TMD, US-JAPAN RELATIONS, AND EAST ASIAN SECURITY

Recommended Citation


"East Asian Regional Security Futures: Theater Missile Defense Implications"
The United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, June 24-5, 2000
There has been a certain kind of cooperation between Japan and the United States on ballistic missile defense since the late 1980s, but that cooperation has been greatly strengthened and accelerated during the last three years. In December 1998, both the United States and Japan formally declared that Japan would commence joint research on a TMD system with the US in fiscal year 1999. According to an agreement signed in August 1999, the joint R&D effort will focus on the sea-based Navy Theatre Wide Missile defense system, which will be deployed in East Asia. With TMD suddenly becoming something real and impending, it also turns out to be one of the most contentious issues in East Asia security. The fault line is quite clear-cut: US and Japan on one side argue that TMD is defensive in nature and that it is not directed toward any specific country, whereas China, Russia, and the DPRK argue that the idea of TMD is military and offensive. In fact, Japan has already begun to show its teeth by dividing countries into different groups and deepening the suspicions between major powers in this region. It is highly likely that the US-Japan co-development, especially TMD, will make it impossible for other countries to develop a regional security framework that will strengthen the US-Japan alliance and increase East Asia's overall security. The US and Japan will individualize the issue of missile threat and stability, ironically that which TMD is supposed to achieve.

TMD will increase the potential tension between Japan and the US and the potential of the US-Japan alliance to take military actions around Asia. Mainly due to its reluctant relationship with the US on the joint TMD program, Japan has become more active in regional military affairs. As the joint TMD program will not be completed before 2010, the joint R&D of TMD will increase the military cooperation between the US and Japan, enhance the military and dual-use-technology transfers between the two countries, and as such, make their alliance even closer and stronger. There is also an argument between the both US and Japan that TMD is able to improve military interoperability and intelligence information sharing of the US-Japan alliance by helping integrate Japan's missile defense system into the US system.

An effective TMD system will greatly increase the overall capability of the US-Japan alliance and thus, its potential to intervene in regional conflicts. The revision of the US-Japan defense guidelines in the late 1990s has already led to a change in the range of regional conflicts that would be used as a reason to become a part of a joint venture. The US and Japan are trying to provide logistics assistance to the US troops that become involved in “contingency in the areas surrounding Japan,” although neither country has made clear the very content of such a “contingency” and the military actions that are involved. Consequently, it is possible that an action for all purposes will be taken in the future under the very same circumstances (2).

The areas surrounding Japan — for example, a conflict on the Korean Peninsula — Japan might be reluctant to join in the US military intervention partly because of its vulnerabilities to possible WMD retaliations. A cooperative venture with the US in TMD may change the situation. Hence, it is plausible to assume that with the protection of a sophisticated TMD umbrella, the US, and to a larger extent Japan, will be more willing to participate in military actions in East Asia. In other words, the US-Japan alliance, even more than TMD, might truly become a powerful force in the region.

The above analysis of TMD implications might be too gloomy for many advocates of TMD. Unfortunately, the danger is real. In the past two years, we have already witnessed a lot how TMD issue could damage the US-Japan alliance (3). China and the US-Japan alliance is also increasing. Lastly, but not the least important, with an effective TMD system, the scenario that the US-Japan alliance involves in a conflict over Taiwan is getting even more real. Then the possibility of a conflict between Japan and China will increase. As a result, the sentiment in Taiwan for formal independence may be encouraged, and as such the likelihood of military escalation will increase. This may once again prove that the US-Japan alliance is not a force of peace in East Asia.

Japan currently has no official or public stance on TMD. Nevertheless, an analysis of Japan’s military and security policies in the last three years shows that there is a growing sentiment for Japan to be more involved in military affairs. As the biggest economic power in East Asia, Japan has been keeping the second largest defense expenditure for years. In addition to having the strongest marine force in East Asia, Japan also possesses some of the most advanced military equipment and technologies, including highly sophisticated technologies of launching rockets and satellites. Though Japan has chosen not to produce and possess nuclear weapons, it does have the capacity to make nuclear bombs within very short time. In a word, Japan has every POTTENTIAL to quickly become a major military power. The US has been encouraging Japan to engage in overseas military operations more actively as a means to acknowledge the bilateral alliance. Now with the joint TMD program with the US, Japan is not only going to spend more on its military, its capabilities in early warning, intelligence collection and rapid reaction of military action will also be greatly enhanced.

The US-Japan alliance is not one of equals. Both those Americans arguing for providing TMD to Taiwan and those Taiwanese seek TMD aggressively from the US are driven more by political calculations(12). They seem to take some counter actions, which in turn may push the US and Japan to invest even more in missile defenses and other advanced military technologies. With the introduction and development of TMD, there is a real danger that major players in East Asia will be trapped into a downspiral of security dilemma. China has increased its military expenditure and will increase the potential between Japan and China. This may be (dichotomy) that there exist deep mistrust and suspicion between the US, Japan and China. But the problem is that the US and Japan have been getting involved in a military alliance again after a few years. The US-Japan alliance has been considered an important weapon for the US to ensure the stability of East Asia. Certainly, there is a possibility that US-Japan alliance will become an important weapon of the US to ensure the stability of East Asia.

Secondly, the US and Japan are close allies, whose security alliance has just been updated. On the contrary, China’s relations with both the US and Japan are far from satisfying. There are lots of problems or tensions between Japan and China in several areas, such as economic competition, historical issues, and ocean islands. In brief, the US-Japan alliance between China and the Taiwan Strait. The same ambiguity strategy is being taken on TMD again. Both countries, especially the US, refuse to exclude the possibility of providing logistics assistance to the US troops that become involved in “contingency in the areas surrounding Japan,” although neither country has made clear the very content of such a “contingency” and the military actions that are involved. The United States may eventually intervene in the case of a conflict or “contingency” across the Taiwan Strait. The same ambiguity strategy is being taken on TMD again. Both countries, especially the US, refuse to exclude the possibility of providing logistics assistance to the US troops that become involved in “contingency in the areas surrounding Japan,” although neither country has made clear the very content of such a “contingency” and the military actions that are involved. The US-Japan alliance, even more than TMD, might truly become a powerful force in the region.

The US-Japan alliance is not one of equals. Both those Americans arguing for providing TMD to Taiwan and those Taiwanese seek TMD aggressively from the US are driven more by political calculations(12). They seem to take some counter actions, which in turn may push the US and Japan to invest even more in missile defenses and other advanced military technologies. With the introduction and development of TMD, there is a real danger that major players in East Asia will be trapped into a downspiral of security dilemma. China has increased its military expenditure and will increase the potential between Japan and China. This may be (dichotomy) that there exist deep mistrust and suspicion between the US, Japan and China. But the problem is that the US and Japan have been getting involved in a military alliance again after a few years. The US-Japan alliance has been considered an important weapon for the US to ensure the stability of East Asia. Certainly, there is a possibility that US-Japan alliance will become an important weapon of the US to ensure the stability of East Asia.

The US-Japan alliance is not one of equals. Both those Americans arguing for providing TMD to Taiwan and those Taiwanese seek TMD aggressively from the US are driven more by political calculations(12). They seem to take some counter actions, which in turn may push the US and Japan to invest even more in missile defenses and other advanced military technologies. With the introduction and development of TMD, there is a real danger that major players in East Asia will be trapped into a downspiral of security dilemma. China has increased its military expenditure and will increase the potential between Japan and China. This may be (dichotomy) that there exist deep mistrust and suspicion between the US, Japan and China. But the problem is that the US and Japan have been getting involved in a military alliance again after a few years. The US-Japan alliance has been considered an important weapon for the US to ensure the stability of East Asia. Certainly, there is a possibility that US-Japan alliance will become an important weapon of the US to ensure the stability of East Asia.

The US-Japan alliance is not one of equals. Both those Americans arguing for providing TMD to Taiwan and those Taiwanese seek TMD aggressively from the US are driven more by political calculations(12). They seem to take some counter actions, which in turn may push the US and Japan to invest even more in missile defenses and other advanced military technologies. With the introduction and development of TMD, there is a real danger that major players in East Asia will be trapped into a downspiral of security dilemma. China has increased its military expenditure and will increase the potential between Japan and China. This may be (dichotomy) that there exist deep mistrust and suspicion between the US, Japan and China. But the problem is that the US and Japan have been getting involved in a military alliance again after a few years. The US-Japan alliance has been considered an important weapon for the US to ensure the stability of East Asia. Certainly, there is a possibility that US-Japan alliance will become an important weapon of the US to ensure the stability of East Asia.

The US-Japan alliance is not one of equals. Both those Americans arguing for providing TMD to Taiwan and those Taiwanese seek TMD aggressively from the US are driven more by political calculations(12). They seem to take some counter actions, which in turn may push the US and Japan to invest even more in missile defenses and other advanced military technologies. With the introduction and development of TMD, there is a real danger that major players in East Asia will be trapped into a downspiral of security dilemma. China has increased its military expenditure and will increase the potential between Japan and China. This may be (dichotomy) that there exist deep mistrust and suspicion between the US, Japan and China. But the problem is that the US and Japan have been getting involved in a military alliance again after a few years. The US-Japan alliance has been considered an important weapon for the US to ensure the stability of East Asia. Certainly, there is a possibility that US-Japan alliance will become an important weapon of the US to ensure the stability of East Asia.