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The Implication of TMD System in Japan to China's Security

HONG Yuan

Institute of World Economics & Politics
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

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In the preliminary stage of a war in the future, both air force attack-defense capability and land-based, sea-based medium and long range missiles are necessary for destroying enemy's air force and other crucial strategic infrastructures. The TMD, therefore, will be a key element for a future war and regional conflicts. More and more countries have been trying to develop new defense systems against all kinds of missile attack, or are thinking to set up their own TMD projects. This development has gradually stimulated the proliferation of the TMD. A new confrontation and competition between missile offense and missile defense have appeared to the international arena.

The analysis of Japanese TMD is based on US-Japanese alliance relationship. The cooperation on TMD allows them to share the common resources.

JAPAN'S INTERESTS IN STRENGTHENING ITS NAVAL FORCE

In recent years, Japan has paid much attention to the military development in the whole Asia-Pacific region and the sea line toward Indian Ocean. For this purpose, based on 1000 maritime miles, the defense coverage of Japan will be extended toward Southeast and Southwest step by step. As a typical island state, geo-politics and the pattern of its military modernization make the naval build-up be the top priority on the Japan's defense policy agenda, and it does not have to put a high budget on the army build-up. Most of money goes to naval forces. Japan, a island state, pays less on the military use of resources compared with ocean-continental states, because the latter have to develop both navy and army forces, which is more costly.

This formula applies to the TMD consideration. TMD development will be logically started with the armament of the strongest section in the military forces, considering the geographic position for an ocean-continental country, it should take the sea-based and land-based TMD into account. According to the resources allocation and the order of policy priorities, land-based TMD should follow the development of sea-based system, then, sea-land dual use, and finally land-based.

SEA-BASED TMD AND ITS ROLE AND PERSPECTIVE

Without any formal commitment, and because of the financial shortage, Japan has not fully begun its work on the TMD, it has, however, completed the studies of West-pacific missile defense structure. Since the redefinition of US-Japanese security pact in 1997, Japan has had more freedom to make decision in its security arrangements, it has extended its defense coverage to much broader area. Japan has not only ordered and improved the basic equipment usable for TMD, but drawn the blueprint for multi-layer defense system mainly against North Korea and China. The blueprint is aimed to cope with the missile attack from North Korea, China and Russia. The US encourages Japanese to develop the TMD system within the US-Japan security arrangement (Daily News, Japan May 18,1997). It will deploy "Aegis" destroyers armed with low altitude missiles; To defend the whole territory, namely, within three circles which can cover the whole country, it will deploy destroyers with THAAD system to intercept immediately the high altitude missile attacks upon when they enter into the atmosphere. As an island country, Japan has its special situation: if there was a missile attack, the orbit of missiles is flying over the sea, and that is the basic reason why sea-

based TMD should be introduced to Japan. Furthermore, the shape of the territory of Japan makes the TMD work well, as it is flexible to be used for the sea and the land, and it is easy to be applied a continental state.

“Aegis” destroyer is a good carrier for weapons, and it is not difficult to be improved. It is of the following advantages: first, its defense system can be moved close to the battle field, in another word, to play as a “point-blank defense”. This provides the forces with broad air protection so as to improve the “general attack capability”. Second, it has the flexibility for both sea and land situation. Third, it has strong air protection capability. As such, sea-based TMD can provide a reliable, motility and maneuverability air protection.

THE DUEL PURPOSE OF TMD DEVELOPMENT IN JAPAN

This strategic evolution in Japan has its own covert purpose and target. The TMD is a breakthrough of military revolution. We have to look at it as a component of the whole Japan's strategic thinking. In a strict definition, The TMD is a weapon system with both defensive and offensive capabilities. Moreover, it is a guarantee for Japan to be a big military power.

The minimum cover range of lower-tier TMD or a THAAD system, with the improved “Aegis” destroyer, is up to 100-300 km, the intercept capability can be 30-160 km high, it can protect large area or a big city. This kind of TMD can be introduced on the combat fleets and fight with TBM at earliest time when a threat is posed. This means that it can be moved toward the coast area of the foe state and intercept missiles before they enter into atmosphere so as to attain the advantage of time and space, and have a good position in the battle field. For Japan, the special case, sea-based TMD can provide the high motility and maneuverability of air defense. The TMD, which sounds like unarmful, but it's not only a defensive system. It does have both offensive and defensive utilities. It is such a dual-use technology that if it is used with the sea-based THAAD, it is easy to reach the coast line of a foe country and intercept the attacking missiles. In short, it is of the land and fleet air defense capability.

The “hawks” and “pigeons” in Japan share a consensus on getting rid of the “peace Constitution” and like to see Japan being a political power. After W.W.II, Japanese government has officially taken a “three nos principle on nuclear”, but, as a matter of fact, it has done something different. Some openly talk about going nuclear. On June 17, 1994, answering questions raised by the journalists, the then Prime Minister said, “Japan indeed, has the capability to make nuclear weapon”. Once Japan has bombs, the delivery system can carry them to any corner around the world.

There is an argument, however, that Japan is fully nuclear capable, but can not make the bomb. Because even if Japan has a bomb, the size of its territory might decrease its defense capability anyway. On one hand, Japan can not be accepted as a nuclear state by many Asian neighbors and the West lead by the US, on the other, it is difficult to use nuclear weapons to deter a missile attack, just like other nuclear powers. In contrast, it will find itself in the hot water and a target of attacks. Japan, with a small size of land, resources shortage, and intensive distribution of its industry, can not afford such attacks. Japan has strong felling: more it involves in world affairs, more its ideas and behaviors will get accusation from the peace loving nations, including China. Since the horrible memory about nuclear attack can not be swept away easily,

the government has to think about the consequence of its nuclearization carefully, which surely be serious.

To get rid of the dilemma situation, Japan is taking a “building shields first, then swords” policy. We can assume that once upon TMD is deployed, Japan will get itself nuclearized and go forward to a military power. Japanese government will like to take the chance to permanently get out of the shadow of nuclear memory, and to promote the survival capability and security for the whole country. Thus, any change of its foreign policy, its “peace constitution, “three nos principle on nuclear , and “involvement of a war abroad” issue depends on the TMD build-up. It is a typical “cause and effect” case.

JAPAN'S TMD IMPACT ON CHINA

Although Japan has not formally committed to joining the cooperation with the US on TMD considering the reaction from parliament, legal procedure and media, the preparation for the research and deployment is making its headway. On June 2, 1998, Defense Department decided that Japan will formally participate the joint project on TMD technology research. Japan has paid 550 million yens to figure out if TMD is workable and it got a positive conclusion in July. The deployment of the system will be directed to southwest. By the beginning of next century, they will get it done, and use it to prevent the medium range missile attack from the neighboring countries.

1. US-Japan alliance against China and North Korea

In the alliance, Japan, on one hand, bents its the knee to the US; on the other, under the US's umbrella, claims the strategic interests in Korean peninsula and announces its intention to “protect” Taiwan and South China Sea. A alliance usually has an enemy, that is the reason why an alliance exists and why military exercises are carried on. While Japan has tried hard to convince people that China is not its target, the officials reiterate: the key area for its defense coverage is shifted from “North” to “Southwest”. On October 27, 1995, the then Foreign Minister said, the review of US-Japanese security alliance is a result of taking China in its consideration. To be frank, in the new form of its defense strategy, China is an adversary and a potential threat for Japan, it is hard for the officials to speak it out though. TMD is now the best juncture of their interests in the US-Japanese cooperation.

Japan will intervene in Korean Peninsula dispute. The Peninsula is the first option for the US “fighting two regional wars at the same time” policy, and it is in the central place in the stage of military confrontation in Asia. Should the US involves in a limit war in Northeast Asia, its military base in Japan would be in a dangerous position. The US who plans, generates and conducts war, can accept that part of Asia, including Japan is destroyed in order to achieve its long term strategy, as long as there is no big casualty for Americans. Japan will have to make a choice among if it likes to go along with the US and confronts with other Asian countries, and takes the risk of damage of its territory. The TMD, in this regard, is a good choice. If a conflict broke out in Korean peninsula, TMD can make sure the damage for Japan will be minimized. Considering the over react in Japan over the Korean satellite launch (defense ministry even planned an attack to the launch site), Japanese government has shown its determination to interfere into the Northeast Asian conflict.

2. Obstacle for the solution of Taiwan issue

Looking through the history of Japan and Taiwan relations, the build-up of sea-based TMD will have negative impact on China and complicate the Chinese unification process. In April 1994, Japanese government included the Taiwan strait, Korean peninsula and South China sea, which called "neighboring area", into its defense coverage under Japan-US security treaty. That means, once conflict broke out across the Taiwan strait, Japan has the obligation to send troops there together with the US. This poses threat to Northeast Asia, especially to China military security. China's endeavor on integrating its territory might be unsuccessful forever. This is a strategic step for Japan, which allows Japan to use its naval forces, and push its strategic border into the China's sea. The military guarantee for this national strategic service will, in many ways, depend on the development of TMD system.