

KINU Workshop

By Nozomu Okibe
Senior Research Fellow

February 2003

On 6 December 2002, IIPS hosted a joint workshop with the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU). Seven participants came from KINU: Professor Dr Seo Byung-chul, the president of KINU, five senior research fellows and a representative of the Korean Foreign Ministry.

The agenda featured the following four topics: (1) Issues Surrounding Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and North Korea, (2) The Recent Situation on the Korean Peninsula, (3) Closer Economic Relations between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan, and (4) Cooperation between the ROK and Japan within Multilateral Cooperative Frameworks in Asia. The main points of the discussion were as follows:

1. Issues for Normalization of Diplomatic Relations

Various participants from IIPS affirmed that, since Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to North Korea, the abduction of Japanese citizens had become by far the most pressing and sensitive political issue, and that normalization talks had been suspended because of it. KINU participants responded that Korea was very hopeful that progress might be made towards normalization and that it was important to address the normalization issue from a much wider and longer-term perspective.



2. The Recent Situation on the Korean Peninsula



One of the KINU participants envisioned that the "Sunshine Policy" would continue, irrespective of the result of the up-coming presidential election. Regarding US policy towards North Korea, one KINU participant argued that it was in US interests to maintain a certain degree of tension on the Korean Peninsula. Another KINU participant foresaw that the US would have a constructive role in future Korean unification.

A research counsellor from IIPS commented that both the ROK and North Korea should address the unification issue according to the principles of the July 4th South-North Joint Statement which was announced in 1972. Another IIPS research counsellor pointed out that North Korea was not a threat to the US, and that it is China that is potentially the most

powerful competitor to the US. He added that US policy in East Asia has to be analyzed in the context of US policy towards China.

3. *Closer Economic Relations between the (ROK) and Japan*

An IIPS participant emphasized that a Korea-Japan FTA should be designed in a manner that would allow the evolution of an economic relationship that fully utilizes each country's economic power, and that it would be better if China were to join it afterwards. A KINU participant stated that the economic structures of Japan and Korea were competitive rather than complementary, and that it would be wise to formulate a broader cooperative framework before addressing more sensitive matters in detail.

4. Cooperation between the ROK and Japan

A KINU participant suggested that a new collective security framework between Japan, Korea, China and Russia be established. He also expressed the hope that Japan would play a role in bridging the gap between Korea and the US.