

From Carrots to Sticks: Japanese Sanctions Towards the DPRK

Bert Edström

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Executive Summary

This paper traces Japan's sanctions towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), also known as North Korea. Sanctions are often defined as the deliberate, government-inspired withdrawal or threat of withdrawal of customary relations taken by a country ("the sender") against another country ("the target") to coerce it into particular avenues of response. These are actually negative sanctions ("sticks"). In this paper, positive sanctions ("carrots") will also be taken into account. In the postwar period Japan was long reluctant to use sanctions because of its prewar and war history. It was only at the end of the 1980s that they were used for the first time by Japan. In its sanctions policy, the Japanese government has had a predilection for using positive and not negative sanctions as a foreign policy tool.

From 1990 when Japan first employed a positive sanction, a two-track sanctions policy evolved in that both positive and negative sanctions have been employed. The 1990 sanction was a sizeable carrot in order to solve problems linked to the historical past but no results were seen. The next case came in 1993, with sanctions issued after the DPRK had launched a Nodong-1 missile. In 1994 Japan participated in an effort by the United States and other countries to make the DPRK freeze its on-going nuclear activities. Japan became a member of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), an international consortium to manage aid to the DPRK. Again no results were seen, which was similar to Japanese donations of food aid to the DPRK for humanitarian reasons in 1995.

Japan's two-track sanctions policy towards the DPRK was in full force after 1998, when the DPRK sent a Taep'odong-1 missile over Japan, demonstrating Japan's vulnerability. The Japanese government cancelled food aid to the DPRK, postponed signing the cost-sharing agreement for the KEDO project, and announced that it was not going to pursue talks aimed at normalization. Part of these sanctions were lifted rather soon, since the Japanese government announced that it did not want to give the DPRK an excuse to resume nuclear weapons development by causing the collapse of KEDO. The rest of the sanctions were lifted after about a year. Subsequently, the Japanese government engaged in offering carrots. In March 2000 it was announced that Japan would provide food aid, which met an important

precondition from the DPRK for resuming normalization talks. Contributing to this might have been the announcement that the Japanese government would donate food aid. Tokyo sensed a positive tone in the normalization talks with the DPRK. Perhaps based on a miscalculation on the part of Japan that quick results could be reached due to the DPRK's stark need for aid, Japan offered to provide an "economic aid" package amounting to US\$9 billion (60 percent in grant aid and 40 percent in loans). The DPRK denounced Japan's offer as an attempt to sidestep an admission of colonial repentance.

The most spectacular development in Japan–DPRK relations was Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō's visit to the DPRK and his face-to-face meeting with its leader Kim Jong Il on September 17, 2002. To secure progress, Koizumi offered a gargantuan carrot: Japan promised "economic assistance" in the form of grant aid, long-term soft loans, and humanitarian assistance via international organizations. The DPRK reciprocated by promising compliance with international law, pledging to take appropriate measures so that the "regrettable incidents" that had taken place in the past would not again be repeated. Both countries agreed to fulfill "all related international agreements" pertaining to nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula. Koizumi also apologized for the occupation period, while Kim admitted and apologized for the abductions of Japanese citizens by the DPRK. When the latter became known to the Japanese public, the Japanese stopped seeing their country as perpetrator of aggression and maltreatment of the Korean people during the annexation period. Kim's revelation made Japan, not Korea, the victim. This *victimization* of Japan became crucial for subsequent developments, when the Japanese government became prone to employ sticks much more eagerly than before to reach its foreign policy goals. In June 2003 legislation passed the Diet to prevent DPRK ships from calling at Japanese ports. By enforcing strict obedience of rules and regulations, Japan employed what were not formally, but in reality, sanctions. As a result, bilateral trade decreased in the years the followed.

In a multilateral arena, however, Japan showed its willingness to use positive sanctions in the first round of the Six-Party Talks in August 2003 by proposing a resumption of fuel oil supplies as well as a support framework for dealing with the DPRK's energy needs. In return Pyongyang was to abandon its nuclear weapons program, accept IAEA inspections, and

forsake both the export and deployment of ballistic missiles, but no results were reached. From 2004, Japan has mostly employed sticks, both unilaterally and in a multilateral context. New legislation was adopted by the Diet in June 2004 with the Law to Prevent Designated Ships From Visiting Japanese Ports, and in March 2006 with an amendment to the Law on Liability for Oil Pollution Damage.

In 2006 the tense situation surrounding the Japan–DPRK relations worsened after seven Taep’odong missiles had been fired by the DPRK. The Japanese government immediately implemented unilateral sanctions, including a ban of DPRK nationals from entering Japan as well as port calls by the ferry *Man’gyongbong-92*, a ferry shuttling between Wonsan in the DPRK and Niigata in Japan, and often said to be North Korea’s lifeline. It also worked hard for making the UN adopt a resolution. Subsequently, on June 15, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1695, to be followed two months later by Resolution 1718 condemning the nuclear test that the DPRK had then performed.

The nuclear test worried the U.S. government. At a session of the Six-Party Talks in February 2007, the United States altered its stance from rejecting any attempt to seriously engage with Pyongyang to taking steps to reengage with the reclusive state, including bilateral talks. While the other parties to the Six-Party Talks agreed at the session to initially supply heavy fuel oil as emergency energy assistance to the DPRK, Japan refused to provide any heavy fuel oil unless Pyongyang addressed the abduction issue.

In June 2008, the Japanese government agreed to partially lift its sanctions, after Pyongyang had promised to re-start investigations of the abductions. Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo told that Japan would ease other economic sanctions, if the renewed investigation of the abductions made progress. The DPRK agreed to reinvestigate the abductions, followed by the Japanese government promising in its turn to partially lift economic sanctions towards the DPRK, allowing DPRK ships to enter Japanese ports once the reinvestigation probe commenced. What seemed a positive development was broken in April 2009, however, when the DPRK launched a missile. Japan responded by renewing its existing sanctions and requesting an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council and also submitted a draft resolution with the United States, which ultimately resulted in UN Security Council Resolution 1874.

When the former political opposition formed the government after the landslide victory of the Democratic Party of Japan in the general election in 2009, many had expected that Japan's approach would change, but the new government has continued the policy of the former government.

Introduction¹

A country's foreign-policy toolbox contains both tangible and intangible instruments. Foreign policy is an area where both word and deed are used. In many cases a government may chose to employ verbal policies in order to promote or reach its goal; in other cases, more tangible instruments are used. Sanctions are tools that can be both, either constituting word politics or word politics backed up by raw power (or other tangible power resources). A prominent figure in the history of sanctions is U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. In the aftermath of the First World War, he declared in a classic statement: "A nation that is boycotted is a nation that is in sight of surrender. Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force. It is a terrible remedy. It does not cost a life outside the nation boycotted, but it brings a pressure upon the nation which, in my judgment, no modern nation could resist."² Describing sanctions as such a remedy, Wilson suggested that if the League of Nations employed them, the world could be kept free of war. Wilson's optimism was contagious and, in sanctions researcher Gary Hufbauer's words, "sparked America's love affair with economic sanctions."³ He described it as the grand diplomatic experiment of the United States, having been employed by the U.S. government nearly 100 times in the twentieth century.

In recent decades, countries employing sanctions have increased. Also multilateral organizations such as the United Nations or the European Union increasingly employ sanctions towards third parties. With the number of multilateral organizations employing sanctions increasing, the number of countries involved also increases, since countries are bound by the decision taken by the organization of which they are members.

¹ The author wants to thank Professor Ōkuma Hiroshi, Seijo University, Tokyo, and Associate Professor Kubota Norihito, National Defense Academy of Japan, who read and commented on the manuscript. All inadvertencies rest with the author.

² Quoted in Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott, Kimberley Ann Elliott, Barbara Oegg, *Economic Sanctions Revisited*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2007), 1.

³ Gary C. Hufbauer, "Economic Sanctions: America's Folly," Council on Foreign Relations, Remarks, Transcript, November 10, 1997, <http://www.cfr.org/trade/economic-sanctions-americas-folly/p62> (accessed November 8, 2011).

Japan is a country that has employed sanctions as a foreign policy tool both unilaterally and in a multilateral context. Because of the country's past when it was an imperialistic and aggressive power, postwar Japan did not have any wish to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries for decades, and was a long time until sanctions became a tool that was used by the Japanese government to reach foreign policy goals. When a military junta took power in Burma in 1988, Japan joined other Western countries and suspended its ODA, especially yen loans.⁴ The following year Japan employed sanctions towards China as a reaction to the authorities' clamp-down on protesters after the Tiananmen riots in Beijing. In the early years of the post-Cold War period the Japanese government turned out to be less hesitant than before regarding sanctions. In a reaction to the Tiananmen riots the Japanese government worked out an official sanctions policy, which made sanctions an integral part of Japan's ODA policy. In recent years, a frequent target of Japanese sanctions has been the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea), after its missile launches, spy ship incursion and abductions of Japanese citizens made it a primary security concern for Japan. The aim of this paper is to examine the sanctions that Japan has employed towards the DPRK. It is a sequel to a previous paper detailing the postwar development of Japan–DPRK relations.⁵

Sanctions

Sanctions have been defined as the deliberate, government-inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary relations taken by a country ("the sender") against another country ("the target") to coerce it into particular avenues of response.⁶ The concept of "sanctions" is often used for what are actually negative sanctions ("sticks"), while positive sanctions ("carrots") are often not taken into account in discussions of the policy of sanctions pursued by countries.⁷ Positive sanctions can be defined as actual or promised rewards to an actor over whom another actor is exerting or

⁴ Bert Edström, "Japan and the Myanmar Conundrum," Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Asia Paper* (October 2009).

⁵ Bert Edström, "Troubled Encounter: Japan–DPRK Non-Relations," Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Asia Paper* (June 2012).

⁶ Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Revisited*, 3.

⁷ As is observed already in Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 51. The prevalence of this tendency has not diminished since.

attempting to exert power.⁸ Sanctions range across the economic, military and political spectrums.⁹ They can be unilateral or multilateral, comprehensive or selective. The most far-reaching type are military sanctions. Nowadays, the most common type are economic sanctions, which are restrictions that a government maintains with respect to economic activity with foreign countries or persons.¹⁰ Non-economic sanctions usually deny legitimacy or prestige through diplomatic, cultural, and travel restrictions.¹¹ The most effective sanctions are those that are more difficult to evade and have effects that are less diffused throughout the targeted society, often called smart sanctions.¹² Sanctions can be seen as a form of expression and a way to communicate displeasure with a certain behavior or action. In this, they satisfy a domestic need to do something.¹³ Sanctions aim at bringing about changes in the target state's political behavior.¹⁴ An important consideration behind many cases of sanctions is that they are employed in order for a government to show resolve or to make a public statement of displeasure.

⁸ See David A. Baldwin, "The Power of Positive Sanctions," *World Politics* 24:1 (October 1971): 23.

⁹ Cf. Richard N. Haass, "Introduction," in *Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy*, ed. Richard N. Haass (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), 3.

¹⁰ Harry L. Clark, "U.S. Economic Sanctions: Background and Glossary of Terms," International Economic Policy Advisory Committee (IEPAC), Washington, D.C.: Dewey Ballantine LLP (1999), quoted in Ruediger Frank, "The Political Economy of Sanctions against North Korea," *Asian Perspective* 30:3 (2006): 7.

¹¹ Marc Bossuyt, *The Adverse Consequences of Economic Sanctions on the Enjoyment of Human Rights* (Geneva: United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, 2000).

¹² Daniel W. Drezner, "Sanctions Sometimes Smart: Targeted Sanctions in Theory and Practice," *International Studies Review* 13:1 (March 2011): 96–108.

¹³ Haass, "Introduction," 3.

¹⁴ Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Revisited*, 3.

Japan's Current Sanctions Policy

Historically, Japan has been both the target and the sender of sanctions. It was hit by Russian sanctions in 1904–05, UK sanctions in 1917–18, and U.S. and Allied Powers' sanctions in 1939–45. It has also been the initiator, sanctioning Burma from 1988, the Gambia 1994–98, India and Pakistan 1999–2001,¹⁵ and the DPRK on various occasions in the post-Cold War period. The beginning of Japan's current sanctions policy was seen in 1991, when the Kaifu Toshiki government signaled a shift of Japanese aid policy by calling for the use of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) in support of peace, security, freedom, and democracy. Japan's policy on aid was codified in the ODA Charter that was adopted by a government decision in 1992, which made sanctions an integral part of Japan's ODA policy. In making aid decisions, policy-makers were to consider the situation in recipient states regarding: (1) trends in military expenditures; (2) development and production of weapons of mass destruction and missiles; (3) exports or imports of arms; and (4) democratization efforts, development of market-oriented economies, and status of human rights and freedom.¹⁶

After the introduction in 1992 of Japan's sanctions policy as part of its ODA Charter, it was almost immediately applied in several cases. In a reaction to Mongolia's democratization and steps towards introducing market economy, the Japanese government announced an ODA grant and later dispatched specialists to assist Mongolia.¹⁷ Similar steps were taken in case of the five Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. After their independence from the Soviet Union, these countries began to introduce economic reforms and democratization. The Japanese government pointed out that these countries "have never received any development assistance from Japan before, (and) they are not familiar with objectives and working mechanism of our ODA programme. [...] With this in mind, the government invited in April this year

¹⁵ Ibid., 20–41.

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan's ODA Charter," <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1997/09.html> (accessed March 2, 2012).

¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan's ODA 1993* (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Co-operation, 1993), 34.

two trainees in charge of coordination of foreign aid from each of these five countries.”¹⁸ The newly announced policy was also applied in the case of Vietnam. In an explicit support of Vietnam’s Doi Moi restructuring policy, Japan gave the country a commodity loan.¹⁹

The implementation of Japan’s sanctions policy has made its sanctions a mix of negative and positive sanctions. Positive sanctions, carrots, have been employed more often than negative sanctions, sticks.²⁰ From 1991 to 2002, for instance, negative sanctions were used in 16 cases, while positive sanctions were used in 15 cases.²¹ One argument used by the Japanese government for using carrots is that sticks can backfire and retard improvement.²²

The Japanese government’s reluctance to act has surfaced time and again over the years. This predilection is a result of Japan’s recent past as an imperialist and aggressive power, which has not been forgotten by countries ransacked and maltreated by prewar and wartime Japan. Neither have many Japanese forgotten that the expansionist policies practiced by their country from the Meiji period (1868–1912) until 1945 ended in national disaster and humiliation for Japan as a nation and people. A lodestar for “the newborn Japan” that emerged in 1945 has been “never again.” Accordingly, postwar Japan practiced for decades a “hands off” policy in international affairs. It was not interested in poking its nose into the affairs of other countries, however appalling their policies or internal conditions. Consequently, the Japanese government has had obvious problems in pursuing the principles of the ODA Charter considering the repercussions it might have on Japanese interests. It has argued that one reason for not acting too hastily is that both desirable and undesirable actions might be taken.²³ Japan has been prone to applying positive rather than negative sanctions, seemingly taking the opportunity to lift or soften negative sanctions if the sanctioned country has

¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹⁹ Ibid., 34.

²⁰ Inada Jūichi, “Jinken-minshuka to enjō seisaku: Nichibei hikakuron” [Human rights, democracy and aid policy: A comparison of Japan and the United States], *Kokusai mondai* 422 (May 1995): 5.

²¹ Miko Oishi and Fumitaka Furuoka, “Can Japanese Aid Be An Effective Tool of Influence? Case Studies of Cambodia and Burma,” *Asian Survey* 43:6 (2003): 891.

²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan’s ODA 1995* (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Co-operation, 1995), 48.

²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Japan’s ODA 1996* (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Co-operation, 1996), 38f.

taken some positive step or showed improvement that has been seen to be relevant.

That the Japanese government has pursued a cautious policy fits the views of many of its neighbors and is in line with what their peoples think behooves Japan, considering its prewar and wartime behavior. Thus, despite the Japanese government declaring a principled aversion against providing aid to countries engaging in human rights violations, and considering the fact that some of the worst perpetrators of crimes against human rights are found among Japan's neighbors, the Japanese government has often behaved in a way that prolific Western human rights proponents have not found reasonable. Japan has been roundly criticized for its reluctance to act or, if it has acted, for its slow or insufficient measures. Airing criticism that has continued to be heard ever since, David Arase, for instance, accused Japan for addressing the issue of democratization and human rights in a more or less perfunctory manner, telling that the announced principles had "proven to be more declaratory than substantive," with Japan having "refused to take appropriate stands in subsequent major policy tests."²⁴

Japan's reluctance to employ sanctions was seen in its reaction to the way the Tiananmen Square riots in 1989 were suppressed by the Chinese authorities, when Japan joined the G-7 countries and employed sanctions against China. Japan's actions included a suspension of the aid program, a freeze on an already agreed ODA loan of 810 billion yen, a suspension of high-level contacts, military links, and a number of economic and cultural exchanges.²⁵ The Japanese government did its best to mitigate the intensity of sanctions imposed by other Western donors and, spurred by Japanese business interests, soon resumed aid disbursement.²⁶ As a precondition to the resumption of new ODA projects, the Japanese government indicated that the Chinese government must adopt domestic policies that satisfied the standard of the international community.²⁷ Japan's sanctions were lifted after

²⁴ David Arase, "Japanese Policy toward Democracy and Human Rights in Asia," *Asian Survey* 33:10 (1993): 948.

²⁵ *Japan and Greater China: Political Economy and Military Power in the Asian Century*, ed. Greg Austin and Stuart Harris (London: C. Hurst, 2000), 186.

²⁶ Saori N. Katada, "Why did Japan Suspend Foreign Aid to China? Japan's Foreign Aid Decision-making and Sources of Aid Sanction," *Social Science Japan Journal* 4:1 (2001): 44.

²⁷ Juichi Inada, "Democracy and Stability: Political Considerations in Japan's ODA to Myanmar and China," in *In Pursuit of Common Values in Asia: Japan's ODA Charter*

a year, making it the first G-7 country to resume aid to China. Cases like this have made ODA researchers point out that “when the Japanese government yields to international pressures and imposes aid sanctions on a country that represents considerable economic interests, or has special relations with Japan, Tokyo will resume aid as soon as it finds the slightest convenient pretext to do so, even if there are no concrete signs of improvement.”²⁸

Another sanction took place when China conducted a nuclear testing on May 15, 1995. It was seen as a violation of what was stipulated in Japan’s ODA Charter and the Japanese government announced after a week that it was going to reduce its grant aid to China. This did not stop China from continuing its nuclear testing and, in protest, Japan suspended the grant portion of its aid to China and delayed disbursement of the loan portion. It was a largely symbolic action, however, since grant aid represented only a small portion of total aid.²⁹ The sanctions were lifted in March 1997 – a period roughly the same length as the sanctions following the Tiananmen Square riots. But it alerted the Japanese government to the negative effects that sanctions may have; the threat of stopping the aid program and the condemnation of China’s nuclear testing aroused nationalistic feelings in China and rekindled Chinese anti-Japanese sentiments.

Re-evaluated, ed. Tatsuro Matsumae and Lincoln C. Chen (Tokyo: Tokai University Press, 1997), 111.

²⁸ Larisa Nikitina and Fumitaka Furuoka, “Japan’s Foreign Aid Sanctions Policy after the End of Cold War,” *MPRA Paper 6757* (January 15, 2008), 13.

²⁹ Katada, “Why did Japan Suspend Foreign Aid to China?” 43f.

Japan's Two-Track Sanctions Policy Towards the DPRK

As can be seen from the above, when Japan began to deploy sanctions towards the DPRK, they were not a novelty for Japanese foreign policy. In one sense, sanctioning the DPRK has differed from other cases of Japanese sanctions in that the countries targeted in those cases have been recipients of Japanese ODA. Since Japan did not provide ODA to the DPRK, sanctions could not be based on the ODA Charter as in other cases. Cases of Japanese sanctions employed towards the DPRK will now be discussed chronologically. In accordance with the view that sanctions can be both negative and positive, both types will be considered.

Unilateral, Carrots (1990)

As noted, the Japanese government has had a predilection for using not negative but positive sanctions as a foreign policy tool. A prominent case was seen in the first high-level encounter between Japan and the DPRK in the postwar period. It took place in 1990 when a high-powered delegation visited Pyongyang. Members of the delegation came from Japan's ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the main opposition party, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), as well as the Japanese foreign ministry. The delegation leader was Japan's most influential politician at the time, Kanemaru Shin, vice-president of the LDP and a former deputy prime minister. The assertive action taken by the Kaifu government in dispatching the Kanemaru delegation was an attempt to take advantage of the openings that the end of the Cold War offered.

The visit produced unexpected results. The delegation had been sent to the DPRK to negotiate the release of two crewmen of the Japanese fishing boat *Dai 18 Fujisan maru* who were held captive by the DPRK. Agreement was reached quickly on their release but, in a totally unforeseen move, the North Koreans brought up the issue of diplomatic relations already at the first session. Not prepared for Pyongyang's overture, the Japanese were taken off guard. Overruling objections from the foreign ministry officials, Kanemaru decided to approve a joint declaration calling for normalization

talks between the Japanese and DPRK governments and a deepening of economic and cultural exchange. While the officials from the Japanese foreign ministry did not accede, the LDP and the JSP agreed with the DPRK side that Japan should not only apologize and provide appropriate compensation for the period of colonial rule but “officially apologize and compensate” to the DPRK for “the unhappiness and misery imposed on the Korean people for 36 years and the losses inflicted on the Korean people in the ensuing 45 years.”³⁰ While the scope of this compensation was not made clear, both the Japanese and the DPRK side were well aware that what were de facto reparations were considerable, maybe amounting to up to US\$10 billion. It was a whopping carrot that Kanemaru dangled before the North Koreans.

The diplomacy by the delegation was, to say the least, unusual, when the LDP and JSP members of the delegation joined the DPRK side by condemning Japan’s postwar DPRK policy. Similar denunciations of the policy pursued by the Japanese government had been issued on earlier occasions by delegations dispatched to the DPRK by the JSP, but this time the Japanese delegation did not represent only the JSP but had been dispatched by the Japanese government. Later, the U.S. ambassador to Japan succinctly captured what had probably occurred when he wrote that Kanemaru and his associates were “caught up in the ostentatious warmth of the North Koreans’ reception.”³¹

It is clear that it was Kanemaru on the Japanese side who was the driving force and who made the Japanese delegation accept the North Korean overtures for mutual recognition. From Kanemaru’s point of view, it made sense to go along with the North Koreans. His personal ambition was to enter the Japanese history books. One of the rare possibilities for a Japanese politician to do so is to secure an important diplomatic feat.³² Sorting out relations between Japan and the DPRK was such an opening to political stardom for a Japanese politician.³³ However, Kanemaru’s feat was discarded off hand

³⁰ For the text of the declaration, see Ishii Hajime, *Chikazuite kita tōi kuni* [A distant country getting closer] (Tokyo: Nihon seisansai hombu, 1991), 163–65.

³¹ Michael H. Armacost, *Friends or Rivals? The Insider’s Account of U.S.–Japan Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 149.

³² Watanabe Akio, “Nihon no taigai seisaku keisei no kikō to katei” [Structures and processes in Japanese foreign policymaking], in *Taigai seisaku kettei katei no Nichibei hikaku* [A comparison of Japanese and U.S. foreign policy decision-making processes], ed. Hosoya Chihiro and Watanuki Jōji (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1977), 34.

³³ Edström, “Troubled Encounter: Japan–DPRK Non-Relations,” 23.

by the Japanese government – it was unacceptable for the Japanese government that Japan would pay compensation for the postwar period. Adding to damage, Kanemaru had to apologize to the ROK as well as to the U.S. government.

Multilateral, Carrots (1993–95)

The Kanemaru debacle brought to light the degree to which Japan's policy vis-à-vis the DPRK was linked to Japan's relationships with both the United States and the ROK, and consequently, the constraints on Japan's freedom to act and negotiate. The unilateral action taken by Japan turned out to be anathema to South Korea and not acceptable to the United States and the Japanese government committed itself to coordinate policies with the United States and South Korea. This might be seen as quite natural given the fact that Japan and the U.S. had a mutual security treaty, but it soon dawned that the agreement reached would make the Japanese government have to consider actions and measures that were not altogether agreeable. The first such case occurred in 1993, when negative sanctions towards the DPRK became an option for the United States. In May 1993, the DPRK launched a Nodong-1 missile into the Sea of Japan and thus demonstrated that its missiles could now reach the southern half of Japan including Osaka. The launch was combined with shrill rhetoric – Pyongyang warned that the imposition of sanctions would be tantamount to a declaration of war. The Japanese government had to acquiesce to the U.S. view that it might become necessary to use more coercive measures for bringing the DPRK into compliance with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection regime. This was despite the fact that the use of negative sanctions had been discarded shortly before by Foreign Minister Mutō Kabun: "I think that as a diplomatic policy it is not good to make one state isolated when other states cooperate internationally. So I think we should avoid rapidly punishing anything at anytime as much as possible."³⁴ Furthermore, the former leading opposition party, the Social Democratic Party of Japan (the renamed JSP), which had become a member of the coalition government after the 1993 general election, was an old friend of the DPRK and resisted any move

³⁴ Quoted in Satoru Miyamoto, "Economic Sanctions by Japan against North Korea: Consideration of the Legislation Process for FEFTCL (February 2004) and LSMCIPESS (June 2004)," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 15:2 (2006): 26.

to accede to U.S. pressure for an imposition of sanctions.³⁵ The risk that the DPRK could resort to a violent and possibly preemptive response to the imposition of sanctions was seen as great.³⁶ A containment of the DPRK, such as the possible Japanese participation in a naval blockade as proposed by the Americans, was deemed “totally impossible” for Japan according to Deputy Cabinet Secretary Ishihara Nobuo.³⁷ The pressure on the Japanese government to engage in proactive activities lessened when former U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s intervention resulted in a cooling off of the critical situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula and the United States and the DPRK signed the so-called Agreed Framework on October 25, 1994 aimed at freezing the DPRK’s on-going nuclear activities.³⁸ Subsequently, the United States, Japan, and the ROK formed the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), a consortium to manage aid to the DPRK. The United States and other countries promised to provide crude oil and two light-water nuclear reactors in return for the DPRK dismantling its nuclear program. Japan agreed to contribute US\$1 billion to the construction of the reactors.

This time the situation differed from 1990 when Japan had acted on its own; Japan was now acting in concert with others. On the surface, the offer of this carrot was fully in line with traditional Japanese policies. However, the problem for the Japanese government was that it had not been consulted; yet, the U.S. and others just took it for granted that Japan would shoulder

³⁵ Christopher W. Hughes, “The North Korean Nuclear Crisis and Japanese Security,” *Survival* 38:2 (1996): 92.

³⁶ Marcus Noland, “The (Non) Impact of UN Sanctions on North Korea,” Peterson Institute for International Economics, *Working Paper* WP 08-12 (December 2008), 2f, <http://www.iie.com/publications/wp/wp08-12.pdf> (accessed October 8, 2011).

³⁷ Ishihara Nobuo, *Kantei 2668 nichi: Seisaku kettei no butaiura* [2668 days in the Prime Minister’s Office: What’s behind the political decisions] (Tokyo: NHK shuppan, 1995), 52. The political heavyweight Ozawa Ichirō argued that if sanctions and/or naval blockade would have an effect on North Korea, they should be used. Revealed by former Deputy Foreign Minister Yanai Shunji in *90 nendai no shōgen: Gaikō gekihen: Motogaimushō jūmujikan Yanai Shunji* [Witnessing the 1990s: Violent change: Former Deputy Foreign Minister Yanai Shunji], ed. Iokibe Makoto, Itō Motoshige, Yakushiji Katsuyuki (Tokyo: Asahi shimbunsha, 2007), 147.

³⁸ Yo Taik Song, *US-DPRK Agreed Framework and Implementation* (Seoul: Sejong Institute, 1998).

a sizeable share of the bill.³⁹ The Japanese government could not do much more than play along, pledging to cover part of the cost of the reactors.⁴⁰

But Japan also engaged in positive sanctions decided on its own terms. With the JSP's Murayama Tomiichi as the prime minister, the Japanese government strove to improve relations with the DPRK. In May 1995 Japan decided to donate 500,000 tons rice to the DPRK for humanitarian reasons in response to the famine conditions after a severe flooding. No reaction from the DPRK could be noticed, but ROK President Kim Young-sam was forthcoming. In a meeting with Murayama, Kim expressed understanding for Japan's shipments of rice to the DPRK and declared that it was "unnatural" [*fushizen*] that Japan and the DPRK did not have diplomatic relations.⁴¹ What might have been a response from Pyongyang came years later, when two small groups of Japanese women, who had emigrated to the DPRK, were allowed by the DPRK government to visit their families in Japan in November 1997 and early 1998.⁴²

Unilateral, Sticks+carrots (1998–99)

The next instance of Japan employing sanctions towards the DPRK differed from the above case both in the sense that it was a unilateral action as well as a negative one. On August 31, 1998, a Taep'odong-1 missile passed over Japan before it fell into the Pacific Ocean. In a twinkle of an eye, Japan's vulnerability had been demonstrated. The Japanese government announced that it would freeze all food aid to the DPRK, postpone signing the cost-sharing agreement for the KEDO project, and not pursue talks aimed at normalization.⁴³ The Japanese government also withdrew the permission to DPRK's Air Koryo for nine charter flights between Pyongyang

³⁹ Mark E. Manyin, "Japan-North Korea Relations: Selected Issues," *CRS Report for Congress* (November 26, 2003), 2f, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/27531.pdf> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁴⁰ Michael J. Green, *Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121f.

⁴¹ *Murayama Tomiichi ga kataru "temmei" no 561 nichi* [Murayama Tomiichi talks about 561 days of "fate"] (Tokyo: KK Bestsellers, 1996), 108–11.

⁴² David Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging toward Autonomy?" in *Japan in a Dynamic Asia: Coping with the New Security Challenges*, ed. Yoichiro Sato and Satu Limaye (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 143.

⁴³ Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Economic Power and Security: Japan and North Korea* (London: Routledge, 1999), 111.

and Nagoya and decided not to permit any chartered flights.⁴⁴ This took a toll on Pyongyang; these air cargo flights were used by the DPRK to carry agricultural commodities to Japan and were an important source of foreign currency.⁴⁵ However, the Japanese government was unable to convince the United States and the ROK to adopt a harder line towards the DPRK. Once again it was demonstrated that the Japanese government had to acquiesce to decisions made elsewhere.

On October 21 the Japanese government announced that it did not want to give the DPRK an excuse to resume nuclear weapons development by causing the collapse of the KEDO – the most realistic and effective framework for preventing the DPRK from developing these weapons – and would therefore reopen cooperation in KEDO.⁴⁶ Japan had been persuaded by the United States and the ROK to sign the KEDO agreements, and now reversed its negative posture after the U.S. government had offered to take “a firmer stance against the further testing, production and export of ballistic missiles by North Korea and to consult closely with Japan and South Korea on these issues.”⁴⁷ On November 2 the Japanese government continued softening its stance by partially lifting its sanctions on the DPRK, including the ban on charter flights and restrictions on unofficial contacts with DPRK authorities, and decided to take up the stalled normalization negotiations.⁴⁸

This decision by the Japanese government to lift the sanctions can in itself be seen as a positive sanction.⁴⁹ And Japan was to add more carrots. In January 1999, the Japanese government announced that it “would be prepared to work toward improving relations with North Korea through

⁴⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 1999*, Chapter 1: General Overview, B. Major Events, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1999/1-b.html#2> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁴⁵ Miyamoto, “Economic Sanctions by Japan against North Korea,” 27; Christopher W. Hughes, “The Political Economy of Japanese Sanctions towards North Korea: Domestic Coalitions and International Systemic Pressures,” *Pacific Affairs* 79:3 (Fall 2006): 462.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 1999*, Chapter 1: General Overview, B. Major Events.

⁴⁷ Yoichiro Sato, “US North Korea policy: the ‘Japan factor’,” in *North Korea Policy: Japan and the Great Powers*, ed. Linus Hagström and Marie Söderberg (London: Routledge, 2006), 82.

⁴⁸ Victor Cha, “DPRK Dialogue: A Little Luck the Fourth Time Round?” *Comparative Connections* 1:3 (January 2000), 66, <http://csis.org/programs/pacific-forum-csis/comparative-connections/vol-1-no-3-jan-2000> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁴⁹ On the lifting of sanctions as constituting a carrot, see Haass, “Introduction,” 3; Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Revisited*, 169.

dialogue and exchange provided that North Korea shows a constructive response towards resolution of international concerns over its ballistic missiles and suspected hidden nuclear facilities, as well as to the resolution of outstanding problems between Japan and North Korea, including the suspected cases of abduction of Japanese citizens."⁵⁰

It seems Pyongyang perceived Japan's stance as hardening. On August 10, 1999, the DPRK government issued a statement shifting from a focus on Japanese economic compensation for the annexation period to "obtaining a guarantee for the Kim Jong Il regime" and "easing the military threat from Japan."⁵¹ In Tokyo, this statement was interpreted as a call on Japan for improved relations. The DPRK also showed restraint by suspending missile launches while high-level talks with the United States were underway.⁵²

Unilateral, Carrots (1999–2002)

In this situation of easing strains, a suprapartisan delegation, led by former Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi, visited the DPRK in December 1999. The delegation was largely dispatched in order to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of dialogue. The former premier carried a letter to the DPRK's leader Kim Jong Il from Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō that expressed hope for improved relations. After Murayama's visit, Japan added even more carrots by lifting the remaining sanctions, including those on food aid.⁵³ By then the sanctions had been in effect for about one year.

Japan continued to offer carrots. In March 2000 it was announced that it would provide 100,000 tons of rice through the World Food Program, which met an important precondition from the DPRK for resuming normalization talks.⁵⁴ This was followed Red Cross talks that resulted in visits to Japan by Japanese wives married to Koreans living in the DPRK and a renewed effort to investigate cases of "missing" Japanese citizens. The DPRK also

⁵⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2000*, Chapter 1: General Overview, B: Major Events in 1999, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2000/index.html> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁵¹ Hajime Izumi, "Pyongyang Grasps New Realities," *Japan Quarterly* 47:2 (April-June 2000): 13.

⁵² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2000*, Chapter 1: General Overview, B: Major Events in 1999.

⁵³ Victor D. Cha, "Japan's Engagement Dilemmas with North Korea," *Asian Survey* 41:4 (2001): 551.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 552.

expressed its gratitude for the rice.⁵⁵ At the ninth round of normalization talks in April after seven and a half years of impasse, both sides repeated their previous positions. The Japanese side emphasized that resolving the abduction issue was critical, while the DPRK side demanded an apology for the colonial period and compensation while rejecting Japan's demands that the ballistic missile threat and abduction issue should be addressed.⁵⁶ At the tenth round in August, progress was seen when the DPRK side did not totally discard Japan's offer to provide "economic aid" and furthermore, indicated it would continue its search for "missing Japanese."⁵⁷

The positive tone that had been noted at the tenth round of talks continued in the preparation for the eleventh round in October in a way that demonstrated how the Japanese government took into account the interests of the ROK. Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō's successor Mori Yoshirō had acted on the advice from South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and in a letter to the DPRK's leader Kim Jong Il proposed a summit meeting between Japan and the DPRK.⁵⁸ Once again, the Japanese government announced that it would provide food aid, this time 500,000 tons of rice. Also this time, the DPRK expressed its gratitude for Japan's food aid.⁵⁹

With this foretaste of coming riches that would follow "economic cooperation" after relations had been normalized, the Japanese negotiators acted on Pyongyang's perceived willingness to come to terms with Japan that had been demonstrated at the tenth round. At the subsequent meeting; the Japanese negotiators told that Japan was prepared to provide an "economic aid" package amounting to US\$9 billion (60 percent in grant aid and 40 percent in loans). The DPRK side denounced Japan's offer as an attempt to sidestep an admission of colonial repentance and rejected the idea of receiving

⁵⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2001*, C: Notable Developments in 2000, 1. Korean Peninsula Situation, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2001/index.html> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁵⁶ Cha, "Japan's Engagement Dilemmas with North Korea," 552.

⁵⁷ Myonwoo Lee, "Japanese-North Korean Relations: Going in Circles," in *North Korea and Northeast Asia*, ed. Samuel S. Kim and Tai Hwan Lee (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 90f.

⁵⁸ Victor D. Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: Ending 2000 with a Whimper, Not a Bang," *Comparative Connections* 2:4 (January 2001), 93, http://csis.org/files/media/csispubs/0004qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁵⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2001*, C: Notable Developments in 2000, 1. Korean Peninsula Situation.

“economic assistance,” and returned to its earlier demand for “reparations” tied to an apology.⁶⁰

The offer implied a significant shift in the objective pursued by Japan. The rationale for the package was not to pay reparations for the annexation period but to handle the missile threat and reach a satisfactory resolution to the abduction issue.⁶¹ Furthermore, if the offer had been accepted, it is not unlikely that no compensation for the annexation period would be forthcoming. Quite simply, would the Japanese people be prepared to first pay US\$9 billion for moderation on the missile threat and a solution of the abduction issue, and subsequently pay a similar amount as compensation for the annexation period? Most certainly not.

It is clear that presenting the “economic cooperation” offer was to take a chance that did not work. The offer was probably based on a miscalculation on part of Japan in a belief that quick results could be reached given the DPRK’s stark need for aid, especially food aid, and interest in the considerable amount of money that Japan was prepared to offer. It is true that the package was huge in comparison to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the impoverished DPRK, estimated to amount to US\$10 billion in 2002,⁶² but to disregard the DPRK’s demand for an apology was to underestimate the national pride of the North Koreans and made them back down from the constructive stance that had been discerned during the tenth round.

The hint of a change in Pyongyang’s mood seems to have some ground despite the demonstrated intransigence from the DPRK at the eleventh round of normalization talks. Pyongyang seems to have begun to reconsider its strategy. When George W. Bush replaced Bill Clinton as U.S. president, the DPRK probably realized that the prospects of an agreement with the U.S. on the nuclear issue had evaporated; thus, Pyongyang is likely to have concluded that Japan would not be abandoned by the United States. Thus, Pyongyang did now once again do what it did when the Cold War was over and it had been abandoned to a large extent by China and the Soviet Union, its two primary supporters – it made advances to Japan. Soon after President Bush’s inauguration in January 2001, Pyongyang turned to cultivating Japan and floated the idea of a summit meeting.⁶³ This played into the hands

⁶⁰ Cha, “Ending 2000 with a Whimper, Not a Bang,” 93f.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶² CIA, *World Factbook 2002*, quoted in Manyin, “Japan-North Korea Relations,” 9f.

⁶³ Yoshihide Soeya, “Japanese Diplomacy and the North Korean Problem,” *Japan*

of the charismatic and popular Koizumi Jun'ichirō, who succeeded Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō in April 2001. This shift in Japanese domestic politics proved crucial. Koizumi had a strong backing among the Japanese public and thus ample room for taking initiatives. He was a proponent of *shunō gaikō*, or "leader-led diplomacy," also called *Kantei gaikō*, Cabinet Office-led diplomacy.⁶⁴ And he was willing to take risks on his own.⁶⁵ Not long after he came into office, he decided that it was time to act.

While there were a number of issues vitally important for Japan – such as nuclear development, missiles, the settlement of the past and normalization – the abduction issue towered above all others in the eyes of the general public (Figure 1). Koizumi realized that the issue had to be tackled decisively to overcome the diplomatic inflexibility resulting from the public opinion in Japan that was increasingly hostile towards dealings with the DPRK.⁶⁶ He saw the possibility for progress residing in a summit meeting between the leaders of the two countries, and initiated negotiations in utter secrecy in order to realize a visit to Pyongyang. After a year of long and arduous negotiations, it was announced that he was going to visit Pyongyang.⁶⁷

Koizumi's meeting with the DPRK's leader Kim Jong Il on September 17, 2002, was a showpiece of give and take. To secure progress, Koizumi angled with a gargantuan carrot. Japan promised "economic assistance" in the form of grant aid, long-term soft loans, and humanitarian assistance via international organizations, while the DPRK reciprocated by promising compliance with international law, pledging to take appropriate measures so that the "regrettable incidents" that had taken place in the past would not again be repeated. Both countries agreed to fulfill "all related international agreements" pertaining to nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula.⁶⁸

Review of International Affairs 17:1 (Spring 2003): 55.

⁶⁴ The standard work is Tomohito Shinoda, *Koizumi Diplomacy: Japan's Kantei Approach to Foreign and Defense Affairs* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2007).

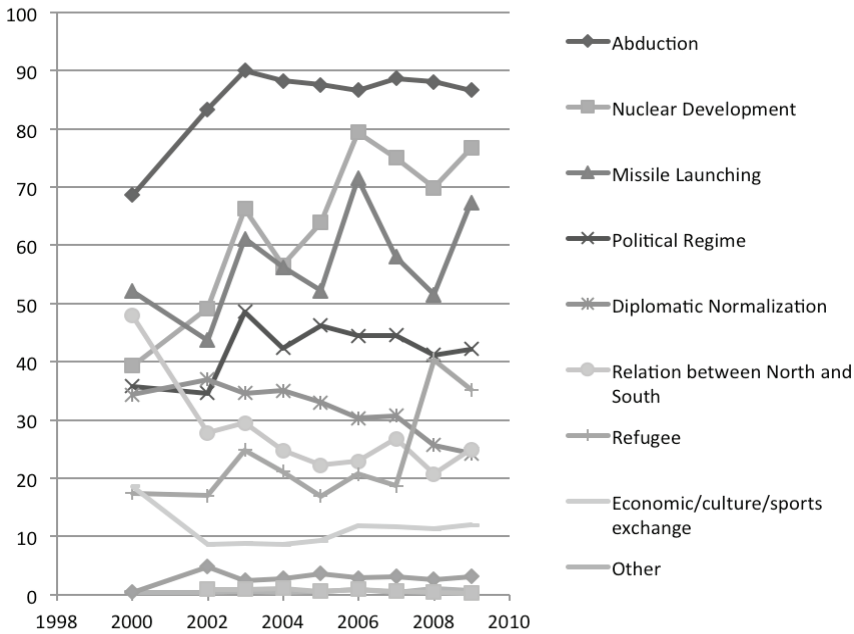
⁶⁵ Iokibe Makoto, "Japanese diplomacy after the Cold War," in *The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan*, ed. Iokibe Makoto (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 203.

⁶⁶ Tanaka Hitoshi and Tahara Sōichirō, *Kokka to gaikō* [The nation and diplomacy] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005), 27–29.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan–DPRK Pyongyang Declaration," http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n_korea/pmv0209/pyongyang.html (accessed November 11, 2011).

Figure 1. Japan–DPRK Issues According to Opinion Polls



Source: Norihito Kubota, “The Structure of Impasse: The Complexity of Japan’s North Korean Issues,” Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Asia Paper* (October 2010), 13. Based on Cabinet Office, “Gaikō ni kansuru yoron chōsa” [Opinion polls on diplomacy], 2000–2009.

Koizumi also apologized for the occupation period and Kim apologized for what he, only now, admitted – that 13 Japanese citizens had been abducted by the DPRK of whom at least seven were dead.

Returning to Tokyo, Koizumi could list a number of important results. He had obtained information about the abductions of Japanese citizens for which Kim Jong Il had apologized; the DPRK had de facto accepted to do as the ROK did in 1965 and accept “economic cooperation” instead of reparations without Koizumi having to specify the amount that Japan was to provide; he had secured a moratorium on missiles after 2003; and he had persuaded Pyongyang to pursue nuclear and missile issues within a

multilateral framework.⁶⁹ Koizumi's achievement is an eminent example of the result that can ensue from a statesman's personal diplomacy.⁷⁰

But the ink of the leaders' signatures on the Japan–DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, the joint statement that was issued after the summit meeting, had hardly dried until the march on the path towards normalization derailed. What wrecked the effort was Kim's admission of DPRK abductions of Japanese citizens. It was news that made anti-North Korea feelings run high in Japan. The Japanese turned from seeing their country as perpetrator of aggression and maltreatment of the Korean people during the annexation period. Kim's revelation made Japan, not Korea, the victim. This victimization of Japan became crucial for subsequent developments.⁷¹

Unilateral+multilateral, Sticks (2003)

The virtual failure of Koizumi's effort to advance towards normalization of relations became apparent soon after the summit meeting. In its aftermath, the abduction issue loomed larger than before and this made efforts to improve relations difficult. The relatively unknown LDP politician Abe Shinzō offered the Japanese people his services as a hard-hitting North Korea basher. In the mood prevailing in Japan after the disturbing news that abductees had perished, his anti-DPRK sermon was enthusiastically received. On his hand, Koizumi tried to keep the normalization process on track. On the bilateral level, he seems to have wanted to boost the prospects by opening up for something that the North Koreans were known to value. A few days after his return from Pyongyang, he indicated that Japan might resume rice aid to the DPRK even before normalization.⁷² In the context of Japanese domestic politics, his attempt to advance the normalization negotiations came to naught, however, following a shrill concert of objections and accusations from right-wing politicians and organizations supporting the families of the kidnapped picked up by mainstream media. In fact, Koizumi increasingly allowed the anti-North Korea basher Abe a free hand to

⁶⁹ Edström, "Troubled Encounter: Japan–DPRK Non-Relations," 48ff.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 53ff.

⁷² "Chronology of Japan-Korea Relations, July-September 2002," *Comparative Connections* 4:3 (October 2002), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0203qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

pursue the abduction issue and the sanctions legislations in his own style.⁷³ Also when he had been elevated to top governmental position, Abe had no problem to go public with his view in favor of sanctions, assuring the public that “time will work to our advantage,” since North Korea’s economic difficulties would inevitably force it to surrender to the Japanese resolution.⁷⁴

A blow to Koizumi’s effort to bring about a breakthrough came when news spread that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly after a visit to Pyongyang had disclosed that the DPRK had acknowledged it was working on an enriched uranium development program. This violated the 1994 Agreed Framework. The news broke on October 17 but the Japanese government had been informed by Kelly already on October 6 on his way back to Washington. This led the Japanese government to act in bringing home the surviving abductees and they arrived in Japan on October 15. In Pyongyang, the Japanese delegation had agreed that the visit was temporary, but facing the outrage against North Korea expressed in media at the return of the abductees, the Japanese government announced that it had decided that the five abductees would not return to Pyongyang. At a meeting in November, the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group – an effort at trilateral cooperation on the DPRK – discussed whether heavy fuel oil shipments to the DPRK, as promised under the 1994 Agreed Framework, should be suspended or not. The ROK and Japanese sides agreed with the United States to accept a shipment that was already on its way and initiate suspension in December. The Japanese government clarified that it was unlikely to give food aid to the DPRK.⁷⁵

The DPRK seems to have tested Japan’s resilience in early 2003 with two anti-ship missiles in the direction of Japan in late February and early March. The response of the Japanese government was to downplay the incidents, announcing that the first did not technically violate the ballistic missile testing moratorium and that it had received advance notification in the second case.⁷⁶ These incidents agitated Japan’s anti-DPRK lobby. LDP lawmakers

⁷³ Hughes, “The Political Economy of Japanese Sanctions Towards North Korea,” 469.

⁷⁴ Abe Shinzō, “Tokushū Kitachōsen mondai no miezaru saizensen: Jikan wa wareware ni yūri ni hataraku” [Special Edition: The not-so-visible frontline of North Korean issues: Time will work to our advantage], *Chūō kōron* (August 2003): 62.

⁷⁵ Victor D. Cha, “Japan-Korea Relations: The Sweet, the Sour, and the Bittersweet,” *Comparative Connections* 4:4 (January 2003), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0204qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁷⁶ Victor D. Cha, “Japan-Korea Relations: Contemplating Sanctions,” *Comparative*

initiated legislation to ban port visits by vessels believed to be engaged in espionage.⁷⁷ In order not to be totally flattened by the ruling coalition, the main opposition party DPJ introduced in March 2003 a proposal in the Diet to prevent DPRK ships from calling at Japanese ports. The ruling LDP followed suit in April; in June 2003 legislation was passed and Japanese customs, immigration, and the Japan Coast Guard expanded their safety inspections and searches for illicit contraband on DPRK cargo and passenger ships. By enforcing the strict obedience of rules and regulations, Japan employed what were not formally, yet in reality, sanctions. These quasi sanctions were to significantly reduce trade between Japan and the DPRK.⁷⁸

Japan went further than only take unilateral actions. In May 2003 Prime Minister Koizumi met President George W. Bush and declared that Japan was going to take part in the Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) shipments to and from countries such as the DPRK.⁷⁹ Japan was the only Asian country to join the United States, an action taken by Koizumi in order to demonstrate in no uncertain terms Japan's support of the United States.⁸⁰

In the campaign for the general election on November 9, 2003, the ruling LDP made the abduction issue a winning issue with political candidates eagerly picking up the disgust of ordinary Japanese. Throwing gasoline on the anti-North Korea fire Abe Shinzō turned out a formidable campaigner for his party. The DPJ and the Komeito noted his success and quickly introduced plans for sanctions into their election platforms.⁸¹ This made the DPJ

Connections 5:1 (February 7, 2003), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0301qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Between 2003 and 2008, Japan's export to the DPRK diminished from 10.6 billion yen to 790 million yen, import from 20.1 billion yen to zero. See Narushige Michishita, "Japan's Policy towards North Korea since 2002," *Journal for International & Strategic Studies* 4 (Spring 2011), 68.

⁷⁹ Samuel S. Kim, *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War World* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, [2007]), 46.

⁸⁰ For the Coral Sea exercises, see Victor D. Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: What a Difference A Year Makes...," *Comparative Connections* 5:3 (October 2003), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0303qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed November 11, 2011).

⁸¹ Ōtake Hideo, *Koizumi Jun'ichirō popyurizumu no kenkyū: Sono senryaku to shuhō* [Research into the populism of Koizumi Jun'ichirō: Strategy and methods] (Tokyo: Tōyō keizai shimpōsha, 2006), 226; Yomiuri shimbun seijibu, *Gaikō o kenka ni shita otoko: Koizumi gaikō 2000 nichi no shinjitsu* [The man who turned foreign policy into a fight: The truth about the 2000 days of the Koizumi foreign policy] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2006), 49f.

improve its credentials with voters and the party strengthened its position in the Diet, while the DSPJ that had been a supporter of the DPRK in the past performed weakly in the election. The party's longtime leader Doi Takako had to resign as its lack of voter support was widely interpreted as a result of her identification with a party that had denied the abductions for years.⁸²

Three weeks after the general election, the LDP introduced an amendment to Japan's Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law that would make it possible to unilaterally impose economic sanctions towards the DPRK, independent of the United Nations Security Council. Within three months it had become law.⁸³

Multilateral, Carrots (2003-04)

On a multilateral arena, Japan once again showed its willingness to use positive sanctions at the first round of the Six-Party Talks that convened in Beijing in August 2003. The Talks were aimed at coming up with a peaceful resolution to the problems created by the DPRK's nuclear program. Participating countries were the DPRK, China, the United States, the ROK, Japan, and Russia. At this stage, the United States saw no use of offering concessions since the North Koreans might perceive this as a sign of weakness, but the Japanese government proposed a resumption of fuel oil supplies as well as a support framework for dealing with the DPRK's energy needs. In return Pyongyang was to abandon its nuclear weapons program, accept IAEA inspections, and forsake both the export and deployment of ballistic missiles.⁸⁴

The anger over the abductions and perceived unwillingness from the DPRK to clarify facts about the fate of the abductees increased the disgust of the general public in Japan. Members of the families of the abductees became celebrities. Influential politicians joined them and the opening for

⁸² Tim Shorrock, "Japanese hawks soar on Korea fears," *Asia Times Online*, November 26, 2003, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/EK26Dh03.html> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁸³ Richard J. Samuels, "Payback Time: Japan–North Korea Economic Relations," in *A New International Engagement Framework for North Korea? Contending Perspectives*, ed. Ahn Choong-yong, Nicholas Eberstadt, and Lee Young-sun (Washington, D.C.: Korea Economic Institute of America, 2004), 322f.

⁸⁴ "Talking with North Korea: Japan to Go Its Own Way at 6-Nation Talks," *Asahi shimbun* online edition, August 26, 2003; as quoted in Fouse, "Japan's Post-Cold War North Korea Policy: Hedging toward Autonomy," 150.

improving relations with “the close but distant neighbor” fizzled away. Despite the ever-mounting pressure from a vocal public opinion on the government to take stern action, Prime Minister Koizumi made a second visit to Pyongyang on May 22, 2004 in order to negotiate the return of the abductees’ family members who were living in North Korea. The DPRK’s leader Kim Jong Il did not waver and told Koizumi that his country had to maintain a nuclear deterrent but also stated that his goal was to achieve a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula. Kim reassured Koizumi that the DPRK would maintain a moratorium on missile firing tests. For Koizumi, the most important achievement was that he succeeded in making Pyongyang allow five children of the repatriated abductees accompany him back to Japan; two children of one of the abductees, Soga Hitomi, who had married the American Charles Jenkins who had defected to the DPRK, were promised to meet their mother in a third country. On his part, Koizumi pledged that Japan would not invoke economic sanctions as long as the DPRK observed the terms of the joint declaration from the first summit. He also promised that Japan would deliver 250,000 tons of food and US\$10 million worth of medical assistance through international organizations.⁸⁵

The reaction in Japan was negative. According to a poll, 64 percent of the Japanese believed that Koizumi had paid too high a price at the second summit, although they were positive for his efforts to bring home the family members of the five surviving abductees.⁸⁶ However, according to Victor Cha, a leading U.S. specialist of Korean affairs, it was not Koizumi’s carrots that carried the day, but the sticks. In an analysis Cha argued that it was crucial that the new foreign exchange legislation would allow Japanese authorities to cut off financial remittances to the DPRK and ban imports of North Korean goods *plus* ban port calls *plus* enhance Tokyo’s central role in maritime exercises in the Coral Sea by the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), aimed at curtailing the illicit transfer of WMD-related materials.⁸⁷ What was certain was that the outcome of the second Koizumi–Kim

⁸⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2005* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2005), 24.

⁸⁶ Hong Nack Kim, “The Koizumi Government and the Politics of Normalizing Japanese–North Korean Relations,” *East-West Center Working Paper, Politics, Governance and Security Series* 14 (February 2006), 25.

⁸⁷ Victor Cha, “Japan-Korea Relations: Engagement from Strength,” *Comparative Connections* 6:2 (July 2004), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0402qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed November 11, 2011); Jeff Kingston, *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics,*

meeting demonstrated the crucial importance that the abductions had taken on as a political issue in Japanese domestic politics.

Multilateral + Unilateral, Sticks (2004–08)

Had Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang been an exercise of dialogue, he did not forget to also exercise the other part of the slogan that captured Japan's approach to the DPRK, "dialogue and pressure." Two days after his second visit to Pyongyang, Koizumi met President George W. Bush. The Japanese prime minister officially endorsed the line that Japan was going to pursue both "dialogue and pressure."⁸⁸ Shortly afterwards a new stick was mobilized by Japan. In an attempt to pressure the DPRK to make concessions, the DPJ cooperated with the LDP on a law to ban certain foreign ships from making port calls in Japan, and in June 2004 the Japanese Diet enacted the Law to Prevent Designated Ships From Visiting Japanese Ports. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Koizumi continued to resist pressure to take quick action. In October he reiterated that he preferred dialogue with the DPRK over economic sanctions. In November it was reported that Koizumi intended to continue humanitarian food aid to the DPRK despite the debate over the abduction issue. A month later, he stressed that it was important to normalize relations between Japan and the DPRK even though he could not forgive the abductions. While he made clear that he doubted the effectiveness of sanctions the mood elsewhere was different. On December 10, the Diet adopted a resolution recommending that the Japanese government consider imposing economic sanctions on the DPRK for failing to provide information on the abductees. Both the ruling LDP and the opposition DPJ made preparations to enact a North Korea Human Rights Act that included the potential use of economic sanctions.⁸⁹

The prime minister became more and more isolated on the abduction issue but he continued to try to keep the normalization option alive. One of

and Social Change Since the 1980s (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 137.

⁸⁸ Uchiyama Yū, *Koizumi seiken: "Patosu no shūsho" wa nani o kaeta no ka* [The Koizumi government: What has "the patosu prime minister" changed?] (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2007), 153.

⁸⁹ David C. Kang, "Japan-Korea Relations: Improving and Maturing, but Slowly," *Comparative Connection* 6:4 (January 2005), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0404qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

his top officials, Abe Shinzō, who had argued for sanctions as a way to make the DPRK succumb, was out engaging in free talk of the need to precipitate a regime change. According to him, "regime change" in the DPRK was a distinct possibility, arguing that "we need to start simulations of what we should do at that time."⁹⁰

In January 2005 it was reported that Koizumi downplayed the idea of prioritizing the abduction issue over the nuclear issue in Japan's dealing with the DPRK. He argued that the issues should be solved "comprehensively," and "none should be particularly delayed."⁹¹ In June, he disavowed sanctions again and also told that Japan could not just impose sanctions, since it had to respect views of the other countries in the Six-Party Talks and also had to cooperate with its neighbors.⁹² Meanwhile, an amendment to the Law on Liability for Oil Pollution Damage had taken effect on March 1. It prevented foreign ships weighing more than 100 tons with inadequate insurance from docking at Japanese ports. This measure was in reality a new exercise of a quasi-sanction taken towards the DPRK because most DPRK freighters were not covered by the necessary insurance and were in effect banned from Japanese ports.⁹³

The stalemate in Japanese–DPRK relations continued. To signal its displeasure with DPRK intransigence, the Japanese government decided a week before a new round of the Six-Party Talks in February 2006 to continue its suspension of food aid to the DPRK.⁹⁴ In domestic politics further moves were taken. In March, the LDP increased its pressure on the Koizumi government by submitting a bill that would force the government to impose

⁹⁰ Jim Lobe, "Hawks push regime change in N Korea," *Asia Times Online*, November 24, 2004, <http://atimes.com/atimes/Korea/FK24Dg01.html> (accessed November 10, 2011); "Tokyo might force Pyongyang to bend," *AsiaNews.it*, December 13, 2004, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tokyo-might-force-Pyongyang-to-bend-2103.html> (accessed November 11, 2011),

⁹¹ David C. Kang, "Japan-Korea Relations: History Impedes the Future," *Comparative Connections* 7:1 (April 2005), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0501qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁹² David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: Little Progress on North Korea or History Disputes," *Comparative Connections* 7:2 (July 2005), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0502qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁹³ Brendan Taylor, *Sanctions as Grand Strategy* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2010), 39; Kang, "Japan-Korea Relations: History Impedes the Future."

⁹⁴ David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: *Seirei Ketsuzetsu* (Cold Politics, Warm Economics)," *Comparative Connections* 8:1 (April 2006), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0601qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

economic sanctions if no improvements on the abduction issue were seen, and in April the Diet deliberated on a human rights bill authorizing the government to impose economic sanctions “when recognizing that there were no improvements in the abduction issue and other North Korean human rights abuses against the Japanese.”⁹⁵

The new legislation became law in September 2006. By then the tense situation surrounding the Japan–DPRK relations had worsened. On July 5 seven Taep’odong missiles were fired by the DPRK. The launch was in abject breach of the Japan–DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, which includes a commitment from the DPRK to “maintain the moratorium on missile launching in and after 2003.” Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe Shinzō announced that “Japan will take any kind of sanctions we can” against the DPRK.⁹⁶ The Japanese government immediately implemented unilateral sanctions, including the ban of DPRK nationals from entering Japan as well as port calls by the ferry *Man’gongbong-92*, a ferry shuttling between Wonsan in the DPRK and Niigata in Japan – a direct link between the two countries often said to be North Korea’s life-line.⁹⁷

For China, the missiles were annoying because its leverage over the DPRK was shown to be wanting. Already before the launch of the missiles, Beijing had cautioned both publicly and privately Pyongyang not to proceed.⁹⁸ When the DPRK went ahead, the Japanese government urged the UN Security Council to convene an urgent meeting. It also presented a draft UN Security Council resolution.⁹⁹ Although Japan’s initial resolution was rejected, on June 15 the Security Council adopted Resolution 1695 that was supported also by China. The resolution required UN member states

⁹⁵ James L. Schoff, “Political Fences & Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policy Making in Japan & Implications for the United States,” The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Project Report (June 2006), 19, <http://www.ifpa.org/pdf/fences.pdf> (accessed October 8, 2011).

⁹⁶ Hisane Masaki, “N Korea’s missiles met by Japanese sanctions,” Asia Times Online, July 6, 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/HG06Dg02.html> (accessed July 5, 2011).

⁹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2007*, Chapter 2 (1), http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2007/pdf/pdfs/2_1.pdf (accessed July 5, 2011).

⁹⁸ Noland, “The (Non) Impact of UN Sanctions on North Korea,” 2f.

⁹⁹ David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, “Japan-Korea Relations: Missiles and Prime Ministers May Mark a Turning Point,” *Comparative Connections* 8:3 (October 2006), http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/0603qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

to prevent the transfer and procurement of missile and missile-related items, materials, goods and technology to and from the DPRK as well as the transfer of any financial resources in relation to its missile or Weapons of Mass Destructions programs.¹⁰⁰ Russia, a traditional DPRK supporter, also voted for the resolution, which indicated that the diplomatic support for the DPRK had seriously eroded.¹⁰¹ Two months later, on September 19, the Japanese government announced the imposition of new sanctions that targeted remittances and transfers of financial assets to those in the DPRK who were supposedly involved in its WMD programs or missile programs, and were more extensive than measures listed in the UNSC resolution.¹⁰²

A week later, Abe Shinzō assumed the post of prime minister. While in office he was preoccupied with the abduction issue, which should not be surprising given that he had made a political career as a one-issue politician with the abduction issue central to his political platform.¹⁰³ When he presented his policy speech in the Diet on September 29, 2006, he did not mince his words:

There can be no normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea unless the abduction issue is resolved. [...] Under the policy of dialogue and pressure, I will continue to strongly demand the return of all abductees assuming that they are all still alive. Regarding nuclear and missile issues, I will strive to seek resolution through the Six-Party Talks, while ensuring close coordination between Japan and the United States.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ "Security Council Condemns Nuclear Test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Missiles Launches, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1695 (2006)," UN Security Council, 5490th Meeting, July 15, 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8778.doc.htm> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹⁰¹ Peter Hayes, "Embrace Tiger, Retreat to Mountain, Test Nuke," *Nautilus Institute, Policy Forum Online* 06-06A (2006) (accessed November 8, 2011).

¹⁰² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Press Conference with Deputy Press Secretary Tomohiko Taniguchi, September 19, 2006, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/2006/9/0919.html> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹⁰³ Richard Haass has pointed out that the increased strength of single-issue constituencies has resulted in sanctions being employed more frequently. See Haass, "Introduction," 3.

¹⁰⁴ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, "Policy Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the 165th Session of the Diet," September 29, 2006, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/09/29speech_e.html (accessed October 8, 2011).

In October the situation became alarming. Pyongyang announced its intention to test a nuclear device, which made China reiterate its warning to Pyongyang not to proceed – but to no avail. The test was performed when newly appointed Prime Minister Abe was en route from Beijing to Seoul on a face-mending trip to China and the ROK. Shortly after he landed in Seoul, information reached him of the DPRK's first nuclear test.¹⁰⁵ A troublesome aspect to Tokyo was that the test demonstrated that despite its alleged influence, not even China appeared to be able to dissuade Pyongyang. To China, the test was a slap in the face since President Hu Jintao had expressed his concerns in talks with Abe during his visit to Beijing.¹⁰⁶ Beijing described the test as a “flagrant and brazen” violation of international opinion and shifted towards supporting more robust sanctions towards the DPRK.¹⁰⁷ The prospect of a nuclear-armed neighbor that might force Japan to reconsider its non-nuclear policies must have been alarming for China and threatened to result in an arms race where there were only losers.

A tangible effect of the nuclear test was that it contributed to more amicable Japanese–Chinese relations. At Abe's visit to Beijing, the Chinese leaders “expressed their understanding of the high level of concerns that the Japanese people have” with regard to the abduction of Japanese citizens. The prime minister also gained the understanding of the Chinese side when he explained Japan's position in regard to the abduction issue.¹⁰⁸ Backed by the fact that he obtained support from Chinese leaders, the hard-liner Abe took immediate action. While still in Seoul, he announced that the Japanese government “shall immediately embark on consideration of harsh measures.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Wakamiya Yoshibumi, *Wakai to nashonarizumu* [Reconciliation and nationalism] (Tokyo: Asahi shimbunsha, 2006), 12.

¹⁰⁶ Bert Edström, “The Success of a Successor: Abe Shinzo and Japan's Foreign Policy,” Central Asia Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, *Silk Road Paper* (May 2007), 56.

¹⁰⁷ David E. Sanger, “North Koreans Say They Tested Nuclear Device,” *The New York Times*, October 9, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/09/world/asia/09korea.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed March 8, 2012).

¹⁰⁸ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, “Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Following His Visit to China,” October 8, 2006, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/10/08chinapress_e.html (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, “Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Following His Visit to the Republic of Korea,” October 9, 2006, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/10/09koreapress_e.html (accessed October 8, 2011).

Two days later new sanctions had been rushed through the Diet. They were based on the human rights bill that had passed the Diet in April 2006. A total ban on DPRK ships entering Japanese ports, all imports from DPRK and a ban on DPRK nationals from entering Japan (excepting those living in Japan) were imposed. In early November, Tokyo expanded its sanctions by banning the export to North Korea of 24 luxury items, including beef, tuna meat, caviar, liquor, cars, motorcycles, yachts, watches, cameras, movie and music devices, jewelry, and tobacco, which together accounted for 16 per cent of goods exported to the DPRK from Japan in 2005.¹¹⁰

It was not only Japan that hammered on the DPRK. In Seoul, Abe declared that he was also considering what multilateral actions could be taken and that had instructed his government to "request the UN Security Council to immediately launch consultations with a view to taking firm action on North Korea's nuclear test issue." On October 14, 2006, UN Security Council Resolution 1718 was adopted condemning the nuclear test. The resolution embargoed exports of heavy weapons, dual-use items, and luxury goods to the DPRK, as well as the importation of heavy weapons systems from the DPRK.¹¹¹ These sanctions have been described as "light" by a sanctions researcher, and as part of a larger strategy that entailed the DPRK rulers to stay in power; thus, the sanctions had mainly a signaling function.¹¹²

The nuclear test worried the U.S. government. At a session of the Six-Party Talks in February 2007, the United States altered its stance from defying any attempt to seriously engage with Pyongyang to taking steps to reengage with the reclusive state, deciding to hold bilateral talks. While the other parties agreed at the session to initially supply 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil as emergency energy assistance to the DPRK and up to 950,000 tons in the next phase of the DPRK's denuclearization, Japan refused to provide any heavy fuel oil unless Pyongyang addressed the abduction issue.¹¹³ For-

¹¹⁰ David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: Abe's Ascension," *Comparative Connections* 8:4 (January 2007), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/0604qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹¹¹ "Security Council Condemns Nuclear Test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1718 (2006)," UN Security Council, 5551st Meeting, October 14, 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8853.doc.htm> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹¹² Francesco Giumelli, *Coercing, constraining and signaling: Explaining UN and EU sanctions after the Cold War* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2011), 90.

¹¹³ "Bush authorizes 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil aid to N. Korea," Breitbart,

eign Minister Asō was outspoken. On March 3, 2007, the *Yomiuri shimbun* reported his view: “Unless there is progress on the abduction issue, we have no intention of paying even one yen [to North Korea].”¹¹⁴ But there were dissenting voices also. When the DPRK experienced heavy flooding, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano Kaoru said that Japan had to consider providing humanitarian assistance to victims regardless of political considerations.¹¹⁵

Abe Shinzō was replaced in September 2007 with Fukuda Yasuo, a consummate bureaucrat-type politician with foreign policy considered his strong hand. He declared that his government wanted to strengthen cooperation with the international community aimed at achieving the denuclearization of the DPRK, and would devote itself whole-heartedly to solving the abduction issue.¹¹⁶ Fukuda had played a key role in devising Prime Minister Koizumi’s North Korea policy and some thought Fukuda’s accession might herald an improvement in relations with the DPRK. A softening of Japan’s stance was hinted at when he indicated that he regarded the nuclear and missile threat from the DPRK as more important than abductions,¹¹⁷ but Fukuda proceeded cautiously and sanctions were renewed in October 2007 and April 2008.¹¹⁸ Again, the Japanese government refused to provide energy to the DPRK that it was expected to put up as part of an agreement reached at the Six-Party Talks, according to which the DPRK would disable its 5 MW reactor, its reprocessing plant and nuclear fuel rod fabrication

September 28, 2007, http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8RUTJV83&show_article=1&cat=0 (accessed August 16, 2011).

¹¹⁴ “Asō: Unless there is progress on abductions, we will not pay even one yen”, *Yomiuri shimbun*, March 3, 2007, quoted in International Crisis Group, “After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?” *Policy Briefing, Asia Briefing* No. 62, April 30, 2007, 7, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/north-east-asia/north-korea/b62_after_the_north_korean_nuclear_breakthrough_final.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/north-east-asia/north-korea/b62_after_the_north_korean_nuclear_breakthrough_final.ashx) (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹¹⁵ David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, “Japan-Korea Relations: With a New Japanese Leader, New Opportunities?” *Comparative Connections* 9:3 (October 2007), http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/0703qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹¹⁶ Bert Edström, “Struggle, Strife, and Stalemate: Yasuo Fukuda and Present-day Japanese Politics,” Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Asia Paper* (March 2008), 6.

¹¹⁷ “Transcript of FT interview with Yasuo Fukuda,” *Financial Times*, November 12, 2007, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4109518a-9124-11dc-9590-0000779fd2ac.html#axzz21Wjx7280> (accessed March 15, 2012).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

facility in Nyongbyon, as well as provide a complete and correct declaration of its nuclear program.¹¹⁹

Still, Fukuda's more forthcoming stance made a new round of the Japanese–DPRK bilateral meetings possible in June 2008. It is notable that the DPRK side acted first. Pyongyang promised to restart investigations into the abductions as well as hand over the four remaining members of the nine hijackers of a Japan Airlines jet in 1970. In response, the Japanese government agreed to partially lift its sanctions, including some travel sanctions and allowing certain DPRK ships to make port calls and some flights between the two countries. A carrot was provided by Fukuda. He said that Japan would ease other economic sanctions if the reinvestigation of the abductions made progress.¹²⁰ Thus, he indicated that Pyongyang should act first. But whatever the DPRK would do, it was unlikely that the Japanese public opinion would be swayed. An opinion poll taken in June 2008 showed that 61 percent of respondents were against relaxing sanctions, while only 25 percent were in favor.¹²¹ Nevertheless, it seems as if the DPRK regime took Fukuda at his word. In a bilateral meeting in August 2008 the DPRK agreed to reinvestigate the abductions, followed by the Japanese government promising to reciprocate by partially lifting economic sanctions towards the DPRK, and allowing DPRK ships to enter Japanese ports once the reinvestigation probe commenced.¹²²

Unilateral, Sticks (2008–)

Fukuda lasted about one year as prime minister, as long as most recent Japanese prime ministers. He was replaced by Asō Tarō on September 24, 2008. He had served as foreign minister in Abe's cabinet and it was therefore no

¹¹⁹ Narushige Michishita, *North Korea's Military–Diplomatic Campaigns, 1966–2008* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 174

¹²⁰ Blaine Harden, "N. Korea Agrees to Reexamine Abductions," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, June 14, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/13/AR2008061303285.html?hpid=moreheadlines> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹²¹ *Nikkei Shimbun*, June 2008 Telephone Opinion Poll, Question 8, June 27–29, 2008, <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/2008/poll-08-25.htm> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹²² David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: Who's in Charge?" *Comparative Connections* 10:3 (October 2008), http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/0803qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed November 11, 2011).

surprise that he acted as a hardliner. A week after he assumed the political top post, sanctions towards the DPRK were renewed, and when the other members of the Six-Party Talks asked Japan to give aid to the DPRK, Tokyo refused.¹²³ On April 5, 2009, Pyongyang launched a new missile. Japan responded on April 10 with renewing its sanctions for a full year, rather than the usual six months, and banned all trade with the DPRK from June 18 until April 2010. It also lowered the amount of cash that could be sent to the DPRK without approval to 300,000 yen, down from one million. These sanctions were largely symbolic and aimed at punishing the DPRK's behavior rather than having much practical impact.¹²⁴ The Japanese government was the first to request an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council and also submitted a draft resolution with the United States, which ultimately resulted in Resolution 1874.

With the former opposition party coming to power after the 2009 general election, little change in Japan's approach to relations with the DPRK was seen. The main party of the new coalition government, the DPJ, had been as eager as the LDP to pursue a hardline policy against the DPRK. In November 2008, the DPJ had drafted legislation that would ban all Japanese exports to the DPRK as well as all travel.¹²⁵ Prior to the 2009 election, the DPJ joined forces with two other opposition parties and agreed that they would "make every effort" to resolve the dispute, which had prevented normalization. The party believed that Japan needed to prevent the DPRK from continuing to develop nuclear weapons and missiles, and needed to do this in cooperation with the international community.¹²⁶

One week before the election, the prime minister-to-be Hatoyama Yukio stated that he would push for "dialogue and cooperation" with the DPRK should his party win.¹²⁷ The issues surrounding the DPRK were one of the

¹²³ Kang and Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: Who's in Charge?"

¹²⁴ David Kang and Ji-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: Pyongyang's Belligerence Dominates," *Comparative Connections* 11:2 (July 2009), http://csis.org/files/publication/0902qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹²⁵ "DPJ to propose total ban of exports, travel to N. Korea," *Kyodo News*, November 2, 2008, <http://home.kyodo.co.jp/modules/fstStory/index.php?storyid=407541> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹²⁶ Ko Hirano, "Hatoyama will be tested early on N. Korea issues," *The Japan Times*, September 14, 2009, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20090914a4.html> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹²⁷ Kiyori Ueno, "DPJ Leader Hatoyama Would Seek Talks With N. Korea (Update 1)," *Bloomberg*, August 23, 2009, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchi>

headaches that awaited him as prime minister. Hatoyama's grandfather Ichirō is considered one of Japan's great postwar prime ministers due to the fact that he was responsible for normalization with the Soviet Union in 1956. This led to speculation that Hatoyama Yukio was going to take up his grandfather's foreign policy mantle, which included handling relations with Russia and, by extension, also Russia's protégé, the DPRK. This speculation seemed validated when Hatoyama brought back to prominence his grandfather's idea of *yūai*, "fraternity," as an underpinning of political actions, also foreign policy.¹²⁸

The speculation came to naught, however. Soon after Hatoyama had assumed the post of prime minister, he met representatives of the families of the abductees. The meeting confirmed the crucial role that the abduction issue played in Japanese domestic politics. The prime minister was quoted by the relatives as telling them that "I am going to tackle this issue in the belief that a new administration will be meaningless if we don't solve this."¹²⁹ Soon afterwards he met the South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and they agreed that the DPRK should not be given aid and that sanctions must remain in place until Pyongyang took concrete steps to dismantle its nuclear weapons.¹³⁰ Subsequently, sanctions were extended for one year.

On October 30 the Hatoyama government continued the line of the former government of targeting trade and exchange, when it submitted a bill in the Diet that enabled Japan's Coast Guard to inspect vessels carrying cargo to and from the DPRK.¹³¹ It also showed up in the aftermath of the Cheonan incident, when a ROK warship was sunk. The Japanese government responded by lowering the cap on the amount of undeclared cash that could be carried to the DPRK from ¥300,000 to ¥100,000. In addition, the

ve&sid=a4NOMxCYj8mc (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹²⁸ Bert Edström, "The Hatoyama Foreign Policy: From Ichirō to Yukio," paper presented at the Third EJARN Annual Meeting, Stockholm, June 10–11, 2010.

¹²⁹ "Hatoyama vows efforts to get back abduction victims," *Breitbart*, September 29, 2009, http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9B0V79O0&show_article=1 (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹³⁰ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, "Joint Press Conference by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama of Japan and President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea," October 9, 2009, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/hatoyama/statement/200910/09kyoudou_e.html (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹³¹ David Kang and Yi-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: Small Signs of Progress?" *Comparative Connections* 11:4 (January 2010), http://csis.org/files/publication/0904qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

amount of money an individual could bring to the DPRK was lowered from ¥300,000 to ¥100,000.¹³²

Hatoyama did not remain very long as prime minister. The two DPJ politicians who have come after him did not make any change in Japan's DPRK policy. The abduction issue was so ingrained in Japan's body politic that not even the fall from grace of the previously seemingly ever-ruling LDP resulted in any changes. The DPJ prime ministers Hatoyama, Kan and Noda have been as bogged down by the abduction issue as their LDP predecessors. In fact, the new ruling party, the DPJ, had been second to none in condemning the abductions. In the prevailing political climate in Japan, the need to do so might have been seen to be pertinent to the party elders, since leading DPJ politicians have a record of having been promoters of better relations with the DPRK.

¹³² David Kang and Yi-Young Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations: *Cheonan* Incident Overshadows Everything," *Comparative Connections* 12:2 (July 2010), http://csis.org/files/publication/1002qjapan_korea.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011).

The Effectiveness of Japan's Sanctions Towards the DPRK

How successful have Japan's sanctions towards the DPRK been? The objective of sanctions, positive or negative, is that a country wants to reach some goal(s) and other instruments in the foreign policy toolbox are not seen to be suitable to make the country reach the goal(s). The effectiveness of sanctions can be measured as the degree to which the targeted country has been coerced or persuaded to conform to the sender's demands.¹³³ In the case of the DPRK, Japan's renewed use of sanctions is an indication that it has not reached its goals in the sense that the DPRK has not been coerced to conform to Japan's demands. This is in agreement with comparative studies of the history of sanctions. David Baldwin noted in 1985 that there was a nearly universal tendency to denigrate the utility of sanctions.¹³⁴ The most comprehensive studies of sanctions have been presented by Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott. Their first study (1990) analyzed 116 cases of sanctions after World War I; their most recent follow-up (2007) study covers 174 cases. Their results show that historically, sanctions have been partially successful in about one third of the cases.

Table 1 presents a summary of sanctions employed by Japan towards the DPRK. The first sanctions case from 1990 was aimed at bringing about a solution to the problems linked to Japan's annexation of Korea. While the Kanemaru delegation reached results, the Japanese government rejected them. However, both the Japanese and the DPRK governments stuck to the agreement to begin negotiations aiming at normalization.

The next case occurred in 1993. Again the Japanese government offered a carrot but this case differed from the previous one in that this measure was taken in a multilateral context; Japan joined the United States in an effort to make the DPRK dismantle its nuclear program. No dismantling was seen, however, so results were nil. Shortly afterwards, Japan added unilaterally a carrot, donating 500,000 tons of rice as food aid.

¹³³ Cf. Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Revisited*, 157.

¹³⁴ David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 51.

Table 1. Sanctions Employed by Japan towards the DPRK

Type	Scope	Duration	Result
Carrots	Unilateral	1990	Some
Carrots	Multilateral	1993–95	None
Sticks+carrots	Unilateral	1998–99	None
Carrots	Unilateral	1999–2002	None
Carrots	Unilateral	2002	Yes
Sticks	Unilateral+multilateral	2003	None
Carrots	Multilateral	2003–04	None
Carrots	Unilateral	2004	Yes
Sticks	Multilateral+unilateral	2004–08	None
Carrots+sticks	Multilateral+unilateral	2008	Some
Sticks	Unilateral	2008–	None

The third case occurred in 1998, when the Japanese government used negative sanctions towards the DPRK in response to the launch of a DPRK missile that flew over Japan. The Japanese government employed a parade of sticks: freezing of food aid, suspension of its signing of the KEDO funding agreements, cancellation of charter flights, and stalling talks aimed at normalization. It is hard to see any particular goal for these sanctions other than retaliation, so there were no goals to attain apart from demonstrating Japan's displeasure to the DPRK and resolve of the Japanese. The sanctions were partially abolished rather soon at the urging of the United States and the ROK. Later, gearing into its traditional track of offering carrots, the Japanese government dispatched a high-level delegation and donated food aid. All sanctions had been lifted after a year and had, by then, not yielded any results.

The next case was different. Turning to Japan's now well-established willingness to pay "economic cooperation" to heal the wounds after the annexation period 1910–45, the Japanese government offered the DPRK a hefty US\$9 billion package. The goals were distinct this time: the offer was in exchange for North Korean moderation of the missile threat and a satisfactory resolution to the abduction issue. As before, the carrot did not yield any result.

A different outcome was seen the next time Japan employed sanctions. Prime Minister Koizumi visited Pyongyang aiming to make a breakthrough

on the abduction issue as well as the advance towards diplomatic normalization. To make progress, he used a gargantuan carrot. He promised “economic assistance” in the form of grants, long-term soft loans, and humanitarian assistance via international organizations that would equal what the ROK received in 1965, today amounting to several billion dollars. Koizumi achieved a breakthrough on the abduction issues in that Kim admitted that abductions had taken place and apologized. Kim agreed to a moratorium on missiles after 2003 and agreed that the nuclear and missile issues would be pursued within a multilateral framework, agreement was reached on the commencement on normalization discussions. The carrot resulted in a diplomatic success for Koizumi’s personal diplomacy but one that did not last long. With Japanese public anger over the abductions, the anti-North Korea lobby began to play the first fiddle. The Japanese government began to use, primarily, sticks to solve what it had declared was the overriding problem residing in Japan’s relationship with the DPRK, the abduction issue.

The next Japanese move was seen in June 2003, when Japanese customs, immigration, and the Japan Coast Guard expanded their safety inspections. In technical terms, this action did not constitute sanctions but were stricter application of already existing legislation and can be labeled quasi-sanctions. A similar measure was taken in November the same year when an amendment to Japan’s Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law made it possible for Japan to unilaterally impose economic sanctions towards the DPRK.

With Prime Minister Koizumi as the primary actor on the Japanese side, the Japanese government did not throw a policy of carrots overboard. In another development in a multilateral arena, it proposed a resumption of fuel oil supplies as well as a support framework for dealing with Pyongyang’s energy needs; it was a proposal that was contrary to the line of the United States at the time. Japan’s declared goal was for the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program, accept IAEA inspections, and forsake both the export and deployment of ballistic missiles. None of these goals were attained and Japan’s carrot brought nothing.

More carrots were on their way, however. At a second visit to Pyongyang and a meeting with Kim Jong Il in May 2004, Koizumi negotiated the return of members of the abductees’ family. Once again, he was successful, perhaps because of the carrot he offered – Japan would provide food aid

and medical assistance and would not invoke economic sanctions as long as North Korea observed the terms of the joint declaration from the first summit.

In July 2006 the Japanese government used sticks again after the DPRK had launched seven missiles over Japan. The Japanese government announced sanctions that targeted DPRK shipping and trade. In October, after the DPRK had performed a nuclear test, the UN adopted a new resolution and Japan instituted a number of new sanctions. Japan's sanctions were in response to what was seen as a repulsive action and, thus, retaliation, so there was no particular goal to attain.

With Fukuda Yasuo at the helm, there was a return to a use of carrots when sanctions were partially lifted by his government and Pyongyang responded by promising to re-start investigations into the abduction of Japanese citizens. Pyongyang also agreed to discuss the issue of four members of the Japanese Red Army responsible for the 1970 hijacking of a jet who were believed to be in North Korea.

In summary, Japan's declared goals have been reached in some few cases, but taken together, the success rate has been rather modest. This is in line with the results reached by comparative studies on economic sanctions. Sanction researchers have concluded that a number of conditions should be met for sanctions to be effective in modifying the target country's behavior:

1. The goal should be modest.
2. The target country is much smaller than the country imposing sanctions, is economically weak, and is politically unstable.
3. The sender and target are friendly toward one another and conduct substantial trade.
4. The sanctions should be imposed quickly and decisively to maximize impact.
5. The sender should avoid high costs to itself.¹³⁵

How do Japan's sanctions towards the DPRK fare in relation to the above criteria? Regarding the *first* condition, it is important to consider that

¹³⁵ Kimberly Ann Elliott and Gary Clyde Hufbauer, "Sanctions," in *Library of Economics and Liberty*, <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc1/Sanctions.html> (accessed March 8, 2012).

in Japan's case, sticks have in some cases been employed as retaliation for what the Japanese have seen as threatening or repulsive actions taken by the DPRK. These measures are intended to demonstrate resolve and there has been no goal apart from punishment. In a few cases, goals have been vague, and in others, the goal has constituted a quest for a makeover of DPRK policies as exemplified by Abe's view made public in 2003, when he was an up and coming man on the national political stage; his view was that sanctions would make Pyongyang surrender to the Japanese resolution. After Kim Jong Il's revelation in 2002 that the DPRK had actually abducted Japanese citizens, Japanese public opinion became so enraged that there was not much room for the Japanese government to take positive steps. After 2006, when sticks became the primary tool for Japan, they have not yielded any results, but this did not make the Japanese government reconsider them but only add more.

With retaliation a key element of Japan's approach after Abe became the key policy-maker on relations with the DPRK, and with "the more the better" thinking dominating, Japan does not seem to have taken into consideration that it takes two to tango; any progress means the two parties to the conflict must agree on steps to take.

The *second* condition has three aspects of which two have been met: the DPRK is much smaller than Japan and is economically weak. However, the third aspect, political instability, has not been met; the regime in Pyongyang has proven to be quite capable at controlling its people.

The *third* condition has not been met since Japan and the DPRK are not friendly toward one another and do not conduct substantial trade. The Japan-DPRK dyad is in direct opposition to the first aspect: the two countries are not friendly, sometimes not even on speaking terms; the two countries are better described as polar opposites to this condition. Furthermore, a basic problem for the Japanese government in employing sanctions towards the DPRK has been that the impact of sanctions is bound to be limited given the low and declining volume of bilateral trade. Trade volumes between Japan and the DPRK have not been large in absolute figures in the postwar period but, nevertheless, Japan became the DPRK's second largest trading partner after China in 1993 and even became its largest partner, albeit temporarily.¹³⁶ Since the Japanese government has in some cases chosen to

¹³⁶ Kim, "North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War World," 51.

employ sticks that have targeted trade and other types of exchanges, trade and exchanges between Japan and the DPRK have nosedived. When sanctions made trade and economic relations shrink, it decreased their impact. Choosing economic sanctions in a situation when Japan's trade and economic relationship with North Korea had already shrunk drastically was a sure way to guarantee that sanctions would have little effect.

Furthermore, according to some sanctions researchers, sanctions can be effective only if applied multilaterally.¹³⁷ In the case of the DPRK, sanctions have had little possibility to succeed without China's support.¹³⁸ In fact, after the Japanese government introduced negative sanctions that targeted trade and financial exchanges, the DPRK increased its trade with China and the ROK, which muted Japan's intended effect.¹³⁹ Thus, China played the role of "black knight."¹⁴⁰ The need for China supporting international pressure on Pyongyang was recognized by Abe, who expressed his gratitude to China for having exerted leadership in dealing with the DPRK on the denuclearization issue.¹⁴¹

The *fourth* condition has been met in some cases but far from all. Quick and resolute impositions of negative sanctions have been used by the Japanese government in some cases, including the 1998 and 2006 cases, when sanctions were imposed in response to actions taken by the DPRK that Japan saw as threatening. After 2006, Japanese sanctions have tended to drag on.

The *fifth* condition has been met in economic terms. Contacts and exchanges between Japan and the DPRK are meager so the economic costs of sanctions imposed on Japan have been miniscule. In political terms, however, the costs have been considerable. Japan's inability to normalize relations with its "close but distant neighbor" has had great significance for the Japanese position in both the region and the world and will, as long as this

¹³⁷ Kubota, "The Structure of Impasse," 34f; see also Gavan McCormack, "The Strange Record of 15 Years of Japan-North Korea Negotiations," Z Net, September 4, 2005, <http://www.zcommunications.org/the-strange-record-of-15-years-of-japan-north-korea-negotiations-by-gavan-mccormack> (accessed March 8, 2012).

¹³⁸ Daniel W. Drezner, *The Sanctions Paradox: Economic Statecraft and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 289f.

¹³⁹ Jinhwan Oh and Jiyong Ryu, "The Effectiveness of Economic Sanctions on North Korea: China's Vital Role," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 23:1 (March 2011): 123.

¹⁴⁰ Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 8, 47.

¹⁴¹ Edström, "Success of a Successor," 56; quoting "Li: China to help on abduction issue," *Asahi shimbun*, February 17, 2007, <http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200702160469.html>

state continues, remind the world of Japan's past as an imperialistic, aggressive and oppressive power until its defeat in 1945. Prime Minister Koizumi realized this and wanted to normalize relations with the DPRK to thus finish the process of normalization with other Asian countries.¹⁴² His failure to do so will, if not realized by his successors, continue to make it hard for Japanese governments to raise Japan's international profile and pursue an assertive foreign policy.

A problem for the Japanese government is that its policy hits where it should not. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is among those who have pointed out that sanctions have unintended consequences: "When robust and comprehensive economic sanctions are directed against authoritarian regimes, a different problem is encountered. Then it is usually the people who suffer, not the political elites whose behaviour triggered the sanctions in the first place."¹⁴³ Pyongyang's intransigence has been reciprocated by Tokyo; Japan's unwillingness to assist the people in the DPRK hard hit by bad harvests, flooding and other natural disasters is contrary to Japan's traditionally generous aid policy. Not only that. According to Kubota Norihito writing in October 2010, the Japanese government was self-critical that it has given rice aid to the DPRK before 2002.¹⁴⁴ This entails political costs. Tokyo's present insistence on sticks in its relations with the DPRK goes against Japan's traditional approach of using carrots as a foreign policy tool.

It is important for both the Japanese public and policy-makers to recognize that the few cases when the DPRK has been forthcoming have been in response to positive sanctions, the most prominent cases being the results obtained by the Kanemaru delegation in 1990 (almost immediately rejected by the Kaifu government) and by Koizumi in 2002 and 2004. Japan's negative sanctions towards the DPRK have become yet another example in the long row of failed unilateral sanctions employed by one country towards another country. After an initial reluctance vindicating well-established Japanese skepticism on (negative) sanctions, sanctions were applied but gave way for the insight that only actions taken in concert with others would

¹⁴² Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁴³ Kofi Annan, *We, the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* (New York: United Nations, 2000), 50.

¹⁴⁴ Kubota, "The Structure of Impasse," 34.

bring result. In parallel with unilateral action, the Japanese government took part also in multilateral efforts and even tried to invigorate multilateral sanctions. This did not result in the realization of Japan's declared goals – to the extent that goals had been declared – to a large extent because of Japan's focus on the abductions, marginalizing Japan at the Six-Party Talks, the key multilateral arena for handling matters related to the DPRK.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Charles L. Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 86f.

Concluding Remarks

It took until 1990 for Japan and the DPRK to meet in a direct encounter. The history of Japan's relations with Korea has left a legacy of ill feelings on the part of Koreans. The Japanese government as well as Japanese politicians have realized that any improvement in relations would rest on Japan paying compensation for the prewar and war period. In postwar Japan's characteristic style, the discussions held between the Japanese and the DPRK during the 1990 encounter became an occasion when the Japanese side offered to provide "economic cooperation" to its counterpart as a *quid pro quo* for solving thorny issues in their relationship. In what was to follow, the predilection for Japan to employ carrots can be discerned but also sticks have been employed, when the DPRK has acted in a way that Japan has seen as aggressive and threatening.

The history of Japanese sanctions towards its close but distant neighbor demonstrate how the Japanese government has employed a policy of using sanctions – both negative and positive – in order to coerce the DPRK to behave in the desired way; it also shows how Japan's objectives have shifted over the years. It demonstrates the interplay of positive vs. negative and unilateral vs. multilateral sanctions, as well as the interplay between domestic and foreign policies. Over time, Japan has unleashed a whole battery of sanctions towards the DPRK. A two-track policy can be discerned in the way Japan has employed these sanctions, with measures taken comprising both positive sanctions, carrots, and negative sanctions, sticks. The outbursts of Japanese proactive policy that were seen with the Kanemaru delegation in 1990 and Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang in 2002 evaporated quickly. The negotiations that Kanemaru pursued were so diplomatically inept that Japan's option of independent action went down the drain as a result. The renewed attempt at independent action initiated by Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang in 2002 went bust with the populist outrage in Japan over what was seen by the Japanese population as the DPRK's reckless behavior. Koizumi tried for a while to keep up diplomatic action as an option, but with the abduction issue being top news day after day his efforts were in vain.

The meager effects of Japan's sanctions in terms of goal attainment are striking. With the emergence of Abe Shinzō as the key decision-maker on Japan's North Korea policy, and especially after 2006, sanctions seem to have been employed by the Japanese government more to satisfy a wish for revenge residing among many Japanese or, in some cases, to punish the DPRK for actions that the Japanese have considered objectionable and repulsive. The rage against the DPRK has its underpinning partly in Japan's hierarchical thinking. The DPRK viewed as the under dog and Japan the top dog contributed to helping Abe, with his punishment sermon attract followers. Here, Koizumi was his opposite, treating Asian and African nations on an equal footing and respecting their national pride regardless of their size and power. But as a politician whose position was based on public opinion support, Koizumi adjusted to the prevailing sentiments running totally against accommodation and in favor of punishing the North Koreans that Abe was the most prolific spokesman for. Quite soon after the Koizumi–Kim summit meeting in Pyongyang in 2002, the abduction issue had developed into a stumbling block for the normalization process.

The key point for the Japanese government seems often to have been to demonstrate resolve both to the Japanese people and to the world, and resolute responses from the Japanese government against the DPRK's aggressive behavior such as missile launches over Japan and nuclear tests have no doubt, at times, been justified.

The problem for Japan and the historical burden it carries is that Japan's past experience makes it evident that if results are sought, positive rather than negative sanctions or, at the most, a mixture of positive and negative sanctions should be used. If Japan wanted results, not revenge, this lesson from history should have guided policy-makers. The emotional approach that Japan took when Abe became the key decision-maker is far from the approach that the "father" of Japan's postwar foreign policy, Yoshida Shigeru, would have taken. For Yoshida, it was vital that foreign policy decision-makers base their decisions on a cool assessment of the situation, not on emotions. It was incumbent upon the Japanese "not to shut our eyes but to appraise the situation clearly and do our best to cope with it effectively."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Yoshida as quoted in Bert Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine: From Yoshida to Miyazawa* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 11.

It is often said that foreign policy and domestic policy are but two sides of the same coin, but the abduction issue also demonstrates the veracity of the saying that all foreign policy is domestic policy. While there have been other issues that should have been vital for the Japanese government to pursue, both bilaterally and multilaterally, the abduction issue has siphoned off not only all energy of Japan's endeavor to come to grips with the DPRK but has also become a straitjacket for Japan's foreign policy.

Considering the acute situation prevailing today, it is interesting that Rüdiger Frank, in his discussion of economic sanctions against North Korea, describes Japan, along with South Korea and China, only as "interested parties" either supporting or opposing U.S. sanctions against the DPRK.¹⁴⁷ That Frank wrote this as late as 2006 serves to remind us of how quickly the Japanese policy has changed.

¹⁴⁷ Frank, "The Political Economy of Sanctions against North Korea," 7f.

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