

# **An examination of matters related to the occurrence of a military Conflict in the Taiwan Strait**

*Retired SDF officers travel to Taiwan to talk about an issue  
that they believe hits close to home*

**Tomohiro Okamoto**

*Former Director General of the Joint Staff Office of the SDF*

## **Introduction**

A meeting of “uniformed” participants from Japan and Taiwan took place in Taipei last November. At that time exchanges between parties involved in the defense of these two countries were nonexistent, a situation that ironically could embolden China in the event of a military emergency in the Taiwan Strait. A dialogue between Japanese and Taiwanese involved in national defense efforts would serve as a deterrent to such a military emergency. This line of thinking formed the premise for planning and carrying out the first Tokyo-Taipei International Conference on Asia-Pacific security and strategic studies.

The Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait continue to be referred to as the Asia-Pacific region’s powder kegs. But both the government of Japan and its people have viewed these issues as someone else’s concern. Until now the government and the public have not been inclined to see these situations as their own problem and have not wanted to think about them. The fact that legislation for coping with a military emergency does not yet even exist in Japan is a telling indicator of the circumstances that have prevailed. Amid the “La La land mentality” of the media and politicians, there has been only one group, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), that has worried about the situation and has internally continued to give as much thought as possible to coping with a military emergency. One example of this from years ago is the Mitsuya plan, a series of top-secret studies that the top officials of the Joint Staff Council performed in 1963 for

the operational planning of the SDF in case of Japanese emergency. Another is the remark that Hiro-omi Kurisu, chairman of the Joint Staff Office of the SDF, made about taking measures beyond the law in an emergency. Our nation has been an odd place, with opposition party forces and the media showering all such initiatives with criticism and the individuals involved being punished.

Now, though, suspected abductions have ceased to be merely allegations. It has also been confirmed that a suspicious vessel was a North Korean spy ship. Given such developments, the people of Japan have also at last begun to wake up to the North Korean threat. The time has also come for legislation to deal with military emergencies to be passed during an ordinary session of the Diet. However, with regard to the Taiwan Strait, the region's other powder keg, many politicians and members of the media do not utter a word. The only reason for their silence is that they do not want to provoke China. If politicians fail to act, then how about we plan over how to respond to a military emergency? That notion was the genesis of a trip to Taiwan by a private-sector Japanese group consisting of former generals and admirals of SDF and specialists in the field of defense security. Their quest was to have a venue for a candid discussion with a group of active Taiwanese military officials about such questions as how the situation in East Asia should be viewed and how to prevent a military emergency in the Taiwan Strait.

From the beginning the Taiwanese side desired the exchange even more than we did. Japanese and U.S. defense specialists already meet to exchange information, as do U.S. and Taiwanese experts in this field, and respective bilateral technology exchanges and joint exercises are also conducted. Until now, though, Japan and Taiwan have not had any mutual exchanges involving military personnel. This has stemmed from the weak-kneed posture of the Japanese government, which did not want to incur China's displeasure. To be sure, given the fact that diplomatic ties do not exist between Japan and Taiwan, it is not possible to hope for exchanges between the two countries' active military personnel. But what if the Japanese side consisted of members who had retired and become private citizens, that is, former SDF officers who were practically the same as active personnel? In that case, we figured, the Taiwanese side would also probably be receptive to an exchange between them and its own active military personnel. Based on such an idea, retired members of the SDF who were virtually the same as uniformed officers traveled to Taiwan last November. The reception extended by the Taiwanese side was also sincere. Lin Chia-lung, senior adviser, Taiwan National Security Council, embraced the exchange project as a quasi-governmental program, and various entities in Taiwan, including the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, and the National Defense University, participated in the project from the planning stage on.

In this paper I will first describe the content of the November conference and then, on that basis, elaborate on the Taiwanese side's perception of the international situation. I subsequently intend to confirm the military implications of air combat capabilities, a field in which technological innovation is particularly phenomenal. In other words, this paper will ascertain the significance of air power at present from a military and tactical standpoint. I then intend to present a suggestion concerning the Taiwanese side's defense strategy in preparation for a military emergency in the Taiwan Strait.

### **The first “Tokyo-Taipei International Conference on Peace in Asia”**

The international conference was held on Nov. 12 and 13, 2002. The Japanese side consisted of a total of 13 individuals, including 4 retired general officers: Shigetaka Hasegawa, former commanding general of the Northeastern Army; Mutsuyoshi Gomi, former commander-in-chief of the Self-Defense Fleet; Yasuo Okushi, former air defense commander; and myself, Tomohiro Okamoto, former director general of the Joint Staff Office. Former officer Hachiroe Tokuda and two other SDF veterans, as well as several scholars, were also part of the group. The Taiwanese side consisted of a total of approximately 40 participants, including 4 attendees from the Executive Yuan's Foreign Ministry; 2 participants from the Taiwan Research Institute's Division of Strategic and International Studies; 27 individuals involved in military affairs at the Defense Ministry, National Defense University, and elsewhere; and several scholars selected by Taiwan Think Tank. The Grand Hotel's Spanish Room, which was the venue for the opening session on the first day of the conference, was virtually filled to capacity. Approximately 20 Taiwanese journalists were also present. A camera crew from NHK, Japan's public broadcasting organization, and a reporter from Japan's *Sankei Shimbun* newspaper could also be spotted in the room. Just before our departure, an article about the project had appeared on the first page of the Nov. 10 morning edition of the *Sankei Shimbun*. It had been transmitted electronically to the media in Taiwan, where it apparently generated a considerable response. This was presumably an indication of just how highly the Taiwanese side viewed the significance of the project.

### **Responding to a Military Conflict on the Korean Peninsula**

The international conference began with opening remarks by Hidetake Sawa, served as the leader

of the Japanese delegation. Speaking in an earnest tone, he referred to the significance and importance of the conference and also said that he sincerely welcomed the fact that the project had at last culminated in the opening of the conference in 2002, a year marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Japan and Taiwan. During his remarks he particularly captured the interest of journalists when he noted that Okinawa would inevitably be a base for the U.S. military in the event of a military conflict in Taiwan and pointed out that, in such a scenario, Japan's SDF would also naturally play a role in terms of providing logistical support to U.S. troops in accordance with guidelines based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Given the impressive foresight of this man, whose early prediction of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s amazed the world, the words he spoke had a truly major impact.

Speaking in a voice filled with emotion, National Defense University President Chen Chen-hsiang, former army commander-in-chief, referred to the truly profound significance of such a conference being held on Nov. 12, that day that marked the observance of the 137<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Sun Yat-sen, the country's founding father. He extended a sincere welcome, saying that the international conference was a highly unique undertaking and, for that reason alone, also had immeasurable significance. The actual conference then commenced immediately after all of the participants posed for a group photograph. The proceedings began with briefings on the situation on the Korean Peninsula given by participants from Japan and Taiwan. Their analysis and assessment of the status of the situation on the peninsula were followed by an active and earnest discussion, particularly with respect to how events on the Korean Peninsula impact Taiwan's security.

One of the aspects pointed out was that the deterioration of the situation on the Korean Peninsula brought about by North Korea's policies is an unwelcome development, not only for the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan but also for China and Russia, and that these nations in the vicinity should work together to put a stop to the North Korean recklessness. Another point made was that any destabilization of the situation in East Asia originating with North Korea could also have a harmful impact on Taiwan's security. In particular, reference was made to the worst-case scenario: simultaneous disturbances on two fronts in East Asia, that is, trouble on the Korean Peninsula combined with a cross-strait situation. The Taiwanese side elaborated on this point by saying that in the past the Korean War had certainly been an instance of divine intervention for Taiwan, for when the Korean War broke out China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) was unable to subdue the forces of Chiang Kai-shek, which held Taiwan.

As a result, Taiwan did not end up under PLA control. To put it differently, there are fears that China may forsake North Korea the next time a military emergency materializes on the Korean Peninsula and instead instigate a military emergency in the Taiwan Strait.

Continuing this type of analysis, both the Japanese and Taiwanese sides felt that the existence of a major gap in the responses of the United States and China to the present Korean situation was cause for alarm. Sounding an additional warning about the fact that South Korea, with its excessive economic emphasis, is presently moving toward China, the two sides came to share the perception that the kind of security dialogue taking place during the conference was therefore very timely and important. Furthermore, it was stressed that Japan and Taiwan must work together in an even more solid manner in order to enjoy liberal democracy along with the United States in the face of various trends over the medium to long term. For one, China's ascent is creating a situation in which its national power is approaching a level comparable to that of the United States, and Chinese policies may have a considerable impact on security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, South Korea's intense economic single-mindedness tends to further heighten its dependence on China. Additionally, there is a tendency for North Korea to move closer to China because of its own economic hardship.

Meanwhile, in connection with inspections in Iraq by the United Nations, the Iraqi problem will presumably come to a head in 2003, after which North Korea, which is regarded as next in line after Iraq, will probably be in the spotlight. Conference participants were in agreement about this outlook and the implications for North Korea, which will therefore have a pressing need to expeditiously conduct negotiations with the United States in order to assure the continuation of the regime of Kim Jong-il as well as talks with both South Korea and Japan in order to obtain economic assistance. Attention was drawn to the fact that circumstances in East Asia will probably change substantially in 2003, and that portents of what is to come are already taking shape.

### **The legitimacy of world public opinion as epitomized by the United Nations**

The session that took place starting in the afternoon consisted of analysis and debate by participants from Japan and Taiwan who gave briefings concerning the situation in the world after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Attention focused in particular on changes in the Asia-Pacific strategy of the United States and how the security of Taiwan and East Asia as a whole is affected.

According to the analysis presented, U.S. unilateralism subsided momentarily after Sept.

11, but a tendency to act unilaterally has recently started to become pronounced once again. Examples include the overwhelming victory scored by the United States and the United Kingdom in their campaign to mop up international terrorists in Afghanistan as well as “Axis of Evil” remarks made by U.S. President George Bush, among others. On the other hand, though, it was also pointed out that, as the prospect of a first strike against Iraq has been noised around, the legitimacy of the United Nations has been respected, just as was seen in the previous case of the Gulf War. The perception is that this means that the United States is being confronted by the fact that the flow of international public opinion, as epitomized by the United Nations, will prevail over the legitimacy of the American position. Presumably, the United Nations, which had essentially ceased to function during the days of the Cold War, is at last discovering its role as an institution for international coordination in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a time of the globalization of the world.

In connection with this, it was then debated whether or not a preemptive strike would constitute justifiable self-defense. According to commentary by Professor Tsuneo Yoshihara of Takushoku University, an expert in this subject area, there are some who believe that it would. Prefacing his remarks by saying that he was not necessarily in agreement with the interpretation that he would express, he noted the existence of the opinion that the idea of a preemptive strike or preemptive self-defense would be approved in the present case. The underlying argument for this is related to two points. First, the expression used in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter is “armed attack occurs.” But the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Japanese-language translation of this phrase is different, for the Japanese version translates back into English not as “in the event that an armed attack occurs” but as “in the event that an armed attack has occurred.” Second, the reality is that, in consideration of the massive destructive force of nuclear weapons, peace-breaking nations that are aggressors stand to benefit enormously. This has led to the belief that it is not the intent of the U.N. Charter to award peace-breaking conduct by aggressor nations and so forth. Such international law scholars from the United States and the United Kingdom as Sir Humphrey Waldock and Myres McDougal have advocated this interpretation of a justifiable preemptive strike. But there are also other specialists in the area of international law, including such U.S. and British scholars as Ian Brownlie and Bernard Victor Aloysius Rolling, who believe otherwise. Their opposing argument is primarily that the first strikes that have been permitted until now have involved the right of self-protection. The thrust of their argument is based on their interpretation of common law. That is, pointing out that most

members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemned Israel for its assault on Lebanon in 1975 and its raid on an Iraqi nuclear power reactor in 1981, these scholars maintain that there is not yet any fixed basis within the scope of common law that would make the present case acceptable.

Along with everyone being in agreement with such an interpretation in terms of international law, it was shown that the outlook for a preemptive strike in the present case would still presumably be problematic unless Iraq's violation of international law was pointed out according to U.N. inspections and a U.N. resolution approving an attack on Iraq was approved. Conference participants observed that a U.N. resolution is still regarded as a symbol of world public opinion and in that sense has powerful legitimacy.

Meanwhile, analysis presented with regard to the international strategy of the United States noted that the country has been shifting its strategic center of gravity from Europe to Asia since the collapse of the Cold War structure. In particular, from now on the United States will probably face a pressing need to make strategic adjustments vis-à-vis China, which is on the rise. In the process, East Asia, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, will serve as a strategic point for the United States. While Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well as member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), do support the United States' exercising of its influence in the region, the fact is that they are also apprehensive about Washington's super-power mind-set. That is, they fear interference with their national sovereignty and domestic affairs. The reality is that, with China on the brink of establishing regional hegemony, Asian nations are being forced to make adjustments in terms of their own presence. Based on that perception, conference participants were in agreement that any Chinese rupture or collapse would be a development that would do no good and much harm in terms of the Asia-Pacific region in particular. They concurred that having the United States and China execute strategic adjustments in a calm manner is of primary importance in terms of regional security and stability.

With that perception in mind, participants then spelled out Taiwan's dilemma. If Taiwan leans exclusively toward the United States, then it will have to be part of Washington's policy of besieging China, and its own interests will be forfeited entirely. And if Taiwan strives to strengthen its ties with other Asian nations, then possibly not only Taiwan but also its partners will experience more intense friction with China. According to Dr. Tzai Wei of National Chengchi University in Taiwan, the process of establishing democracy in China will require an

extended period of time and presumably entail some upheaval. In that context, he concluded, it is essential for Taiwan to engage in dialogue and not opposition; to cooperate rather than have a Cold War mentality; and to seek out a policy for engagement with China that involves exercising Taiwan's own particular strong points. It would be inappropriate, he observed, for Taiwan to shift from being opposed to the Communist Party of China (CPC) to being anti-China, or to change from being pro-American to toadying up to the United States. These comments impressed upon us a renewed sense of the political complexity of Taiwan's position. This kind of thinking presumably comes across as spineless and indecisive for that segment of the Taiwanese people who think earnestly in terms of their country's independence, while for pragmatists it probably is reflected in an incomplete commitment to Taiwan's economic interests.

### **China's National Military Strategy and the Situation in East Asia**

Closed-door discussions among active Taiwanese military personnel and retired Japanese SDF members took place at the former site of the National Defense University on the second day of the conference. The former academic facility is located at the foot of Yangmingshan, a mountain soaring upward on the outskirts of Taipei. Yangmingshan is the site of caves that were excavated and left behind by the former Japanese Imperial Army. There is now a plan to turn this space into a presidential command center for use during national emergencies. The National Defense University has thus already been relocated to a nearby district, and the empty site was awaiting the start of construction when we were there.

The third session began with a presentation by Colonel Ju Chuan-zhi, a member of the National Defense University's faculty, on a study of China's military revolution. The session continued with briefings by the Japanese side on the meaning of the concept of a revolution in military affairs (RMA) and the present RMA status of other countries. During his presentation Colonel Ju explained that the CPC is presently making economic development its objective. He said that the major task assigned to the country's armed forces is to assure security in the East Asia-Pacific region so that such economic development will be possible. After explaining this he spelled out China's development objectives. The first phase, which continues until 2006, focuses on the acquisition of the ability to conduct a medium-scale limited war. The second phase, from 2006 through 2015, targets the acquisition of a space defense system with a dual-defense capability. The objective of the third phase, from 2016 through 2049, is to acquire military strength that will allow China to have an impact on international peace comparable to that of the

United States.

The Japanese side responded to his explanation by providing some supplementary information pertaining to statements in a strategic report announced on Sept. 17, 1990, by Chen Yun, who at the time was chairman of the Advisory Council of the CPC. According to the report, China foresaw the possibility of a war with Japan in 2015 and believed that it should bolster its military strength by that time. The report also referred to other points, including China's quest to grow and become a nation that will have an impact on the world through the global deployment, like the United States, of a fleet of aircraft carriers in 2050. Noting just how long-term a perspective China took when drawing up its national military strategy, the Japanese side observed that even now the substance of the strategy has still not wavered. Japanese participants called for caution in various respects, stating in particular that the PLA is shifting its emphasis to the acquisition of aerospace capabilities, a move that reflects the present RMA. Conference participants pointed out various RMA-related developments. For example, recent improvements in the sphere of information technology (IT) are being applied in the military arena. There are revolutionary increases in the speed with which information is transmitted and its accuracy, as well as improvements in precision guidance technology. Revolutionary changes are also occurring in connection with the components of combat: detecting, discriminating, designating, conveying weaponry, and hitting the targets. That is, these elements of warfare are being split and taken a role among different weaponry and integrated through networks. Consequently, the speed of operations is completely different from what has been seen until now. The emerging situation is such that it is becoming impossible to have joint operations with old-style and legacy armed forces. It was further pointed out that, along with operations theory modifications, there is a need to review aspects ranging from doctrine to systems for education and training.

The Taiwanese side then raised a question regarding Japan's security. According to the previous day's analysis, the development of the Chinese economy is stirring up strong interest on South Korea's part. As South Korea is quickly moving closer to China in economic terms, Korean nationalism has been coming to the fore, with a huge wave of such sentiment building up, for example, through the World Cup soccer games and in connection with the issue of the unification of the Korean Peninsula. Additionally, ties between North Korea and South Korea are experiencing a slight change due to the impact of the military revolution that China is making every effort to carry out. Because of this, asked the Taiwanese side, hypothetically assuming that the Korean Peninsula does become a unified Korea, what will be the ramifications in terms of

Japan's security? A spirited and vociferous exchange featuring arguments made from multiple angles ensued in response to this question. But both the Japanese and Taiwanese sides agreed that the key to this issue will be whether the U.S. forces stationed in South Korea remain in place in a unified Korea. As we fix our eyes on the next 20 years, the existence of U.S. forces stationed in Japan and their counterparts in South Korea will be a forefront for the United States' execution of its national strategy with regard to China. But there are several uncertain factors. For example, will a unified Korea accept as is the continued presence of U.S. troops now stationed in South Korea? Will China maintain its existing policy of tolerating the presence of U.S. forces stationed in South Korea? As a result of this situation, the understanding of conference participants was that the question of the continued presence of troops now stationed in Japan and South Korea constitutes a critical element in terms of determining the circumstances that lie ahead.

No matter what, the United States will look after a unified Korea, though if this "looking after" is with respect to reconstruction, then the country involved will be none other than Japan. In other words, the task of taking care of North Korea will be up to Japan and the United States. Consequently, the United States should respond to the situation on the Korean Peninsula with an extra layer of caution, and merely executing an attack will not be sufficient. Furthermore, it may be that North Korea's standing as a nuclear state will be permanent, and that such a status will be assumed as is by a unified Korea. In that case, like it or not, the issue of whether Japan should arm itself with nuclear weapons as a safeguard will presumably come up for discussion. According to recent press reports, opinion in favor of Japan's nuclear armament is already beginning to emerge among parts of the conservative camp in the United States. Members of government circles in Japan uniformly state that this stance is a clear departure from what the Bush administration thinks and that nuclear armament would make Japan an "international orphan" and entail too many losses. If we consider, though, the fact that the international community has ultimately ended up tolerating the nuclear armament of India and Pakistan, then it will probably be difficult to suppress talk about Japan's own nuclear armament if a unified Korea continues to be a nation with nuclear weapons. In the past, Shingo Nishimura, a member of the House of Representatives in Japan, presented an argument in favor of Japan's nuclear armament on the basis of the aforementioned premise. Nevertheless, that premise was totally disregarded, and the media squelched his proposal. When we recall that episode, then the appearance of Japanese media coverage concerning the argument expressed by some U.S. conservatives can at the very least be regarded as a major shift. Accordingly, the United States

must take into consideration the present situation on the Korean Peninsula while also bearing in mind the fact that the notion of Japan's nuclear armament will surface in the future at home and in the international arena.

As a true friend of the United States, Japan should probably direct Washington's attention to the existence of this kind of backdrop to the North Korea problem. Additionally, there is no need to comment at length on the fact that, from the standpoint of the connection between the national strength of the United States and China, which is on the ascent, having the United States remain in the Asia-Pacific region with Japan-U.S. security arrangements at the center of a presence that includes the existence of U.S. troops in a unified Korea will from now on be a crucial contributing factor with respect to regional peace and stability, especially over the long term.

### **China's "Revolution in Military Affairs"**

The session concluded with debate about the impact that China's military revolution has on Taiwan's security. The qualitative and quantitative superiority of the Taiwanese air force is tending to be gradually declining. At the same time, Taiwan's navy is also tending to be forced into an inferior position because of China's array of late-model destroyers and sophisticated new submarines purchased from Russia. The members of the Taiwanese side agreed that Taiwan's lone edge is its army. According to their perception, this army retains its supremacy over the CPC's marine forces, which could potentially invade Taiwan. The discussion then hit its highest point as members of the Japanese side responded by raising a number of questions. For instance, they asked the Taiwanese side about Taiwan's options in terms of maximizing its existing edge, and about its military strategy vis-à-vis China. By way of conclusion, the Taiwanese delegation said that Taiwan will hold fast to its strategy of being anti-CPC, not anti-China, and being against pro-U.S. toadyism, rather than leaning exclusively toward the United States. They added that Taiwan will make an effort to tenaciously utilize democracy as its weapon and work together with countries that are bastions of liberal democracy. In addition to making such comments, they noted that, once something does happen, the country's military forces will only proceed to protect people's lives and assets and to defend the nation's territory. The entire Japanese side was freshly and profoundly impressed as it witnessed this display of true feelings by military officials in charge of Taiwan's national defense.

After enjoying an approximately two-hour lunch around tables at Taiwan's Air Officers

Club, conference participants from Japan and Taiwan returned as a group to the former National Defense University and resumed their discussions at 2 p.m. First, Colonel Wang Shuning, a member of the National Defense University's faculty, spoke about China's artificial satellites. The Japanese side followed this with an explanation concerning the status of different countries' development of artificial satellites, after which participants began to discuss this subject. For his research Colonel Wang had carefully made observations of the actual situation and accumulated data. Moreover, the fixed-point observations serving as the principles for his data had also been conducted multiple times. He had performed exacting analysis based on them, and his work qualified as exceptionally high-caliber material concerning military affairs. Moreover, the Taiwanese side highly welcomed the Japanese side's research, which was also of a specialized nature.

With considerable enthusiasm running throughout the conference, the Chinese government's web site was then introduced. Looking at it, I saw a reference to the fact that Japan and Taiwan were presently in Taipei working on a plot to launch a joint attack on China. According to the scenario described by the web site, F-15s positioned in advance by Japan on the islands of Yonagunijima and Shimojishima will launch an attack on China's Fujian Province together with Taiwanese fighter planes. Such a joint operation is totally impossible in the present circumstances. Above all, though, we learned that China also has this kind of interest in the joint Taiwan-Japan international conference on Asia-Pacific security and strategic studies, and that our project touched a nerve. We felt a renewed sense that the conference was significant in that sense alone. Furthermore, we consequently felt keenly, and unexpectedly, that the fruits of the revolution in military affairs being engineered by China's PLA are even extending into this field.

### **Taiwan's Powerful Diplomatic Strategy**

A group of scholars visited Taiwan Think Tank on the second day of the conference. Representatives of this organization who participated in an exchange with this group included Lee Chia-fang, a national policy adviser; Wu Zhi-jung and Weng Shi-jie, both members of the think tank's executive committee, Jang Pei-jen, the executive secretary of its continental issues forum, Jang Yang-pe i, a researcher at the Taiwan Research Institute; and Wei Bai-gu, an associate professor at the Van Nung Institute of Technology. The participants in the session heard various opinions and exchanged views concerning such subjects as Taiwan's policies regarding Mongolia and Tibet, its policy with respect to North Korea, the issue of the Chinese

mainland, and Taiwan's bilateral relations with South Korea, the United States, and Japan. The visitors learned that Taiwan Think Tank is a foundation that was just established in December 2001 as a think tank associated with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The organization already operates 13 forums concerning such topics as national defense and security problems, Asia-Pacific issues, matters related to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the question of the Chinese mainland, and it formulates recommendations for the Taiwanese government.

The exchange of views was conducted in a candid and spirited manner. In particular, with respect to the issue of Mongolia and Tibet, it was revealed that Taiwan is moving toward renouncing its existing policy, which is to regard these two as intrinsic territories, and instead is attempting to come up with a new policy incorporating acknowledgement of Tibetan independence. Other revelations included the status of Taiwan's ties with North Korea. In 1990 China established an embassy in South Korea, which severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan three years later. This led Taiwan to momentarily have a policy of approaching North Korea. At present, though, Taipei is not pursuing a policy of moving forward with active exchanges with Pyongyang. At the private-sector level, however, exchanges are being carried out without the establishment of any constraints. For instance, Lee, the national policy adviser, is himself working actively as a "fixer" in connection with Russia and North Korea. Members of the Japanese side were both surprised anew and impressed by this quite unexpected revelation. Additionally, they learned that, while an array of shifts can be seen in thinking with regard to the problem of the Chinese mainland, most Taiwanese long for democracy, freedom, and human rights and believe that unification into one nation will be difficult unless China changes the very core of its being. Another view expressed was that Japan, like South Korea, is also overly indifferent to Taiwan, a stance that is markedly different from the way that Taiwan is received by the United States and European nations. In addition to airing such opinions, the Taiwanese side delivered a strongly worded statement that Japan in particular should develop its national strategy by reinforcing its economic links not only with China, which is economically on the upswing, but also with Taiwan. Even after the discussion had drawn to a close, members of the Japanese side found themselves compelled for some time to ruminate several times on that statement.

Under its present DPP administration, Taiwan possesses channels for dialogue with Mongolia, Tibet, Russia, and North Korea, and it is making a strong bid to ensure its own survival. By contrast, some neighbors continually ignored Taiwan over the last 30 years. Japan,

which continues to neglect Taiwan politically and economically as well as militarily, perhaps should at this time review its policy once more and ask if it has made a truly rational choice. It is fervently hoped that the relationship between Japan and Taiwan from now on will be made at least somewhat similar to Taiwan's ties with European nations and the United States through such steps as constructing anew a platform that will be conducive to bilateral economic exchanges. Options for this include the kind of Taiwan-related legislation now being considered even by the United States, a free trade agreement, or some comparable arrangement. In this connection, China has been a member of the WTO since Dec. 11, 2001, while Taiwan officially joined the organization on Jan. 1, 2002.

### **The Strategic Environment surrounding Taiwan**

The above summary fully covers the international exchange that was held last November. Through this exchange I was startled to realize that I had never displayed much interest in Taiwan's situation. Nor had I ever been told a great deal about the country. According to a recent book that Taiwan produced to relate the story of its own history, invasions of the island by foreign powers continued without pause through World War II. First, the Dutch and then the Spanish ruled Taiwan from 1624 through 1683. It was subsequently under the Manchu until 1895. Japan was in control of Taiwan from the end of the Sino-Japanese War until 1945. Later, amid the chaotic aftermath of World War II, the Allied powers permitted the occupation of Taiwan by forces under the command of Chiang Kai-shek, and rule by him and then his son continued through 1988. The intervening years included such events as the Feb. 28 Incident, a 1947 uprising that was triggered by the brutal beating of an elderly woman selling cigarettes in violation of the law and turned into a massacre. With the death of Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, in 1988, Lee Teng-hui, a native Taiwanese, stepped into office to complete the seventh president's remaining term, and democracy existed in Taiwan for the first time. The story of Taiwan's democratization is one of a process that began with the lifting of martial law by the nation's seventh president, the younger Chiang, on July 15, 1987, and the subsequent establishment of democracy as Lee assumed the presidency. The book explains that Taiwan has entered a period in which true democracy has taken root, with the nation subsequently choosing Chen Shui-bian as its tenth president in general elections in 2000, an event that is still fresh in our minds and proceeded smoothly without any disruption.

Naturally, the CPC would presumably never accept such a Taiwanese interpretation of

history. Intent not only on refuting that historical account but also on crushing such developments, the CPC makes prime use of a strategy of intimidation with regard to Taiwan. Engaging in more than merely political intimidation, it continues to carry out extraordinarily extensive intimidation aimed at Taiwan even on the military front. China has installed as many as approximately 400 short- and medium-range missiles in parts of the Chinese mainland that are close to Taiwan. It also has an array of solid-fuel mobile missiles known as Dong Feng-21s that will even reach Tokyo. And as a result of recent technological progress, short-range Dong Feng-15 ballistic missiles are now able to reach Okinawa.

When the former Soviet Union deployed short-range missiles called SS-20s on its western flank in the past, European nations perceived a significantly heightened threat because of the multiple number of warheads involved and the fact that the utilization of solid fuel dramatically shortened the amount of time prior to their launch. Additionally, these missiles' road-mobile capability allowed for exceptional flexibility in their utilization and made detection difficult. Citing these reasons, among others, European nations galvanized international public opinion and ultimately brought the issue to the point that the missiles were scrapped. If we look at how Japan responded in similar circumstances, though, we see that it did not make any political protest whatsoever against China at the time of the initial appearance of the Dong Feng-5, a missile that used liquid fuel and was the Dong Feng-21's predecessor. Nor did Japan lodge any complaints even when these instruments were replaced by the Dong Feng-21s, solid-fuel missiles with a road-mobile (so called TEL) capability. In neither instance did Japan appeal to the world about its sense of peril, let alone give any consideration at all to making a military response. The recent situation is such that the Japanese government has at last pointed out this threat against the nation in its white paper Boei Hakusho (Defense of Japan) and has approved studying a missile defense system.

Unlike the other permanent members of the UNSC, China is still outfitted with intermediate-range ballistic missiles that are equipped with nuclear warheads and have a range of 5,000 meters or less. In addition to being the only UNSC permanent member that did not comply with a ban against such arms, China is not making an effort to comply with another arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The fact that such a nation is a permanent member of the UNSC is undeniably a conflict that definitely should not be allowed. The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which calls for the elimination of medium-range nuclear ballistic missiles, is, to be sure, an agreement that was forged between the

United States and Russia. But if European nations are also scrapping weapons in compliance with the INF Treaty, then it seems as if international public opinion now ought to loudly denounce China's aforementioned high-handedness.

### **The role of Air Power capabilities of Today**

Threats made by air are chiefly presented by aircraft or missiles. The roles played by these air combat capabilities, or air power, can be broadly put into four categories: air-to-air combat as aircraft battle each other, strategic bombing of land-based targets in maneuvers carried out exclusively through air power, air interdiction in the case of such maneuvers, and direct support of land and sea operations that is carried out to assist army and navy operations. For a prolonged period after the debut of air power, though, aircraft and missile accuracy was exceptionally poor compared with the firing accuracy of land and sea power, perhaps because of the rapid velocities involved. But then global positioning system technology was introduced during the 1991 Gulf War, and the role of air power has escalated substantially as technology for guiding warheads to their targets has become quite precise. Air Force Colonel John Warden, the chief planner of air operations during the Gulf War, overestimated the capabilities of air power and attempted to ultimately drive President Saddam Hussein into a corner solely through the use of air power. The outcome of this attempt was failure. But even so, forces on the ground and at sea have subsequently had confidence in air power's accuracy with respect to targets. Air power has acquired very real significance in terms of strategic bombing, air interdiction, and the job of extending direct support for army and navy operations. Furthermore, the fact that strategic bombing and air interdiction, as well as direct support of army and navy operations, were operations that were first made possible because of the availability of air power's superiority in terms of time and space—an advantage obtained through warfare waged by aircraft—also became common knowledge. For operations carried out separately by forces on the ground, at sea, and in the air, as well as operations that integrate such maneuvers, the side that secures freedom of the skies will possess an overwhelming advantage. Accordingly, in any war, beginning an operation with a skirmish to establish air supremacy through combat between aircraft has become a general principle.

Of the four roles of air power, a strategic bombing mission is an operation carried out against, for example, an enemy's political and economic hub, its strategic command center, key transportation points, or communications and contact centers. There are also strategic bombing

missions designed to inflict harm on noncombatants, who account for most of a nation's citizens, and thereby make them lose their will to continue fighting as a nation. However, strategic bombing aimed at subduing a nation's people by inflicting losses on civilians and social infrastructure is a strategy that can now turn one into an enemy in terms of international public opinion. Strategic bombing is therefore understood today to be a mission that should be performed with extreme prudence. One can presumably say that we are therefore entering an age when strategic bombing missions are being replaced by ballistic missiles, whose accuracy with respect to targets is still inferior to that of aircraft.

The reason for ballistic missiles' low accuracy is probably because missile guidance technology cannot keep up with the exceedingly rapid final-stage velocity of a missile. Accordingly, this means that ballistic missiles, which do not permit precision strikes, have come to be viewed as less than optimal in terms of military tactics. Conversely, though, there are also countries that abuse the fact that these missiles have poor accuracy. Their objective is to turn the function of a ballistic missile into a strategic bombing mission that will serve to destroy the fighting spirit of a nation's people by inflicting losses on civilians and social infrastructure. If ballistic missiles are outfitted with nuclear warheads, then the outcome in such cases will be decisive.

In other words, ballistic missiles are today utilized as a superior means of intimidating an opponent politically and psychologically. In this vein, the ballistic missiles now in place along the east coast of the Chinese mainland opposite Taiwan are none other than the CPC's largest arsenal for its strategy of intimidating Taiwan. Unlike an airplane, which can be ordered to return, a ballistic missile cannot abort its mission once it has been fired. Consequently, when ballistic missiles are turned into political devices, there must be an unshakable conviction on the part of a commander, who has to make the decision to use them while being prepared for their shortcomings in terms of flexibility. But it is inconceivable that a dictator in a state that is not a democracy, such as North Korea or Iraq, would hesitate or vacillate very much when making such a decision. That situation is all the more the source of a headache for the international community. On top of that, news of the occurrence of errors, with a missile such as North Korea's Nodong landing as far as approximately 2,700 meters from its targeted location, also has the result of fanning further fear among the people of Japan.

### **Taiwan should arm itself with ballistic missiles**

The threat against Taiwan from the Chinese mainland does not consist solely of the aforementioned ballistic missile threat. China's military is becoming remarkably modern as the country purchases the latest fighter planes, destroyers, and submarines from Russia and takes other steps, including the procurement of an air defense missile system. Additionally, along with economic development, China's efforts to build its military are also steadily progressing, and Taiwan's strategic environment is becoming exceptionally intense. In particular, according to U.S. defense reports and other sources, it is also said that the balance of air power as an instrument for securing air supremacy as discussed earlier will shift to the Chinese mainland's advantage in 2005. It is not difficult to imagine the sense of crisis that prospect raises in Taiwan. To be sure, the chief emphasis of the CPC at the moment is more on the continuation of economic growth than on party doctrine. But various domestic problems that are starting to take shape will erupt as China's growth continues. China therefore requires peace and stability in the East Asia-Pacific region at all costs. On top of that, the Beijing Olympic Games are scheduled for 2008, and China will also host Expo 2010 Shanghai China. Accordingly, China's aim of keeping any cross-strait problems from materializing will probably remain intact for the next 10 years or so.

If that is the case, then it is peculiar that China does not declare to the world that it will destroy its medium range ballistic missiles. When President Jiang Zemin visited President Bush in October of last year, he indicated China's willingness to remove cross-strait missiles in return for a reduction in U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. His statement certainly served to show that the ballistic missiles are political instruments. It can also be interpreted as revealing that China's installation of ballistic missiles is in part designed to drive a wedge between the United States and Taiwan. Therefore, at this point the United States and other Western nations should unanimously denounce CPC-led China as the only UNSC permanent member not in compliance with the INF Treaty and the MTCR scheme. If that cannot be done, then Taiwan should be permitted to possess ballistic missiles. Given the level of technology in Taiwan, ballistic missile technology would not be that difficult. The United States has recommended that Taiwan acquire a missile defense system, a so-called MD system. Physically and in terms of time, though, the depth of such a system would not be adequate for responding to the threat of ballistic missiles from the Chinese mainland. Furthermore, an MD system is an extremely high-priced option at the present time. In light of its cost effectiveness, some consideration is required before purchasing such a system. It would instead be far more practical to develop and install a

relatively less expensive ballistic missile system.

In the event that Taiwan equips itself with ballistic missiles, the probable target would be the east coast of the Chinese mainland. That coastal region is a center that supports economic development, and social infrastructure has steadily appeared there along with economic growth. Consequently, from Taiwan's perspective the region's value as a target is rising a notch compared with the past. In other words, this means that this target's vulnerability is increasing. Accordingly, outfitting itself with ballistic missiles would clearly be an effective and powerful means of strengthening Taiwan's political influence. The nations of the West should continue to consistently cooperate with Taiwan in support of this line of thinking. They probably ought to be prepared to go this far if they are going to denounce the position of the CPC as it strews the threat of ballistic missile strikes around the East Asia–Pacific region. Unfortunately, due to a constitutional constraint, at the present time Japan does not have any room for discussing the option of installing a ballistic missile system as a safeguard. It therefore has no choice but to acquire a missile defense system, even if such a system is costly.

Because of space limitations and so forth, I will not venture to go any further and comment on the threat posed by North Korea's ballistic missiles and nuclear development. In this way, though, the situation surrounding Japan and Taiwan in the East Asia–Pacific region is becoming increasingly intense. The experience of taking part in last November's international exchange with Taiwan gave me a fresh and palpable sense of that intensity.

### **Upon the completion of the project**

The dream of retired SDF officers miraculously came to fruition through the conference. The Taiwanese side also expressed high praise. When I later visited Taiwan again to take part in an international symposium jointly organized by research institutions from Taiwan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore, I learned that Taiwan's National Security Council and its National Defense Ministry had positioned our project as one of the government's important avenues for dialogue. The Taiwanese side strongly desires the future continuation of the project and fervently believes that we should together create a permanent and enduring channel for communication through its continuation. In response, given that the Japanese side seeks to build a network among island nations in order to talk about defense with peace in Asia as the goal, which was the inherent objective of our project, our intent is not to single out Taiwan as our only partner for exchange. And there are also budgetary constraints. Nevertheless, in light

of diplomatic issues that Japan and Taiwan face, the project's executive committee felt compelled to attach importance to Taiwan, and the consensus of opinion was to hold an international conference once a year, with the venue alternating between Japan and Taiwan.

The "Peace in Asia" project's executive committee is committed to supporting peace and security in Taiwan and other parts of the East Asia-Pacific region at the private-sector level, and in the future it will promote projects similar to the one last November. It will be our utmost pleasure if, by doing this on multiple occasions, we are able to contribute somewhat to Japan's security policy. Additionally, we hope that this kind of flow will accelerate and that a defense dialogue between Japan and Taiwan will become a regular fixture. The security of the Asia-Pacific region will also probably benefit enormously if new horizons are opened up for Taiwan to participate in a range of activities—including air and sea rescue operations; measures to deal with pirates, terrorism, and smuggling; and drills for rescue operations for sunken submarines—and even for it to take part in Rimpac exercises. Such a scenario will not be possible solely through the effort of Taiwan as a single entity, and concurrent cooperation by Japan, the United States, South Korea, and ASEAN member states is essential. There must also be an appeal for unanimous solidarity on the part of countries that espouse the protection of liberal democracy and human rights as common values.

Finally, I apologize for waiting until the very end to once again express our appreciation to Katsuhisa Uchida, chief of the Taipei Office of the Interchange Association, who on occasion extended encouragement and at times offered well-timed words of advice as the planning of this project proceeded. I would also like to convey our gratitude to research institutes, including the Defense Research Center, the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, and the Council on National Security Problems that actively lent their support to this project as supportive research organizations.