

Koizumi Meets Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang; Normalization Talks to be Resumed

Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Jun-ichiro paid a one-day landmark visit to Pyongyang on Sept. 17 to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, seeking a breakthrough via top-level political initiatives in the deadlocked negotiations to normalize diplomatic relations between the two countries. Koizumi became the first Japanese prime minister to visit North Korea. This was also the first summit meeting by top leaders of the two countries since North Korea was created in 1945.

The two leaders signed a joint declaration, called the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration, which incorporated the two leaders' agreement to resume in October the normalization talks suspended since October 2000, comply with international law and not commit acts threatening the security of the other side, and maintain and strengthen the peace and stability of Northeast Asia.

However, the result of the historic meeting was marred by Kim's sensational revelation that six of the 11 Japanese nationals listed by the Japanese government as having been abducted to North Korea have died, one is missing and only four are surviving. It also transpired that three other Japanese, not on the Japanese government's list, had been abducted and two of them have died.

Kim for the first time acknowledged the abductions and offered an apology for the "horrible acts." He explained

COMING UP

The next issue of *JTI* will analyze Japan's role in 21st-century international society from the perspective of politics, economics, and science and technology. We will examine the reasons for Japan's lack of progress in implementing structural reforms at a turning point of history, including a comparison with the development of modernization during the Meiji period.

that some North Korean undercover agents resorted to rash acts and heroism during the 1970s and the early 1980s to recruit people who could teach the Japanese language to members of espionage organizations and help to disguise North Korean agents as Japanese to enter South Korea. He denied his personal involvement in the case.

Koizumi strongly protested to Kim about the abductions and asked the North Korean authorities to conduct detailed investigations into the cases and take measures to prevent a recurrence of such incidents. The North Korean leader pledged to punish those responsible for the abductions and to prevent a recurrence.

Among those whose death was confirmed are Yokota Megumi, who was abducted from Niigata Prefecture in 1977 when she was 13 and Arimoto Keiko, a college student of Kobe City University of Foreign Studies who was abducted in Europe in 1983 when she was 23. North Korean officials revealed that Yokota had a daughter, who currently resides in Pyongyang. They expressed their readiness to allow the survivors to return to Japan at an early date. The Japanese side has confirmed the identities of the four survivors.

Koizumi, for his part, expressed Japan's "deep remorse and heartfelt apology" for the tremendous damage and suffering of the North Korean people during the period of Japan's colonial rule. Koizumi and Kim agreed that the two countries should settle Pyongyang's demand for compensation for Japan's colonial rule through economic cooperation.

Kim also promised to extend North Korea's moratorium on missile testing beyond the already-pledged 2003 and to take measures to stop espionage operations by North Korean ships in or near Japan's waters.

The two leaders then agreed to



Prime Minister Koizumi Jun-ichiro shakes hands with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang on Sept. 17

establish a bilateral consultative body aimed at promoting confidence-building in the security sector. In this connection, Koizumi proposed that six countries with interests in Northeast Asia – North and South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia – hold consultations on the Northeast Asian situation, and Kim expressed his country's readiness to participate.

Referring to the suspected espionage operations of North Koreans in and near Japanese waters, Kim acknowledged that special units of the military were engaged in voluntary training. He promised to stop such operations and disband these units.

During the meeting, Koizumi stated that Japan and North Korea both need political will to settle issues pending between the two countries and issues causing international concern, and he expressed hope that Kim would take courageous action in this direction. Kim, for his part, expressed his strong intention to normalize relations with Japan, saying that "Japan and North Korea are geographically close to each other but their relations are distant. The word 'distant' should pass into oblivion. Our two countries should turn a new page in their history through common will and efforts."

Despite the two leaders' expression of their eagerness to improve relations between their countries, the normalization talks scheduled to resume in October could face difficulties, because the Japanese public is angered by Kim's acknowledgement of the abduc-

tions, which meant North Korea was involved in the crimes as a nation.

New Bank Notes to be Issued in 2004 to Counter Forgeries

Japan will issue new ¥10,000, ¥5,000 and ¥1,000 notes adopting sophisticated technologies in fiscal 2004 to beat counterfeiters. It will be the first Bank of Japan (BOJ) note issue since July 2000 when the ¥2,000 note was issued to commemorate the new century and the holding of the Group of Eight summit in Okinawa. The ¥2,000 note will remain in circulation.

The new ¥10,000 note will continue to feature Fukuzawa Yukichi, a scholar and educator of the Meiji era (1868-1912), but the pair of pheasants on the back will be replaced with a pair of phoenix statues (designated as national treasures) at Byodoin Temple in Kyoto.

The ¥5,000 note will carry the portrait of Higuchi Ichiyo, a female novelist and poet of the Meiji era. Mt. Fuji on the reverse side will be replaced by the decorative painting "Kakitsubata" by Ogata Korin (designated as a national treasure), an artist of the Edo period (1603-1867). This will be the first time a woman has appeared on a Japanese bank note. Empress Jingu, who briefly ruled Japan in the early third century, was featured on a note issued by the government in 1881, but this was before the BOJ was created.

The ¥1,000 note will feature bacteriologist Noguchi Hideyo and the reverse side will feature Mt. Fuji and cherry blossoms.

The three figures were selected from among scores of candidates, mostly men and women of culture, whose pictures are carried in the textbooks for elementary and secondary schools, and are familiar to the public.

The replacement of bank notes was prompted by a growing sense of crisis about the increase in the number of counterfeit notes in circulation since 2001. Forgery of the ¥1,000 note is particularly noticeable, with about 3,100 bogus ¥1,000 notes confiscated by the National Police Agency in 2001 and about 6,000 in the first half of this year alone.

The issuance of euro notes adopting

cutting-age anti-counterfeiting technologies and reports about U.S. plans to issue new notes to deal with the growing problem of forgeries hastened the Japanese government's decision to issue the new notes.

The new notes will adopt the latest anti-counterfeiting technologies such as hologram imaging, which changes colors and patterns at different angles, and a latent image, which sets numbers and letters in relief. Hologram imaging was also incorporated into the new euro notes.

The new ¥5,000 note will be one-millimeter longer than the current one, but the sizes of the ¥10,000 and ¥1,000 notes will remain unchanged.

The government hopes that the issuance of the new bank notes will dispel the gloomy mood resulting from the prolonged recession and that the upgrading of vending machines and automated teller machines (ATMs) to handle the new notes will stimulate the domestic economy. Many economists predict, however, that the economic effects of the new notes will be limited.

Launch of Registry Network Plagued by Glitches

Japan launched on Aug. 5 a nationwide resident registry network that encodes people's personal information and gives everyone an 11-digit number. Under the system, known as Juki Net, each municipality provides people's names, addresses, dates of birth, sex, individual numbers and records of changes to their information to a database run by the national government via prefectural governments.

The government says the network is intended to enhance administrative efficiency and the personal convenience of users. But Juki Net got off to a bad start, with six local governments with a total population of about 4 million refusing to log on to the network because of anxieties about the security of personal information. The six municipalities include Yokohama, the largest city in the nation in terms of population.

Minister of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications Katayama Toranosuke says the government has taken full measures to

protect security and privacy, and will strive to enhance precautionary measures to ease people's concerns. But his assurance failed to convince the opponents of the system, who claim in their protests to the ministry that Juki Net would infringe on people's privacy rights. They are seeking a legal injunction against the network.

The problem is that a bill on protecting private information, which is a precondition for the introduction of Juki Net, is still pending in the Diet. The legislation, originally intended to prevent the leakage of information from Juki Net as well as in the financial and communications sectors, also incorporated measures to restrict media reporting and has thus drawn strong public criticism, with the result that parliamentary deliberations on the bill have been postponed.

There are also growing concerns over illegal access to Juki Net by public officials and the possibilities of step-by-step expansion of their use of the registry code. The government has emphasized that officials are banned from using the network for anything other than the original purposes. Penalties have been tightened for officials found responsible for leaks, and the private sector is not allowed to access the system.

In order to remove public concerns, it will be necessary for the government to adopt comprehensive measures to prevent abuse of the system, and educate public officials in the importance of ethics.

Registry network systems similar to Juki Net have been introduced in a number of countries. But these countries are properly disclosing information and protecting and managing such data. Only in these countries do people trust such systems, because the protection of information works side by side with the disclosure of information.

It must be noted that public trust in national systems is lacking in Japan. Recently, some officials of the Defense Agency circulated within the ministry a list of people who sought the disclosure of some information related to the agency. As long as administrative authorities abuse national systems, they will never be able to win the public's trust.