

Ballistic Missile Defense Deployment in Japan: Regional Reaction and the Future Stability of East Asia

CSC 2004

Subject Area National Military Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Title:** Ballistic Missile Defense Deployment in Japan: Regional Reaction and the Future Stability of East Asia
- Author:** Major Jeffrey S. Kawada, USMC
- Thesis:** Ballistic missile defense deployment by Japan, while defensive in nature, has the potential to dramatically upset the balance of power and regional stability of East Asia.
- Discussion:** On 31 August 1998, North Korea tested a medium range Taepodong missile over Japan that landed in the Pacific Ocean to the northeast. The test had a sobering effect on the perceived collective security of the nation as it took the missile less than nine minutes to reach Japan. This incident, the September 11th terrorist attacks and regional balance of power shifts have all pushed Japan toward a more engaged, assertive and autonomous foreign policy. The deployment of a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system by Japan, while defensive in nature, is certain to create tensions and upset the perceived balance of power between Japan and regional competitors, North Korea and China.

Nowhere else in the world has the past more defined and shaped relationships of the present than in East Asia. Memories of Japanese imperial domination pre-World War II has shaped attitudes and relations between Japan, China and North Korea today and must be taken into consideration before determining likely regional reaction to BMD.

North Korean ballistic missiles pose the most immediate threat to Japan. Lacking a long-range strike capability, the ballistic missile is North Korea's only power projection capability outside the peninsula. Many analysts believe the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs are merely bargaining chips for political and economic gain vice actual use. China though, represents a much more complex, long-term and increasing threat. China can threaten Japan both militarily, and perhaps more importantly, economically. China's ballistic missile fleet can target all of Japan and disrupt vital sea lines of communication transiting the South China Sea. Conflict also stems from the potential for Japan to use its naval BMD capability to defend Taiwan from Chinese efforts toward reunification. Additionally, regional fears are that BMD will open the door for a

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 2004		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2004 to 00-00-2004	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Ballistic Missile Defense Deployment in Japan: Regional Reaction and the Future Stability of East Asia				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Marine Corps War College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA, 22134-5067				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 53	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

return of Japanese aggression and the militant ways of their past leading to a nuclear armed Japan in the future.

Conclusion: In the end, the role of the United States is essential to the stability of East Asia and as the dominant power in the region, will play the pivotal role in determining the future stability of that region. How the U.S. handles the changing landscape, combined with the level of U.S. long-term commitment and investment in the region, will determine the future stability and balance of power in the East Asia.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 31 August 1998, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) launched a medium range Taepodong missile over Japan into the Pacific Ocean and set into motion a chain of events that has the potential to upset the balance of power and stability of East Asia. The unannounced launch startled leaders of the United States, Republic of Korea (South Korea), and especially Japan who could do nothing but watch helplessly as the missile flew over their country. The North Korean missile test enraged the Japanese public and had a sobering effect on the perceived collective security of the nation as it took the missile less than nine minutes to reach Japan. Years of indecision by Japan about entering a cooperative effort with the U.S. to develop ballistic missile defense (BMD) and its technologies came to an end as Japan joined the U.S missile defense cooperative in August 1999.¹ Four years later, on 23 August 2003, Japan announced its intentions to upgrade all four of its Aegis-equipped destroyers with a U.S.-made missile defense system that includes sea based SM-3 anti-ballistic missiles, paired with the installation of the land based Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) anti-missile system.² The two-tier sea and land system (Figure 1) given an estimated initial operating capability of 2007 with full operational system deployment targeted for 2011,³ has the potential to dramatically upset the balance of power and regional stability of East Asia and thrust Japan into the role as a regional military power.

¹ The Maxwell Papers, USAF, *US-Led Cooperative Theater Missile Defense in Northeast Asia*, Maxwell Paper No. 21, July 2000, 2.

² Pacific Forum CSIS, *Comparative Connections*, 3rd Qtr 2003, Vol.5, No. 3, Oct 2003, 24
<<http://www.csis.org>>

³ Paul Thompson, *Japanese budget to boost ballistic missile defence*. Janes Defence Weekly, 10 Sept 2003, <<http://www4.janes.com>>

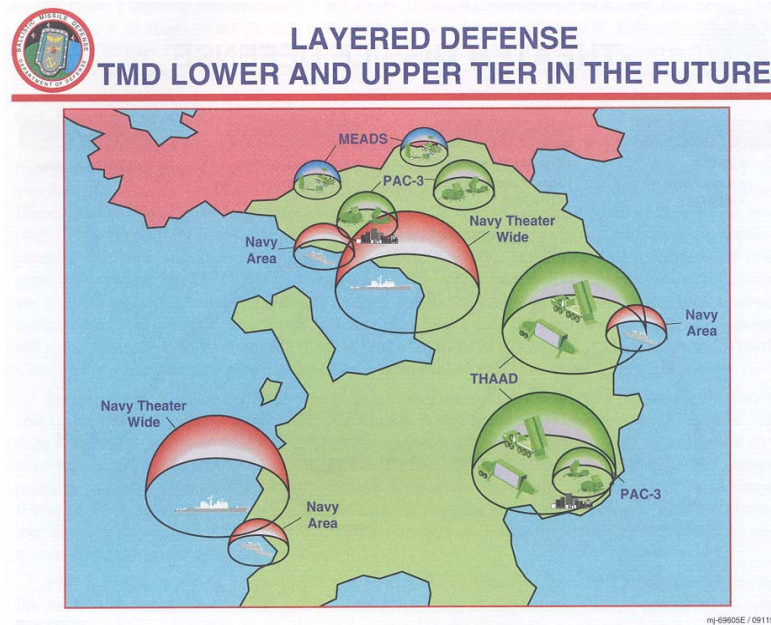


Figure 1. Example of two tier BMD

Source: The Stanley Foundation and Center for Nonproliferation Studies and Monterey Institute of International Studies, *Ballistic Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security: Views from Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo*, April 2001.

No matter how defensive or non-aggressive BMD may be considered by Japan, its deployment is certain to change the perceived balance of power in the region and raise suspicions by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and North Korea as to ulterior motives of Japan. This mistrust stems from decades of brutal war and occupation by Imperial Japanese Forces in Korea and China from 1894 until the defeat of Japan in 1945. Since World War II, Japan has risen from its ashes and rearmed itself under the umbrella and pressure of U.S. strategic Cold War requirements from a shattered military into a modern and powerful force. The end of the Cold War brought Japan out of the shadow of the United States and in search of a new identity. What has emerged is a more internationally engaged Japan with an increasing role on the international stage. To that end, Japan has quietly amassed a “defensive” military with the potential and capability to exert regional and limited

global power projection only a constitutional “pen-change” away. The will of the Japanese people is the only lacking ingredient that has kept Japan from becoming a strategic military power on par with countries such as the United Kingdom or France. The North Korean missile incident, September 11th terrorist attacks, and regional balance of power shifts have threatened to erode that will and have pushed Japan toward a more engaged and assertive foreign policy. Japan faces many serious questions in regard to its future defense posture that will have monumental effects on regional relations, stability in East Asia, and most importantly on the U.S-Japan Security Alliance.

Methodology

This paper will analyze the regional reaction to the deployment of BMD by Japan and how it will affect the balance of power and future relations and stability within East Asia. In order to properly discuss this topic, this paper will first take into account the impact of historical legacies in East Asia for they provide the basis for international relations in the region today. Next, the discussion will focus on Japan’s rise from the ashes of World War II and the circumstances leading to the reemergence of the Japanese military and their decision to deploy BMD. With the framework set, the discussion will shift and analyze the regional threats facing Japan and how adversaries of North Korea and China will react to BMD deployment. Finally, the paper will examine the future of East Asia and possible roles the U.S. might play in the regional balance of power equations of the future.

II. THE CONFLICT BEFORE THE CONFLICT: THE LEGACY OF JAPAN

Nowhere else in the world has the past defined and shaped relationships of the present than in East Asia. By far, the most influential and historical events that have shaped regional relations are all related to the Japanese domination of East Asia from 1894 until its defeat during World War II in 1945. Most of this history is centered on control of the Korean peninsula due to its strategic position in relation to China, Russia and Japan. The Korean peninsula was viewed as a buffer state between the invasion of Japan from the north or conversely, attack into China and Russia from the south. To alleviate this threat, the policy of Japan became “to place Korea outside the scope of foreign countries’ expansion policies, whatever dangers that may involve, however great the price.”⁴ This policy led to the annexation of Korea and war with China twice as Japan justified its aggression as defensive in the name of protecting its own sovereignty. Three major events during this period more than any others have shaped the relationships of China and Korea with Japan. Those events were the First Sino-Japanese War from 1894-1895 and Port Arthur Massacre, the occupation and annexation of Korea from 1910-1945, and most influentially for China, the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937-1945 and the “incident” known as the Nanjing Massacre.

The First Sino-Japanese War: 1894-1895

Japan and China share a common geographical region and claim portions of each other’s culture, yet in modern history, the two prevailing powers have always seen each other as a potential threat. Since the road to both Japan and China is through Korea, control and

⁴ Chishichi Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan 1825-1995* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 168.

influence over that nation became vital to both sides. A strategic game of chess ensued for years and small-scale confrontations became common as the powers jockeyed for position. By 1894, China had gained predominance over Japan through use of its troops to quell a Japanese backed coup attempt to install a pro-Japanese government in the place of Korea's Queen Min. The Japanese failure gave China the upper hand and obliterated any remaining Japanese influence in Korea. To Japan, the existence of a pro-Chinese government in control of the most likely avenue of approach (Korea) for an attack on Japan became a motive for a war with China. Additionally, Russian expansion into the Far East threatened the Japanese leadership as well. The result was the First Sino-Japanese War.

In February 1894, a peasant uprising, known as the Tonghak⁵ Rebellion flared up in protest against oppressive taxation and incompetent financial administration. At the request of Korea, China dispatched 2000 troops to help suppress the rebellion and unwittingly handed Japanese military leaders the pretext they needed to intervene massively on the Korean peninsula. Japan quickly dispatched its own troops to “maintain the balance of power between Japan and China”⁶ except it was soon clear by the large numbers of Japanese troops deployed, the balance of power was clearly in Japan's favor. On 1 August 1894 the Japanese emperor formally declared war against China and by October of that year had expelled most Chinese forces from Korea. The poorly equipped and trained Chinese military was no match for the modern and professional Japanese force on both the land and sea. Chinese soldiers fled their positions as the Japanese advanced into China and the Liaotung and Shantung peninsulas. Port Arthur and Weihaiwei on those peninsulas guarded the land

⁵ Tonghak or “Eastern Learning” movement began in 1860 as a new religion emphasizing salvation that was anti-foreign and for the improvement of dynastic institutions vice overthrow, appealing to the peasants.

⁶ Tsuzuki, 124

and sea approaches to China's capital at Peking (Beijing)⁷ and with the fall of Port Arthur and Weihaiwe, "the gateway had been thrown wide open, and no power in China [could] stay Japanese entry into Peking."⁸ Unfortunately, the first of many instances of brutality occurred known as the Port Arthur Massacre, which would become part of the Japanese legacy in East Asia and which continues to be a controversial and emotional subject through today.

Prior to the advance on Port Arthur, the Japanese had earned a reputation of restraint. "With wonderful unanimity, they [the natives] say they had no fear of the Japanese."⁹ From this reputation many of the civilians decided to remain at Port Arthur even after much of the Chinese military fled. As the Japanese advance guard approached, journalists from the *London Times* and *New York World* reported seeing mutilated Japanese bodies with "the heads of their slain comrades hanging by cords, with the noses and ears gone and a rude arch in the main street decorated with bloody Japanese heads."¹⁰ Others reported seeing equally mutilated bodies, "disemboweled; the eyes were gouged out, the throat cut, the right hand severed. They were perfectly naked, and groups of children were pelting them with mud and stones."¹¹ Upon seeing this, infuriated Japanese soldiers took their revenge upon any Chinese they could find. A foreign correspondent reported, "Nobody was spared, man, woman or child that I could see. The Chinese appeared to offer no resistance. The dead were mostly townspeople; their valiant defenders seemed to have been able to make themselves scarce."¹² The massacre continued for days as the Japanese advance continued. The intervention of the Western powers of Russia, Germany and France, known as the "Triple Intervention" finally

⁷ S.M.C. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895* (Cambridge, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 197.

⁸ "China," *The Japan Weekly Mail* (Yokohama), 23 March 1895, 344, cited in Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895*, 242.

⁹ Paine, 210.

¹⁰ J. Creelman, "The Massacre at Port Arthur," *The world* (New York), 20 Dec 1894, 1, cited in Paine, 211.

¹¹ James Allaj, *Under the Dragon flag: My experiences in the Chino-Japanese War*, 1898, 66-67, cited in Paine, 211.

¹² "China Unmasked," *The North-China Herald* (Shanghai), 28 Dec 1894, 1037 cited in Paine, 247.

stopped the Japanese advance and massacre. Their threat of intervention was not out of motivation for the massacre victims, but the stability of economic treaties they had built in China that hinged upon the survival of the ruling dynasty. Realizing it could not defeat the combined Western powers, Japan allowed China to sue for peace and end the war. The sheer brutality and lack of humanity between the two sides was the first of many acts of inhumanity each side would exact on each other throughout the years.

The quick defeat of the Chinese signified a complete reversal of Chinese and Japanese positions in East Asia. “China, regarded as the Bluebeard of the East, [was] disclosed as a sheep parading in wolf’s clothing.”¹³ Japan was now regarded as the dominant and supreme power in East Asia while China just hoped to survive and maintain its sovereignty. China defeated, Japan now saw Russia as their main threat. Russian activity in Manchuria just to the North of Korea now threatened the “Independence” of Korea and by proxy threatened Japan resulting in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Once again to the amazement of the world, Japan was victorious and with Russia’s defeat acquired the southern portion of Manchuria to include the Russian railway and most importantly, complete control of Korea.

The Annexation of Korea

The impact of the annexation was devastating for every aspect of Korean life. The currency was converted; transport and communications were controlled in their entirety by the Japanese government; and all Korean farmlands became the property of the Japanese Oriental Development Company. Korea was now a helpless captive state. The Korean people, long accustomed to oppressive rule, were now forced to confront yet more decades of naked exploitation on an unprecedented scale.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid, 247.

¹⁴ Isop Hong, ‘*The Modern Period*’, in *Korea, It’s Land, People and Culture of All ages*, 89, cited in Geoff Simmons, *Korea, The Search For Sovereignty*, 126.

The Treaty of Annexation was signed on 22 August 1910 proclaiming the Emperor of Korea ceded all rights of sovereignty to the Emperor of Japan and that the Emperor of Japan accepted.¹⁵ Although the treaty was merely a formalization of the existing situation, it officially wiped away the independence of Korea and legitimized the dominance of Korea in the eyes of the Japanese. The swift and complete control imposed on the entire peninsula by the Japanese military was on a scale almost too large to imagine. The Koreans were considered racial inferiors and stripped of all political rights. Many were forced to work as virtual slave labor in mines and factories in Japan and Korea for more than twelve hours a day, with less than half the pay of Japanese workers and without any industrial rights. Opposition movements were summarily crushed and leaders such as Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee were forced into exile to avoid arrest and imprisonment. Between 1911 and 1918 there were 330,025 cases of summary conviction against suspected anti-Japanese opposition. The Japanese attempted to wipe out Korean culture and expunge Korean national identity through a process of “Japanization.” In 1930, Japanese was pronounced the official language of Korea and “Korean Educational Ordinances” were introduced to teach obedience to Korean children in the Japanese controlled schools. Historians and archeologists conducted studies to prove Korean history was a part of Japanese and there was an “evident Korean backwardness that only the Japanese could rectify.”¹⁶ All forms of cultural expression considered nationalistic were banned and meeting places such as church gatherings were closely supervised, with Christian leaders often arrested and jailed for suspected anti-Japanese rhetoric or plots.

¹⁵ Choi, Woonsang, *The Fall of the Hermit Kingdom* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1967), 77.

¹⁶ Geoff Simons, *Korea, The Search For Sovereignty* (NY: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1995), 128.

As an agricultural based society, the Korean farmers suffered most, losing ownership of their land to the Japanese Oriental Development Company. An ever-increasing percentage of the Korean crop went to stem severe food shortages in Japan as its industrialization effort shifted emphasis and resources from agriculture to industry. Through the 1920s, the annual per capita rice consumption doubled in Japan while the per capita in Korea fell to nearly half. Japan grew as Korea starved. It is estimated that 45 per cent of all farm households, around 1.3 million, were unable to earn enough to live on. Overall, more than half of the entire Korean population was starving to death, forced to eat anything they could find such as roots or tree bark to survive.¹⁷ Many fled to Manchuria to secure a better life, but with up to 800,000 immigrants entering Manchuria by 1931 and 1.5 million by 1935, conflicts with the indigenous population were inevitable. Violence between the two populations was encouraged by the Japanese for it helped justify the eventual 1937 Japanese invasion and occupation of all of Manchuria during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

The rape of Korea by the Japanese during this period was complete in physical, cultural, national, and spiritual matters. The Koreans were forced to support the imperial expansion and war effort of Japan during nearly four decades of oppression and brutality. The influence of this period on current relationships is seen not only with North Korea, but South Korea as well and cannot be ignored in studying issues of both countries today.

The Second Sino-Japanese War: 1937-1945

The defeat of the Chinese in 1895, the Russians in 1905 and the annexation of Korea in 1910 set Japan's expectations and national goals higher with aspirations of military and economic hegemony in East Asia. By 1932 Japan had seized all of Manchuria during the

¹⁷ Simons, 130.

“Manchurian Incident”¹⁸ of 1931 and even after a League of Nations brokered cease-fire continued to nibble away at parts of Northern and Central China in a “programme to swallow up China piece by piece”¹⁹ (See Figure 2 and 3). In 1936, the militarists in Japan seized power and the Army was freed of any hindrance in the prosecution of its conquest of China. All that remained for the generals was a pretext for war.



Figure 2. Japanese invasion route

Source: Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight* (NY: The Viking Press, 1982) 1.

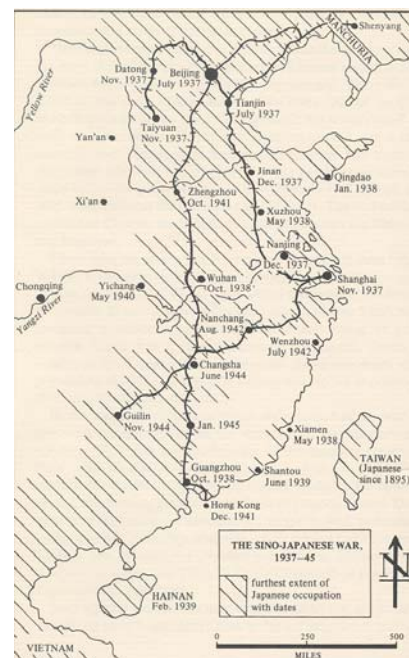


Figure 3. Japanese occupation

Source: Wilson, 12.

A minor shooting incident between Chinese and Japanese forces at the Lugouqiao Bridge, also known as the Marco Polo Bridge, in the summer of 1937, provided the Japanese army the pretext for war they were looking for. Japan had garrisoned a large number of soldiers with supporting artillery, tanks, cavalry and engineers in Tiajin near Beijing, under tenants of

¹⁸ The Kwantung Army attacked and seized Manchuria after a staged attack on Japanese forces as a pretext for the invasion.

¹⁹ Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight* (NY: The Viking Press, 1982), 7.

the old Boxer Protocol.²⁰ During a night training maneuver, the Japanese discovered one of their men was missing. Immediately suspecting Chinese foul play, they demanded to search the nearby town of Wanping on the eastern end of the Lugouqiao Bridge. The Chinese garrison commander refused and the incident escalated into a shooting between the two sides. Actual accounts of how the shooting started conflicted, but extremists in the Japanese army saw this as the excuse they were waiting for to commence an attack and continued expansion into China. Both sides moved reinforcements into the area making demands and ultimatums that each side knew the other would not accept as it would mean losing “face.” Events eventually escalated beyond control and into a full-scale war. By November 1937 the Japanese army attacking south from Manchuria had taken Beijing and marched south across the Yellow river while in Central China, Japanese forces landed at Hangzhou Bay (See Figure 4) taking the city of Shanghai, and pushed west toward the Chinese capital of

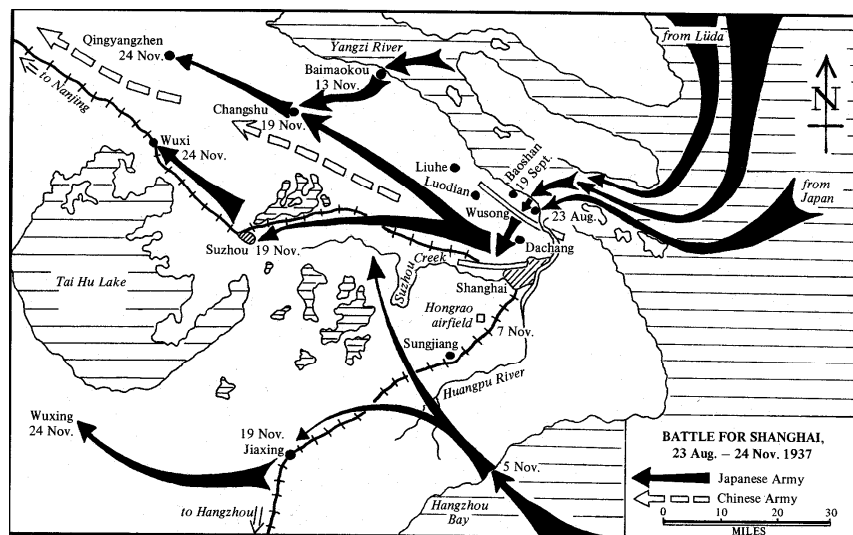


Figure 4. Battle of Shanghai

Source: Wilson, 32.

²⁰ Eleven allied nations that included Japan defeated the Boxer occupation of Peking and forced the liberated imperial court to accept heavy indemnity and terms in the boxer protocol of 7 Sept 1901 as the alternative to imperial division of its territory among the allies.

Nanjing. Just as during the First Sino-Japanese War, the well-trained and equipped Japanese military easily overpowered the large but poorly equipped Chinese defenders leaving the civilians to the mercy of the Japanese onslaught. It was during the assault on Nanjing that the atrocities of war surfaced. Years of confrontation, pent up emotions and the horrors of war broke down all semblance of civilized or moral behavior and exploded on the battlefield. The incident was to be known as “The Nanjing Massacre” and forever solidified the Japanese legacy of brutality and inhumanity in the minds of the Chinese.

The siege of Nanjing took only four days as the Japanese routed the 100,000 defenders of the city with superior and devastating firepower. Many of the soldiers fled their positions as the situation became futile only to be shot by machine gun nests manned by passionate Chinese soldiers who strafed their fellow comrades attempting to flee the city.²¹ The massacre began on 13 December 1937 and continued well into January before it was over. “Tens of thousands of Chinese were massacred; women raped; stores and homes were plundered and burned.”²² The Japanese military command had decided not to take prisoners as they could not spare the manpower or supplies and doing so would slow the Japanese advance. They were to “dispose” of the Chinese or in not so polite terms, kill them.²³ As the Japanese approached the gates to the city, two Japanese officers set the tone and waged a contest to see who could kill 100 of the surrendering Chinese first using only their traditional Samurai swords. The Tokyo press reported that since they could not decide who reached 100 first, they continued the contest to 150.²⁴ Not only were soldiers the targets of the atrocities,

²¹ Wilson, 70.

²² Tsuzuki, 286.

²³ Ibid, 287.

²⁴ Wilson, 71.

but thousands of civilians as well. A Japanese journalist named Honda Katsuichi wrote a controversial book in Japan titled “The Nanjing Massacre”²⁵ citing dozens of interviews he conducted with survivors of the massacre. In many cases, survivors lost their entire families to include women, children and babies shot, bayoneted or beat to death by Japanese soldiers. The soldiers were taught to look upon the Chinese as animals of “less value as a dog or a cat.”²⁶ Soldiers hacked off the ears and arms of people in the streets for sport or used them for target and bayonet practice. In the end, estimates of numbers killed by the Japanese in Nanjing ranged from 40,000 to 300,000 depending upon the source or country conducting the study. The Far Eastern Military Tribunal investigating the atrocities put the death toll at approximately 200,000. In all, the war lasted from 1937 until the defeat of Japan during World War II in 1945 and accounted for a combined official count of 2.5 million soldiers killed. The civilian death toll however was much higher and estimated at 7.5 million with most of the civilian deaths inflicted on the Chinese.²⁷

It is difficult to measure the impact of historical events on present relations, but they cannot be underestimated or ignored when studying the current issues of today. In East Asia, the legacy of Japan’s imperialism is certain to shape perceptions, assumptions, and decisions for generations as the sheer brutality and duration of the Japanese legacy has forever scarred the national pride of China and Korea. What matters, is the importance placed on the legacy versus the current goals of a nation over time. As national goals change and separate the events, one might assume their impact would diminish. Unfortunately for Japan, in adversarial and closed nations such as China and North Korea, Japan’s brutal legacy can last generations depending upon the value placed upon it and its reinforcement by the respective

²⁵ Honda Katsuichi, *The Nanjing Massacre* (NY: .E. Sharpe, 1999).

²⁶ Wilson, 80.

²⁷ Ibid, 1.

government. Both countries have attempted to leverage Japan's atrocities for political gain and promote national unity. Indications are that this will continue as long as it remains politically beneficial to do so. In addition, perceived Japanese insensitivity, lack of regret or national responsibility for the atrocities inflicted, have only caused continued hatred and suspicion in post World War II generations. To this day, Japan can rarely conduct a dialogue with China or North Korea without the topics of imperialism, apologies, or reparations arising. Only when it is no longer politically advantageous to leverage the past for future gains will these countries be able to push forward and truly put the past behind them. Until then, the past must be considered and taken seriously as they command an intertwining role in East Asian politics.

III. OUT OF THE ASHES: POST WORLD WAR II REARMING OF JAPAN

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

-Article 9, The Constitution of Japan²⁸

Just as the conquer and occupation of China and Korea by Japan left a significant legacy on East Asian relations, so did the defeat and occupation of Japan by the United States post World War II. Japan has evolved from a defeated and impoverished country into a world economic superpower. It has done so under the guidance of its post World War II imposed Constitution and the protection of the bilateral Japanese-United States Security Treaty.

²⁸ Japanese Defense Agency, *The Constitution of Japan (Preamble and Chapter II)*, <<http://www.jda.go.jp>>.

These two documents have formed the foundation for the evolution and direction of post World War II Japan for the past half-century. The cornerstone for this foundation is Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, declaring renunciation of war, non-possession of war potential, and denial of the right of belligerency of the state. In addition, the interpretation that the “international right of collective self-defense”²⁹ exceeds Article 9 bounds has limited Japan to “acts in self-defense within the limit of the minimum necessary level for the defense of the nation.”³⁰ While the intent of Article 9, written in the context of post World War II occupation, was to ensure Japan never again threatened another country, its actual interpretation, utility, and practice has proved more controversial in modern times.

Japan evolved over the post World War II years into a technological and economic world power with all the tools of a first class nation yet its popular will, Constitution, and expectations of itself remained the same for nearly 50 years. Nations engaged in international affairs began to criticize Japan for enjoying all the benefits of a first class nation and world leader without truly paying its dues on the international scene. This criticism was brought to its culminating point after Japan’s lack of direct military action during the 1991 Gulf War. Japan was seen as benefiting the most from a stable Middle East, yet risking the least. International criticism of “checkbook diplomacy” gravely tarnished the international prestige Japan worked so hard to gain and the embarrassment served as a turning point in Japanese foreign relations. Japan received a modern day version of Commodore Matthew C. Perry’s 1853 message to Japan³¹ to enter the international community as an active participant. This and other associated events prompted Japan to reassess its foreign policy,

²⁹ Refers to the international right of a nation to use force to stop armed attack on a foreign country with which it has close relations, even when the state itself is not under direct attack.

³⁰ Japanese Defense Agency, Japan’s *Defense Policy: Right of Collective Self-Defense*, <<http://www.jda.go.jp>>.

³¹ In 1853 Commodore Perry sailed into Edo Bay (Tokyo) with a fleet of warships forcing Japan to open its ports to the West and enter the international community of nations.

military roles, national strategy and even constitutional limitations. Recent world events initiated a complete paradigm shift that has opened the doors for the reemergence of a more assertive, aggressive and rearmed Japan on the international stage, alarming some regional neighbors leary of Japan's militaristic past.

POST WORLD WAR II OCCUPATION

The defeat of Japan in 1945 was total not only in terms of physical destruction of the country's capacity to wage war but total defeat of the Japanese people in mind and spirit. All of Japan's industrial and large cities had been destroyed with the exception of Kyoto and nearly 700,000 civilians were killed by Allied bombing raids. Surprisingly, instead of general guilt or hatred for their American conquerors, there instead emerged revulsion for war and their own leaders who they felt betrayed them, shame for their aggressive imperial past, and an acceptance of their defeat with a desire to do whatever necessary to rebuild their country. Demoralized by the effects of war, the Japanese embraced the hope and guidance the American conquerors brought with them and instead of reacting to the occupation with resentment, saw it as an opportunity for a new and better day.³² The success of the occupation was in large part due to culturally embedded Japanese values of strict discipline, order and subservient attitudes that made them preconditioned to submit to the will of the Americans. To the Japanese, "the United States had proved its superiority by defeating Japan."³³ Additionally, "American tendencies of didactic self-confidence, benevolent

³² Reischauer, Edwin O., *The Japanese Today* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 104-105.

³³ Ibid, 105.

patronage and the old Japanese habits of effective cooperation and loyalty to leaders blended well.”³⁴

A top concern of the U.S. and especially Japan’s neighbors, most notably China and Korea, was the removal of what many believed as historically rooted militarism. From the end of World War II until 1947, demilitarization was the focus with little effort paid to the rebuilding of Japan and its economy. Many American policy-makers and most influentially, General Douglas MacArthur, set out to make Japan the “Asian Switzerland.” On May 3, 1947 the U.S. authored and imposed “peace constitution” was ratified forever renouncing Japan’s right to war. 1948 brought the end to the demilitarization/punishment phase of the occupation as President Harry S. Truman changed the focus of effort to rebuilding Japan into a strong democratic and capitalist ally in Asia. The North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950 changed the paradigm and to the dismay of China and Korea, the U.S. called for the immediate rearming of Japan in support of the “containment” of communism. Needing all available U.S. troops for the fight in South Korea, General MacArthur ordered Japan to form its own national police force to replace occupying U.S. troops and amazingly asked them to use their remaining naval and coast guard force to sweep mines off the coast of Korea, which they did quietly throughout the war. Although a direct violation of the Japanese Constitution, “occupied” Japan had little recourse for refusal and set the precedence of U.S. influence over Japan for the next two decades. It would not be until Japan could achieve economic parity that they would have the confidence to openly oppose the United States. Within two years that force grew to 110,000 and was supplied with tanks, artillery, ships, and aircraft.³⁵ The Korean War was a blessing in disguise for the shattered Japanese economy and set Japan on

³⁴ Ibid 105.

³⁵ Edgerton, Robert B., *Warriors of the Rising Sun* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.,1997), 26.

the road to economic recovery as its industry filled billions of dollars in military orders for the war effort. Whether they wanted to or not, from this time forward, Japan became a strategic partner in the U.S. led policy of Soviet “containment” and the rearming of Japan was well on its way.

POST COLD WAR + THE GULF WAR = CRISIS IN JAPAN

From its nascence, the creation of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) was based on the containment policy of the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet threat, its very existence was called into question. The Cold War had built the JSDF into a powerful and modern force operating under the world’s third largest military budget after the Soviets and the U.S. The loss of the Soviet foe in 1989 sent the military in search of new roles and missions. By this time though, the momentum of the military buildup begun in the 1980s was too powerful to be stopped even with the end of the Cold War. Not willing to admit the Cold War buildup was over, Japanese defense spending continued to increase with the passage of a Cold War model five-year military plan. In 1994, Japan became the only Western nation without a plan to reduce their military size and budget.³⁶ The end of the Cold War did have the effect of freeing Japan from the bonds of U.S. containment policy and American demands. Japan now had to determine its own future roles and missions for its military, once again pushing Japan toward increasing autonomy. The two most likely missions were that of international contributions and the countering of North Korea and Chinese threats similar to the Cold War models.³⁷

³⁶ Tetsuo Maeda, *The Hidden Army: The Untold Story of Japan’s Military Force* (Chicago: Edition Q, Inc., 1995), 282.

³⁷ Ibid, 284.

Japanese will pay money, perhaps break a sweat, but never spill a drop of blood.
Why is that?

-U.S. ambassador Michael Armacost to LDP leader Keiichi Miyazawa, 1990³⁸

The 1990-91 Gulf War caught Japan ill-prepared to deal with the complexities of international involvement and perceived obligations versus constitutional limitations and popular support. The traditional Japanese practice in dealing with change on constitutional and politically controversial issues was to take “baby steps” by passing a series of small measures and to wait for its acceptance little by little. Having taken almost 40 years to get naval forces authorized just 1000 miles from the shores of Japan, the U.S. led coalition request for JSDF forces in the Persian Gulf was too much for Japan to stomach in such a short time. In addition, many considered it was in direct violation to Article 9 interpretations of the constitution. Japan did contribute \$13 billion to the effort, but they received little gratitude or international recognition and were accused of applying “checkbook diplomacy.” The international embarrassment was demoralizing for Japan, but created an opportunity in terms of public and political support for an expanded international role for the JSDF in the future. The loss of face in international eyes had a devastating effect on Japan’s already unconfident self-image and became the critical turning point in the direction of future JSDF missions.

The first step toward active international engagement was the passage of the Peacekeeping Operations Cooperation Act (PKO Cooperation Act) in August 1992. This law authorized the JSDF to participate in peacekeeping activities, humanitarian international rescue activities and material cooperation. After much debate on roles, missions and limitations, this new law was put to the test in September 1992 with the dispatch of 1,216

³⁸ Ibid, 285.

JSDF troops to Cambodia becoming the first armed soldiers to deploy since Japan's defeat in 1945. This first deployment was considered a success, but problems of mission creep arose and the road and building missions soon gave way to surveillance, armed patrol, and election security. The boundaries of the PKO law were stretched beyond their limits as well as Article 9 limitations, but government officials continued to support the mission since public concern for the JSDF in Cambodia was minimal. The "Cambodian contingent had accomplished concretely in one year what had taken the JSDF forty years of legislative conniving to achieve."³⁹ True to Japanese practices, the ends justified the means and a new precedent was in place.

The rest of the 1990's revealed Japan's emergence from the shadow of the United States with a more independent foreign policy and the ability to say "no" to the United States as a peer competitor vice a junior one. In 1994, Japan ascended to the number two spot on the highest military budget list behind the United States. The Clinton administration reinvigorated ties with its new engagement policy toward China while those with Japan seemed to waiver. Memories of the "Nixon Shocks"⁴⁰ resurfaced and confidence in the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance wavered. Sensing the rift, the new U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye Jr., felt it necessary to renew the alliance and reaffirm the security relationship between Tokyo and Washington. The "Nye Initiative," as it was called, identified common security interests for the post-Cold War era and expanded the responsibilities of the JSDF for defense of Japan and areas surrounding Japan. It also called for deepened personal relationships between senior U.S. leaders and their counterparts and agreed to further integration of military forces and strategies. The seven-month study led to

³⁹ Ibid, 298.

⁴⁰ Unannounced 1971 decisions by President Nixon to open relations with China and the devaluation of the dollar in conjunction with a ten percent tariff on imports targeting Japan seen as a betrayal of Japan by the U.S.

the revision alliance agreements and filled in gaps that had existed in the bilateral strategy. Additionally, the Japanese Diet⁴¹ passed the “Regional Contingency Law” permitting the JSDF to aid U.S. forces in disputes or emergencies near Japan. It is clear that the 1990s represented a complete paradigm shift for Japanese defense policy and a break from its traditional role as a junior partner to the U.S. in foreign relations. The increased latitude granted to the JSDF post Gulf War was a turning point in Japan’s continuing evolution toward a “normal” nation status, but it also reaffirmed the importance of the U.S.-Japanese Alliance.

9/11

If the first Gulf War broke new ground in JSDF employment, September 11th 2001 laid the foundation. Once again, following a major event, the gradual evolution of the JSDF and foreign policy took a leap forward further stretching the interpretation of Japan’s Article 9 limitations. Mistakes ten years previous were not going to be repeated and Japan was eager to “take some positive, visible action”⁴² at the urging of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. Prime Minister Koizumi threw full support behind the U.S. anti-terrorism military campaign unveiling a seven-point plan allowing Japan to support the U.S. “as much as [constitutionally] possible.”⁴¹ This was followed up with the “Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law” on October 29, 2001 allowing for the “provision of materials and services for the forces of the U.S. and other countries, search and rescue activities to combatants in

⁴¹ The Japanese Diet is the highest organ of state power in Japan made up of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.

⁴² Brad Glosserman, Japan Battles Gulf War Ghosts, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), PacNet Newsletter #38 Sept 28, 2001, <<http://csis.org>>

⁴¹ Ibid.

distress due to combat activities and assistance to affected people.”⁴³ Shortly thereafter Japan deployed six JMSDF⁴⁴ vessels to the Indian Ocean and JASDF⁴⁵ C-130s in support of U.S. requirements in the Pacific. Other notable laws were subsequently passed allowing for greater authority and flexibility for JSDF units and granting greater authority to the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) and Prime Minister in times of crisis.

IV. REGIONAL REACTION TO THE ARMING OF JAPAN AND BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE DEPLOYMENT

NORTH KOREA

Most experts agree that North Korean ballistic missiles pose the most immediate threat to Japan. Lacking a long-range strike capability, the ballistic missile is North Korea’s only power projection capability outside the peninsula. It “Serves to preserve the North Korean regime, provide political leverage, augment economic capabilities and facilitate the reunification of the Korean peninsula.”⁴⁶ North Korea’s Nodong missile seems to have been specifically developed to deter and threaten U.S. and Japanese forces as a terror weapon when armed with a conventional warhead or a strategic deterrent when armed with a WMD. The missile fleet also serves political and economic capacities in supporting research and development through sales of missiles or technology or leveraging the threat of such actions

⁴³ Japan Defense Agency, *Overview of Japan’s Defense Policy 2002*, <<http://www.jda.go.jp>>

⁴⁴ Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force

⁴⁵ Japanese Air Self-Defense Force

⁴⁶ Swaine and Runyon, *Ballistic Missiles and Missile Defense in Asia*, June 2002, 63, The National Bureau of Asian Research, <www.nbr.org>

in exchange for concessions or economic aid from the U.S. and Japan.⁴⁷ Considering the unpredictable nature of the North Korean leadership, the history of conflict on the peninsula and continued military buildup, the chance of confrontation is enormous.

The Threat

North Korean Ballistic Missiles			
	Type	Range (km)	Payload (kg)
Hwasong-5 (Scud Mod B)	SRBM	300	1,000
Hwasong-6 (Scud Mod C)	SRBM	500	700
Nodong-1 (Scud Mod D)	MRBM	1,000	700–1,000
Taepodong-1	MRBM	1,500+	1,000
Taepodong-2	IRBM	4,000+	1,000

SRBM = Short-range ballistic missile, with ranges up to 1,000 km (620 mi.); MRBM = Medium-range ballistic missile, with ranges of 1,001–3,000 km (621–1,860 mi.); IRBM = Intermediate-range ballistic missile, with ranges of 3,001–5,501 km (1,861–3,410 mi.).
SOURCE: Stimson Report, p. 17.

Figure 5. North Korean Ballistic Missiles

Source: Michael D. Swaine, Swanger and Kawakami, *Japan and Ballistic Missile defense*, Rand Note MR-1347-CAAP (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corp., 2001), 12.

North Korea has amassed an unknown total number of medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles (MRBM/IRBMs), with a capability of striking all of Japan from Okinawa to Northern Hokkaido (See Figure 5). North Korea's Nodong-1 MRBM (Scud Mod D) is currently the greatest threat to Japan and U.S. forces stationed there. Having a range of 1,300 km (800 miles) the estimated 100+ Nodong-1 missiles North Korea may pose an enormous risk to regional security. The Nodong missile also serves as the base of technology for developing the longer-range series of Taepodong missiles. As seen with the famous 1998 test, the Taepodong-1 has a range of more than 2000 km (1200 miles). Attempts to add a third stage to the Taepodong-1 could give it a range of greater than 5000 km (3,100 miles).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

North Korea's development of the Taepodong-2 intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM), if successful, would be capable of hitting part of western Alaska and the Hawaiian Islands with a three-stage version capable of striking the U.S. West Coast. All missiles are assessed chemical, biological, or high explosive capable. North Korea is thought to possess enough reprocessed plutonium from spent nuclear reactor fuel rods for one or two low yield nuclear devices. More importantly, and probably dangerously, is speculation that they may be developing an enriched uranium program that, if successful, could create a nuclear weapon small enough to be delivered by a ballistic missile potentially putting the Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, or West Coast at risk.

Assessment Of North Korean Intentions

The number one priority of the North Korean leadership is regime survival. To that end, North Korea has become obsessed with military security, willing to fund its military buildup at the expense of widespread famine and economic collapse. As the sole source of power projection for North Korea, great emphasis and effort is put towards ballistic missile development and production. Many analysts believe the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs are merely bargaining chips for political and economic gain vice actual use. The political backlash from preemptive use of WMD would forever destroy any chance of North Korea attaining any of its goals and would most likely signal the end of the current leadership's reign. Noting the Taepodong's imprecise guidance, the strategic significance of even conventional warheads would be insignificant and considered only a terror weapon. In the event WMDs are used, Japanese officials fear the most likely high value targets within range to be Japan and the U.S. bases operating there. It

can be reasoned that North Korea would not use WMD preemptively against South Korea unless attacked and the U.S. is too far to range with current North Korean technology. The only viable and strategic target left within range is Japan. The distrust between the two countries is enormous considering the history of Japanese annexation of Korea and Japan's close ties with the U.S. The recent admission by North Korea of its abduction of Japanese citizens, JMSDF armed clashes with North Korean "spy/drug smuggling" vessels, and threat of missile attack after the 1998 missile incident have kept tensions high. Acts such as these have brought on an unprecedented debate in Japan on constitutional amendments, the preparedness of the Japanese military and a reassessment of constitutional interpretations on limits of defense. In January 2003, Shigeru Ishida, head of Japan's Defense Agency publicly stated that the "constitution did not preclude a Japanese pre-emptive strike on North Korea should Pyongyang be on the verge of attacking Japan,"⁴⁸ highlighting the concern Japan has for this threat. In the end, one would rationally expect that it would not be in the best interest for North Korea to employ the use of unconventional ballistic missiles as it would most likely signal the end of North Korean regime as we know it. The problem is that rational does not always count when dealing with North Korea.

North Korean Reaction To BMD

Not surprisingly, North Korea is opposed to any deployment of BMD in East Asia. Their reaction to the deployment of a BMD system in Japan would probably be one more of talk than substance, claiming it to be part of a plan of future aggression and arms buildup. Extremely effective versus a country with limited ballistic missile stocks and capability, BMD could potentially neutralize North Korea's ballistic missile threat to Japan and U.S.

⁴⁸ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - China and Northeast Asia, 9 Jan 2004, <www4.janes.com>

forces based there if the need occurred.⁴⁹ It would be difficult for North Korea to claim Japanese BMD as an aggressive act, but over time might cause North Korea to enter into an arms race with the intent of being able to overwhelm the Japanese defenses or a modernization process with the help of China or Russia to restore balance of power in the region. Any reaction by North Korea alone will not be enough to prevent the deployment of a BMD system, as the advantages of security would far outweigh any disadvantage North Korea could muster.

CHINA

Although North Korea is the immediate threat to Japan, China represents a much more significant, complex, long-term, and increasing threat that requires far more analysis and explanation. Publicly, Japan is careful not to characterize China as a threat and motivation for its BMD deployment, yet privately, Japan views China as one of the primary reasons for BMD deployment. Japan keeps a “close watch” on China as relations become more turbulent with increasing overlap in competing national interests. The present relationship between China and Japan is characterized as one of “constant instability,”⁵⁰ reflecting deep ambivalence on both sides. It is a relationship where “the past is always present.”⁵¹ China sees itself as the rightful heir to the throne, as the dominant regional power in Asia. Economically, estimates from the World Bank project that a rising China could have the world’s largest economy by 2020. In turn, with increasing military budgets, China could create a modern, highly deployable, rapid-strike and special operations capable force to

⁴⁹ Swaine and Runyon, *Ballistic Missiles and Missile Defense in Asia*.

⁵⁰ Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS), *U.S.-Japan-China Relations*, 2 <www.csis.org>.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 3.

match its economic growth. Japan is faced with potentially serious military and economic challenges from China in the future.

The Threat

Types and Estimated Numbers of Chinese Ballistic Missiles^a

Delivery Vehicle (Western designator)	Range (km)	Nuclear Weapons Databook (1994)	Military Balance (98-99)	Jane's Strategic Systems (9/98)	Various
<i>Land-based missiles</i>					
DF-3A (CSS-2)	2,850	50	38+	60-80	40-80 ^b
DF-4 (CSS-3)	4,750	20	10+	20-35	10-20 ^b
DF-5A (CSS-4)	13,000+	4	17	15-20	4-10 ^b
DF-21A (CSS-5)	1,800	36	8	35-50	20 ^c
DF-15/M-9 (CSS-6)	600	N/A	4	400	25-50 ^b
DF-11/M-11 (CSS-7)	300	N/A	N/A	200	160-200 ^d
DF-11A (CSS-7 Mod 2)	300	N/A	N/A	N/A	32 ^e
DF-31 ^f	8,000	0	0	0	0
DF-41 (31A)	12,000	0	0	0	0
<i>Sea-launched ballistic missiles</i>					
JL-1 (CSS-N-3)	1,700	24	12	12	12
JL-2 (CSS-N-4)	8,000	0	0	0	0

^aAdapted from Bates Gill and James Mulvenon, "The Chinese Strategic Rocket Force: Transition to Credible Deterrence," in *China and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Implications for the United States*, National Intelligence Council, Washington, DC, 1999, p. 35.

^bDunbar Lockwood, "The Status of U.S., Russian, and Chinese Nuclear Forces in Northeast Asia," *Arms Control Today*, November 1994, p. 24.

Notes continued on next page.

Figure 6. Chinese Ballistic Missiles

Source: Michael D. Swaine, Swanger and Kawakami, 15.

China is in the midst of a modernization effort, increasing military spending an estimated ten percent per year for the last ten years with a 17.7 percent increase in 2001 alone. This effort is seen as a "major threat and a problem"⁵² to Japan. China's emphasis has been on increasing its strategic power projection capabilities and giving the highest priority to its missile forces for the following reasons:

1. The PLA desires a variety of nuclear and non-nuclear ballistic missiles to deter U.S. support for Taiwan and to project power throughout Asia.

⁵² General Nakatani, Former Chief of Japanese Defense Agency, *Jane's Sentinel security Assessment-China and Northeast Asia*, May 2002, <www4.janes.com>.

2. China cannot modernize its air force and navy without significant outside assistance, but can itself develop a variety of modern ballistic missiles.
3. Ballistic missiles provide an asymmetric form of attack against the United States potential adversaries.⁵³

China's ballistic missiles (See Figure 6) are the most cost effective option for neutralizing superior Western equipped adversaries such as Taiwan and Japan and are one of the few tools it has in its

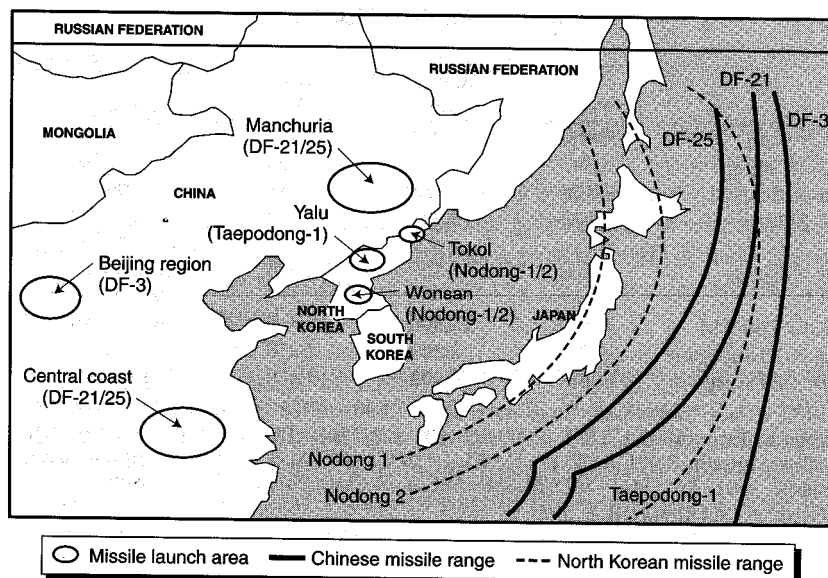


Figure 7. Chinese and North Korean missile ranges

Source: Michael D. Swaine, Swanger and Kawakami, 17.

inventory to leverage its will against those countries. China is assessed to have 100-150 DF-11 and DF-15 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) with ranges of 300 and 600 km respectively with an estimated ability to deploy up to 650 of these missiles by 2005. Mainly a threat directed against Taiwan, the missiles are also a concern to Japan because China can threaten and influence vital sea lines of communications (SLOCs) in the East China Sea. China also possesses approximately 70 DF-3 medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) with

⁵³ The Maxwell Papers, *US-Led cooperative Theater Missile Defense in Northeast Asia*, 7.

a range of 2,800 km and DF-21 intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) with a range of 1,800 km. China's missile arsenal has the ability to strike all of Japan with nuclear or conventional warheads (See Figure 7). To round out the missile force, estimates hold that China has deployed an estimated 20 DF-5, 13,000 km range and DF-31, 8,000 km range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICMBs) capable of targeting the United States.⁵⁴ Upgrades are planned to incorporate up to eight multiple and targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) per missile with greater accuracy.⁵⁵ Recent efforts have stressed the use of non-nuclear warheads, as they are currently strategically more effective while reducing the chance for nuclear retaliation.

Assessment Of China's Intentions

For over a decade, China has been a country in transition following the "East Asian developmental state" model in which, growth and economics are the keys to national power and the basis of governmental legitimacy.⁵⁶ Clearly the top priority driving China's transformation is its economic growth as a critical requirement for national sovereignty that is tied to a military modernization program. China's economic growth directly translates into an increase in military spending and a modernization process. One could argue it is not an indication of hostile intent toward or aggressive actions against any specific country, with the exception of Taiwan, but simply the natural evolution of a [normal] country protecting its national interests [with increasing resources available.] Most of China's force is 1950s and '60s vintage with its strategic missile assets in need of modernization and increased accuracy

⁵⁴ Ozawa, *International Perspectives on Missile Proliferation and Defenses*, No 7, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, May 2001, 72-73.

⁵⁵ The Maxwell Papers, *US-Led cooperative Theater Missile Defense in Northeast Asia*, 9.

⁵⁶ Ikenberry and Mastanduno, *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 389.

to become strategically valuable weapons vice inaccurate weapons of liability and terror. It is against China's best interests and national priorities to cause instability and "believe that a peaceful and stable international situation is critical to the economic and social development in China."⁵⁷ Although China's intent may not currently threaten the U.S. and Japan, its growing capability and future ambitions as the hegemon in Asia is threatening to U.S. and Japanese economic and military interests. Looking from the Chinese perspective, the threat from the U.S.-Japanese Alliance is overwhelming as China is faced with economically, technologically and militarily superior adversaries. China's emerging economy funds the modernization of its forces "to adapt to drastic changes in the military situation of the world and prepare for defense and combat given the conditions of modern technology, especially high technology."⁵⁸ China has historically been an introverted society generally viewing the world with a regional perspective through "realist" eyes. They see their role as challenging the hegemony of the U.S. in Asia in order to maintain a "balance of power" in the region. China views Japan as a secondary threat provided they remain within the U.S. alliance and sphere of influence. Since the entrance of China to the "nuclear club" and its development of MRBMs, IRBMs, and ICBMs, China has held a strategic posture of "minimum deterrence," to prevent "nuclear blackmail" or attack by holding a small number of strategic military or population centers of the attacking nation at risk. Hardly an offensive-minded strategy, the missile force is essentially China's only power projection capability. It also claims limited amphibious or blue water capabilities and an air force being developed to fight a "local war

⁵⁷ Li Bin, *The New U.S. National Security Strategy: Positives and Negatives for China*, Center For Defense Information (CDI), <<http://www.cdi.org/national-security-strategy/>>.

⁵⁸ Flanagan and Marti, *The People's Liberation Army and China in Transition* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2003), 178.

under high tech conditions”.⁵⁹ All strategic capabilities less the IRBM and ICMB fleet seem to be suited only for a limited range coastal fight that encompasses a conflict with Taiwan at its center. Searching for historical reference, some analysts have compared China to Otto von Bismarck’s Germany, “a nationalist rising power whose interests sometimes conflict with others’, but one that so far lacks any obvious ambition or reason to indulge a thirst for international expansion, let alone dominance.”⁶⁰ On the surface, as far as Japan is concerned and barring involvement in a Taiwan conflict, the threat from China is minimal. When one digs a little deeper though, the issues and intentions become far more complex.

In Asia, one must always consider the impact that history and long memories play in the interaction of nations today. The legacy of Japanese imperialism and brutal domination of China during World War II still remains strong in China, as the level of anti-Japanese sentiment has oddly not diminished markedly since World War II. Controlled anti-Japanese and patriotic programming aimed at glorifying the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is regularly fed to the Chinese public as a way to unify and increase nationalism in support of the CCP. Combined with “Japan’s historical inability to regard other Asian nations as equals and more recently Japan’s distaste for the Chinese will to supremacy,”⁶¹ the result is distrust, tension and the potential for conflict due to more emotional than rational reasons. Chinese security analysts fear that a rearmed and militarily assertive Japan, much more independent of the United States, could appear within the next 25 years and replace the U.S. as the dominant Western allied military power in the region. Even though the U.S. would be the larger threat overall, the Chinese and for that matter Korean distrust and hatred of the Japanese for years of torturous domination in the past would far exceed fear of U.S. power in

⁵⁹ Ibid, 139.

⁶⁰ Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 63.

⁶¹ Ibid, 196.

the future. Those same analysts believe the only limiting factor in the inevitable Japanese militarism is the U.S.-Japanese Alliance. One analogy seems to aptly describe how China views the alliance:

The U.S. presence in Japan can be seen as either a 'bottle cap,' keeping the Japanese military genie in the bottle, or as an 'egg shell,' fostering the growth of Japanese military power under U.S. protection until it one day hatches onto the regional scene.”⁶²

The Chinese view of Japan presents them with an interesting dilemma. The physical and only current threat to Chinese sovereignty is the U.S. The problem is that Japan, although not a serious physical threat, is a more emotionally perceived and larger symbolic threat to China. The Chinese population as a whole sees Japan as an equal if not a larger threat than the U.S., due in part to the Chinese government's own creation and promoted national hatred for Japan. Although a communist state, mass opinion has a powerful influence on political decision-makers. Any increase in Japan's military capabilities, defensive or not, are likely to be met with accusations of aggression and increased tensions between the two nations.

All this said, the question still remains, what are the true Chinese intentions? Keeping in mind the intertwining economic, military and historical relationships China has with the U.S. and Japan, one must speak of all three when describing relations between only two. What China wants goes back to its strategic priority which in turn is driving the military buildup. This paper argues that the answer is national sovereignty, achieved primarily through economic prosperity and finally economic and military parity with the U.S. in East Asia. China sees its “true adversary” as the U.S. and its “traditional enemy” as Japan. There is a fundamental difference in the relationship China has with the U.S. and Japan. China is willing to put up with the necessary evil of U.S. demands in exchange for access to the U.S.

⁶² Ibid, 34.

economy and export market with a trade deficit in its favor of over \$77 billion in 2003.⁶³ China's strength is in its sheer size and potential workforce making its economic potential and potential Gross Domestic Product (GDP) greater than that of Japan or the U.S., though its actual GDP per capita is one of the lowest. In order to become the dominant power in East Asia, China must be able to compete with and influence Japan both economically and militarily. Although the U.S. has strategic reach, China sees East Asia as its "home turf" and foresees weakening U.S. influence in East Asia as Chinese influence gradually takes its place. In the meantime, China needs the U.S., in order to attain the economic growth required of its plan. China also sees itself becoming a peer competitor of the U.S. vice another dominated country under the American hegemon as in Japan.

The key to China's relations with Japan is that it can not only influence Japan economically, but also threaten it militarily with ballistic missiles serving as a deterrent to keep Japan from interfering with its reunification efforts with Taiwan. Any efforts by Japan to interfere with this process would most likely result in armed conflict as general hatred and loathing of Japan for the past might outweigh the fact that Japan is China's second leading export market. China may be willing to "throw the baby out with the bath water" and accept the economic losses. In addition, Japan is also its strongest regional competitor in its quest for regional influence. Because of the close U.S.-Japan Alliance, China must deal with both simultaneously. In the end, keeping with its economic plan, China does not want conflict with the U.S. or Japan until it has attained its long term goals of economic parity with the

⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Trade Balance with China*, <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html>>.

U.S. and strong regional influence over Japan. Chinese leaders see Japan as a potential threat to this effort and no longer hide the fact that their nuclear-armed missiles target Japan.⁶⁴

Chinese Reaction to BMD

China's ballistic missile capability is considered the protector of national sovereignty and enforcer of national policy as its only credible tool for strategic military deterrence, coercion and leverage. Not surprisingly, negative Chinese reaction to the deployment of a BMD system in Japan will be centered on two main issues. First, new defensive roles for Japan could set precedence for increased acceptance of offensive based weapons systems and lead to a rearmed and militant Japan. Second, and more importantly for China, is the fear that Japan will deploy a sea-based Navy Theater Wide (NTW) system that will allow Japan to provide theater level BMD for Taiwan during times of tension. This strategy in turn might have the effect of increased confidence in Taiwan to vie for independence without fear of effective retaliation by mainland China.

The fear of the reemergence of a rearmed and militant Japan continues to be a central theme in relations between China and Japan. The Chinese fear that the deployment of BMD in Japan will begin a chain of events that will break important norms of Japanese self-restraint and lead to eventual acquisition of offensive weapons and possible WMD.⁶⁵ Chinese analysts agree that apart from U.S. deployments, Japan has the most technologically advanced arsenal in East Asia and although not currently possessing the "combination of material capabilities, political will and ideological mission," they do understand that "Japan

⁶⁴ Mohan Malik, *Japan Wary Of Assertive China*, Jane's Intelligence Review, <<http://www4.janes.com>>

⁶⁵ Swaine and Runyon, *Ballistic Missiles and Missile Defense in Asia*.

can easily do much more militarily than it does.”⁶⁶ As they see it, only the umbrella of U.S. protection has allowed Japan to foster its pacifist beliefs and non-aggressive ideals. Further, China keeps a close eye on Japan’s constitutional reform debates and fears the acceptance of increased defensive roles will erode the constitutional, Article 9 restrictions and eventually lead to the release of Japan from its self-imposed penalty box.

The possibility that Japan could move a sea-based Navy Theater Wide (NTW) system in time of crisis to encompass the defense of Taiwan is the second and most threatening concern China has with Japan’s BMD deployment. The reunification of Taiwan is a non-negotiable and cherished national agenda item for which the Chinese are willing to use any means necessary to regain control of it and have focused most of its military efforts to that end. Any indication that Taiwan might try to declare independence is met with immediate threats and a show of force to intimidate Taiwan back to the status quo. Going back to its ultimate goal of secure sovereignty through economic growth, China does not want an armed reunification with Taiwan because a thriving economic Taiwan is a gold mine for China just as Hong Kong is, while a destroyed Taiwan becomes a liability. On the other hand, China would rather see an obliterated Taiwan off its coast than a Western allied adversary that could be a strategic threat to the mainland and its vital sea lines of communications (SLOCs).

The Chinese are correct in their assessment of possible Japanese involvement in a Taiwan conflict. Japan’s vital interests are in maintaining freedom of movement within regional SLOCs for almost all of Japan’s vital petroleum imports that originate in the Middle East. The loss of Taiwan to China would significantly threaten the very life-line of the Japanese economy as a net importer of raw materials and allow China to command strategic influence over Japan and her economic future. As discussed earlier, Japan traditionally has contempt

⁶⁶ Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 29.

for Chinese superiority that goes back to imperialist beliefs of the early 20th century. Still generally true today, the Japanese still privately feel they are the superior Asian race and might not stand for China having that much influence over its future prosperity. In the name of defending Japan's national interests, Japan could intervene "defensively" in support of Taiwan. Japan still has close political and business ties to this former colony where "its rule was conducted with a lighter hand than elsewhere."⁶⁷ Japan is the largest exporter to Taiwan and the political leadership of the two countries maintains extensive and cordial relations. There is also a growing popular sympathy in Japan for Taiwan summed up by the president of Japan's National Defense Academy:

Their economy is in good shape. They have free elections. There is a sort of respect for Taiwan. We don't hear Taiwanese people criticizing Japanese like the mainland Chinese do. They don't demand apologies for the wartime. We feel more comfortable with people from Taiwan.⁶⁸

In the end, Japan is strategically more likely than the U.S. to oppose reunification efforts by China, but as of today, views in Japan do not translate directly or quickly into action. With a successful BMD deployment, Japan will have the confidence to test the waters with China and assume more risk as many U.S. and Chinese analysts have predicted.

As mentioned earlier, China currently follows a "minimum deterrence" strategy with regards to WMD. The inherent flaw in this strategy is that in China's case it implies the requirement to endure an initial attack first before counter-attacking due to China's limited command and control structure, lack of proficient early warning/intelligence capabilities and current lack of precision missile accuracy. Add BMD to the paradigm and from the Chinese point of view, one quickly realizes China's "minimum deterrence" strategy is no longer a

⁶⁷ Armacost and Pyle, *Japan and the Engagement of China: Challenges for U.S. Policy Coordination*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, Vol. 12, No. 5, Dec 2001,32, <<http://www.nbr.org>>

⁶⁸ Ibid, 32.

valid deterrent. With only an estimated 70 IRBMs capable of striking Japan and roughly 20 ICBMs capable of striking the U.S., any missiles feasibly not destroyed in the initial attack could be picked off with BMD and render China's counter-attacking and remaining ballistic missiles impotent. Even without a preemptive attack, the U.S. could most certainly target the 20 or so ICBMs currently directed at U.S. soil and Japan could most likely protect at a minimum its most valuable strategic and populous centers. It is therefore understandable that China is concerned.

Admittedly unable to take on the U.S. militarily in the foreseeable future, China will likely focus on countering the Japanese BMD threat commensurate with its intentions of regional dominance. These factors in mind, there are three options China may take to counter the BMD paradigm. The most obvious and most immediate option China could implement is to increase its nuclear ballistic missile inventory in an attempt to overwhelm any BMD architecture Japan has constructed. The concern is that this could touch off an arms race between the two countries due to the latent distrust and suspicions of Japan from its former imperial ways. In turn, if Japan believed itself threatened enough, it might decide to develop its own nuclear and other offensive weapons in addition to its shield of BMD. Japanese officials have already stated that if Japan has the option to develop and deploy nuclear weapons as a defensive measure well within the limitations within its constitution, but thus far chooses not to, in a subtle and tacit warning to China. Alarmed at the state of nuclear proliferation already in Asia, China would attempt to keep the situation from getting out of control through some sort of negotiated settlement with the U.S. as the mediator.

A second reaction most likely elicited by China would be a greater emphasis on its naval force and especially a modernization of its submarines. Japan recently announced plans "to

modify all four of its Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyers and purchase an additional two, to give them a ballistic missile defense capability. Depending upon when the SM-3 interceptor missile is available, Japanese could deploy a missile-defense capability as early as fiscal year 2007.”⁶⁹ If Japan were to deploy this force to help defend Taiwan, the NTW-Aegis destroyers would logically become a ripe target for an improved Chinese submarine force. Just the possibility of a capable submarine fleet in the area would make the Japanese or for that matter any country think twice about its willingness to risk a national asset such as one of only six NTW capable Aegis destroyers and a reduction of protective cover for Japan itself.

The last and more fundamental change that might be anticipated is China’s shift away from its “minimum deterrence” strategy and toward a “limited deterrence doctrine.”⁷⁰ China is slowly coming to believe that conventional weaponry can gain more strategic advantage than absolute WMD due to the fact that any nation that uses WMD or threatens WMD will instantly become ostracized and isolated in the international community. This doctrine would be based on the selective targeting of key high priority and high-payoff targets from the tactical through strategic levels in both the conventional and nuclear ends of the spectrum. The aim would be to control escalation if the original deterrence fails. This force structure would require a flexible and responsive command and control structure, a high level of precision weaponry, with an increase in early warning detection and intelligence to become an effective force. The force would be used more efficiently to specifically target the threats and not just population areas or industrial centers. Although the current

⁶⁹ David Isby, *Japanese DDGs to get BMD mission*, Jane’s missiles and Rockets, 1 Oct 2003, <<http://www4.janes.com>>.

⁷⁰ Swaine and Runyon, *Ballistic Missiles and Missile Defense in Asia*.

modernization of the Chinese military addresses some of those issues, the capability to put it all together is still years away.

V. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND FUTURE OF EAST ASIA

In the long run it is Asia that seems far more likely to be the cockpit of great power conflict. The half millennium during which Europe was the world's primary generator of war (and economic growth) is coming to a close. For better and for worse, Europe's past could be Asia's future.⁷¹

The United States in East Asia

The role of the United States is essential to the stability of East Asia. As the dominant power in the region, the U.S. will play the pivotal role in determining the future stability of East Asia. During the Cold War, countries were aligned with the U.S. or Soviet Union in a bipolar world. Ideological, religious or cultural differences were often repressed or restricted by the might of the Soviet Union, but controlled in such a way as to maintain a balance of power with the U.S. and its allies. On the other hand, the U.S. and its allies maintained an alliance through a common threat and enemy that kept the peace between historically adversarial nations. With the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, U.S. hegemony in East Asia became central to filling the void and maintaining regional stability. As the regional stability broker, the U.S. relies on a "hub and spoke" system of bilateral security arrangements and strategic partnerships with each of the regional players. Though suspicion or distrust may exist between players, the U.S. has fostered a complex triad of "deterrence, engagement and reassurance,"⁷² to allow these traditionally, adversarial countries to

⁷¹ Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," in *East Asian Security*, eds. Michael E. Brown, Lynn-Jones, Miller Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1996), 5.

⁷² Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 423.

peacefully coexist and thrive economically. Japan's BMD deployment will have the effect of causing the deterrence leg of the triad to grow disproportionately larger and in turn create regional instability. To maintain regional stability, a corresponding increase in engagement and reassurance on the part of the U.S. will be required. The most likely scenario for the future of East Asia is maintaining the status quo followed by the eventual development of a bipolar East Asia in which Japan's BMD deployment will play a contributing role. Regardless of the final outcome, the degree to which the U.S. takes a proactive approach to the stability of East Asia will determine the actual impact of Japan's BMD deployment as such a strategy will foster stability while a reactive one will quickly invite conflict.

Maintaining the Status Quo

America's alliances in Asia not only underpin regional peace and stability, but are flexible and ready to deal with new challenges. To enhance our Asian alliances and friendships, we will:

- Look to Japan to continue foraging a leading role in regional and global affairs based on our common interests, our common values, and our close defense and diplomatic cooperation;
- Work with South Korea to maintain vigilance towards the North while preparing our alliance to make contributions to the broader stability of the region over the longer term;
- Maintain forces in the region that reflect our commitments to our allies, our requirements, our technological advances, and the strategic environment.

**-The National Security Strategy of the United States of America
September 2002⁷³**

The Bush Administration's National Security Strategy of September 2002 outlines a strong commitment of the U.S. to the security of Asia both militarily and economically. This commitment is vital to maintaining stability and security in the region. In order to keep the status quo and maintain hegemony over the region, the U.S. must increase its efforts in East

⁷³ *The National Security Strategy Of The United States Of America*, September 2002, 26,
<www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.htm>

Asia to counter the increasing influence of China and threatening posture of North Korea. The key to this approach is the strengthening of the bilateral agreements and partnerships the U.S. has built over the years to include an extensive effort to persuade the Chinese that “despite its size, economic power, or political ambition, it is best served as a partner in a U.S.-centered order.”⁷⁴ Words must be backed up with actions by maintaining a powerful military and more importantly a substantial economic force in the region. The U.S. must be careful to not be perceived as a direct threat to the sovereignty of regional nations, especially China or North Korea, as it would undermine the willingness of countries to cooperate with and accept the leadership of the U.S. Inevitably, Japanese BMD deployment will be seen as a threat to China and North Korea. In order to temper this perceived threat, these regional “powers must find U.S. hegemony not only tolerable but also beneficial.”⁷⁵ Certain guarantees will be required for China to accept the status quo to include reassurances on its claims to Taiwan. The U.S. should treat China as a partner and give it the credit and respect it deserves as a world power rather than as a second-class adversary, but hold it to the standards and responsibilities of a first-class nation as the price for that status. Cultural understanding and humility on the part of the U.S. will go a long way in relations with China today and set the tone for future relations with China as it develops to challenge U.S. hegemony in East Asia. The preferred end state of this scenario would be a China willing to trade U.S. regional hegemony for economic prosperity while the economic success of capitalism inspires a movement toward a multi-party democracy. Although this scenario is preferred, it may only prove attainable in the short-term. China needs the West for its economic growth, but will never cede to U.S. leadership, as it would be a threat to its

⁷⁴ Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 424.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 424.

national sovereignty. In the short-term, China will most likely privately accept Japan's BMD claims as defensive and not a threat to China's sovereignty, but publicly reject the deployment for popular support and to demand further guarantees on its claims for Taiwan. Barring a strategy of Containment or near-term armed conflict with China, the long-term reality is that China will most likely continue to grow economically and militarily to transform East Asia into a bipolar region with the U.S. and China competing for power.

The Future – A Bipolar East Asia

China's growth is inevitable as the world's economies flock and invest in the largest undeveloped market in the world. U.S. companies are the first in line to invest in China making U.S. officials weary of imposing a containment strategy on China. The most likely long-term scenario in East Asia is the emergence of China as a challenger to U.S. regional hegemony and a shift to bipolar rivalry. Within the region, North Korea would align with China out of fear and hatred for the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance while Japan and South Korea would continue to align with the U.S. amid strengthened and expanded bilateral alliances. What the U.S. should be concerned about is the evolution of the bipolar arrangement into a smaller version of the Cold War and a strategy of containment. A second Cold War is not in the best interests of the United States and China realizes that confrontation will only hurt their further development since "China has based its economic growth strategy on deeper integration with the West."⁷⁶ Unlike the Soviets during the Cold War, China is a much more fragile nation with an interdependent economy that makes it far less likely to instigate a conflict that might threaten its economy and in turn its sovereignty.

⁷⁶ Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 435.

VI. CONCLUSION

The North Korean missile incident, September 11th terrorist attacks, and regional balance of power shifts have all pushed Japan toward a more engaged, assertive and autonomous foreign policy. BMD deployment by Japan, while defensive in nature, is certain to create tensions and upset the perceived balance of power between Japan and regional competitors, North Korea, and China. The situation becomes more complex as all three countries have intertwined histories with unresolved, unforgotten and unforgiven issues of Japan's imperial legacy. It is difficult to measure the impact these historical events will have on present relations, but they cannot be underestimated or discounted when studying the current issues of today since they will always play a part in regional relations until it is no longer politically advantageous to leverage the past for future gains. The U.S. is the current regional hegemon, but with the addition of (1) the developing North Korean ballistic missile and WMD programs; (2) the rising global economic and regional military power of China; and (3), the concurrent rise of Japan towards a more engaged foreign policy and military, the potential for conflict is enormous.

The North Korean missile threat is by far the most immediate threat that Japan's BMD deployment is designed to counter simply due to the proximity and unpredictability of the North Korean leadership. China on the other hand is the much more significant and long-term threat for Japan and a privately held driving factor for BMD deployment as they control vital SLOCs transiting the South China Sea between the oil rich Persian Gulf region and Japan. It is estimated that both China and North Korea have the current missile force to target parts or all of Japan with over 100 conventional and unconventional capable missiles

each. Japan's search for a national identity and increased engagement in the world's affairs only serve to aggravate the situation as perceptions of renewed Japanese militarism blur with the actual realities of Japan's intent of peaceful global engagement. The massive distrust between the three countries continually haunts the region by mixing emotions with rational thought and creating the potential for a volatile atmosphere. The only stabilizing factor in the regional equation is in the bottom line of economic success. It is the only force that can temper traditional emotional and irrational behaviors of the region, as countries become invested and unwilling to risk the benefits of economic prosperity. Thus, as China is unwilling to sacrifice economic gains and in turn national sovereignty over a limited threat such as Japan's BMD, North Korea may be just as willing to sacrifice everything due to the economic peril and failure that country has endured.

As the current "hegemon" in East Asia, the U.S. needs to take a proactive role in shaping the future balance of power and stability of the region and carefully consider what the desired and realistic end state should look like. Economic success of China or even North Korea translates directly to stability, but as China's or North Korea's economic and military power increases, the ability and effective tools for the U.S. to shape regional challenges decreases. In the big picture, how the U.S. handles Japan's BMD deployment must be in line with the overall national strategy on East Asia with proactive stabilizing measures in place prior to Japan's 2007 BMD deployment.

Japan's BMD deployment by itself is not considered a direct threat to China or North Korea, but when combined with the U.S.-Japanese Alliance and U.S. striking power or with the defense of Taiwan, it becomes a serious threat to those nations. The continuing shift in the power dynamics in East Asia has set the stage for an adjustment in regional relations.

How the U.S. handles the changing landscape combined with the level of U.S. long-term commitment and investment in the region will determine the future stability and balance of power in the East Asia.

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