I. Introduction

The research outlined below is a study of how Japan has recalibrated risk through its framing of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) in the post-Cold War era. It is based upon the hypothesis that there has been a substantial recalibration of the risks that are perceived and portrayed to emanate from the entity conceptualized as North Korea (kitachōsen) by multiple actors – intersecting the state, market and society – in Japan. It is also hypothesized that this has occurred through a complex interactive process – reliant upon these actors’ inter-subjective identities and their disposition towards the adherence to a number of salient norms.

The core thesis discussed herein is, therefore, premised on two key theoretical positions: a constructivist conception of the socio-political world (as socially constructed), and the contention that a vast mass, perhaps all, of politically motivated ideas are in some aspects generated, developed and mediated in relation to considerations of risk – and its variable calibration. Japan’s framing of North Korea provides a relevant case study through which significant empirical research can be guided by these theories.

A constructivist perspective is central, it is argued, to understanding the dynamic processes of interaction between states internationally, and the state, market and society domestically. Constructivism exposes how interdependent ideas (expressed and acted upon, primarily through discourse) are, in the final reckoning, the function of inter-subjective, socially constructed identities. Therein, it is only with reference to identity (including collective identity up to the level of the state) that politically-charged action and state responses can be fully understood. This is particularly significant in terms of extrapolating meaning and causality from analyses of national responses to external threats and uncertainties, which can be constructed in terms of crises, or crisis-equivalent situations, and mediated as the on-going source of indefinite and salient risks. A schematic diagram of how this process is manifest can be observed in Figure 1.1. The process is then tracked and analysed through a series of case study events – beginning with the Japan’s responses to the DPRK’s 1993 Nodong missile test launch.
II. The 1993 Nodong Missile Launch

Given the clear design of North Korea’s first Nodong test missile launch on 29 May 1993 as being geared toward a possible direct attack upon Japan, the related risks were, at least in the public sphere, interpreted in a relatively understated manner by the political elite in Tokyo, as well as across the vast majority of civil and market actors and stakeholders. This is something which is also reflected by the minimal media coverage, displayed in Figure 3.1, below, and is in total contrast to the massive impact and resulting rapid re-calibration of risk triggered by the 1998 Taepodong 1 launch, discussed later on. Additionally, it is striking that what language was used by politicians in the Diet following the test-launch of 1993 bore resemblance, albeit with a far less fervent tone, to that used to discuss the Taepodong launch of 1998, but was, at that stage, qualitatively less risk-oriented (or risk-obsessed) and more measured. The same kind of qualitative linguistic and voluminous quantitative gap can be observed in reactions within the media, as tackled in terms of comparative newspaper reactions. Indeed, there were as few as twenty entries listed on the National Diet database for comments of any kind made on the 1993 Nodong launch in the months immediately following it, and targeted searches bring up only three magazine articles throughout the whole of 1993 which cover the incident in itself. In fact, according to established academic data-bases, only nine recognized magazine and periodical publication articles covered North Korean missile issues in Japan during the entire period from 1993-7. The figure for 1998-9 reaches sixty four. Nonetheless, in terms of sowing the seeds of risk recalibration – which were metaphorically brought to fruition some five years later by the 1998 Taepodong test launch – by way of initializing the identification and framing of North Korea as a persistent source of multiple risks, NHK news reports from the same year pinpoint the policy community’s shift at this time. A news article of 30 July 1993 stated that,

Today’s Defence Agency white paper raises the problem of North Korea (DPRK)’s new-model missile development, stating the grave concern that ‘if this missile development is combined with the development of nuclear weapons it may present an extremely dangerous situation.
The above article goes on to express how the Defence Agency has specifically identified North Korea as a source of risks (given the new missile’s range, covering almost the entirety of Japan), in an otherwise improving East Asian security environment. In this way the above article directly presents how and when the state initiates its recalibration of security risks to Japan through the framing of North Korea.
North Korea’s launching of the Taepodong 1 missile in August 1998, part of which flew over Japan and splashed into the Pacific, could not have come at a more apt time for Japan’s risk entrepreneurs. In June of the same year, the North Korean Red Cross had categorically confirmed that none of the suspected remains of abductees were those of Japanese citizens. This combination of perceived economy in revealing the truth about abduction cases and aggressive geo-military sabre-rattling prompted a fierce response from Japan and catapulted North Korea’s negative framing to a point of national fervour. The process by which this happened can once again be observed through examination of how Japan’s interactive policy community mediated the affectation of risk recalibration. The ensuing discourse from the Diet was representative by then, not just of a political issue influenced by civil society, but more obviously of a growing national phenomenon, which the Taepodong launch served to bring to fruition. The test firing galvanised the framing of North Korea as a pressing and salient threat in the public sphere, and as such recalibrated the risks associated with it. The resulting reaction from Japan’s political upper echelons was virtually instantaneous and far reaching, and was tangibly expressed by Japan’s imposition of sanctions and the suspension of signing for the cost-sharing agreement of the Agreed Framework’s Light Water Reactor (LWR) project, until November of 1998. In the months and years that post-dated the Taepodong launch, the risks assigned to the missile threat were repeatedly referred to when justifications were made to revise Japan’s security posture and apparatus. Indeed, in arrant contrast to the manifestos of 1996-98 highlighted above, the LDP’s first lower-house election manifesto following the Taepodong event contains an entirely new section entitled “dealing with new problem situations and the promotion of provisions for a crisis management framework” (arata na jitai e no taisho to kiki kanri taisei no seibi no suishin), which is unprecedented in its targeting of the DPRK.

The point of critical interest is that dialogue which discussed the risks posed by North Korea shifted dramatically following the Taepodong 1 incident. This reverberated not only as a direct response taken by the policy community in Japan, but as a growing phenomenon of risk recalibration and framing of North Korea across the entirety of its media and civil society. The full extent of this phenomenon can be observed not only in the qualitative shift in focus and language used in discourses within the public sphere, but also quantitatively in terms of media and civil society attention paid to issues concerning Pyongyang’s every move – as revealed by Figure 3.2, below.

This framing of North Korea, was observed also in the case of the abduction issue, for instance, which was no-longer an awkward stumbling block that acted as an impediment to normalization talks, but rather became almost unanimously referred to as the “abduction problem” (rachi mondai) and framed as an assault on national sovereignty (tōchiken no shingai). At the same time, the potential risks of a North Korean missile strike were recalibrated as an exigent military threat (gunjiteki kyōi) and the DPRK regime was framed as culpable for imposing military intimidation (gunjiteki dōkatsu). However, it is also important to note that in terms of personalizing the risks emanating from Pyongyang the process was far from complete. The full demonization of DPRK leader, Kim Jong-II, fulfilled this function, but was as yet in its early stages, and little direct mention was afforded to
him in the Diet sessions which took place in the aftermath of the Taepodong 1 test firing.

What is more, it is also significant that the political and social norms which have come to dominate the agency of how Japan’s North Korea relations are formed, most ostensibly in the negative framing of Pyongyang’s regime and recalibration of associated risks, appear even to have out-weighed the would-be prevailing economic market interests within Japan when it comes to dictating policy generation and counter-measures vis-à-vis the DPRK. Indeed, while it is an arduous task to accurately locate the cross-interaction between Japan’s political and economic elites, large-scale stakeholder enterprises would surely have little to gain from such a negative framing and political trajectory made in response to the North. However, as touched upon below, market influences upon Japan’s post-Cold War, and post-Taepodong, recalibrations of risk in response to North Korea are at once more complex and less capricious than they may appear at first glance.

Figure 3.2 (a). Media Reaction to the August 1998 Missile Test Launch

Figure 3.2 (b). Diet and News Magazine Reaction to the August 1998 Missile Test Launch
IV. Japan’s Escalating Recalibration of Risk in Response to North Korea

As seen from the discussion of Japan’s framing of the DPRK following the 1998 Taepodong launch, one of the clearest measures of how risks have been recalibrated by Japan’s policy makers can be viewed through their responses to North Korean missile tests. The events that unfolded during 2006, however, presented a second, additional element, with which risks framed in the context of the DPRK’s weapons programmes could be further compounded and recalibrated. In addition to the multiple rocket launches in July, which served to remind and re-confirm the risks framed against Kim Jong-II’s provocative regime, the nuclear test in October of the same year elevated their calibration to a yet higher level. Once again this can be observed across a sphere that intersects the state, market and society – mediated to the citizen through a broad range of information sources; including mainstream newspapers, television and other electronic sources.

The key events of 2006 (nuclear and missile tests) are examined in the context of reactions within Japan to a series of preceding incidents and issues that continued to stimulate the recalibration of risk through the framing of North Korea in the period after the 1998 Taepodong launch. These include the “suspicious ship” and “spy boat” maritime incursion incidents of 1999 and 2001, and the furore surrounding the abduction issue. The latter is shown to have pivotally hinged on political party and media responses to former Prime Minister, Koizumi Junichirō’s, historic visit to Pyongyang and the ensuing admission by Kim Jong-II that the DPRK had, indeed, abducted a number Japanese citizens during the 1970s and 1980s. Exploration of how leading actors in Japan utilized these high-profile elements as a means by which to frame the North and recalibrate risks pertaining to it accordingly, elucidates a consistent process by which discourses in the public sphere prime a particular external object (Kim Jong-II’s North Korea), making it highly susceptible to the justification and implementation of sudden and oft times reactionary measures in light of particularly conspicuous events. The amplified reaction and policy revisions shaped within Japan in the aftermath of the missile and nuclear tests performed by Pyongyang in 2006 can be seen as representative of this process, i.e., in terms of state-societal level justifications made on the premise of ameliorating highly (re) calibrated risks.

V. 2006 Missile and Nuclear Tests: The Risk Recalibration Process

When North Korea test fired seven ballistic missiles, including its longest-range missile, the Taepodong-2, over a two day period spanning the 4th and 5th of July, 2006 risks framed against Pyongyang in Japan were, as outlined above, already highly ratcheted-up. It is true that there had been a relative lull in the perceived risks of immediate military contingency stemming from the North in the period which followed the 2001 spy-boat sinking, but the abduction issue and suspicions over the DPRK’s nuclear development program ensured that progress at the Six Party...
Talks was sluggish and faltering, preventing any major downward recalibration of risk within Japan’s policy community. Moreover, the ensuing rise to power of Abe Shinzō, on the back of an election campaign which placed resolution of the abduction issue at its fore, meant the hawkish side of the political elite maintained its momentum of risk recalibration in a relatively consistent manner.

In the period immediately preceding the 2006 test-firings, Japan’s political elite, lead by vociferous Prime Minister, Koizumi, and Foreign Minister, Asō primed the following mediation of reactions by Tokyo through their emphasis on the potentiality of risks contained in the possible actions being planned by Pyongyang. After which, the materialization of North Korean sabre rattling in the form of technologically enhanced missiles fired eastward across the Japan Sea was all that was needed by proactive right-of-centre actors from the political elite in order to maximize the recalibration of risk, particularly in terms of identifying concrete external sources of harm and justifying military re-strengthening as a counter-measure. The apparent possibility of an actual military contingency in combination with the emotional impact, and outrage, of citizens being snatched from their own shores left little room for a softer line on North Korea, and pushed the policy community as a whole towards identifying all that was associated with the DPRK as hostile and alien assailant.

This suggests a trend of consensus, or at least convergence, among leading political figures as to the legitimacy and uniformity of recalibrating risks perceived to emanate from Pyongyang. The point is illustrated by remarks made in the International Terrorism Prevention Special Committee a month later, on 11th August 2006, by Nagashima Akihisa, representing the then leading opposition party, DPJ. Nagashima actually praised Asō and Abe for their swift, hard-hitting response to the North Korean threat, apparently representing a new form of Japanese diplomacy, which could be demonstrated to the world (atarashī nihon gaikō no arikata wo sekai ni shimesu). Moreover, Nagashima also pressed the Foreign Minister and Chief Cabinet Secretary to explain how they would deal with a contingency where it would be necessary to use force against North Korea, an option which they did not rule out if unavoidable.

The discourses of emergency, counter-measure, and military provision (gunjiteki sochi) proliferated in discussions within the Diet during the months which followed the 2006 Taepodong-2 launch, demonstrating not only how Japan’s policy community had converged upon a marked recalibration of risk vis-à-vis the DPRK per se, but also how this process appeared to have been facilitated by a broad weakening of the pacifist norm. With both ruling and opposition parties discussing the possibility of military contingencies, and public anger and fear charged by the media’s constant coverage of all issues connected to North Korea, it was, therefore, an unproductive climate for resistance against the adoption of a more assertive defence policy – and continued recalibration of risks.

In addition, even closer adherence to the norm of bilateralism was once again stated and restated as a core, and absolutely necessary, means by which Japan could ameliorate the risks posed by North Korea. Indeed, the quantitative impact of the 2006 test launches, particularly in conjunction with North Korea’s first nuclear test, across these spheres is also evinced, once again, in terms of the types and volume of media coverage. Moreover, the momentum created by these events was sufficient to broadly maintain the established levels of heightened risk calibration up to and including reaction to subsequent actions initiated by Pyongyang in 2009.
VI. 2009 Missile and Nuclear Tests: Continuing Recalibration of Risks

As discussed above, in the aftermath of the 2006 missile and nuclear tests, the perceived risks associated with North Korea – galvanized within Japan’s political elite and mediated to the wider society (primarily through the mass media) – were enough to maintain Pyongyang’s negative framing in the immediate months and years that followed. The phenomenon of a conspicuous emphasis upon the recalibration of risks framed against the DPRK was also sustained through the lack of a satisfactory resolution to the abduction issue and continued speculation over the specifics of the nuclear programs in the Northern half of the peninsula. In the wake of further missile and nuclear tests during 2009, the process of risk-recalibration in response to North Korea largely maintained its momentum up to the aftermath of those events. Ultimately, however, the empirical evidence analysed, particularly with reference to Pyongyang’s further provocations in 2010, also points to the emergence of a phenomenon of saturation across political, media and societal spheres. This is witnessed in terms of the reaction from each of these sectors in response to the kitachōsen mondai in Japan – and appears to have manifest itself in the establishment of a new equilibrium with regards to how North Korea is now framed, and how risks associated with the DPRK are calibrated. Furthermore, to a certain extent, this has countered the continuing upward trend of risk-recalibration and resulting counter-measures and policies, made primarily against North Korea on the basis of ameliorating those risks. Once again, a complex interactive process, involving key political, market, and societal actors is evinced – and the salience of predominant norms, particularly the powerful influence of bilateralism, can be observed.

VII. Reaction to Recent Events: A New Equilibrium?

In likeness to the events identified with Japan’s framing of North Korea and the successive recalibration of risks, the extent, level and trajectory of such (re)calibrations can, to a certain extent, be quantified through comparisons of the volume of coverage – particularly in the Diet and across media sources – assigned to each incidence. Figure 6.3, below highlights the impact of three further examples that would, in light of the case-studies observed above (pertaining to events occurring between 1993 and 2009), be expected to accentuate the established process of risk recalibration within Japan in response to North Korea – and further compound its negative framing. However, in fact, while their impact does little to evince a significant reduction in the calibration of risks attached to the DPRK, taken as a combined effect, it is also problematic to make an empirically convincing case for these events having been utilized to further recalibrate risks to a significantly higher level. As such, what can be seen is the tentative emergence of a new equilibrium, in terms of the process of risk recalibration framed against North Korea having come to fruition – and having become established as a kind of proxy-norm within political, market and societal spheres in Japan.
VIII. Minimal Reaction to North Korea’s October 2009 Multiple Missile Test-Launch

Pyongyang’s resumption of multiple missile test launches in to the Sea of Japan on 12 October 2009, coming only three months after its July test-firings, might well have been expected to trigger a more raucous reaction from Japan’s policy community. This is particularly so given that it was interpreted in one sense by the GoJ as part of North Korea’s programme to refine its ballistic missile capabilities (Kitazawa, 13 November 2009, Diet Security Committee). However, the incident’s almost total omission from direct reference in the Diet sessions which followed, and extremely limited coverage in the main-stream press, highlights the apparent lack (without clear evidence of such a new capability) of motivation on the part of actors concerned to further recalibrate risks – which had already been extremely emphasized in the wake of missile and nuclear tests conducted earlier in the same year. The lack of public-political sphere interest in this incident is, indeed, also evinced by the short length of articles covering the event and the dearth of emotive language – previously employed for emphasis and persuasive effects when describing the North’s actions.

Therein, though it is not possible to draw comprehensive conclusions based on a single limited incident, a continuation of comparatively limited reactions to Pyongyang’s successive provocations (including missile launches previously seen as the trigger for recalibrating risks) during the latter months of 2009 and throughout 2010 does suggest that Japan’s recalibrated risks framed against the DPRK, while not substantially reduced in terms of sustaining calibration at existing levels, are moving towards some form of equilibrium. Within this process, the series of upward waves of recalibration discussed in the chapters above, and illustrated by Figure 6.3, have witnessed a levelling-off (or lack of sustained socio-political and market-driven momentum). This offers an explanation for why events such as the North’s October 2009 missile test-firing are perceived as being comparatively insignificant and were insufficient to spark an additional recalibration of risks. They have also, therefore, had little impact in terms of further extending the public sphere framing of risks vis-à-vis the DPRK.

IX. Consistent Levels of Risk-Calibration in Reaction to North Korea’s Suspected Sinking of the Cheonan Naval Vessel

Due to the initial (and continuing) uncertainty surrounding the circumstances regarding the sinking of the ROK’s Cheonan naval vessel on 26 March 2010 – despite suspicions of North Korean involvement being present from an early stage – reaction from Japan’s policy community and broader public sphere was understandably cautious and limited in scope and volume (e.g., Yomiuri Shimbun, 27 March 2010: 2; Asahi Shimbun, 27 March 2010: 1 (evening editions)).

Nevertheless, given that 46 crew members died in the incident, there was little if any serious provocation evident from the ROK or elsewhere, and that Pyongyang’s military were suspected from the time of the event, it is notable that Japan’s reaction was relatively limited in scale...
and veracity. However, having established that Pyongyang was indeed responsible, the by then familiar discourse of contestation over willingness by leading political actors to recalibrate risks identified with such an incidence to a sufficient level, and adapt policies accordingly, was visible in the Diet.

However, there is little ostensible evidence of a further recalibration of risk – in terms of identifying a novel threat – manifest in the Cheonan sinking. In general, the emphasis of reaction to the incident remained only upon increasing military strengthening, maintained as a focus of central discourse relating to Pyongyang’s actions, and continued to frame North Korea as the source of salient risks. Such risks were, therein, once again utilized to justify out-bidding rival political parties and actors in order to take a consistently tough-line of policies, which could be revised as required to ameliorate them.

In quantitative terms, the Impact of the Cheonan’s sinking – given the incidence’s lack of clarity as a single isolated event – likewise demonstrates a consistent pattern. This resulted in the extensive, but not unprecedented, increase of coverage of North Korean affairs in the months that followed across Japan’s public sphere and an extension of the DPRK’s negative framing attached to a range of risks identified with Pyongyang’s provocations. It is noteworthy, however, that statistically the phenomenon of a receding pattern of waves (i.e., a new equilibrium), as opposed to the model exhibiting a rising series of peaks observed up to 2006, has been realized.

X. Maintenance of the Recalibrated Risks: The Yeongpyeong Shelling

North Korea’s shelling of ROK administered Yeonpyeong island on 23 November 2010, killing four South Koreans (two civilians) and injuring 19 others, resulted in a far more extensive reaction from within Japan compared to that witnessed in response to the October 2009 missile launch or the sinking of the Cheonan naval vessel in the spring of 2010. Indeed, in one sense Japan’s policy community was quick to reinforce its demonized framing of the DPRK – not least as an aberrant aggressor willing to unapologetically kill civilians in neighbouring states. However, the associated risks expressed in central political and public sphere discourses bore more evidence of a maintenance of interpreted risk-levels (i.e. with that already established in response to North Korea’s provocations between 2006-09, examined above), in terms of how they were calibrated, rather than a full-scale recalibration of risks propelled to an unprecedentedly higher peak.

Moreover, reaction from within the Diet to the Yeongpyeong incident was comparatively limited in terms of scope, volume and intensity. Nevertheless, it should be re-emphasised here that the process of risk-recalibration outlined in the chapters above, resulting in debates between Japan’s political elite focussed primarily on contestation over the ability to respond with speed and exhibit strength in the face of an entity framed broadly as a belligerent aggressor (the DPRK), remained inherent to the manifestation of Diet discourse after the Yeongpyeong shelling. Within this, opposition parties were quick to criticise the ruling DPJ administration’s lack of response rapidity and apparent under-calibration of incumbent risks potentially posed to Japan by the North’s “outrageous violation” or bōkyo.

In this manner, while the established pattern
of competition over demonstrating an overtly strong response to North Korean actions, including the provision of counter-measures to counter the attributed risks, is evident, there is little qualitative evidence from Japan’s Diet chambers to show that the Yeonpyeong shelling was an event sufficient to sustain a more generic upward momentum of recalibrated risks – rather, serving only to maintain the existing levels of previously recalibrated risks and the perpetuation of North Korea’s negative framing within the political elite.

XI. Comparison of Quantitative Results: Decreasing Momentum in the Recalibration of Risk Across a Convergent Policy Community

The discussion above has, then, outlined how the interactive influences of state, market (including media) and societal actors have created a qualitative process of risk recalibration in response to North Korea’s actions throughout the post-Cold War period – identifiable in general convergence up to 2007, and to varying degrees across each sector up to 2009. This section demonstrates how that recalibration can also be traced in quantitative terms by cross-examining the patterns of response to each of the major case studies dealt with in the preceding sections. As confirmed by the random sampling and qualitative examples examined throughout, coverage in both the Diet and mass media relating to North Korea has been overwhelmingly negative. Therefore, while the qualitative analysis above is necessary in order to discern the specific form – particularly in terms of public-political sphere discourse – of Japan’s framing of the DPRK, the extended fluctuating quantity of coverage relating to North Korea is also highly illuminating. This is particularly so in terms of delineating the impact of specific events upon these core areas of the policy community’s recalibration of risk.

In this sense, comparison of Figure 6.3 (a) and Figure 6.3 (b), below, reveals a remarkable proportional similarity in terms of reactions to North Korea-related events in the period examined. This not only supports the qualitative evidence exposed above, suggestive of a close interaction and convergence of media and Diet spheres, but also reaffirms their significance in terms of being constitutive elements of a tangibly identifiable policy community which directs responses towards North Korea within Japan. Furthermore, while there is a significant difference in the volume of coverage assigned to each event (particularly the abduction revelations of 2002) across media sources, the indisputable conformity in the correlation between specific time periods and peaks of coverage observable in Figure 6.3 demonstrates the pertinence of a addressing the media as a unitary actor in itself – i.e. as a predominantly convergent influence upon and amid the policy community.
Put simply, the decrease in additional recalibrations of risks identified with North Korea since the summer of 2009 can probably be attributed broadly to many of the various key actors having

XII. Future Research Goals:
Tracking the Risk (Re)calibration Trajectory
achieved their policy goals – and maximized the market potential – contained in such a process as a function of Japan’s framing of North Korea. This includes Japan’s convergent right-of-centre policy community, which facilitated the process of risk recalibration in order to justify increased or sustained levels of military expenditure and investment, and the use of North Korea’s framing as a negative reference point from which to promote a positive image and national identity of Japan. In addition, individual politicians have been able to make use of North Korea issues to distract public sphere attention away from more domestically rooted woes – and garner populist support. Media actors have also converged towards such a position, and have been able to utilize risks associated with the DPRK to create a popular discourse which could be sold to the public. Additionally, furthermore, US foreign policy and business interests have been largely satisfied by the current levels of risk calibration assigned to Pyongyang’s actions – in terms of providing support for a rationale which allows the continued levels of US troop deployment and highly profitable BMD technology transfer to Japan.

However, future research into the formation of norms and identity – and their relation to risk (re)calibration – in this sphere may further be able to better explain this apparently symbiotic nature of state, societal and market actors which have broadly moved in convergence, as observed in Figure 6.3, facilitating the recalibration of risks framed against North Korea in Japan. Moreover, an extension of in-depth analysis – working within this framework – into contemporary events related to the above, can aspire to elucidate further how this process now appears to be reaching a new equilibrium. Therein, the findings of this study present a case-study which seeks to facilitate conceptually innovative literature relevant to understanding Japan’s regional and global international relations, and the domestic processes which are central to them. In addition, it also provides the rudiments of a theoretical and empirical tool that can hopefully be employed in the more extensive utilization of risk as a key concept within the fields of Political Science and IR, and applied directly to the creation and formation of policy. If this is realized, the day may come when risk is understood to shape the future of all.

Notes

1 I.e., in comparison to the Taepodong launch of 1998, despite the fact that in terms of design and range the Taepodong was clearly developed as a weapon capable (and ultimately made as such with the Taepodong 2) of striking US targets, whereas the Nodong only has the capacity to strike those within Japan or the ROK.

2 The timing of the missile launch, coming little more than two months after the North Korean Red Cross’ denial of the abduction cases, presented a particularly potent cocktail for framing the DPRK.

3 It is the process behind the extremity of how Japan reacts to a continuing sequence of North Korean actions which is of particular interest. Indeed, the significance of such is evinced by the “difference in temperature”, or ondosa between Japan and other stake-holder states in their responses to North Korea.

4 While much was made of the fact that North Korea had further developed its upgraded Taepodong missile, government-sponsored research institutes conceded that the primary threat posed to Japan by North Korea’s missiles lay in its deployment of over 100 Nodong units, and that even in such case as the Taepodong missile was further developed and its range extend, it would still be hard to consider that that in itself posed a particular risk to Japan.