

1st February 2009

The abductions of Japanese nationals during the late 70s and early 80s were a reality of Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea's (DPRK) move to recruit spies from Japan for espionage. Although abductions were also from neighboring state South Korea (as early as the 1940s) and within DPRK, this article highlights the Japanese abductees and the Japanese government's stand. The numbers are somewhat small as there are no concrete proofs of the abductees themselves, although sources quote some 60-80 abductees from Japan during that period. The abductions during the "cold-war" period were crucial for the DPRK's intelligence gathering as Japan shared close border proximity to DPRK and the fact that Japan was an ally to the United States prompted severe security threats for DPRK. The United States established a base in Okinawa after the surrender of the Japanese in [World](#) War Two under the Japan-US Security Treaty. As the cold war erupted, the US was quick to respond to the threats of security and communism escalating from Russia and its allies within the region and this included DPRK. Today DPRK plays a different role in its capacity for espionage on nations such as Japan. As tensions in the Korean Peninsular grows, it is with no doubt that DPRK will continue to conduct illegal activities within the territorial waters of Japan

DPRK mission on abducting Japanese citizens is in fact an on-going operation as of to date, with regards to current political and security related issues towards DPRK from the United States and tensions within the Korean Peninsular. The fact remains that "unidentified" vessels have been spotted in the Japanese waters as far back as the early 1990's as well as a "spy" boat, which was captured by the Japanese authorities in December of 2001, of the Japanese EEZ in Higashi-shina kai, east of the China Sea. The vessel was identified as a "spy" boat and bore the Chinese flag on board. The crew on board the Chinese flagship, disguised to be of a fishing vessel, sped off when the Japanese authorities tried to dock next to it, prompting a crewmember from the vessel to use a Rocket Propelled Gun (RPG) to fire at the Japanese authorities. This led to a chase and in an apparent event to evade capture, the "spy" boat self destructed with all its crew on board.

The Japanese authorities, however, managed to salvage the "spy" boat in 2002 with its dead crew as well as obtaining vital information on security on North Spy Agency (Ministry of State Security) and DPRK. The information retrieved, proved that it was indeed a "DPRK" vessel spying in Japanese waters and the probability of smuggling drugs, intelligence gathering and to some extent to abduct "new recruits" from the west coast of Japan, near Niigata where a number of abductions occurred, although abductees came from all over Japan. Weapons and equipments were also found on board. The "spy" boat remains today at the Yokohama Bay area at a public museum of the Japanese Coast Guard port in Yokohama.

The Japanese authorities were concerned of territorial waters being probed by "spy" boats from DPRK. The Japanese government also claims that the issue of abductees has not been properly resolved. As of today the DPRK is perceived to be covering up evidence of its on-going operations in the waters of Japan, abducting Japanese citizens as well as evading issues to past abductees.

The intentions of the North Spy Agency (Ministry of State Security) were mainly for the training and "brainwashing" of the abductees to assist the North Spy Agency (Ministry of State Security) in the purpose of espionage. Although there were reports of the abductees teaching Japanese to North Spy Agency schools, the main purpose was to be trained and train espionage agents from DPRK. Most of the abductees were relatively young in age, so as to be an easier means of educating, training and "brainwashing" to become a spy. Being Japanese citizens, the North Spy Agency knew that the language skills, cultural and societal knowledge was the best means to infiltrate Japanese agencies, be it public or private organizations. Some of these organizations being government agencies require Japanese nationals to be employed for security reasons in its capacity to protect national security interest.

The Japanese government's concern, about the current security threats of DPRK's spying in its territorial waters as well as engaging Japanese abductees and to some extent North and South Korean nationals from the former Korean Peninsular, living in Japan as citizens of Japan as trained spies to infiltrate its organizations, is very much a "potentiality" for DPRK. These spies operate within Japan and are now operating on different levels of intelligence and information gathering. There are current Japanese citizens who have been captured by Japanese authorities over the years that remain in highly protected prisons in Japan. Some of these "spies" have never been rehabilitated. The close proximity of North Korea's infiltration of its organizations in Japan such as the Chongryon, a pro-Pyongyang Korean residents' association and the North Korean Chamber of Commerce are some avenues of DPRK's infiltration. These were, however, raided by the Japanese authorities in 2006 for evidence of former abductees.

The North Spy Agencies, main focus today with regards to Japan is information on its current security policies and measures, its close relations to the United States in security cooperation and defense procurement related to the security of Japan. The level of intelligence gathering from the DPRK has also changed dramatically from the end of the "cold-war" to advance intelligence and information gathering supported by allies of DPRK.

As Japan initiates its new national defense program in the coming quarter of 2009 as well as its new maritime policies, it is vital for Japan to protect its sovereignty. The Japanese government should make sure that the level of dialogue is open at all cost to negotiate and retrieve all Japanese citizens abducted from the 70s to the present without any internal political issues hindering the process. The six-party talks should uphold all existing and appropriate measures taken from the time of the perpetrated incident to the current issues within the six-party talks. The Japanese government needs to pressure the United Nations on its role on human rights issues to be "fully settled", as stated by then United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. DPRK should formally sign a declaration of its abductions on Japanese citizens to the Japanese government. DPRK should allow the United Nations appointed human rights commission team to assess the claim and to provide all assistance to retrieve all abductees from DPRK and to uphold the declaration.

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