

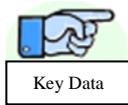
▶ Chapter 2

Securing Japan by Strengthening Deterrence and Promoting Cooperation

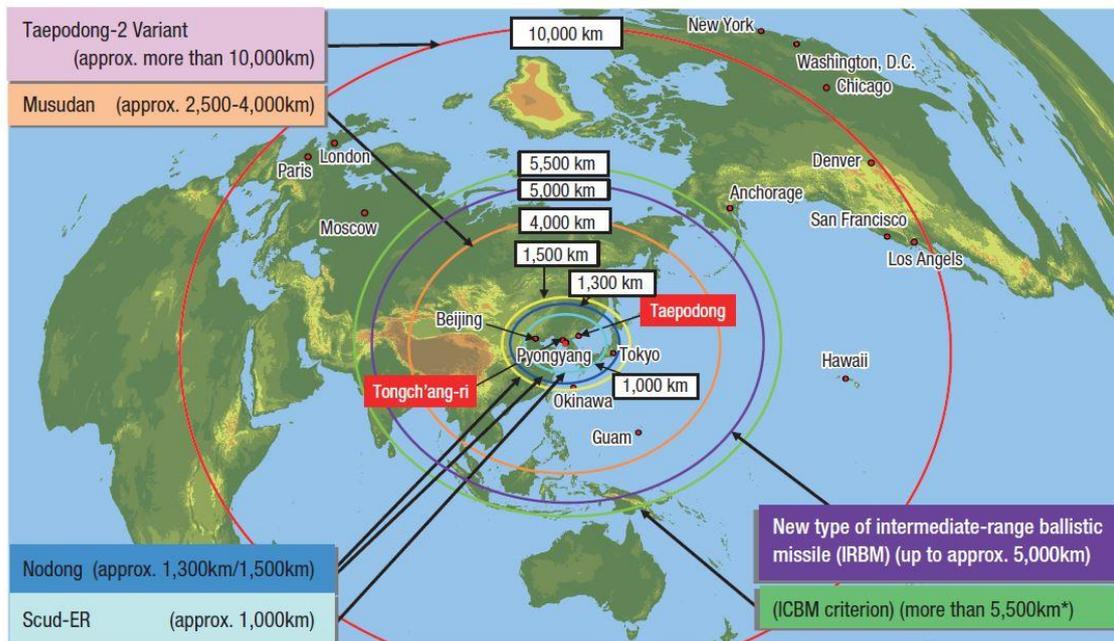
——Japan Should Engage in Dialogue

[Key Points]

- The North Korea issue is undergoing changes from the perspective of Japan's security. Previously, a contingency on the Korean Peninsula was the main concern for Japan. It was, however, an indirect threat. Now the possibility of a direct military attack on Japan has emerged.
- North Korea positions the development of its nuclear and ballistic missile program as being essential to maintaining the regime. Accordingly, any attempt to force it to abandon the program would inevitably end up resulting in military action. There is a strong possibility that North Korea would launch an attack in the event of a military strike of any kind. South Korea and Japan would suffer serious damage as they would be the targets of this attack. To avoid this situation, our side must not exercise force under any circumstances.
- Japan should take the initiative, or at least engage in talks to reach a solution through dialogue, while applying pressure on North Korea with the rest of the international community. Efforts to alleviate North Korea's security concerns are also crucial to détente. We have to bear in mind that the dialogue process will take a long time. To render North Korea's nuclear capability ineffective, Japan should bolster its missile defense system and build its preparedness to launch counterstrikes on missile bases in North Korea to ensure effective deterrence.



Range of North Korean Ballistic Missiles



* The figure above shows a rough image of the distance each missile can reach from Pyongyang for the sake of convenience.

Source: *Defense of Japan 2017* (Annual White Paper)

1. Security Issues in the Asia-Pacific Region

The North Korea issue poses an immediate problem for Japan's security. To understand in what sense it is serious, let us look at how Japan has hitherto regarded its security in relation to North Korea. For Japan, the North Korea issue is one of a number of security challenges that it faces in the Asia-Pacific region. Within the Asia-Pacific region, China, Russia, and the Korean Peninsula pose security challenges for Japan. Let us first ascertain how Japan has hitherto perceived these issues or how it regards them now.

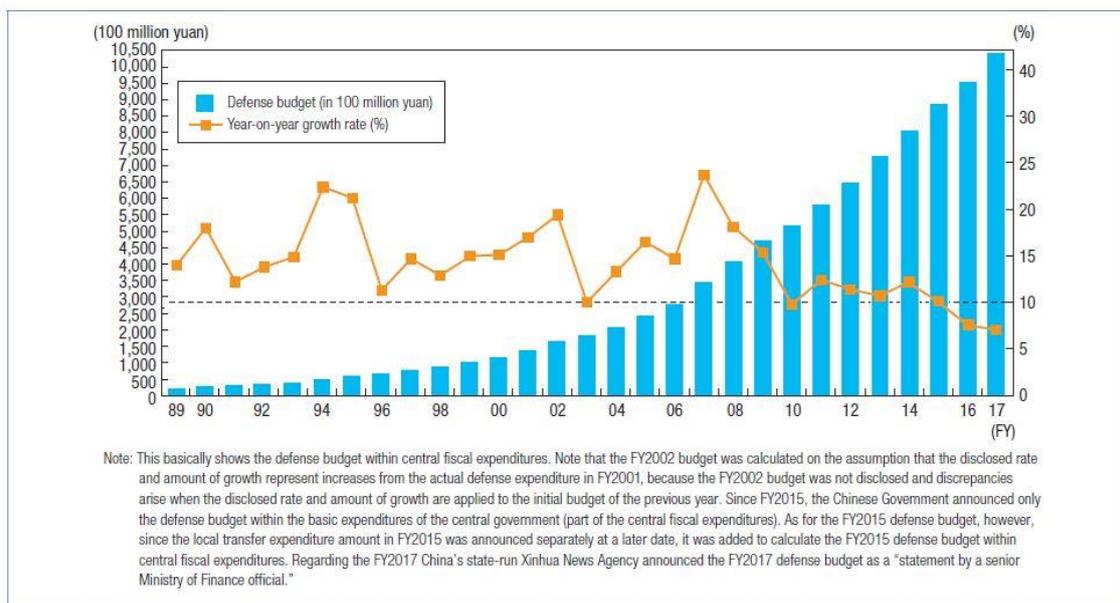
(China)

China is at the center of an ongoing power transition, and its growing military might, efforts to achieve maritime dominance in the South China Sea, strengthening of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD), the Taiwan issue, and territorial disputes are regarded as a problem.

After the Cold War ended, China's policy of reform and opening up brought about a rapid

expansion in its economy, which has overtaken Japan’s economy and is catching up to the United States . In fact, it could overtake the United States in 2030. China’s economic expansion has been accompanied by double-digit growth in its defense expenditure over the last 20 years, resulting in its becoming a military superpower second only to the United States (see Figure 1). At the 19th Party Congress in the autumn of 2016, conscious of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic in 2049, General Secretary Xi Jinping announced that China would become a military superpower ranked alongside the United States, stating, “we will make it our mission to see that...by the mid-21st century our people's armed forces have been fully transformed into world-class forces.”

Figure 1 Changes in China’s Announced Defense Budget



Source: *Defense of Japan 2017* (Annual White Paper)

Looking at the power transition phenomenon, China’s influence not only in the military realm, but also in the economic and political arenas is about to expand to the rest of the world, as indicated by One Belt, One Road. Along the shipping lane that constitutes the One Road, there are signs that China’s military strategy is expanding to the Indian Ocean and on to the African continent. Therefore, in recent years, India has been demonstrating great caution regarding China’s global

strategy.

In the South China Sea, China has established the Nine-dash Line in an effort to maximize its territory and territorial waters, and is moving forward with large-scale land reclamation and military fortifications on seven islands under its control. The purpose of this is likely to be to establish A2/AD by bringing the majority of the South China Sea under its control. In this process, China will likely establish its own Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) covering the South China Sea.

Furthermore, Chinese military activity (drills and exercises) is intensifying in the Pacific Ocean beyond the so-called “second island chain,” one of China’s Pacific Ocean military defense lines, which links the Izu and Ogasawara Islands to Guam and Saipan. Thus, the scope of China’s security focus is progressively extending on a global scale. In this process, China has approached the United States with a proposal for establishing a “new superpower relationship,” under which the United States and China would carve up control of the Pacific Ocean between them.

Regarding the issue of Taiwan, China has ramped up the political and economic pressure on the administration of Tsai Ing-wen, which does not accept the “One-China policy” that regards mainland China and Taiwan as belonging to a single country. It is also increasing the military pressure on Taiwan. China does not rule out ultimately using military means to thwart Taiwan’s independence.

While China has at least resolved its territorial issues with Russia, its territorial dispute with India has reignited. In recent years, China has stepped up its claims of sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands in Okinawa Prefecture and escalated interventions intended as a show of strength, including incursions into Japanese territorial waters by government vessels in the form of patrol boats belonging to the State Oceanic Administration, along with activity by naval vessels and air force planes in nearby waters and airspace.

(Russia)

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia witnessed political destabilization and substantial economic decline, along with a major decrease in its military capacity. However, with the emergence of President Vladimir Putin at the start of the 2000s, the country became more stable and gained strength as a nation, restoring its status as a military superpower. Reflecting the fact that, during the Cold War, it was a political superpower that vied for supremacy with the United States, Russia has gained in influence on the strength of its military might, even though it does not have a great deal of economic clout. It repeatedly interfered in neighboring countries that were formerly members of the Soviet Union and, more recently, plunged into deeper confrontation with Western

countries over its military interventions in Ukraine and Syria.

In terms of relations with Japan, while it remains unresponsive on the subject of the return of the Northern Territories and the conclusion of a peace treaty, Russia is trying to elicit Japanese economic cooperation in such areas as Far Eastern development. Militarily speaking, as well as the apparent resumption of incursions by military forces into areas around the Japanese archipelago, similar to those often seen during the Cold War, Russia's military presence in the Arctic has come to the fore. Japan strongly objected when the Russian military stepped up its deployments and activities in the four islands of the Northern Territories.

In dealing with matters in the international security arena, Russia now tends to find itself shoulder to shoulder with China in sharp conflict with Japan and the United States, or Europe and the United States.

(Korean Peninsula)

Japan faces rather different security issues in respect of the Korean Peninsula than it does regarding China and Russia. The first example that one could cite is the fact that the Korean Peninsula is divided in two and the Korean War has still not ended. Problems involving North Korea relate to the country's overemphasis on its military, its nuclear and missile development, and the unresolved issue of the abduction of Japanese nationals. Japan's relationship with South Korea is also beset by various historical problems.

After the Pacific War ended, the Korean Peninsula was divided in two, with the southern side becoming the Republic of Korea in 1948. The Korean War broke out in 1950 when North Korea invaded, resulting in the loss of a few million lives on both sides. A ceasefire was called in 1953. UN forces drawn from countries including the United States and United Kingdom fought on the South Korean side, while China dispatched a volunteer army (and the Soviet Union dispatched an advisory group) to assist the North Koreans. The situation between the two Koreas remains classed as an armistice even now, and the war is technically still ongoing. While Japan did not provide any troops, it was positioned on the side of the UN forces, permitting them to establish bases and use facilities in Japan, and the UN still has a rump military command headquartered in Japan today: UN Command-Rear.

North Korea attaches great importance to its military and in the latter half of the 1990s, Kim Jong-il advocated a military-first approach called *songun*, under which the military received priority in all projects. It maintains a total domestic military force of 1.2 million, about double South Korea's troop strength. Today, 1.5 million ground troops still face off against one another across the demarcation line between north and south in the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

Even more serious than that is North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles. It has already conducted six nuclear tests, along with repeated test launches of ballistic missiles in recent years. As a result, North Korea has almost completed its development of nuclear weapons and missiles capable of reaching the US mainland. Stringent economic sanctions have been imposed in response, through UN resolutions and other means, but North Korea has continued with its nuclear and missile development program, having secured funds and materials through sanctions-busting. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's 2002 visit to North Korea suggested that a solution to the issue of the abduction of Japanese nationals might be in sight, but the situation regressed thereafter and there are currently no prospects of a solution whatsoever.

Historical problems between South Korea and Japan include the issue of comfort women used by the Imperial Japanese Army, disputes over territorial rights to Takeshima, and the question of the naming of marine areas. There is strong anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korean society, which constantly leaves relations between Japan and South Korea vulnerable, even though they should be strategic partners.

2. The Distinctive Features of Security Issues Involving North Korea

Japan, the United States, South Korea, and other members of the international community have responded harshly to North Korea's nuclear development, but this was due to strong concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear proliferation. While North Korea has acquired nuclear weapons, this does not mean that it will become a major power like China and Russia, or a mighty nation with global influence. This is not the fear that lies behind the America's harsh response to North Korea. The US's objective is to thwart the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

North Korea's motivation in developing and possessing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles would appear, above all, to be to protect North Korea — or rather, its regime — from a US attack. In other words, it is the maintenance of the regime. Unlike China, North Korea probably does not want to gain control over the Sea of Japan or face off against Japan over territorial issues. While North Korea undoubtedly does stand out in terms of its military capacity compared with the size of the country, it is hard to imagine that North Korea, unlike Russia, would use its military might to make forays into other countries.

In terms of security issues (threats) posed by North Korea that differ in nature from those presented by China and Russia, one is the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by

a new small-to-medium-sized state, while the other is the fact that geographical and political conditions could lead to North Korea launching a military attack on Japan, just as it might on South Korea.

The development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is a question of stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; accepting nuclear development by North Korea could entice other small-to-medium-sized states across the globe to acquire nuclear capabilities. From this perspective, the international community is striving to prevent nuclear development by North Korea, but there is no absolutely certain means of doing so without fail. In particular, considering the situation from North Korea's perspective, it probably thinks that possessing nuclear weapons is essential to the continuation of the regime, having watched as the regimes of Iraq and Libya collapsed. North Korea saw that it was Western military pressure or military might that led to their collapse, because those two countries did not have nuclear weapons.

Japan has hitherto regarded the security threat posed by North Korea as an indirect one that would arise in the event of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. Specifically, the challenges presented include rescuing Japanese nationals in South Korea in the event of a contingency, as well as a large-scale refugee issue, support for US military involved in combat, and intelligence gathering. This situation also likely included the possibility of an attack against United States Forces Japan, but Japan was not strongly aware of this fact. However, right now, North Korea could well launch a missile attack on Japan for some reasons. While the potential for an attack using nuclear weapons cannot be denied, the problem is that the possibility of an attack using a weapon of another kind has become more likely.

Thinking about North Korea's motivations for possessing nuclear weapons and developing missiles, it is inconceivable that it would launch an unprovoked attack. North Korea possesses nuclear weapons and develops ballistic missiles to protect itself from US attack, and one can regard this as building up what could be termed a deterrent. Based on this assumption, if it does not come under attack from outside — in other words, if the United States does not attack it — North Korea will likely not take any military action involving Japan. Kim Jong-un has probably made the rational judgment that, even if North Korea were to attack Japan or the United States, the full-scale military counteroffensive by the United States would likely devastate North Korea. Thus, one can conclude that, as long as the United States does not launch an attack, there will be no military counteroffensive and, in particular, no nuclear attack by North Korea.

3. Advances in North Korea's Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Development

North Korea's nuclear and long-range ballistic missile development over the last year or two appears to have moved into a completely different dimension.

North Korea carried out its first nuclear test in 2006. After that it carried out tests once every three to four years, in 2009, 2013, and 2016. The explosion yield gradually increased, with the fourth test estimated to have involved a weapon with an explosion yield of six to seven kilotons. However, North Korea upped the pace over the last year or two, conducting the fifth test in 2016, a matter of months after the fourth, and then carrying out the sixth test in September the following year. Moreover, the tests suddenly grew significantly in scale, with the fifth involving a weapon with an explosion yield of 11-12 kilotons and the sixth 160 kilotons. The sixth nuclear test generated an explosion with a magnitude of 6.1, 8-10 times the power of blasts generated by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see Figure 2). North Korea announced this as a successful hydrogen bomb test. Over the last few years, one would have to say that North Korea's nuclear development has advanced rapidly. If North Korea successfully develops a hydrogen bomb, its power will be unlimited, unlike in the case of an atomic bomb, and the threat will be serious.

Figure 2 North Korea's Nuclear Tests

Year	(1) 2006	(2) 2009	(3) 2013	(4) Jan. 2016	(5) Sept. 2016	(6) Sept. 2017
Date & Time	Oct. 9 10:35	May 25 09:55	Feb. 12 11:57	Jan. 6 10:29	Sept. 9 09:30	Sept. 3 12:29
Hypocenter	Latitude 41.2° N	Latitude 41.2° N	Latitude 41.2° N	Latitude 41.3° N	Latitude 41.3° N	Latitude 41.3° N
	Longitude 129.2° E	Longitude 129.2° E	Longitude 129.3° E	Longitude 129.1° E	Longitude 129.2° E	Longitude 129.1° E
Depth	0 km					
Magnitude	M4.1	M4.52	M4.9	M4.85	M5.1	M6.1
Estimated Yield	0.5–1 kt	2–3 kt	6–7 kt	6–7 kt	11–12 kt	160 kt

Note: Figures for magnitude are as announced by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

Source: Data prepared by the Ministry of Defense

North Korea is believed to have carried out missile tests twice in the 1990s, four times between 2000 and 2010, and nine times between 2011 and 2015. Most of these were short-range missiles that flew for around 500 km. However, this figure surged to 15 times in 2016, with a growing number achieving flight distances of 800 km, ranging up to more than 1,000 km. Nevertheless, it

appears that almost half failed or did not fly as planned.

A total of 15 tests were carried out in 2017; apart from three failures, there was a succession of noteworthy missile launches (see Figures 3 and 4).

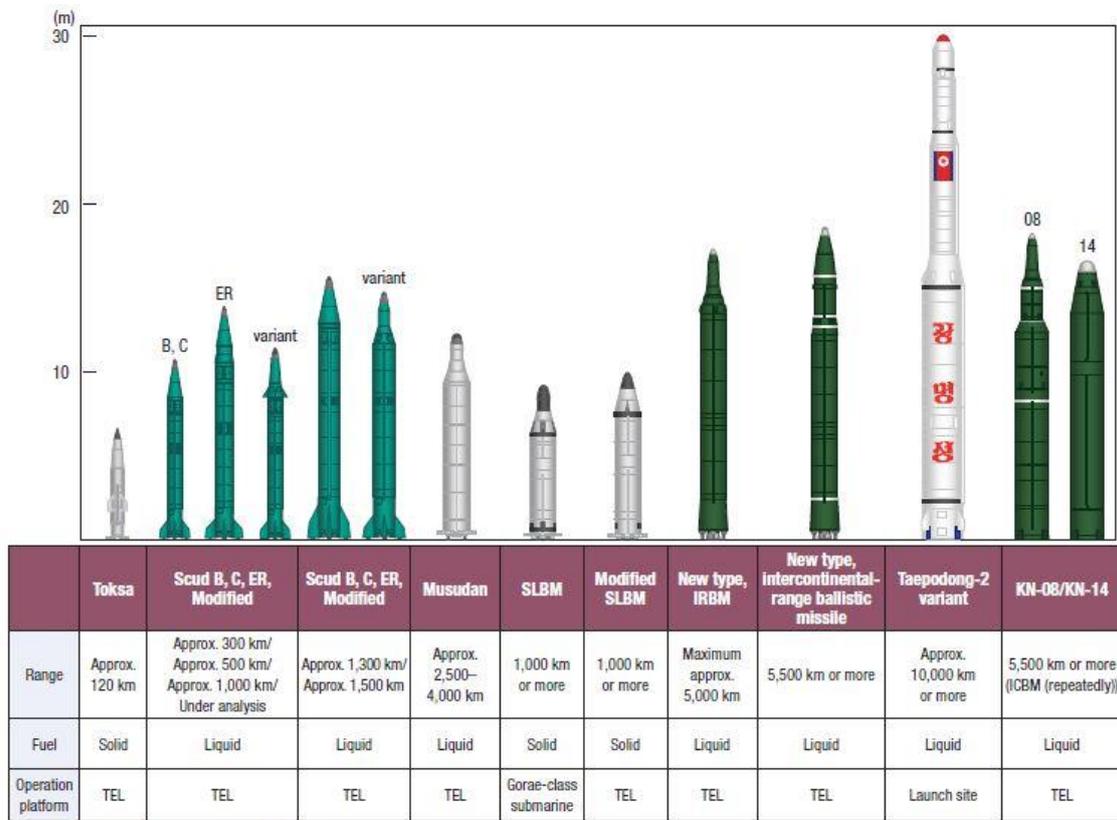
In March, North Korea simultaneously launched four Scud-ER ballistic missiles, which flew for approximately 1,000 km. Launching several missiles toward a single target at the same time makes it harder for a missile defense (MD) system to fully intercept them.

In May, North Korea launched a new type of intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), the Hwasong-12, on a lofted trajectory, which involves firing the missile higher than usual, so that it plunges sharply down again. This test was a success, with the missile flying for 500 km. North Korea launched the same type of missile again in August and September, but at the normal angle, and achieved flight distances of 2,700 km and 3,700 km, respectively. These distances are significant, because they put the US territory of Guam (3,400 km from North Korea) — which North Korea has singled out as a potential target in its verbal exchanges with the United States — within range of North Korea's missiles. This new type of ballistic missile is regarded as being an improved version of the Musudan missile that experienced repeated failures a year before.

In July, North Korea twice successfully launched a new type of long-range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the Hwasong-14, on a lofted trajectory, achieving a flight distance of around 1,000 km. Calculations suggest that, if launched at a normal angle, this missile would fly for 10,000 km, which would bring Los Angeles (9,500 km) within range. Similarly, North Korea launched a Hwasong-15 ICBM in November on a lofted trajectory, reaching an altitude of 4,000 km and flying for approximately 1,000 km. This suggests that it could reach Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. (11,000 km from North Korea).

Having enhanced its submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) to enable its deployment on land, using solid fuel for increased readiness, North Korea successfully launched its new ballistic missile in February and May.

Figure 3 Ballistic Missiles North Korea Possesses and/or Is Developing



Source: Made by MOD based on Jane's Strategic Weapon Systems, etc.

Source: *Defense of Japan 2017* (Annual White Paper)

This shows that, even compared with the situation a year earlier, North Korea's ballistic missile development reached a whole new level in 2017, demonstrating that it is on the road to successfully developing missiles capable of reaching the US mainland or with a high ready-response capability.

In the case of nuclear weapons, a number of issues are believed to remain, such as the extent to which North Korea has succeeded in developing a warhead sufficiently small to be carried on a missile and whether the structure of the missile head is capable of withstanding heat upon re-entry to the atmosphere. Nevertheless, this shows that North Korea is on its way to achieving quite a high level of nuclear weapon and ballistic missile development.

Figure 4 North Korean Ballistic Missile Tests in 2017

Date	Summary	Place	Missile Type	Flight Distance
February 12	1 missile launched	Kusong	Solid fuel, new type of missile	500 km
March 6	4 missiles launched	Tongchang-ri	Scud-ER (presumed)	1000 km

March 22	1 missile launched	Wonsan	Unknown	Failed
April 5	1 missile launched	Sinpo	Unknown	60 km
April 16	1 missile launched	Sinpo	Unknown	Failed
April 29	1 missile launched	Pukchang	Unknown	Failed
May 14	1 missile launched	Kusong	New type of IRBM	Lofted 800 km
May 21	1 missile launched	Pukchang	New type of missile, same type as Feb. 12	500 km
May 29	1 missile launched	Wonsan	New type of missile, improved Scud	Precision-guided, 400 km
July 4	1 missile launched	Kusong	New type of ICBM	Lofted 900 km
July 28	1 missile launched	Mup'yong-ni	New type of ICBM	Lofted 1000 km
August 26	Multiple missiles launched	Kittae-ryong		250 km
August 29	1 missile launched	Sunan	New type of IRBM	2700 km
September 15	1 missile launched	Sunan	New type of IRBM	3700 km
November 29	1 missile launched	Pyongsong	New type of ICBM	1000 km

Source: Compiled from *Defense of Japan* (Annual White Paper) and other data published by the Ministry of Defense

Having reached this point, the United States could not deny that a North Korean attack using a nuclear-armed missile was now a very real possibility and reacted strongly to the North Korean issue. Over the last year, the saber-rattling and war of words between the United States and North Korea has escalated. Media coverage also escalated, creating a situation resembling the eve of war. While North Korea has undertaken an intensive series of missile launch tests and nuclear tests over the last year or two, the United States carried out military exercises with South Korea and other allies, repeatedly subjected North Korea to intense verbal opprobrium, and tightened economic sanctions.

One factor contributing to this was the formation of the Trump administration in the United States, but basically, North Korea's having achieved the aforementioned stage in its nuclear missile development should be considered as a background factor to these developments. Even if the objective is to build a deterrent, once North Korea has almost perfected its development of a nuclear-armed ballistic missile capable of reaching the US mainland, it will present a very difficult problem for the security of both South Korea and Japan.

4. Japan's Missile Defense System

Let us now examine the status of Japan's missile defense.

While North Korea embarked on ballistic missile development in earnest in the 1980s, it was only in the 1990s that Japan started to discuss ballistic missile defense (BMD) with the United States and the two countries began a joint BMD research program. Japan decided in 2003 to introduce a BMD system, putting in place the legislation required for handling BMD (a partial amendment of the Self-Defense Forces Act) in 2005. Japan's BMD system consists of a sea-based upper-tier system and a land-based lower-tier system. The former uses SM-3 Block IA missiles launched from Aegis destroyers to intercept incoming missiles in the upper tier. The latter consists of Patriot (PAC-3) missiles, which intercept incoming missiles in the lower tier, at the final stage.

The whole of Japan is meant to be protected by three Aegis-equipped *Kongou*-class destroyers. While there are currently four Aegis destroyers equipped with the system, periodic ship inspections impose constraints on the number of vessels that are fully operational, so there is no permanent defense system covering the whole country at present. By 2021 or thereabouts, Japan intends to establish a higher-performance defense system, introducing SM-3 Block IIA missiles, which offer enhanced capability, and increasing the number of Aegis destroyers equipped with the BMD system to eight (see Figure 5).

In addition, Japan has decided to deploy a land-based lower-tier SM-3 Block IIA system (Aegis Ashore) in two locations: one in the east and one in the west. These will be important installations that complement the sea-based SM-3 missiles. In particular, these are said to demonstrate high performance in dealing with attacks using missiles on a lofted trajectory, of the kind that North Korea trialed in recent launch tests.

Japan is also in the process of introducing PAC-3 MSEs, an advanced version of the PAC-3 (offering protection over a greater area due to interception at a higher altitude). One should bear in mind that the original purpose of PAC-3s was to protect military bases.

The primary question for BMD systems is the extent to which they can intercept incoming attacks. SM-3s have quite a high success rate in interception tests, but these are only tests and there is no experience of using them in real-life combat. Concern remains about their response in the face of a simultaneous attack using multiple missiles. It will take several years to enhance their performance and install Aegis Ashore, so Japan's defense capability is clearly inadequate at present.

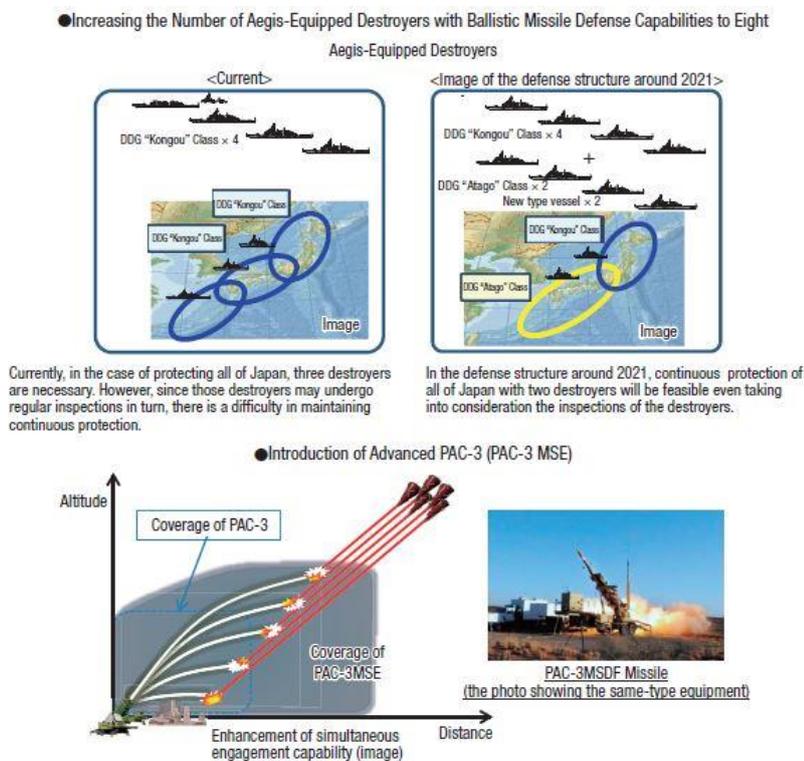
While a deterrent is required to discourage an enemy attack, Japan currently remains completely dependent upon the US's deterrent, just as it would be in the face of a nuclear attack. The question is whether it is right that Japan should be entirely reliant upon another country to deter an attack by

ballistic missiles, which could cause immense damage, depending on the type of weapon with which they are armed. Furthermore, if North Korea acquires the ability to launch a nuclear strike on the US mainland, Japan would face a critical question: while the United States is an ally, would it really attack North Korea if Japan were attacked? This is what is called the decoupling problem, in which the interests of allies cease to be aligned.

If it were anticipated that the United States would not attack North Korea for fear of retaliatory strikes targeting its own territory, extended deterrence provided by the United States would no longer be credible. Even if one does not go so far as that, if Japan is an independent nation, it should probably endeavor to acquire its own deterrent against North Korean missile attacks, to ensure its own security.

The issues that Japan would face in that situation would be the acquisition of pre-emptive strike capability and problems relating to the Constitution. South Korea has acquired its own deterrent in the form of counterstrike and preemptive strike capabilities and systems that it can use itself. From North Korea’s point of view, if it were forced to exercise military force, a missile attack on Japan might, in some circumstances, seem to be more strategically effective than one on South Korea, which has its own deterrent.

Figure 5 Enhancement of Japan’s Capabilities to Respond to Ballistic Missiles



Source: *Defense of Japan 2017* (Annual White Paper)

5. Tightening Sanctions and Military Attacks

Dialogue between North and South Korea began early in 2018, in the run-up to February's Pyeongchang Olympic Games.

Initially, the Japanese government expressed concern about this inter-Korean dialogue. However, the United States stated that it welcomed the talks. During the January round of inter-Korean dialogue, the two sides agreed to continue the talks and it was reported that, in a subsequent telephone conversation, President Moon and President Trump confirmed that this could lead to US-North Korean dialogue aimed at North Korean denuclearization.

While the Pyeongchang Olympic Games were taking place, Kim Jong-un's younger sister, Kim Yo-jong — who holds the post of first deputy director of a major department within the Workers' Party of Korea — and other key figures in the North Korean administration actually visited South Korea, where they met President Moon Jae-in for talks. North Korea not only orchestrated a mood of friendship with South Korea, but also showed its desire for talks with the United States. Kim Jong-un entrusted his special envoys with a message for the South Korean president, which led to the decision to hold a US-North Korean summit meeting with President Trump by May, following the inter-Korean summit meeting at the end of April. Apparently, Kim Jong-un indicated his intention to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and freeze nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

If this series of talks becomes the first step toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and resolves the conflict that has prevailed to date, it will likely be an historic moment for the peace and stability of Northeast Asia. However, calm analysis reveals that it is uncertain whether or not this dialogue will immediately lead to reconciliation between the United States and North Korea or the resolution of the North Korean nuclear and missile issues. Given that North Korea is so close to perfecting the nuclear and missile capabilities whose development it has deemed necessary to its own security, it is unlikely to abandon them unconditionally.

According to an announcement by the South Korean presidential office, Kim Jong-un has disclosed that there will be no reason to retain a nuclear arsenal if the military threat to North Korea is removed and the regime is guaranteed. Conversely, this means that it will not respond to requests for denuclearization as long as these conditions are not met. It says that it will freeze nuclear and ballistic missile launch tests while dialogue continues, but it can still continue producing nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles, and the odds are high that it will do so. Hardliners within the United States are unlikely to stay silent about this. If the talks end in failure, tensions between the United States and North Korea can be expected to rise once more.

The central security issue for Japan, as well as for the United States, is North Korean denuclearization and thwarting its long-range ballistic missile development. Sanctions and military pressure imposed by the international community have been used in an attempt to get North Korea to change its policies. The fact that the international community, including China, has been moved to tighten sanctions on North Korea to this extent is worthy of attention.

However, North Korea has vowed that it will “turn Seoul into a sea of fire” or “use missiles to return fire with weapons of mass destruction” if attacked. It would be a mistake to regard this as merely a threat. It should be noted that these weapons function as a deterrent against the outside world for the small country of North Korea and there is a possibility that North Korea itself regards them in this light. In other words, North Korea could possibly perceive the risk of its being attacked as being low, due to this deterrent.

There are those who hope that, if economic sanctions are tightened to the point that North Korea changes its policies, North Korea will collapse as a state somewhere along the line, but China and Russia would probably not want to drive North Korea that far. Even if China and Russia have faithfully executed the UN sanctions, North Korea will likely withstand the sanctions and continue to develop and deploy its nuclear weapons and missiles. Although there have been reports of economic collapse, poor standards of living among the populace, human rights violations, and a reign of terror within North Korea, the North Korean economy has undergone a modest recovery and growth in the 21st century. It must be recognized that its reliance on trade has been low for many years and it has already formed, to some extent, a self-reliant economic system.

If the approach of trying to change North Korea’s policies by exerting the maximum pressure becomes difficult to bring to fruition using economic sanctions, then ultimately, the only option remaining will be to use military force in applying enforcement measures. Even though moves toward a US-North Korean summit meeting are underway, some within the Trump administration have been heard to express the view that military action is still a possibility. Given this, let us now look again at how the worst-case scenario for Japan’s security might unfurl.

As described above, the possibility of North Korea making the first move to launch a full-scale military operation is actually quite low. This is because, in such a situation, the United States and South Korea would embark on an all-out counteroffensive, which would effectively destroy North Korea. Kim Jong-un is likely to have made at least this level of rational decision. Consequently, if there is potential for a military clash, it is actually more likely that a military assault launched by the United States would be the trigger. Even if it were really a preventive attack (which is illegal) to prepare for the future, the United States would probably claim that it was a preemptive strike (which is legal) in self-defense due to an attack being imminent.

However, if the United States launched a military assault, military retaliations by North Korea would be inevitable. While it would depend on the scale of the US strikes, the North Korean retaliatory actions would probably initially target a country other than the United States. This is because North Korea has not yet completed the development of a missile capable of reaching the US mainland without fail. It is not only technically difficult for North Korea to fire a missile armed with a nuclear warhead at the United States; the risks involved in doing so would be too great, too. Going ahead with it would invite a reprisal by the United States and North Korea would undoubtedly face the risk of annihilation. Consequently, aside from “turning Seoul into a sea of fire,” there is a strong possibility that North Korea would follow through on the threats that it has begun to make in recent years and launch a missile attack on Japan. If Japan were in its sights, the first target would probably be US military bases in Japan, but areas other than the bases might be targeted if the situation were to escalate. Even if the initial missile(s) were not armed with a nuclear payload, missiles armed with chemical weapons or weapons with enhanced ability to kill or maim (such as cluster munitions containing explosive bomblets) would still cause immense harm.

Has Japan actually ever really envisaged thwarting North Korean nuclear and missile development, even if its own territory came under armed attack? While there are some who believe that Japan must not cave in to North Korean threats, North Korea regards retaliatory military actions as a deterrent ensuring its own security, so it is not the case that it has been trying to threaten Japan and others from the outset. The important point is the fact that a policy based exclusively on pressure could potentially result in the United States launching a military assault on North Korea and North Korea launching a direct armed attack on Japan. In other words, a policy based exclusively on pressure could have grave consequences for Japan’s security.

The kind of military clash most likely to actually occur is a limited attack by the US military on a North Korean missile launch base or nuclear-related facility. However, also in this situation, a military retaliation by North Korea would be inevitable. It can be limited in scope, probably targeting a US military base in South Korea or Japan, or military facilities belonging to Japan, the United States, and/or South Korea (ships or missile facilities, etc.) Even if the initial attack and counterattack were limited, there is a strong probability that progressive escalation could not be avoided, eventually approaching something akin to all-out war.

This situation must be avoided at all costs, so, for the sake of its own security, Japan should urge the United States not to be the first to launch a military assault, even if it applies military pressure. Avoiding war is the top priority for South Korea, which would be expected to suffer direct casualties, and reports suggest that it has already requested that the United States refrain from exercising its military might. While leaving open the possibility of a military assault as a

negotiating tactic puts North Korea under pressure, Japan should at least communicate this to the United States behind the scenes.

6. Taking the Initiative in Dialogue and Neutralizing Nuclear Weapons

The question that remains is how to stop North Korea developing nuclear weapons and missiles. However, since North Korea regards their development as a security measure needed for the survival of the state, one must think in terms of creating a situation in which nuclear and missile development are no longer necessary. To put it simply, this is the inverse of what Kim Jong-un said about there being no need to possess nuclear weapons if his regime receives guarantees: it means that the United States, as a country that itself possesses nuclear weapons, would first guarantee North Korea's safety (provide Negative Security Assurances: NSA). Naturally, for this to happen, North Korea would have to address its nuclear and missile development in some way that is acceptable to the United States. In this respect, it is a fact that the ball is in North Korea's court, but looking back over past developments, one can see that the United States ultimately never gave any assurances of North Korea's safety in the course of its negotiations with the state. The United States does not trust North Korea, while North Korea believes that it has been betrayed by the United States.

Ultimately, it is vital to resolve the biggest problem affecting security on the Korean Peninsula: the division of North and South Korea and the conflict situation between them (the fact that the war is still ongoing), and to resolve the conflicts between the United States and North Korea and between Japan and North Korea. In other words, thought must be given in specific terms to the question of how to move forward the process of achieving peaceful coexistence between north and south, normalizing relations between the United States and North Korea and between Japan and North Korea, and eventually achieving the peaceful unification of the two Koreas. Talks between North and South Korea alone will not suffice for this to occur; neighboring stakeholder countries in particular — namely, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia — must also be involved in discussions. Consequently, this dialogue should first be moved forward by resuming the Six-Party Talks.

If rigorous economic sanctions continue, North Korea will come to the negotiating table. It is South Korea's effort that has made moves toward inter-Korean dialogue and US-North Korean dialogue a reality. However, achieving further progress will not be as easy as all that. Japan should appeal to North Korea and talk things over with the United States, with a view to finding a path to a solution via dialogue. The power of hardliners within the United States cannot be ignored. Japan

should lend President Trump a helping hand to override their objections. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe deserves high praise for his leadership, having led the international community in efforts to tighten sanctions. However, that should merely be a process for achieving dialogue and it is important for Japan also to take the lead in this dialogue.

If, through South Korea's mediation, the United States and North Korea also embark on dialogue and charge ahead to reach an agreement without Japan's involvement, Japan's presence could diminish. In that situation, Japan would have to rely on the United States in respect of talks concerning Japan's national interests, including the abductions issue. If Japan explores the conditions for talks and can, through those talks, create a catalyst for reconciliation, it would likely become possible to negotiate with North Korea regarding the abductions issue, as well. It is necessary to work out a solid strategy for dialogue, while continuing to apply pressure to North Korea. If Japan leaves things as they are, North Korea will see Japan solely as the country that has consistently called for pressure.

As described in Chapter 1, in the process of implementing the "South Korea First, the United States Later" policy, through which North Korea aims to build on its dialogue with South Korea to negotiate with the United States, North Korea might propose resuming negotiations with Japan over the normalization of diplomatic relations, including the resolution of the abductions issue. The resolution of the abductions issue and the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea are elements crucial to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia. It might not be possible to achieve North Korean renunciation of nuclear and ballistic missiles through these talks. Nevertheless, if an improvement in relations helped to create an environment in which North Korea gained a palpable sense of national security, the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would likely progress.

Some express skepticism about negotiating with North Korea over nuclear weapons. Many points out that the agreements previously reached through dialogue, including the 1994 US-North Korea Agreed Framework and the joint statement adopted during the Six-Party Talks in 2005, were violated by North Korea and permitted it to undertake nuclear and missile development. However, it should be documented that North Korea shut down its nuclear reactor in accordance with the agreements for many years and that the responsibility for the failure to fully implement the agreements lies not solely with North Korea, but also partly with the United States.

While North Korean issues are never straightforward, on this occasion, it appears that North Korea's change in attitude is motivated by the desire to achieve its own ends by means of dialogue. This process of dialogue and negotiations could well be complex and prolonged. While there are those who express the view that dialogue for dialogue's sake is meaningless, is it not important to

talk first?

Another key point is to use military structures to create a situation in which there is little sense in North Korea possessing nuclear weapons and missiles. For Japan, the most effective approach would likely be to build a near-perfect missile defense system by introducing the US military's state-of-the-art Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system, as well as developing its preparedness to launch attacks on enemy bases to ensure a deterrent. In the case of South Korea, the most effective method would be redeploying tactical nuclear weapons at the US military's South Korean bases.

If the possibility that North Korea might launch an armed invasion of South Korea in pursuit of unification cannot be ruled out, it will be necessary to even out the playing field to achieve parity between the two Koreas in terms of their nuclear armaments. Right now, the biggest threat to Japan's security is an attack using ballistic missiles fired from North Korea, so countering this is Japan's top priority. It has to be said that, in a situation where defense and deterrence systems are inadequate, politicians and policymakers who glibly claim that they could deal with North Korea using the military option — or who permit such assertions to be made — demonstrate a willful disregard for the lives and physical security of their own populaces.

As the Korean Peninsula stands on the verge of a long-term dialogue process, it is vital to create a situation in which possessing nuclear weapons does not offer North Korea any decisive advantages. One might describe this as an attempt to nullify North Korea's nuclear arsenal. Only then will it become possible to bring to fruition the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through negotiations with North Korea.

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