



Friday, July 6, 2007

Japan-N Korea summit not good for U.S.

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On Tuesday, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi paid an historic visit to North Korea for the first time in the post-World War II era. Koizumi candidly expressed Japan's repentance for its colonial rule over Korea while Kim Jong Il unexpectedly admitted that North Korea was responsible for abducting Japanese people in the 1970s and 1980s.

Both leaders were encouraged to make these admissions because they had common interests in starting negotiations for normalization of diplomatic relations.

Japan wishes to establish a normal diplomatic relationship with North Korea primarily because of security concerns in northeast Asia. Kim Jong Il desires normalization because it may be accompanied by huge economic assistance from Japan and it may mitigate the United States' hard-line orientation toward North Korea.

Some people have made a lot of fuss over North Korea's abducting Japanese people. This is an important issue in terms of human rights and Japan's sovereignty. However, is it a vital problem to prevent both countries from establishing a normal diplomatic relationship?

From a broader perspective, the abduction issue is trivial. It should not have been a diplomatic issue discussed by heads of state. In that sense, Koizumi was wrong to make the abduction issue prerequisite to starting a rapprochement negotiation.

Surprisingly, Kim Jong Il apologized to Koizumi (Japan) for North Korea's behavior. Thus, it is no longer a political issue that needs a political solution. Japan should play down this issue in order to promote a friendly relationship with North Korea.

Most countries, such as South Korea, Russia and China, welcomed the Pyongyang Declaration that includes the extension of a moratorium of missile launching after 2003. Who is unhappy about the Japan-North Korea rapprochement? It is the United States.

Since the end of World War II, one of the major aims of U.S. policy in Asia has been to manage Japan's behavior by creating common enemies. During the cold war, Washington used the communist threat to Japan to demand an ironclad alliance with the United States. After the end of the cold war, the United States was desperately looking for a new enemy in order to justify its military presence in Japan. Washington found one. It began to exaggerate the threat from North Korea.

The United States does not want an uncontrolled mess like Chinese communist revolution, but it does seek appropriately unstable conditions in Asia to ensure that regional countries including Japan remain dependent on the United States. In other words, the United States has been the main provocateur of instability in Asia.

What's wrong with North Korea's having weapons of mass destruction? As a sovereign nation, it is quite natural to possess means to protect its own country. Who has the most destructive weapons on Earth? The United States does. What's wrong with North Korea's missile launching tests? North Korea should have done this within its own territory. Who has repeatedly implemented nuclear weapons tests despite severe criticism from its allies including Japan? The United States has.

Who calls other sovereign nations "axis of evil" in public? The United States does. This shows a lack of dignity and grace on the part of the U.S. government. If the United States wants to change the attitudes of other nations, it should exercise a thorough self-examination and alter its own actions before pointing its fingers at others.

Undoubtedly, the United States is currently the most powerful nation militarily in the world, but it lacks the sincerity, heart, grace and aura to be a trustworthy world leader.

September 19, 2002

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