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# **Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles—the military situation in Northeast Asia**

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*As a result of the end of the Cold War, the possibility for an outbreak of armed conflict on a world-wide scale has receded. However, complicated and diverse regional conflicts have risen and the danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), namely nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and ballistic missiles is increasing.<sup>1</sup>*

*Regarding the significance of WMD against national security, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America states as follows:*

*When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations.<sup>2</sup>*

*Furthermore, with regard to nuclear weapons, Delpach mentions that ‘Asia contains the only nuclear-weapon state that is increasing its arsenal and ballistic missiles (China); the two states which have recently chosen to declare their nuclear capabilities (India and Pakistan); the third (and now unique) “threshold country” (Israel); and the [country] found guilty of violating [its] non-proliferation commitments (North Korea)’.<sup>3</sup> He makes it clear that ‘Asia therefore comprises more nuclear powers or nuclear-capable states than any other region in the world’.<sup>4</sup>*

*These show that proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles as its delivery system has a great influence on peace and stability in the Asia–Pacific region.*

*It is in Northeast Asia where both countries, China referred to as such a country and North Korea advancing its nuclear program, exist. Additionally, in this area, while there is no multilateral mechanism analogous to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Southeast Asia, there exist three major powers, namely China that is ‘a rapidly growing state’,<sup>5</sup> Japan that is ‘the world’s second-ranking economic power’ and Russia that was another superpower in the Cold War era.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the US that is today’s ‘sole superpower’ has deployed its military forces in this region.<sup>7</sup>*

*At the same time, ‘the region has not witnessed the dramatic changes in security structure as were seen in Europe’;<sup>8</sup> there still subsist ‘the more pronounced potential sources of conflict’,<sup>9</sup> namely the military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula and China–Taiwan relations.*

*All these things make it plain that movement of the military situation in Northeast Asia also has a significant influence on security of the Asia–Pacific region.*

*Therefore, this paper will examine proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles, and movement of the military situation in Northeast Asia. In the section on proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles, this paper will survey the current situation of the proliferation first. Secondly, it will consider backgrounds to the proliferation and thirdly, it will survey the current situation of countermeasures against the proliferation. Fourthly, this paper will examine the limitations of prevention against proliferation. Fifthly, it will consider the future prospect of the proliferation. In the section on movement of the*

*military situation in Northeast Asia, this paper will consider what factors have a great influence on the military situation. It will examine the backgrounds and dynamics of the main factors. And then it will consider the future prospect of the main factors.*

*Finally, this paper will show that since there are limitations to prevent the proliferation and there are foundations that sustain the main factors, even after ten years these two issues will have significant implications for security of the Asia–Pacific region.*

## **PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND BALLISTIC MISSILES**

### **Current situation of the proliferation**

In this section, first, let us consider the current situation of the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles. As mentioned, at the end of the Cold War the danger of the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles was increasing.

Regarding nuclear weapons, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) divided the world into internationally recognised nuclear ‘haves’ and the nuclear ‘have-nots’.<sup>10</sup> Under the NPT regime, only five countries, namely the US, Russia, the UK, China and France, are recognised as the nuclear haves. However, several countries such as Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Iran are also widely believed or suspected to have developed or been developing nuclear weapons.<sup>11</sup>

With regard to biological and chemical weapons, Spiers mentions that the number of states possessing biological weapons has reportedly grown from four in 1972 to about ten by the 1990s, and the number of states reportedly possessing a chemical weapons capability has increased from seven in the 1960s to 20 by the early 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

Regarding ballistic missiles, Spiers says that ballistic missiles armed with a WMD warheads cause much heavier casualties than ones with a conventional high explosive warhead.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the National Intelligence Council mentions that, ‘Short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, particularly if armed with WMD, already pose a significant threat overseas to US interests, military forces, and allies.’<sup>14</sup> As has been demonstrated, ballistic missiles with a WMD warhead are a serious menace. Therefore, this paper will discuss ballistic missiles as a means of delivery for WMD. Ballistic missiles are now possessed by a considerable number of countries through their export by several countries such as the former Soviet Union, China, and North Korea.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to that, the White House points out that ‘terrorist groups are seeking to acquire WMD with the stated purpose of killing large numbers of our people and those of friends and allies’.<sup>16</sup> Falkenrath also mentions that, ‘The threat of [nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC)] terrorism is growing more serious because the number of non-state actors that are simultaneously NBC-capable and interested in causing mass casualties is growing.’<sup>17</sup> They point out that there is the danger of the acquisition of WMD by non-state actors such as terrorist groups.

It follows from what has been said that there has been considerable proliferation of WMD with ballistic missiles as a delivery means. The proliferation has become a threat to the international community at the present time.

### **Background to the proliferation**

If we consider the background to this proliferation of WMD, there are several reasons why states and non-state actors seek to develop and acquire WMD. At the same time, it is also clear that the acquisition of WMD has become easier.

First, some states seek to acquire WMD for their security. Graham mentions that, 'Historically, countries that develop [WMD] capability do so primarily because of regional security threats'.<sup>18</sup> Tompkins says that 'Under Mao Zedong, China realised that a nuclear retaliatory capability was needed to maintain freedom of action in the face of nuclear threats'.<sup>19</sup> Shaikh mentions that 'The most common (and least questioned) rationale for Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme is the threat posed by India to Pakistan's national security'.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Saunders says that 'a rogue state might use a nuclear-armed missile capability to deter the United States from intervening in a conflict'.<sup>21</sup> In spite of the difference in the threats that each country has faced, all of them show national security as one of the reasons for the proliferation of WMD.

Secondly, as Spiers mentions, 'Political concerns about prestige and status may have stimulated some nuclear programme, deriving from aspirations to attain status as a world power or regional primacy',<sup>22</sup> 'a certain prestige and symbolic value [assigned to nuclear weapons]<sup>23</sup> is one of the reasons for acquiring them. Regarding this point, Shaikh mentions that Pakistan hoped its declaration of its nuclear status would encourage other nascent Muslim states to recognise it as their natural leader on Muslim issues in the world councils.<sup>24</sup> Paul also says that 'India holds great-power ambitions. [After] the end of the enduring rivalries with Pakistan and China, as long as major powers ... possess nuclear weapons, India is unlikely to forgo them unilaterally'.<sup>25</sup> For some countries such as India and Pakistan the prestige of possessing nuclear weapons is one reason to seek acquisition of them.

Thirdly, regarding acquisition of WMD, there is a reason on the basis of ideology or religion. From this point of view, Shaikh mentions that 'One of the ways in which Pakistan has sought to promote its image among Muslim countries is by characterising its nuclear programme as a bulwark against Zionism'.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, as the reason why terrorists seek WMD, Falkenrath says that 'increasing numbers of terrorist groups are motivated to cause mass casualties'<sup>27</sup> and, 'For religious terrorists, violence can become a sacramental act, dictated and legitimised by theology'.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, it is also one of the reasons for proliferation that access to technology and material related to WMD has become easier. With chemical weapons, Bailey warns that it would not stop nations or terrorists from producing chemical weapons, the materials, equipment and know-how for which are too commonplace to be controlled.<sup>29</sup> With regard to biological weapons, Steinbruner mentions that, 'The momentum and diffusion of the research base [of biotechnology] makes it infeasible for any country to appropriate [biological] technology for its exclusive use [for public health purposes] or to control the flow of information'.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, concerning nuclear weapons, Falkenrath says that 'almost any state with a reasonable technical and industrial infrastructure could fabricate an improvised nuclear weapon. Some exceptionally capable non-state actors could also design and build nuclear weapons',<sup>31</sup> and, 'The collapse of the Soviet Union has significantly heightened the risk of nuclear weapons acquisition by non-state actors and states without an indigenous fissile-material production capability'.<sup>32</sup>

From what has been considered above, it is clear that in the background of the proliferation of WMD, there are reasons of security, national prestige, ideology and religion, and easier access to technology and material related to the desire for WMD.

### **Current situation of countermeasures against the proliferation**

In order to prevent the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles, various efforts are being made in the international community. As a part of nuclear non-proliferation systems, there have been the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement.<sup>33</sup> Full membership of the system requires a state to negotiate a safeguards agreement with the IAEA.<sup>34</sup> The centrepieces

of efforts to control chemical and biological weapons are the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which explicitly ban the production, stockpiling and use of the relevant weapons.<sup>35</sup> The CWC also defines measures for verification.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to these, there is 'supply-side arms control' such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Australia Group (AG) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which aim to prevent the supply of particular technologies that could undermine international security.<sup>37</sup> The NSG controls the export of dual-use and exclusive-use nuclear energy materials and technologies.<sup>38</sup> The AG implements export controls on raw materials, manufacturing equipment and related technology used in the production of biological and chemical weapons.<sup>39</sup> The MTCR regulates the export of missile-related equipment and technologies that could be used as delivery systems for WMD.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, the US has shown a positive posture on counter-proliferation of WMD. The US published the *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, in which it suggests that it might retaliate with a nuclear strike in response to a nuclear, chemical, or biological attack on the US, its troops, or friends and allies, and that it forewarns countries seeking WMD that the US could attack first.<sup>41</sup> The international community is making efforts through the non-proliferation systems such as the NPT, the BWC, the CWC and various export controls, in order to prevent the proliferation of WMD and its delivery systems.

### **Limitations of prevention against the proliferation**

Various efforts have been made in order to prevent the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles. However, there has been limited success and it has been difficult to forestall the diffusion of the weapons completely. First, let us examine the limitations of the non-proliferation systems such as the NPT, the BWC, the CWC and the export control.

Regarding the NPT, Paul mentions that, 'over 186 countries have acceded to the [NPT] and accepted its rule, norms, and principles'.<sup>42</sup> Graham says that, '18–23 countries gave up limited or significant nuclear weapons opportunities in large part because the [NPT] regime assured them that their security would be enhanced through multilateral arms control'.<sup>43</sup> Both of them emphasise the effectiveness of the NPT. However, some countries such as Israel, India and Pakistan have not joined the NPT yet. Butfoy shows three problems of the systems. Firstly, Iraq successfully deceived IAEA inspectors prior to the Gulf War.<sup>44</sup> Second, clearly, tight and robust verification remains essential, but the BWC does not yet include machinery for verification.<sup>45</sup> Thirdly, in any case, having appropriate forms of verification is of only limited value unless these are backed up by effective forms of regime policing and enforcement.<sup>46</sup> These reveal that there are limitations to the NPT, the BWC and the CWC. In addition, there is the problem of non-affiliation. As long as there exists a country that recognises that participation in the NPT disagrees with its national interest. The solution to the problems of the limitations is to make severe rules, and force all countries to be participants in the systems and into obeying the rules strictly.

With regard to export control, Spiers points out that, 'developing states have often been able to overcome the technical obstacles involved in producing WMD by seeking assistance from foreign suppliers'.<sup>47</sup> The National Intelligence Council mentions that, 'Most emerging missile states are highly dependent on foreign assistance at this stage of their development efforts'.<sup>48</sup> The dependence on foreign assistance suggests the significance of export control. However, there are problems. One of them is dual-use technologies, such as peaceful nuclear energy technologies that may be adapted to produce nuclear weapons and chemical industry technologies that may be adapted to produce

chemical weapons.<sup>49</sup> The export control of the dual-use technologies forces governments and private industry to choose between national security interests and commercial interests, with the latter often override the former.<sup>50</sup> Second, export control could not deal with independent development by ‘proliferant state[s]’<sup>51</sup> and cooperation among them. Third, chemical and biological agents are a relatively simple technology, inexpensive and virtually impossible to limit through export control.<sup>52</sup> These problems have made it difficult to prevent proliferation and are becoming more complicated because globalisation in which ‘national borders [does not] impede economic transactions’.<sup>53</sup>

Secondly let us consider the relation between proliferation and ‘disincentives to seeking the acquisition of WMD’<sup>54</sup> such as a political and diplomatic disadvantage, an economic disadvantage, and a security commitment from a major nuclear state as reciprocation for disavowing the nuclear option.

As for the political and diplomatic disadvantage, Spiers points out, there is., ‘the fear of alienating a powerful ally, such as the United States’.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, Shaikh mentions that, ‘The first and most crucial relates to Pakistan’s fear of an Indian military attack [and thus] many in Pakistan regard its nuclear defences against India to be worth the stiffest international sanctions’.<sup>56</sup> For a country such as Pakistan, the political and diplomatic disadvantage has not been the reason for renouncing acquisition of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the economic disadvantage, Paul mentions that, ‘Allied states may also lose their ... economic markets if they nuclearize’.<sup>57</sup> However, Wit mentions that, ‘for the North Koreans, national security comes first, economic reform and prosperity second’.<sup>58</sup> This suggests that economic disadvantage does not always make the country that gives priority to national security abandon the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Concerning the security commitment from a major nuclear state as reciprocation for disavowing the nuclear option, Paul points out that the US security assurances are critical to prevent Japan from upgrading its latent capabilities to virtual nuclear capability,<sup>59</sup> and he shows the importance of the security commitment preventing the proliferation. At the same time, he mentions that all three states [namely India, Pakistan and Israel] are involved in protracted conflicts and enduring rivalries and have no clear security commitment from any major nuclear power and points out that all countries could not receive such security commitment.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, while the ‘disincentives to seeking the acquisition of WMD’ may be effective to a lot of countries, as long as there are countries that have grave fears about their national security, the disincentives will not apply to all countries.

Thirdly, there is another problem concerning proliferation, not in the sense of the increase in the number of the countries possessing WMD but the reinforcement of WMD in the countries that already have them. Delpech points out that ‘China is the only one of the five established nuclear powers to have stepped up its nuclear and ballistic-missile capabilities’.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, regarding the declaration that President George W. Bush’s announcement in which the US would deploy a rudimentary national missile defense (NMD) system,<sup>62</sup> Newhouse points out that a US’s missile defence would cause a chain reaction of expansion of China’s, India’s and Pakistan’s nuclear forces.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, as Shikh mentions ‘The possibility of terrorist groups gaining access to Pakistan’s nuclear weapons technology has raised serious questions about the safety of ... its stock of nuclear warheads’,<sup>64</sup> the increase of Pakistan’s nuclear forces may bring about the diffusion of nuclear bombs to terrorist groups.

Finally, regarding the US’s pre-emptive attack that is suggested in the *National Strategy*, Steinbruner mentions that ‘The Bush administration’s central contention—that pre-emptive attack

can prevent the acquisition of mass destruction technology—is not realistic and does not provide a responsible basis for protecting the United States or anyone else [from attacks by WMD]<sup>65</sup> and contradicts its effectiveness. In such a situation as mentioned before, the effectiveness of the pre-emptive attack against the proliferation may also be limited.

From what has been considered above, it is clear that there are limitations of the effectiveness of the international community's various efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles. Therefore, it has been impossible to hinder the proliferation completely and it may also be quite difficult to prevent it completely in the near future.

### **The future prospect of the proliferation**

As mentioned above, for the reasons of security, national status, and ideology or religion, some countries and non-state actors have sought acquisition of WMD. On the other hand, since the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles as its delivery systems has a great influence on peace and stability in the international community, varied efforts in order to prevent proliferation have been made. Besides, there has been the 'disincentives to seeking the acquisition of WMD'. Thus, although so far these have not been able to stop the proliferation completely, it is also true that these have 'helped to create a world in which most states that could build [WMD] have declined to do so'.<sup>66</sup>

As Spiers mentions 'Estimating the scale and future development of weapons proliferation has never been an exact science',<sup>67</sup> it is highly difficult to foresee the proliferation exactly. However, after the Cold War era, 'territorial disputes remain and religious conflicts and conflicts rooted in ethnic problems have moved to the forefront'.<sup>68</sup> As Paul mentions, the possibility to acquire nuclear weapons 'is high for states engaged in protracted conflicts and enduring rivalries or those likely to enter them'.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, 'violence and terrorism motivated by religion are becoming more common and more lethal'.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, insofar as diverse regional conflicts remain, some countries and non-state actors would continue to seek WMD. Under these circumstances, since there are limitations to the non-proliferation efforts in the international community and it is quite difficult to solve the problems, it seems reasonable to conclude that even ten years into the future there will remain intense competition between the international community that intends to prevent the proliferation, and 'proliferant' states and non-state actors that look for WMD.

## **MOVEMENT OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN NORTHEAST ASIA**

### **Factors having a great influence on the military situation**

This section of the paper will consider what factors have a great influence on the military situation in Northeast Asia. As Yang points out four countries, namely China, the US, Russia and Japan are major powers in the Asia-Pacific region,<sup>71</sup> therefore we will begin by considering whether these four countries are respectively the influential factor.

First, China has been growing rapidly not only in its economy but also its defence budget, with military modernisation with the introduction of modern weapons such as Su-27, Su-30 fighter aircraft and Sovremenny-class destroyers.<sup>72</sup> Regarding the rise of China, Lee mentions that 'While the China threat is not officially alluded to by the East Asian states, no other strategic factor looms as large as the cumulative ascent of China'<sup>73</sup> and points out its significance in this region. Therefore, one may say that China, especially its military reinforcement is one of the influential factors of the military situation in Northeast Asia.

Secondly, as shown figuratively by pointing out that the US ‘is poised to spend more on defense in 2003 than the next 15–20 biggest spenders combined’,<sup>74</sup> the USA is ‘the sole superpower’<sup>75</sup> and an ‘East Asia’s dominant actor’.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, the US has had forward-deployed forces in Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK)<sup>77</sup> based on its separate mutual security treaties with them.<sup>78</sup> Regarding the forces, Christensen mentions that ‘a major factor in containing potential tensions in East Asia is the continuing presence of the U.S. military’.<sup>79</sup> Simon also points out that ‘Forward deployments constitute the best guarantee that the United States can respond rapidly to a military crisis’.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, it is clear that the US’s forward-deployed forces in Northeast Asia are one of the factors that have a great influence on the military situation in this region.

Thirdly, regarding Russia, Buszynski mentions that ‘Russia can not be excluded from negotiations affecting the future of the Korean Peninsula’<sup>81</sup> and shows its importance to this region. However, Gibert points out that ‘Soviet SS-20 intermediate range missiles ... have been removed. Russian troops along the Chinese border have been reduced. The Soviet Far Eastern Fleet ... is no longer of significance. In general, Russian armed forces in Northeast Asia are not a threat to either China or Japan’.<sup>82</sup> Berger also says that ‘[Russian] conventional forces are in complete disarray and its political influence at a low ebb. ...for the moment at least Russia has neither the energy nor the inclination to pursue its potential objectives in the Asian theatre’.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Bander mentions that ‘The Soviet Union has disappeared, and a much weaker Russia has neither the capability nor the will for East Asian adventurism’.<sup>84</sup> These argue that today Russia is not the factor that has a prominent influence on the military situation in this region.

Finally, regarding Japan that is ‘the world’s second-ranking economic power’, Berger points out that ‘Japan is the one power in the region which could readily put together a powerful and effective hi-tech military’.<sup>85</sup> However, Japan has built a modest defence capability in accordance with the fundamental principles such as maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy, not becoming a military power that might pose a threat to other countries, and observing three non-nuclear principles,<sup>86</sup> Japan accepts ‘limits on its military power’.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, Bandow mentions that ‘Some analysts ... believe that Japan poses a potential threat to regional peace. Such fears are unwarranted. Tokyo has gained through peace all of the influence and wealth’.<sup>88</sup> These show that despite its economic power and modern military forces, Japan has not been the main factor affecting the military situation in this area.

It follows from what has been said, that only China and the US among the four major powers, especially China’s reinforcement of its military capability and the US’s forward-deployed forces in Northeast Asia, are significant factors in the movement of the military situation in this area.

Next, as this region has ‘two pronounced potential sources of conflict’, namely the military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula and China–Taiwan relations, we then will examine whether the two issues are the factors that have a great influence on the movement of the military situation.

Regarding the Korean Peninsula issue, Lee mentions that ‘Korean unification ... could have major regional implications’.<sup>89</sup> However, Klintworth mentions that ‘Clearly, neither Pyongyang nor Seoul has any intention of trying to swallow each other. South Korea can’t afford the cost. North Korea ... is too weak militarily and economically’.<sup>90</sup> Simon also says that ‘a prospect [of Korean unification is] still seen as more than a decade in the future’.<sup>91</sup> They suggest that the unification of both Koreas would not be realised in the near future.

Moreover, Wit says that ‘Seoul wants the United States to resolve any crisis with Pyongyang diplomatically. The reason is simple: in the event of any conflict, South Korea would suffer enormous

destruction.<sup>92</sup> ROK also mentions that one of its first national goals is to seek peaceful unification.<sup>93</sup> These show that ROK does not have any desire to change the current situation in the Korean Peninsula by its military forces.

In addition, Saunders points out that ‘South Korea has continued to modernize its military and improve its training, while North Korea has not imported major new weapons systems in more than a decade’.<sup>94</sup> Berger mentions that ‘the conventional balance of power ... is highly unfavourable to the North [Korea and thus] a direct military confrontation with the United States and its allies would appear suicidal, given the power imbalance’.<sup>95</sup> They show an absence of North Korea’s capability to change the present situation by its conventional military forces.

All these things make it clear that neither ROK nor North Korea are the influential factors of the military situation in this region, excluding the North Korea’s nuclear program mentioned later.

On the other hand, today North Korea possesses chemical weapons and is developing nuclear weapons and longer-range ballistic missiles. As Gibert mentions, the movement would pose a threat throughout the East Asia–Pacific region.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Paul mentions that ‘nuclear acquisition by regional states such as North Korea could compel Japan to respond’.<sup>97</sup> Wit also says that ‘Failure to prevent North Korea from building a growing nuclear weapons stockpile could also create pressures in countries such as South Korea and Japan to follow suit and start their own nuclear weapons programs’.<sup>98</sup> Both of them point out that North Korea’s nuclear program would cause severe reactions of neighbouring countries including the possibility of their acquiring nuclear weapons. Therefore, the nuclear program of North Korea could be influential in the military situation in Northeast Asia.

Regarding the China–Taiwan relations, Lee points out that ‘Complete Taiwanese independence could very well result in a major military assault from the mainland’.<sup>99</sup> Yang also mentions that ‘The United States has openly and repeatedly stressed that it will protect the security of Taiwan. The Chinese Government, people and military are determined to safeguard China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity at any cost. If mishandled, the Taiwan issue could lead to a direct military conflict between China and the United States.’<sup>100</sup> These show the possibility that China–Taiwan relations might have a significant influence on the military situation in this area.

On the other hand, regarding Taiwan, Lin mentions that ‘Since Taiwan has long abandoned any offensive military operations against China, the objective is to deter the communist forces from using force against Taiwan in the first place’<sup>101</sup> and suggests that Taiwan does not have the will to put up a fight against mainland actively. Additionally, Lijun mentions that ‘Even a declaration of independence by Taiwan, if without U.S. support, will be manageable to Beijing, which has been psychologically, politically, and militarily prepared for such a contingency’.<sup>102</sup> Regarding this point, Sutter points out that ‘The United States does not support Taiwan independence, an anathema to Beijing’.<sup>103</sup> They suggest that since Taiwan independence is not likely to succeed, there is only a bare possibility that Taiwan will declare it under these circumstances. Besides, Taiwan President Chen announced ‘the five nots’ including not to declare independence in his inauguration.<sup>104</sup>

At the same time, Harris mentions that ‘the survival of [the Chinese Communist Party] as well as the unity and stability of China depend upon sustained economic growth’.<sup>105</sup> Eland says that ‘Economic development is China’s top priority, and attacking Taiwan would adversely affect the international economic linkages vital to that goal’.<sup>106</sup> Lankowski also points out that ‘[China] will continue to believe that “time is on its side” as long as its rapid economic growth is sustained... It is in China’s interests to avoid major confrontations that might escalate into conflict’.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, as

Garrett and Glaser mention, ‘economic growth requires a stable international environment’.<sup>108</sup> They make it plain that a war against Taiwan is inconsistent with China’s first national interest, namely maintaining its economic development.

All these things suggest that both China and Taiwan are unlikely to actively raise tensions that might cause a major conflict. Therefore, except in the case that Taiwan attempts to declare its independence contradictory to Chen’s announcement, the China–Taiwan relations are not the influential factor in the military movement.

It should be concluded from what has been considered above, that China’s reinforcement of its military capability, the forward deployment of the US’s military forces in the region, and the nuclear program of North Korea are the main factors that have a significant influence on the movement of military situation in Northeast Asia.

### **Backgrounds and dynamics of the main factors**

Let us consider backgrounds and dynamics of the main factors, namely China’s reinforcement of its military capability, the US’s forward-deployed forces in the region, and the nuclear program of North Korea.

In the first place, regarding China’s reinforcement of its military capability, there is the intention of seeking military modernisation in the background. As shown in the Gulf War, the Kosovo conflict, military campaign in Afghanistan and so on, the US maintains overwhelming technological superiority in the fields of cutting edge military technology.<sup>109</sup> Delpech also points out that ‘China is ... drawing the appropriate lessons from the Gulf War as regards new technologies’.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, Ji mentions that ‘There is no doubt that Chinese civilian and military leaders have firmly accepted the central theme of [the revolution in military affairs (RMA)], that in the information age victory in war is predominantly dependent on the quality of technology’.<sup>111</sup> Under these circumstances, military modernisation would continue to be one of critical issues for China.

In the second place there is a necessity for China to reinforce the military forces in order to maintain its ‘only effective deterrent against Taiwanese independence’.<sup>112</sup> Eland mentions that ‘Chen Shui-bian, a candidate favouring Taiwan’s independence from China, was elected president of Taiwan. Now China, worried about Taiwan’s moving further down the path toward independence, threatens Taiwan merely to defend the status quo’.<sup>113</sup> Ji also says that ‘the [People’s Liberation Army (PLA)] has to develop capabilities powerful enough to deter any attempt by the Taiwan authorities to move towards independence’.<sup>114</sup> In this context, since the PLA’s main means of coercing Taiwan is ballistic missiles,<sup>115</sup> the missiles have become more important for China. However, Gibert mentions that ‘China continues to harshly criticize what it sees as American plans to encourage Taiwan’s defiance of unification by providing Taiwan with a theatre missile defense [(TMD)] system [that could depress China’s deterrent power]’,<sup>116</sup> and suggests the necessity for China to reinforce its ballistic missiles as the countermeasures against the TMD system. Therefore, it seems reasonable that China would continue the build-up of its ballistic missiles capability that is necessary to deter Taiwan from moving towards independence.

In the third place, it might be necessary for China to improve its strategic nuclear forces for the purpose of maintaining its nuclear deterrence against the US. Today the US is pushing ahead with plans of missile defence systems for the protection from ballistic missiles launched by rogue states or terrorists.<sup>117</sup> However, since missile defence, especially NMD poses a significant threat to China’s

nuclear deterrent,<sup>118</sup> US's missile defence plans could substantially influence China's ongoing plans to modernise and expand its nuclear forces.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, Gibert mentions that 'after having spent over fifty billion dollars on such [ballistic missile] defense since 1984, the United States will not be deterred from its course [of developing and deploying the ballistic missile defense systems]'.<sup>120</sup> In this situation, China would continue improvement of the strategic nuclear forces as countermeasures against NMD.

All these things make it clear that China continues to reinforce its military forces for reasons of military modernisation, a deterrent against Taiwanese independence and nuclear deterrence against the US.

Regarding the forward deployment of the US's military forces, Bandow mentions that Washington should instead phase out its military presence in East Asia, transferring to its Cold War era allies responsibility for dealing with local security problems and oppose the maintenance of the presence in East Asia.<sup>121</sup> On the other hand, Mahbubani mentions that the dependence between the US and East Asian countries will be mutual because expanding markets.<sup>122</sup> Lee also points out that there exist 'critical interests [of the US] in remaining fully engaged in east Asia'.<sup>123</sup> They show that the region has vital importance for the US. Regarding the stability of the region, Lee mentions that it 'would be impaired, perhaps substantially, if the United States were to withdraw its forward presence from the western Pacific'.<sup>124</sup> Besides, Friedberg mentions that 'Americans are inclined to dislike and mistrust the current Chinese regime and to fear that it may seek to use its increasing capabilities and influence to challenge the US position in Asia'<sup>125</sup> and shows that in the US, there is the rising vigilance against China a major power in this region. All these suggest that it is reasonable for the US Government to maintain its policy to contend with uncertainty and to meet the many security challenges to be faced, the United States will require bases and stations within Northeast Asia for the long-distance deployment of US forces.<sup>126</sup>

At the same time, regarding the US military presence, the 'misbehaviour of a few US servicemen has had ill effects'<sup>127</sup> which caused 'a new wave of anti-Americanism in both South Korea and Japan, calling for the removal of the US military presence from both countries'.<sup>128</sup> However, the ROK Government says that the [ROK] government will maintain a firm security posture to deter war on the peninsula based on solid and close ROK-US security cooperation.<sup>129</sup> Lee also points out that ROK's active participation in maintaining a US military presence as one of four major pillars on which today's regional security is largely based.<sup>130</sup> The Japanese Government mentions that 'Japan must uphold its security under the deterrence provided by firmly maintaining the Japan-US Security Treaty and thereby securing the forward deployment of the US forces'.<sup>131</sup> Yang also points out that in Northeast Asia ... Japan has to rely on the United States for maintaining peace and stability. It needs the US military presence'.<sup>132</sup> These show that despite the wave, both the Japanese and ROK governments have orientations to maintain the security relation with the USA and its military presence.

Thus, it is clear that the forward deployment of US military forces has been on firm grounds with the significant interests for the US to engage in this region, and the strong will of Japan and ROK to retain the security relation with the US.

Regarding North Korea's nuclear program, Saunders mentions that 'most Korean and Japanese analysts believe the North's objective is to negotiate a deal with the United States that includes security guarantees, improved political and economic relations, and financial assistance and suggests the high probability of its peaceful solution through negotiations'.<sup>133</sup> In August 2003, six-party talks

among the US, China, ROK, Japan, Russia and North Korea were held and the participants of the talks agreed to solve the nuclear problem peacefully through dialogue.<sup>134</sup>

However, Berger mentions that ‘the threat to their domestic political legitimacy may be too great to allow [North Korea’s leaders] to risk compromise’.<sup>135</sup> In addition, Wit points out that ‘Pyongyang probably judges China will not use its political and economic leverage against it if the North plays its cards right’.<sup>136</sup> They show that North Korea would not easily make a compromise with the international community regarding this problem.

Furthermore, while President Bush referred to North Korea as one of an ‘axis of evil’ in his State-of-the-Union address on 29 January 2002 and suggested the necessity of a tougher policy against North Korea,<sup>137</sup> ‘key countries, such as China and South Korea, do not want to back North Korea into a corner and cause it either to collapse or lash out militarily’.<sup>138</sup> These suggest that coordinated international pressure forcing North Korea to abandon its nuclear program may not be effective because there is quite a large difference among the main countries regarding North Korea policies; therefore it is unlikely to succeed rapidly.

On the other hand, regarding a military solution, Gibert mentions that ‘China strongly opposes any use of force against North Korea and would react negatively should Seoul and Washington or the United Nations contemplate the use of force against North Korea’.<sup>139</sup> Saunders also points out that ‘Military strikes appear to have been ruled out because of their inability to destroy any current weapons or plutonium stocks, strong opposition from US allies, a North Korea’s ability to retaliate and cause severe damage to South Korea’.<sup>140</sup> Both of them show the great difficulty of a military solution.

Under these circumstances, it seems that the early solution against the will of North Korea would be quite complicated.

It should be concluded, from what has been considered above, that each of three major factors, namely China’s military improvement, forward deployment of the US’s military forces in this region and North Korea’s nuclear development, has several and persistent backgrounds.

### **The future prospect of the main factors**

As mentioned above, regarding the military movement of this region, there are three influential factors, namely China’s rapid improvement of its military capability, forward deployment of the military forces by the US, today’s sole superpower and the most powerful actor in this region, and North Korea’s nuclear development.

Regarding China’s military improvement, there are reasons such as the necessity for its military modernisation, maintenance of a deterrent against Taiwanese movement toward its independence by the threat of its ballistic missiles attack capability, and the preservation of nuclear deterrence against the US as countermeasures to its development of NMD. It is not easy to remove these reasons.

With regard to the forward deployment of US military forces, it has been critical to its interests for the US to engage in this region, and despite a domestic anti-American wave, the ROK Government has had the intention of maintaining the security relation with the USA and supports the deployment as does the government of Japan.

Concerning North Korea’s nuclear development, there are North Korean domestic matters that make its compromise harder, and the different attitudes to North Korean policies among the key

countries. They make it quite difficult to constrain North Korea from continuing its nuclear program against its own will and hinder an early peaceful solution. Thus, it is not easy to change the current situation of North Korea pursuing a nuclear program while under pressure by the international community to relinquish it.

All these things make it plain that each of these main factors has the firm foundations for endurance. Thus, it is reasonable to anticipate that insofar as the foundations subsist, the factors also will exist. If unlikely great events should happen, such as the collapse of China's economy, the termination of the Japan-US or the Korea-US security treaty, and the collapse of the communist regime in North Korea, the foundations of the main factors would be shaken. Even if these events should occur, even after ten years, the main factors would remain and the military situation in Northeast Asia would still be under the influence of these factors as they are today.

### **Conclusion**

Proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles becomes a serious security problem in the international community because of not only the increase of the number of countries that possess them but also the danger of the acquisition of WMD by non-state actors such as terrorist groups. In the background to the proliferation, there are reasons coming from security, national status, and ideology or religion. At the same time it has become easier to acquire WMD.

On the other hand, in the international community, varied efforts in order to prevent the proliferation have been made. Besides, there has been the 'disincentives to seeking the acquisition of WMD'. However, there are diverse limitations of the non-proliferation efforts that have hindered its complete achievement.

After the Cold War era, there still remain various regional conflicts derived from territorial disputes and, religious and ethnic problems. Insofar as the conflicts remain, some countries and non-state actors will continue to seek WMD. Under the circumstances, since there are limitations to the non-proliferation efforts and it is quite difficult to remove the limitations, it seems that it will be quite difficult to prevent completely the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles.

At the same time, regarding the military situation in North Asia, there are three influential factors, namely China's rapid military improvement, forward deployment of the US's military forces in the region and North Korea's nuclear development.

China's military improvement has various backgrounds such as the necessity of military modernisation, maintenance of a deterrent against Taiwanese independence movement and the preservation of nuclear deterrence against the US. It is not easy to take away these reasons.

Next, the forward deployment of US's military forces has backgrounds in that the full engagement in this region is critical for the US, and both the Japanese and ROK governments support the deployment.

Then, it seems that it is quite difficult to reach an early peaceful solution to North Korea's nuclear development. There are North Korea's domestic difficulty and the difference between the main countries regarding policies to North Korea.

Since there are firm foundations for the main factors, it is reasonable to predict that except if unlikely great events should break the foundations, the factors will remain.

Therefore, it seems that even after ten years, proliferation of WMD will be a serious problem in the international community and the main factors will have a great influence on the Northeast Asian military situation. These two issues, proliferation of WMD and the military situation in Northeast Asia, will subsist as important matters for the peace and stability in the Asia–Pacific region as they do today.

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