TMD AND US-CHINA-JAPAN COOPERATION

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TMD AND US-JAPAN CHINA-JAPAN TMD PROGRAMME

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The TMD joint development by the United States and Japan now stands out as a most prominent sticking point in East Asian security in the wake of September’s 1999 agreement between the United States on TMD joint development. Some argue that it is a stabilizer, whereas many more argue that it is a stabilizer only if there are no complications only affecting the major powers in Asia, but also the American and Japanese militaries, or if the US-Japan military alliance is not to be undermined. I am grateful to the Nautilus Institute and the University of Oregon for sponsoring this workshop and giving me the opportunity to share my personal views with our colleagues from the United States and Japan on this issue. I hope that such exchanges will help all interested parties towards a better understanding on each other’s concerns. I will, on a personal basis, express my strong reservation on the strategic goals of the US and Japan TMD joint development endeavor before then make an explicit approach at its joint development program with the strategic goal of substantially enhancing its overall military strength and, on this basis, aggravates its political position at the international stage. (1)

So, in the above strategic goals, both the United States and Japan are virtually basing themselves on a wrong perception of security, a perception characterized by cold war mentality.

II. Implications of the US-Japan TMD Joint Program

The TMD joint development by the United States and Japan is, in fact, not a stabilizing factor in promotion of East Asian security, but rather a destabilizing factor, affecting regional and global security with multi-fold implications.

Firstly, the sophisticated TMD systems, especially NTW currently under the joint development by the United States and Japan, given its inherent strategic capability, once deployed in East Asia, will undoubtedly serve as an indispensable link within US NMD. Under such circumstances, the above TMD systems will have the same severe negative impacts as those of NMD on both global and regional security. Secondly, the sophisticated TMD systems under joint development by the US and Japan, if deployed, will contribute to wrecking the existing security landscape in East Asia.

This will undoubtedly tip the current tenuous strategic balance in East Asia. Moreover, given the “revolutionary” nature of such sophisticated military systems, other countries will be prompted to come up with corresponding adjustments to their own military strategies. As a result, a spurious arms race in the region may be triggered.

Thirdly, the sophisticated TMD systems currently under joint development by the US and Japan, if deployed in East Asia, will drastically enhance the overall offensive-defensive capability of the US-Japan military alliance, far exceeding the level they maintained during the cold war era, as such sophisticated systems, given their strategic capability, can help enhance the US-Japan military alliance to the very forefront in the balance of power in the region. Any unilaterally unbalanced and provocative Military involvement in regional security issues as a result of its rapid military penetration and projection, thus constituting a direct threat to surrounding countries in the region.

Fourthly, TMD joint development by the United States and Japan will help Japan pick up its pace in its endeavor to embark on the course of re-militarization. Japan’s defense budget is currently the second largest in the world, after those of the US and ROK. In September 1999, Japan’s government approved their new Defense Cooperation Guidelines. (3) In May 1999, the Japanese Diet reviewed and subsequently endorsed the bill concerning “situation in the areas surrounding Japan”, which expand its defense area to “areas surrounding Japan”. Moreover, some politicians in Japan have, from time to time, called for changes in Japan’s military strategy, i.e. from a strategy of “defense confined to its own territory and coastal waters” to “preemptive” one. (4) And some even went so far as to call for amendments to Japan’s Peace Constitution. (5) So, US-Japan cooperation on TMD can only contribute to the resurgence of Japan’s militarism.

Fifthly, TMD joint development by the United States and Japan will give rise to mounting misgivings and mistrust among the major powers in the region, especially China and Russia. Given the US-Japan joint cooperation in the regional context, thus making it difficult to foster a sound and enabling security environment in the region.

Sixthly, the US-Japan cooperation on TMD will not be conducive to relaxing the tensions on the Korean Peninsula, in particular the resolution of the Korean nuclear and missile crises. The emerging positive developments, from another perspective, point to the very fact that the excuses employed by the US and Japan to develop TMD in East Asia in unison with their own way and continue to pursue TMD, it will affect the momentum being gained in the wake of the recent rapprochement between DPRK and ROK. As a result, any resolution to the above crisis will remain elusive.

Seventhly, the US-Japan cooperation on TMD will not help prevent the proliferation of missiles; on the contrary, such cooperation can only multiply the risk of the proliferation of missiles. The report of the ROK- and US-led MTCR indicates that both offensive missiles and missile defenses are mutually convertible, and many technologies for missile defenses can be used and adapted to develop and improve the technologies for offensive missiles. In fact, many TMD systems, even in the case of such a low-tier TMD as PAC-III, are subject to the control of the MTCR as Category II items. So, US-Japan cooperation on TMD is, in fact, very much at odds with the non-proliferation purposes of the MTCR. The result has cast considerable doubt on the effectiveness of the MTCR.

Lastly, the deployment of sophisticated TMD systems in East Asia will constitute a direct grave threat to China’s national security interest. According to the information made available by the US side, NTW, for instance, is an upper-tier TMD system inherently capable of intercepting ICBMs even in the ascent boost phase. (6) The NTW system, given its velocity, is capable of penetrating 800 to 1000 km inside China, thus directly threatening the safety of China’s coastal provinces. The Chinese have naturally registered their grave concerns and strong opposition.

III. The Taiwan Question in Asia-Pacific

TMD Architectures

TMD relating to Taiwan represents a special concern to China, as it involves not only China’s sovereignty but its national security interests as well.

Our concerns on this score are actually two-fold. One is the American factor, i.e. the direct provision by the US to Taiwan of TMD systems, equipment, technologies, services or other types of strategic assistance. The principal purpose of the US-Japan-Taiwan collaboration is the maintenance of the US-Japan military alliance, given the potential for disputes between Taiwan and China.

Neither scenario is acceptable to China, because both scenarios constitute not only an act of interference in China’s internal affairs on the part of the US and Japan, but also a major shift in the latter’s policy towards China. Given the nature of TMD systems, especially with the involvement of early warning information, the provision of assistance to Taiwan will be perceived as the true sign of the US and Japan pursuit of one-sided goal of presenting Taiwan with the US-Japan-Taiwan “power concert”. A “power concert”, in this sense, is actually, a question frequently addressed to me as the United States and Japan are pressing rapidly ahead in their TMD joint development endeavor. My answer is positive. Such a “power concert” will not only shake the basis of China’s relations with the US and Japan, but also undermine the principle of one-China in the hearts of the Chinese.

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Finally, it is necessary to do away with any TMD cooperation based on the wrong perception of security, a perception characterized by cold war mentality.

VI. Conclusion

With this in mind, I am of the view that the excuse employed by the United States and Japan in pursuing their TMD joint development program is untenable. TMD is not a relevant answer to threats flowing from missile development and missile proliferation. On the contrary, it can only cause the relations of major powers, increase their mistrust and thus impede their cooperation with profound and far-reaching negative impacts on regional peace, security and stability. A correct perception of security, coupled with coordination among major powers and enhanced dialogue and cooperation among all relevant countries in accordance with the principle of non-military security for all, is of utmost importance if the regional security issues are to be put behind us.