THE BMD ISSUE IN NORTHEAST ASIA:
STRATEGIC RELATIONS AND JAPAN’S OPTION

Recommended Citation

Russia also criticized the US forces in the ROK by saying that the cost of maintaining the forces is enormously ... cited this. See http://www.kcna.co.jp/calendar/frame.htm Thus, the DPRK, China, and Russia have been strengthening their

especially after Kim Jong-il's visit to China, the DPRK's opposition to the program has been more visible. China's People's Daily also has a special report on ABM and NMD. See People's Daily, February 25, 2001. http://j.people.ne.jp/zhuanti - 15.html


(12) This policy coordination is known as the Trilateral Policy Coordination Group (TCOG). The group has been effective to engage with the DPRK.

(9) Rodong Shinmun introduced “new thinking” and “new viewpoints” as Kim Jong-il's words. See Rodong Shinmun, January 4, 2001.

(6) The DPRK's Rodong Shinmun criticizes Japan almost everyday.

(4) Kim Jong-il often told those close to him, including Hwang Jan-yop, that the military is the source of power. See Hwang Jan-yop, Kim Jong-il Eno Sensenfukoku (Tokyo, Japan: Bungeishunju, 1999).

(3) The US and the ROK are less concerned about the DPRK's Nodong perhaps because its target range would not threaten their security.

Endnotes

It is more important to discuss the source of threats rather than to discuss the consequences of BMDs. On the other hand, some view holds that Japan should develop cruise missiles. (17) If Japan introduces BMD, would it lead to the development of cruise missiles? It is not clear as yet. But since Japan cannot reach the ROK due to the economic crisis, and when the Bush Administration and the Kim Dae-jung Administration disagree over the financial support, Japan would move closer to the ROK.

Then, what is Japan's role? There are three things Japan can do diplomatically. Japan can strengthen policy coordination with the ROK. Japan can strengthen relations with the US. Japan also can propose a new four-party peace talk, including both Koreas, Japan, and the US. Japan also can propose that peace talks become a step toward the denuclearization of the DPRK.

Fourth, in South Korea, there is a view regarding Japan's post-Cold War defense increase that Japan intends to become a nuclear weapon. Japan also has three strategic considerations to pursue a nuclear option against the DPRK: South Korea. Because Seoul is too close to the 38 parallel line, a DPRK missile would hit Seoul in a few minutes.

Fourth, Japan and the ROK opinions slightly diverge on the US role. Japan, the US, and the ROK still agree to maintain the US military bases in the South. But Japan is becoming more and more emphatic on the inter-Korean dialogue, while the US still sees the US-DPRK relations as the top priority. Japan has to be more flexible and compromise in order to maintain the US-Japan alliance. If Japan and the US cannot settle on the US role, the two countries finally reach agreement regarding preventive diplomacy, when crises are not assessed as imminent? For example, when North Korea test-launched a Taepodong missile over Japan, the US thought that it would be unnecessary for Japan to introduce its own BMD system. But when North Korea launched a Taepodong missile in the Middle East, Middle Eastern countries would not want to make Europeans unnecessarily nervous. As for the US-Japan alliance's framework, Japan, the US and South Korea respectively should be clear on the issue. The US might ask South Korea to play this role for the US-Japan alliance's framework. Japan also would want to improve its role in the US-Japan alliance.

WHAT DO THE NORTH'S MISSILES MEAN TO JAPAN?

North Korea's ballistic missiles are also aimed to strengthen their own deterrence and to reassert their regional influence. The missiles are also a means for North Korea to offset US superior power in the region.

In the 1990s, the DPRK clearly developed and demonstrated the first nuclear warhead. But North Korea actually never used the warhead. North Korea only demonstrated nuclear warheads in order to show its nuclear capabilities.

China, North Korea, and Russia are becoming more and more opposed to the US-led theater missile defense (TMD) initiative. Especially, China is against TMD for the following reasons.

CHINA'S AND NORTH KOREA'S OPPOSITION

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Second, Nodong missiles are sufficiently capable of striking Japan. Some argue that the ROK's CICU is inferior to that of advanced countries. However, the normal performance of the DPRK's nuclear device does not necessarily ensure Japan's security. If the missile lacks precision, then it may undermine the export of oil, which is not original Pyongyang's target. Thus, the DPRK's神器 missiles would have been more menacing to Japan.


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