



The Stanley
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Center for
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Ballistic Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security: Views From Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo

Overview

Recent US plans to deploy national missile defense (NMD) and theater missile defense (TMD) have emerged as significant issues for stability in Northeast Asia, a region that faces a number of critical uncertainties and daunting security challenges in the coming decade. These uncertainties and challenges include questions about the future US military role in the region, historical distrust between major powers, the continued existence of divided states, ongoing military modernization programs, territorial disputes, resource conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, and continuing shifts in relative economic and military power.

US interest in deploying NMD and TMD is partly a response to military developments in Northeast Asia, including China's missile buildup across the Taiwan Strait and North Korea's efforts to develop nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles. Yet the US debate about missile defense has largely focused on NMD and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. This originally steered the debate toward Russia and away from China and Japan. The US national security community has tended to emphasize the military requirements and effectiveness of NMD and TMD without fully examining the regional security implications. As a result, these implications have not been fully explored and debated either within US policymaking circles or with their counterpart communities in China and Japan. Broader US interests in the region, maintenance of US alliances and nonproliferation goals have not been systematically connected to missile defense issues.

To address these shortcomings, the Stanley Foundation, in conjunction with the National Defense University and the Monterey Institute of International Studies' Center for Nonproliferation Studies, organized a series of three conferences to conduct a thorough examination of the regional security implications of US NMD and TMD plans. This conference series, titled *Ballistic Missile Defense in Northeast Asia: Implications for Security Relations Among the Regional Powers*, engaged a wide variety of experts from the United States, China, and Japan to gain insights into the potential political and military implications of specific US deployment modes. A report of the conference series was prepared by Evan S. Medeiros of the Monterey Institute and published by the Stanley Foundation. The following brief highlights the key conclusions of the report.

Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security

The conference participants identified several broad trends that are influencing policymaking in China, Japan, and the United States on missile defense issues.

- **US participants agreed the United States is paying a high political cost** in pursuing missile defense systems whose potential military benefits lie far in the future. Uncertainty about the final performance of missile defense systems still in varying stages of development aggravates this problem, because other countries adopt worst case assumptions that the systems will be highly effective and respond accordingly.
- **Chinese concerns about missile defense are chiefly political:** the impact on Japanese militarization, whether TMD would encourage Taiwan independence, and US intentions toward China. US decisions about missile defense deployments should take this broader political context into account and not be based solely on military criteria. The negative impact of missile defense deployments on Sino-US relations could

potentially be reduced by offsetting them with political/economic measures to reassure China.

- **The Japanese government is interested in missile defense as a means of defending Japan** against missile and weapons of mass destruction threats and strengthening the US-Japan security alliance. However, Japanese policymakers have a number of concerns about cost, effectiveness, and the impact on Sino-Japanese relations and global arms control efforts.

National Missile Defense

The American, Chinese, and Japanese participants identified several key differences between the United States and China on NMD, possible Chinese reactions, and Japanese concerns. The conferees also raised potentially negative implications of NMD for Sino-US relations, strategic stability in Asia, and the US-Japan alliance. Possible solutions include more extensive bilateral consultations and adoption of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs).

- **The United States and China hold drastically different views** on the aims, role, and potential of an NMD system. US poli-

cymakers see NMD as an insurance policy to support US national defense if deterrence fails, which is viewed as a real possibility. In contrast, China opposes NMD on two levels: military and political. Militarily, Beijing believes that NMD is structured, sized, and focused to negate China's nuclear forces. Politically, Beijing believes that NMD deployment amounts to a clear manifestation of US hostility toward China and of the US determination to consolidate its position as the global hegemon.

- **China will react to present US NMD deployment plans** by accelerating its strategic modernization, developing countermeasures to defeat the system, and increasing the overall size of its nuclear force. Most US participants believe it would be dangerous to try to capture this larger Chinese nuclear force with an expanded NMD architecture because such efforts would likely fail and would cause serious damage to bilateral relations in the process. The United States should expect a proportional Chinese nuclear buildup in response to NMD deployment.

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The full report from this event, "Ballistic Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security: Views From Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo" is available from the Stanley Foundation and online at <http://reports.stanleyfdn.org>.

- **CSBMs and strategic dialogue could help diffuse tensions over NMD deployment.**

Washington could reassure China that NMD is not intended to undermine the Chinese nuclear deterrent, while Beijing could be more transparent about the ultimate size of its strategic forces. Several Chinese participants supported starting a serious official dialogue on NMD and strategic stability to clarify the nature of the US-China strategic relationship and to avoid negative misperceptions.

- **China’s anti-NMD diplomacy plays on Russian and European fears**

that unilateral deployment of NMD would disrupt strategic stability. Participants from Japan and the United States agreed that an NMD agreement with Russia could help reduce the effectiveness of Beijing’s anti-NMD diplomatic campaign. One possibility would be significant US-Russia bilateral reductions in offensive arms mixed with deployments of limited defensive systems.

- **Japanese views on NMD are mixed.**

Some analysts believe that NMD will strengthen the US defense commitment and enhance

the credibility of extended deterrence. Others believe that deployment outside a modified ABM treaty would undermine strategic stability by provoking China and Russia.

Additionally, some Japanese are concerned that NMD deployment will mark the end of nuclear arms reduction efforts.

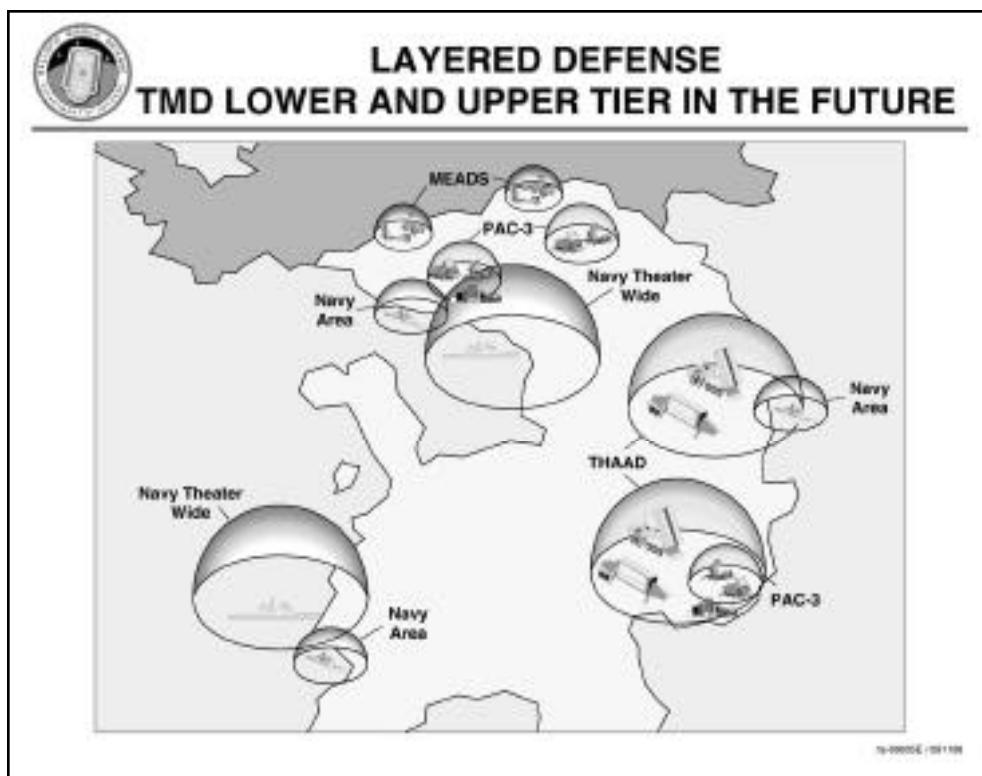
Theater Missile Defense

The conferees agreed that US deployments of TMD in Northeast Asia have mixed implications for regional stability. TMD is needed in some circumstances to protect US troops and bases. Yet China’s reactions to deployments of upper-tier TMD capabilities in Taiwan and

Japan could trigger a dramatic change in the regional security environment. The highlights of the discussion on TMD include:

- **The likely regional consequences of TMD vary with the political footprint and capabilities of each system.** One set of China’s concerns is linked to where the systems would be based, with Chinese objections strongest on Taiwan and somewhat less on Japan. A second set of concerns varies with the potential effectiveness of each system, with less concern about PAC-3 and other lower-tier systems and more concern about upper-tier systems.

Washington could reassure China that NMD is not intended to undermine the Chinese nuclear deterrent....



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- **Beijing opposes all forms of TMD deployment in Taiwan** because it believes missile defense promotes stronger military ties between Taipei and Washington and claims such deployments encourage pro-independence sentiments within Taiwan. Similarly, Beijing is skeptical about Tokyo's effort to achieve a TMD capability because it sees this as a means for Japan to expand its regional role and influence.
- **Despite joint research, Japan is not yet committed to development or deployment** of the Navy Theater Wide (NTW) system. While the Japan Defense Agency and Foreign Ministry actively support missile defense, others in the government and the Diet have concerns about cost and effectiveness. Positive developments on the Korean peninsula or in cross-strait relations could decrease political support for NTW.
- **TMD advocates in the United States and Japan want to use missile defense cooperation as a means to strengthen US-Japan security ties**, but they do not want TMD cooperation to become a

litmus test for the overall health of the alliance.

Conclusion

Given the changing strategic landscape in Northeast Asia, missile defense deployments could alter political and security relationships in Asia in unpredictable (and possibly destabilizing) ways. The central challenge for policymakers is to balance the potential security contributions of national and theater missile defenses with the requirements of continued stability in Asia. To achieve such a balance, US policymakers need to consult more closely with Asian governments, particularly China and Japan, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of missile defenses on regional and global stability. Good diplomacy and appropriate use of CSBMs can mitigate potential adverse consequences of ballistic missile defenses. Given the multiple and overlapping challenges to Asian stability in the coming decade, handling the issue of missile defense deployment properly could have a significant impact on the continued security and prosperity of the region.

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About the Stanley Foundation

The Stanley Foundation is a nonpartisan, private operating foundation that advances its vision of a secure peace with freedom and justice by creating opportunities to improve international understanding through media and educational programs and through forums encouraging open dialogue among policy professionals, educators, students, and citizens interested in world affairs.

Programming is varied and reaches multiple audiences. The foundation convenes focused high-level dialogues for policy professionals, policymakers, and opinion leaders on selected topics in global governance and US foreign policy. Global education programs reach and involve educators, administrators, and students from elementary school to college. The foundation produces a weekly public radio program on world affairs, *Common Ground*, and a monthly magazine, *World Press Review*, which carries and translates pieces from leading newspapers around the globe.

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The foundation does not make grants.

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This report is the result of a project on ballistic missile defenses and US relations with Northeast Asia sponsored by the Emerging From Conflict (EFC) program of the foundation. For more information about this project, please visit the project Web site: www.emergingfromconflict.org. The full report from this event, "*Ballistic Missile Defense and Northeast Asian Security: Views From Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo*" is available online at <http://reports.stanleyfdn.org>. For those without Web access, the full report is available from:

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About the Center for Nonproliferation Studies

Based at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California, the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) seeks to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction by training the next generation of nonproliferation specialists and by disseminating timely and informative data, research, and policy analyses. With offices in Monterey; Washington, DC; and Almaty, Kazakstan, CNS has a staff of over 55 full-time and 65 part-time personnel, making it the largest nongovernmental program in the world devoted exclusively to research and training on nonproliferation issues.

Established in 1995 as one of five major research programs at CNS, the East Asia Nonproliferation Program (EANP) is dedicated to research and training related to East Asian nonproliferation issues. With a staff of eight full-time and part-time researchers, EANP works with East Asian partners to build communities of nonproliferation analysts in the region, and links this new generation of professionals to the international community of nonproliferation specialists. EANP's work includes capacity-building activities in East Asia; visiting research fellowships and training programs; database and information dissemination; and policy-oriented research, consultations, and publications.

Additional information about the East Asia Nonproliferation Program (including publications and conference reports) is available at <http://cns.miis.edu/cns/projects/eanp/index.htm>

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