Michio's LDP-SDPJ-Sakigake delegation to Pyongyang on March 28, 1995. As the amount of Japanese food aid to North Korea outweighs the amount of South Korean rice provision to North Korea equivalent of 150 thousand tons of rice, President Kim Yong-sam expressed his discomfort on Japan's decision which weakened the effect of South Korean rice aid to North Korea.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore,

¹⁴⁵ Jung-wha Shin, *Ilbon eui Daebuk Jeongchaek: 1945nyun~1992nyun (Japan's North Korean policy: from 1945 to 1992)* (Seoul: Orum, 2004), pp.231.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.233.

¹⁴⁷ "North Korea Asks Japan For More Rice," *Associated Press*, September 14, 1995 (accessed November 29, 2014); available from <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1995/North-Korea-Asks-Japan-for-More-Rice/id-6de69c4734e7c30d1c740ddc5c29ca11>

¹⁴⁸ Wada & Takasaki, 2005, op. cit., pp.213-214.

Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi of Japan wrote a letter to President Kim in November 1995 that Japan should not continue Japan-DPRK negotiations without the understanding from Seoul.¹⁴⁹ In other words, past administrations of Japan had to consider South Korean factor while making Japanese foreign policy toward North Korea and the response from Seoul in Japan-DPRK bilateral negotiations had been reflected more on Japan-DPRK relations than it was during the Koizumi and the second Abe administrations.

In conclusion, the study has two limitations in explaining the influence of South Korean influence on the past Japan-DPRK negotiations before Koizumi administration as well as in understating the pro-American tendency of the Koizumi and Abe administrations. In detail, the reason that the United States tolerated Koizumi and Abe to make a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations without seeking serious consultation from Washington might be attributed to the cordial relations between the United States and Japan. Moreover, there were several cases that previous Japanese administrations had difficulty in dealing with de-facto opposition from Seoul in the improvement of Japan-DPRK normalization talks. Regarding recent development as well as the first and the second Japan-DPRK summits, however, it is true that Koizumi and Abe made a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK negotiations without seeking serious consultation or permission from Washington because it was evident that the United States especially Bush must not have welcomed a Japanese approach toward Pyongyang. Yet, this section proved that Koizumi shared a minimum amount of information with the United States in order not to make Bush feel betrayed by Japan's unilateral approach toward Pyongyang and Koizumi put much effort in sharing

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.217-218.

detailed information with the U.S. delegations after he disclosed his plan to visit Pyongyang to Bush. Koizumi's effort as well as intense relations between Japan and the United States must have been helpful for Koizumi to visit Pyongyang without opposition from Washington. In addition, Abe made recent developments in Japan-DPRK negotiations on the Japanese abductee issue regardless of the negative position of the Park Geun-hye administration of South Korea in the improvement of Japan-DPRK relations. In contrast with the recent case, previous instances especially during the 1990s revealed that Japanese dialogue approach toward Pyongyang was susceptible to South Korean influence. Therefore, external factors of Japan such as U.S. and South Korean factor cannot be completely ignored in explaining the passages of Japan-DPRK relations even though domestic factors of Japan were found to be more consistent than external ones in the breakthroughs of Japan-DPRK negotiations including the first and second Japan-DPRK summits and the Stockholm meeting.

4. Prospects

After the Stockholm Agreement was made at the end of May 2014, official negotiations between North Korea and Japan was held in Beijing, China in July to discuss follow-up measures. During the talk, Japan confirmed lifting its unilateral sanctions on North Korea such as an entry ban on North Korean citizens and an embargo on North Korean ships in Japanese ports and easing a requirement for reporting movements of money from Japan to North Korea by raising the threshold from 100 thousand yen to 1 million yen for cash and from 3 million yen to 30 million yen for money transfers in return for the North Korea's resumption on the investigation on Japanese nationals kidnapped by North Korean agencies with the

establishment of “Special Investigation Committee.”¹⁵⁰ After the July meeting, there were director-general level talks between North Korea and Japan in Shenyang, China on the 29th of September 2014 but North Korea did not bring preliminary results of the investigation. Instead, North Korea asked Japanese officials to visit Pyongyang in order to assess the current progress on the investigation. As a consequence, Japanese governmental delegates made a four-day visit to North Korea from the 27th to the 30th of October to scrutinize abductee probes in the hopes of receiving information on twelve Japanese nationals officially recognized as abductees by the Japanese government. It was first time in ten years that Japanese government delegates had official talks in North Korea. During the ten and half hour meeting, North Korea explained the current status of the investigation as well as the method of the probes and promised a thorough probe into special agencies. In addition, North Korea reiterated its stance that the Committee will conduct an intensive investigation free from the past results on the Japanese abductee issue.¹⁵¹ As North Korea did not submit any information of the twelve Japanese nationals, Japan emphasized its strong determination of the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue as its highest priority of Japan. In specific, in the meeting of Lower House budget committee on the 30th of October 2014, Abe reiterated that he would even risk his political career into the Japanese abductee issue calling for North Korea’s prompt investigation into the Japanese nationals.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Gogatsu no Niccho Goui ni Motodoku Waga Koku no tai Kitachousen Sochi no Ichibu Kaijyo (Partial lifting of Japanese sanction against North Korea based on May Japan-DPRK agreement)*, July 04, 2014 (accessed December 05, 2014); available from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000044431.pdf>

¹⁵¹ “[Rachi Saichousa] Abe Shushou Hatsugen Zenbun ([Reinvestigation on the abductees] full text of Prime Minister Abe’s announcement),” *The Sankei Shimbun*, October 30, 2014 (accessed December 10, 2014); available from <http://www.sankei.com/politics/news/141030/plt1410300040-n1.html>

¹⁵² “Abe Shushou: Kitachousen eno 「Taiwa to Atsuryoku」 Muzukasii Kajitori (Prime Minister Abe: a

Despite frequent governmental contact as well as the visit of Japanese delegates to Pyongyang, however, the prospect in Japan-DPRK negotiations on the abductee issue would not be optimistic for the diplomatic normalization between Tokyo and Pyongyang. First of all, North Korea does not intend to provide convincing result promptly. As North Korea is expected to induce the lift of Japanese unilateral sanctions and the economic assistance from Japan at each stage of negotiations, North Korea has a motive to slow down the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue. As a result, there has been criticism from Japanese media on Abe's administration in that North Korea is making use the negotiations in order to extract monetary compensation from Tokyo. The negotiation is likely to be suspended from the absence or protracted progress on North Korea's investigation on the Japanese abductees. Secondly, Abe's "pressure and dialogue" strategy would irritate Pyongyang. Since Abe has been active in pressurizing North Korea against its nuclear and missile launches as well as its human rights violations in international arena, at some point, it is evident that North Korea will raise a question whether Tokyo is willing to improve relations with Pyongyang. In the end, North Korea is highly likely to blow off the investigations of the Japanese abductees. Thirdly, even if North Korea provides convincing evidence of the Japanese abductees, anti-North Korean sentiment from the Japanese public would surge. As a consequence, the ultimate goal of Pyongyang on Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization will be difficult to achieve.

At last, Abe has a narrowed focus of the objective of Japan-DPRK negotiations which is the complete settlement of the Japanese abductee issue unlike his predecessor, Koizumi Junichiro, who considered the normalization of diplomatic

steersman in trouble taking 「dialogue and pressure」 toward North Korea),” *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 30, 2014 (accessed December 08, 2014); available from <http://mainichi.jp/>

relations with North Korea as his diplomatic task. Considering his hardline stance toward North Korea, it is impossible for Abe to normalize diplomatic ties with Pyongyang unless North Korea abandons its nuclear weapons, which is highly unlikely. Furthermore, it is also doubtful that Abe truly seeks the ultimate goal of the Japan-DPRK negotiations on the diplomatic normalization with Pyongyang because it collides with his other aim of Japanese remilitarization. North Korea's nuclear as well as missile threat has been a perfect excuse for Abe to remilitarize Japan even without a need to quote a real threat from China. For example, North Korea has been useful as "a catch-all proxy threat" as it was used for the justifications for the revision of the U.S.-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation as well as the deployment of Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD).¹⁵³ As a consequence, Abe will confine the coverage of recent Japan-DPRK negotiations only into the Japanese abductee issue. Since Abe has been working on the reinterpretation of constitution to allow collective self-defense despite huge opposition from the public, he has strong will on Japanese remilitarization as he does on the complete settlement of the Japanese abductee issue. In other words, Abe would not consider Japan-DPRK normalization of diplomatic relations as an ultimate goal of Japan-DPRK negotiations in order to achieve Japanese remilitarization under the idea of a "normal nation."

¹⁵³ Christopher W. Hughes, "'Super-Sizing' the DPRK Threat: Japan's Evolving Military Posture and North Korea," *Asian Survey*, vol.49, no.2 (Mar/Apr 2009): pp.303, 305.

V. Conclusion

Throughout the paper, seven variables have been analyzed in the three timeframes represented as the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, the second Japan-DPRK summit in 2004, and the Stockholm meeting in 2014 which are considered as a breakthrough of Japan-DPRK relations. With the timeframe comparison, the internal factors of Japan including a strong will from leaders in Japan-DPRK negotiations, an increasing public discontent on the administrations, the characteristics of these administrations to have a rightwing tendency and high level of cabinet stability, and the decrease in the influence of Japanese Foreign Ministry are found common in all three timeframes showed high correlation with the developments of Japan-DPRK relations. Different from expectations, Japan-DPRK rapprochement did not show a close correlation to Japan's external factors.

In the second chapter, it was proved that three of Japan's external factors could not be explained throughout the timeframes with consistency. First of all, the improvement of Japan-DPRK relations did not have correlations with the perceived low level of security threat from North Korea. As it is expected that a peaceful environment surrounding the Korean peninsula would provide a better environment for Japan to pursue negotiations with North Korea, however, the first Japan-DPRK summit as well as Abe's decision to dispatch his envoy Iijima to Pyongyang was made when tension from North Korea's nuclear program was escalating. Even though the date of the first Japan-DPRK summit occurred just prior to North Korea's acknowledgement of its highly enriched uranium program, Koizumi was aware of the existence of North Korea's nuclear program as early as August 2002 when the United States shared such information. Despite Armitage's threatening notification that the

target of North Korea's nuclear program would be Japan, Koizumi did not cancel his plan to visit Pyongyang. As a result, the first Japan-DPRK summit was held right before the outbreak of the second North Korean nuclear crisis. Even though the second Japan-DPRK summit was held during the peaceful environment of the Six-Party Talks, recent developments between Japan and North Korea were made in the escalation of tensions from North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. For example, Koizumi's decision to dispatch Iijima to Pyongyang on May 2013 was made only three months after the third North Korean nuclear test. Despite continuous missile firing from North Korea from March to September 2014, it did not disrupt Japan-DPRK negotiations on the Japanese abductee issue. As both Koizumi in 2002 and Abe in 2013-2014 did not give up the opportunity to have a dialogue with North Korea even in the escalation of tension surrounding the Korean peninsula, therefore, there is no correlation between the low level of North Korean security threat and the development in Japan-DPRK relations.

In addition, it was found that there is no correlation between the breakthrough of Japan-DPRK negotiations and the Japanese diplomatic isolation in Northeast Asia. Although recent Japan-DPRK negotiations have been widely regarded as a Japanese countermeasure against the deterioration of China-Japan relations as well as ROK-Japan relations, given the strong will of Abe in initiating negotiations with Pyongyang for the settlement in the Japanese abductee issue, Abe would have tried to talk with Kim Jong-un regardless of the relations with his neighboring countries. In comparison of the Japanese diplomatic situations before the first Japan-DPRK summit of 2002 as well as the second Japan-DPRK summit of 2004 makes the argument more persuasive. It is because Japan-ROK relations between the Koizumi administration and Kim Dae-jung administration had improved in 2002 due to Japan's

need to cooperate with its neighbors on the war on terror as well as co-hosting the FIFA World Cup 2002 with South Korea. Furthermore, President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea strongly persuaded both Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan and Chairman Kim Jong-il of North Korea to initiate normalization talks. In 2003, in addition, President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea and Prime Minister Koizumi met twice a year and agreed upon the improvement of relations. After 2003, Japan-ROK relations were on steady downhill hitting rock bottom in 2005 but bilateral relations were not bad before the second Japan-DPRK summit on the 22nd of May 2004. Also, Japan was not excluded in participating in the Six-Party Talks. Thus, it is proved that Japan negotiating with Pyongyang did not result from the hostile attitude of Japanese neighboring countries against Japan.

Furthermore, it was found that Japan did not necessarily need a consensus with the United States on North Korean policy in order to make developments in Japan-DPRK relations. Also, both Koizumi and Abe did not seriously consult with Washington when they made the decision to start negotiations with Pyongyang. Although their counterparts, namely Bush and Obama, in the United States officially expressed their support on Japan-DPRK negotiations, it is apparent that Washington cautioned the Japanese move toward North Korea with wariness. Especially, Koizumi expected Bush's opposition on his visit to Japan in 2002 as the normalization talks between Japan and North Korea contradicted with United States interests under Bush's "axis of evil" scheme. As a result, Koizumi secretly prepared his first visit to Pyongyang and notified his plan to Washington only a few weeks before the visit. Armitage's warning on North Korea's development of a highly enriched uranium program could not reverse Koizumi's decision to visit Pyongyang and Washington's concern was ignored by Koizumi. Before the second Japan-DPRK summit, there was

no serious opposition from Bush at the start of the Six-Party Talks. Abe's recent approach toward Pyongyang might be more acceptable for Obama compared to Bush in 2002, but still Abe did not seek prior consultation with Washington before he resumed bilateral negotiation with North Korea regarding the Japanese abductee issue. Therefore, it is proved that thorough understanding from the United States on Japan-DPRK relations was not a necessary condition for Japan to take a dramatic step toward North Korea.

In the third chapter, four similarities of the domestic factors of Japan which have influenced the Japan-DPRK negotiation process during the Koizumi and Abe administrations were analyzed. First of all, the strong will of Japanese leaders on the resumption of the bilateral negotiations with North Korea is highly related to the progress in Japan-DPRK relations. In Koizumi's case, he prioritized the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea over the resolution of Northern Territorial issues with Russia which his predecessors had been focused on because Koizumi realized the deadlock concerning those Northern Territories would not be resolved in a near future. In addition, Koizumi had to take leadership in eliminating North Korean nuclear and missile threats in response to the increase of a perceived threat against Japanese people in North Korea after the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993 as well as its launch of intermediate-range ballistic missiles in 1998. As a consequence, Koizumi pursued the establishment of diplomatic ties with Pyongyang in order to liquidate Cold War legacies as well as to eliminate a North Korean security threat by clearing adversarial relations with Pyongyang. On the other hand, Abe put the resolution of the issue of Japanese nationals who had been abducted by North Korean agencies as the highest priority. Abe's attachment to the abduction issue started even before he started his political career in 1993. Consequently, Abe's strong persuasion

of Prime Minister Koizumi on the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue resulted in Kim Jong-il's acknowledgement on the issue during the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002. After the first summit, Abe's firm insistence of permanent return of five Japanese abductees who were supposed to go back to North Korea in defiance of North Korea brought him national fame. After the second Japan-DPRK summit in 2004, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and Secretary General Abe Shinzo of the Liberal Democratic Party showed a difference in priority when discussing the preconditions of the resumption of Japan-DPRK normalization talks. Although the policy prioritization of the former Prime Minister Koizumi and the current Prime Minister Abe was different in that Koizumi put much effort on the normalization of diplomatic relations to be realized within his term while Abe promised the complete settlement of the Japanese abductee issue under his administration, they shared a strong will to start negotiations with Pyongyang.

In addition, the two characteristics such as right-wing tendency of government as well as the high level of cabinet stability were common in the Koizumi and Abe administrations. As leftist political parties specifically the Japan Socialist Party maintained a close connection with Pyongyang, Japanese public and even U.S. media saw its engagement approach toward North Korea suspiciously. It was because of Japan Socialist Party's extreme sheltering of Pyongyang on the maltreatment of Japanese wives sent to North Korea, the detention of crew members of Fujisan Maru No.18, the explosion of Korean Air Flight 858, and even the abduction of Japanese nationals. Due to public distrust in the left-wing party concerning the North Korean issue, cabinets led by conservative parties including Liberal Democratic Party of Koizumi and Abe would have a better chance at a dialogue approach toward North Korea without public suspicion. In terms of cabinet stability, moreover, Koizumi and

Abe led the victory of Liberal Democratic Party in elections so they were able to enjoy the high level of cabinet stability which gave both administrations enough time to make progress with North Korea. Furthermore, both the Koizumi and the second Abe administration maintained relatively high approval ratings. Thus, the two common characteristics of the Koizumi and Abe administrations included a right-wing tendency as well as a high level of cabinet stability which enabled the leaders to take a bold approach toward Pyongyang.

Also, the Koizumi and the second Abe administration shared common motivations in seeking the negotiations with North Korea in order to cope with growing public disappointment on their economic policy or political scandals. Before the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, Koizumi's high approval rating dropped by 39 percent in June 2002 due to a continuous recession.¹⁵⁴ Based on the public support on the Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization, Koizumi was able to visit Pyongyang despite the escalation of a North Korean security threat. As a consequence, Koizumi's approval rating increased after the first Japan-DPRK summit and survey data proved that the increase was a result of the recognition on the necessity of Japan-DPRK diplomatic normalization as well as support from the Japanese public. Before the second Japan-DPRK summit, moreover, Koizumi and his cabinet were in trouble with a pension scandal. In order to reverse public discontent focused on him and his cabinet prior to the upper-house election in July 2004, Koizumi visited Pyongyang again on the 22nd of May 2004. Even though his approval rating did not increase dramatically following the summit due to public criticism in Koizumi's pledge to provide huge amounts of food and medical assistance to North Korea, it is certain that

¹⁵⁴ NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (2002), *op. cit.*

Koizumi expected his return from Pyongyang together with the family members of the Japanese abductees as North Korea had promised would increase his public support. Also, the second Abe administration is now facing public disappointment surrounding his economic policy as well as public opposition on the reinterpretation of constitutions for the collective self-defense. In order to boost public support of his cabinet, Abe has tried to take a bold approach toward North Korea for the resolution of the Japanese abductee issue because he gained national popularity through his achievements on the issue under the Koizumi administration. Therefore, it can be implied that both Koizumi and Abe sought to resume negotiations with North Korea in order to increase public support.

Lastly, the closed nature of decision-making in the Koizumi and Abe administrations with a decrease of the influence of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) facilitated progress in Japan-DPRK relations. Before the first Japan-DPRK summit, there were several scandals related to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs such as Tanaka Makiko's embezzlement of her secretary's salary as well as Suzuki Muneo's bribery scandal. As public discontent mounted high on MOFA, it was easier for Koizumi to decide the first Japan-DPRK summit without interference from MOFA. Koizumi could carry out his plan to visit Pyongyang in 2002 in confidence. After the first Japan-DPRK summit, bilateral negotiations were suspended due to the emergence of the second North Korean nuclear crisis. However, North Korea pursued unofficial talks with Japan in December 2003 because of North Korea's mistrust of MOFA regarding the broken promises to return back five Japanese abductees after the first Japan-DPRK summit. Similar to 2002, furthermore, Koizumi's decision to visit Pyongyang in 2004 was also made within his Cabinet Office. Koizumi even tried to communicate through channels such as Chongryon other than MOFA. In Abe's case,

he also followed similar decisions to as Koizumi in pursuing secret diplomacy in negotiations with North Korea. The decision of Special Cabinet Advisor Iijima's visit to Pyongyang in May 2013 was made only by three people including Prime Minister Abe, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide, and Iijima. Thus, the secretive diplomacy of Koizumi and Abe in Japan-DPRK negotiations facilitated a breakthrough in bilateral relations.

Although this paper shows that the external factors of Japan are not found common in 2002, 2004, and 2013-14, there are some limitations on the study in that the influence of U.S. and South Korean factors cannot be underestimated in Japan-DPRK relations. Namely, the cordial relations between the Abe and Obama administrations as well as the Koizumi and Bush administrations made the United States tolerate Japanese unilateral move toward North Korea even though the United States could not entirely support the move. Especially, although it was evident that Bush would not welcome Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang due to his narratives on the axis of evil with the designation of North Korea as one of them, Bush should have expressed his support in Koizumi's plan. It was assumed likely because of the sustained and substantial support of Koizumi on Bush's major foreign policies including the war on terror by considering Japan a key ally of the United States, the close economic bilateral cooperation and the intimate personal ties between leaders of Japan and the United States. In other words, Bush had basic trust in Koizumi that Japan would not act against the fundamental interests of the United States. Although Koizumi made a unilateral decision in the first Japan-DPRK summit without consulting the United States, Koizumi put an effort in seeking understanding from the United States after he decided to visit Pyongyang however late it was. As a result, Bush was able to express his support in Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang on the official

stage even though the first Japan-DPRK summit was certainly a displeased occasion for Bush. In addition, the improved bilateral cooperation between the United States and Japan in security, economic and human rights issues during the second Abe administration must be helpful in inducing Obama's support on the recent developments in the Japanese abductee issue even though Abe did not seek permission from Washington beforehand. As the absence of U.S. opposition in the developments of Japan-DPRK negotiations lies partly on the improved relations between Japan and the United States, summing up, it is difficult to exclude U.S. factor completely from the breakthroughs in Japan-DPRK relations. Yet, it is also true that Japan did not seek a thorough prior consultation or permission from the United States on a Japanese unilateral approach toward North Korea even though Koizumi and Abe expected that Bush and Obama would not be fully supportive of moves from Tokyo toward Pyongyang. Also, there were several examples before the first Japan-DPRK summit that Japan took into consideration concerning South Korea when making foreign policies toward North Korea as it had done during the Cold War. In specific, Japanese rapprochement toward North Korea had to be in line with the improvement of inter-Korean relations and even Japanese moves were sometimes blocked by opposition from Seoul. Therefore, this study has limitations in that the breakthroughs of Japan-DPRK relations cannot completely overlook the influence of external factors of Japan especially U.S. factor as well as South Korean factor.

In conclusion, the common denominators of the three timeframes including the first Japan-DPRK summit in 2002, the second Japan-DPRK summit in 2004, and the Stockholm meeting in 2014 with the recent progress were found to be the strong will of leaders during Japan-DPRK negotiations, growing public disappointment on administrations, the characteristics of the administrations such as right-wing tendency

and high level of cabinet stability, and the decrease in the influence of Japanese foreign ministry in making North Korean policy, which were all domestic factors within Japan. In contrast with the previous expectation that the Japanese approach toward North Korea will be highly influenced by external factors, the explanatory power of external factors including the escalation of a North Korean security threat, the Japanese diplomatic situation in Northeast Asia, and policy consensus with the United States on North Korean policy was proved to be weak so that Koizumi and Abe could make a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations regardless of international context. By substituting Japanese domestic variables into the anomalies that external factors cannot explain, it was found that internal variables have more explanatory power than external ones. Although U.S. influence as well as South Korean influence cannot be ignored in Japan-DPRK relations as it is proved in limitations of the study, however, it is true that Koizumi and Abe pushed ahead with their plans toward Pyongyang regardless of their expectations on the unwelcoming response from Washington or Seoul. Therefore, it can be concluded that the combination of domestic factors gave both Koizumi and Abe time from cabinet stability, motive from the growing public disappointment, and power from the decrease in the influence of MOFA to push their strong will to be realized with little regard to the external factors of Japan.

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Appendix

<Chronology of Japan-DPRK Relations since the 1990s>

Date (yy/mm/dd/)		Date (yy/mm/dd/)	
90/09/24-28	Kanemaru-led joint LDP-SPJ delegation's visit to Pyongyang	04/05/22	2nd Japan-DPRK summit
90/09/29	Three-Party Declaration of 1990	04/06/23-26	3rd round of Six-Party Talks
91/01/30-31	1st Japan-DPRK normalization talk	04/11/09-14	Director-general level talks (Pyongyang)
91/03/11-12	2nd Japan-DPRK normalization talk	04/12/08	Announcement on DNA results of Yokota Megumi
91/05/20-22	3rd Japan-DPRK normalization talk	05/07/26-08/07	4th round of Six-Party Talks (1st phase)
91/08/30-09/02	4th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	05/09/13-19	4th round of Six-Party Talks (2nd phase) (9.19 Joint Statement)
91/11/18-20	5th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	05/11/09-11	5th round of Six-Party Talks (1st phase)
92/01/30-02/01	6th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	06/07/05	Taepodong-2 missile launch
92/05/13-15	7th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	06/10/09	1st North Korean nuclear test
92/11/05	8th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	06/12/18-22	5th round of Six-Party Talks (2nd phase)
93/03/12	1st North Korean nuclear crisis	07/02/08-13	5th round of Six-Party Talks (3rd phase) (2.13 Agreement)
93/05/29-30	North Korean Rodong-1 missile test	07/07/18-20	6th round of Six-Party Talks (1st phase)
94/07/08	The death of Kim Il-sung	07/09/27-30	6th round of Six-Party Talks (2nd phase)
94/10/21	U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework	09/04/05	Unha-2 missile launch
95/03/28	Watanabe-led joint LDP-SDPJ-Sakigake delegation's visit to Pyongyang and Four-Party Declaration	09/04/14	North Korea's declaration on SPT withdrawal
97/10/09	Japanese food assistance to North Korea through World Food Programme	09/05/25	2nd North Korean nuclear test
98/08/31	Taepodong-1 missile launch	10/03/26	Sinking of ROK vessel 'Cheonan'
00/04/05-07	9th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	10/11/23	North Korean shelling on South Korean Yeonpyong Island
00/08/21-25	10th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	11/12/17	The death of Kim Jongil
00/10/30-31	11th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	12/12/12	Long-range rocket Unha-3 launch
01/04/26	PM Koizumi assumed office	12/12/26	PM Abe assumed office
02/08/30	Official announcement on Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang	13/02/12	3rd North Korean nuclear test
02/09/17	1st Japan-DPRK summit (Pyongyang Declaration)	14/02/12	North Korea's four scud missiles launch
02/10/16	2nd North Korean nuclear crisis	14/03/03	Two short-range missiles launch & Japan-DPRK informal contact (Shenyang)
02/10/29-30	12th Japan-DPRK normalization talk	14/03/19	Japan-DPRK informal contact (Shenyang)
03/01/10	North Korean announcement on its withdrawal from NPT	14/03/30	Japan-DPRK official talk (Beijing)
03/08/27	1st round of Six-Party Talks	13/05/14	Iijima's visit to Pyongyang
03/12/20-21	Unofficial talk with DPRK (Hirasawa) (Beijing)	14/05/26-28	Stockholm Meeting
04/04/01-02	Unofficial talk with DPRK (Yamasaki&Hirasawa) (Dalian)	14/09/29	Director-general level talks (Shenyang)
04/02/25	2nd round of Six-Party Talks	14/10/27-30	Japanese delegation's visit to Pyongyang

국문초록

고이즈미와 아베 정권 하에서의 북·일 교섭 분석

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본 연구는 일본의 외교 정책이 국제 환경에 수동적으로 반응한다는 관념을 가진 기존 연구들과 달리 일본의 국내적 요인에 초점을 맞추어 북·일 협상 진전과의 연관성을 분석하였다. 북·일 관계 발전에서 가장 대표적인 2002년 제 1차 북·일 정상회담과 2004년 제 2차 북·일 정상회담 그리고 2014년 북·일 스톡홀름 합의를 전후로 하는 세 가지 시간 프레임을 설정 후, 그 기간 내에서 공통적인 요소를 찾아보고자 하였다. 그 결과 북한의 군사적 도발 등으로 인한 안보 위협이나 한·일, 중·일 관계 그리고 대북 정책에 대한 미국과의 합의 등 일본의 대외적 요인들은 공통적으로 발견되지 않음을 알 수 있었다. 반면, 북·일 협상에 대한 지도자의 강한 의지, 정권의 안정성과 우익 성향, 정권에 대한 국민적 불만 증대, 그리고 일본의 대북정책 결정 과정의 폐쇄성 등 일본의 국내적인 요소들이 세 번의 북·일 관계 진전을 촉진한 요인임을 검증하였다. 일본의 대북정책 결정 과정에서 미국과 한국의 영향력을 과소평가할 수는 없지만, 본 논문은 위에 명시된 국내적 요인의 조합이 외부적 환경의 영향력을 감소시켜 고이즈미 정권과 제 2차 아베 정권이 대북정책에서 주도권을 행사하는데 결정적인 역할을 하였음을 보여줄 것이다.

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주요어 : 북·일관계, 국교정상화교섭, 납치자 문제, 고이즈미, 아베, 북·일
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