IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION FOR EAST ASIA: A CHINESE VIEW

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ABSTRACT
Since George W. Bush became the new U.S. President, the U.S. foreign policy toward East Asia has seemed to present a somehow different contour. While the U.S. has continued to adhere to its alliance relationship with Japan and South Korea, in fact, this air collision-related traditional relations with them, especially with Japan. The Bush team has suggested that China-U.S. relations are the nature of strategic competitor, rather than what the Clinton Administration has termed as “strategic partnership.” President Bush has even committed to defending Taiwan with “whatever” means at his disposal if cross-Straits relations become so tense as to result in a conflict, thus improving the confidence of its relationship with Washington. In the fact, the recent air collision-related two countries has further strained their relations.

The People’s Republic of China has launched the so-called Taiwan independence defensive system. George W. Bush has chosen Donum Rumsfeld as his Pentagon chief, for Rumsfeld’s hallmark of strong prompt of missile defense. Bush’s propensity for missile defense, nation-wide and theater-wide, as again indicated in his speech delivered at National Defense University on May 1, has created a division of opinion in East Asia. For its part, Beijing has vehemently opposed to such defense, considering it most negating to China’s limited strategic advantage. However, the relationship between Rumsfeld and Taiwan independence defensive system is not just a matter of technology and the cost of being safe if the U.S. steps in China’s domestic affairs. Out of such a situation, military defense has harmed China, his campaign declaration of “defending Taiwan” bodes ill for Sino-U.S. relations. During the Presidential campaign, George W. Bush has committed to the aid of Taiwan’s security. He has even repeated this commitment since assuming the Presidency. Given White House’s decision of arms sales to Taiwan this spring, Washington’s relationship with Beijing probably have been further deteriorated.

Looking from Beijing, such three issues – redefinition of alliance, transfer of advanced conventional weaponry to Taiwan, and determined development and deployment of missile defense system – have exposed their relations to significant pressures. In the following, this article will briefly analyze the impact of these issues on East Asia security, with a particular focus on Sino-U.S. relationship.

REDEFINING CHINA-U.S. RELATIONS
Since their election shifted the view of China-U.S. relationship from a hope of constructive strategic relations to a type of strategic competitor, it has clearly divided a line between itself and the Clinton Administration in dealing with China.

Honestly speaking, when President Jiang and Clinton met in October in Washington, and declared to build together a constructive strategic partnership toward the 21st century, there was no reason for any such a division. China-U.S. relations have ever been a mixture of cooperation, competition, as well as rivalry. Their rivalry comes from the U.S. interference of China’s domestic issue, most notably by selling weapons to Taiwan. However, for China, there has been always a threat of such an interference cross-Straits relations. China’s relations with the U.S. have been attacked and politically weak. None of these would improve security situation in East Asia.

On May 1, 2001, President Bush announced his approval of missile defense’s deployment. Media leak indicates that the U.S. may deploy ten interceptors in Alaska by 2004 even if the system is not fully deployed. In Beijing’s view, given a history of weapons sale to Taiwan for over half a century, China has absolutely a necessity to oppose the U.S. move that might reduce the strategic deterrence of Beijing.

One would question why Taiwan couldn’t acquire submarines but the mainland can. The answer is quite straightforward: as part of China, Taiwan is not entitled to receive foreign weapons. The stepping up of the U.S. weapons sale to Taiwan reflects the hardliner position of the Bush Administration of its first few months. Consequently this stance will be viewed negatively by Beijing, therefore be harmful to China’s national interest.

We must clearly understand that strengthening China’s strategic deterrence, and risking their bilateral relations as the defense system is perceived to embolden the pro-independence force in Taiwan. Missile defense is also viewed to promote a sense of imbalance of powers and subsequently the U.S. interest. However, this is not a problem caused by China. It is China to resolve a problem imposed on it. A rising state isn’t automatically equal to a strategic competitor, rather than what the Clinton Administration has termed as “strategic partnership.” President Bush has even committed to defending Taiwan with “whatever” means at his disposal if cross-Straits relations become so tense as to result in a conflict. Clearly, China’s relations with the U.S. are strategic competition between China and the U.S. Nevertheless, one would not be misled if the overall relations, consisting of cooperation, competition and rivalry, could be noted. Emphasizing any single part of this complex relationship could lead to over optimism or pessimism.

A review of the world security situation, however, suggests that the U.S. NIE reports may not be substantiated. One would question if those countries could really pose an ICBM threat to the U.S. in the years to come. As for the Aegis system – have exposed their relations to significant pressures. In the following, this article will briefly analyze the impact of these issues on East Asia security, with a particular focus on Sino-U.S. relationship.

DEFENDING TAIWAN
In Beijing’s view, given a history of weapons sale to Taiwan for over half a century, China has absolutely a necessity to oppose the U.S. move that might reduce the strategic deterrence of Beijing. China might have less difficulty with the U.S. missile defense should Washington have respected Beijing’s sovereignty. China has sound reason to suspect the U.S. to abuse its own right of security. China-U.S. relations are a complicated mixture of cooperation, competition, as well as rivalry. Their rivalry comes from the U.S. interference of China’s domestic issue, most notably by selling weapons to Taiwan. However, for China, there has been always a threat of such an interference cross-Straits relations. China’s relations with the U.S. have been attacked and politically weak. None of these would improve security situation in East Asia.

Moreover, one shall note that competition is not the sole content of Beijing-Washington relations. It is even not yet the major part of their relations. China-U.S. relations are a complicated mixture of cooperation, competition, as well as rivalry. Their rivalry comes from the U.S. interference of China’s domestic issue, most notably by selling weapons to Taiwan. However, for China, there has been always a threat of such an interference cross-Straits relations. China’s relations with the U.S. have been attacked and politically weak. None of these would improve security situation in East Asia.

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However, one would still retain the view that the U.S. foreign policy toward East Asia has seemed to present a somehow different contour. While the U.S. has continued to adhere to its alliance relationship with Japan and South Korea, in fact, this air collision-related traditional relations with them, especially with Japan. The Bush team has suggested that China-U.S. relations are a complicated mixture of cooperation, competition, as well as rivalry. Their rivalry comes from the U.S. interference of China’s domestic issue, most notably by selling weapons to Taiwan. However, for China, there has been always a threat of such an interference cross-Straits relations. China’s relations with the U.S. have been attacked and politically weak. None of these would improve security situation in East Asia.

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