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The New Sino-American Cold War and Japan

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- o Beijing is seemingly unaware that its military expansionism is creating distrust in the United States.
- o Sino-American relations have deteriorated to the level of a new Cold War and improving them will be no easy matter.
- o Japanese diplomacy regarding China is at the cross-roads. The Japanese government must either decide on a policy of "friendship at any cost" with Beijing or open its eyes to the wider "Chinese world."

"How should we view China?" I have been asked that question on innumerable occasions, but I think that it is taking on particular importance at this moment in history. The reason is not political, like in the heyday of Maoism when that philosophy sent shock waves around the world. Nor is it economic, connected to the hubbub coming out of China these days about "socialist market economics." No, you might say it is cultural and boils down to the question of whether the expanding and ripening "Chinese world" will bring happiness or danger to humankind.

I know that what I have written here will cause many of my readers to recall the essay "The Clash of Civilizations?" by Harvard University Professor Samuel Huntington that appeared in the Summer 1993 edition of *Foreign Affairs* and has sparked debate in Japan and elsewhere. It appeared in translation in the August edition of *Chuo Koron*.

This is not the place to discuss the argument Professor Huntington makes in his essay that at the moment cultures are in conflict, with "the West Versus the Rest." But when it comes to his

provocative warning of the danger of a "Confucian-Islamic connection," at least as far as shedding light on the recent shocks China has been creating in the strategic and military fields is concerned I think he is right on the mark.

Beijing Remains Unheeding of the Degree of Distrust It Is Causing In Regards to Human Rights and Other Problems

China is going all out in implementing its "reform and opening up" strategy as a means to achieve its national goals of the "four modernizations." On the other hand, despite the shaky state of the nation's finances, and in direct contravention of the global trend towards the reduction of military armaments, China has been increasing military expenditures at an annual rate of 12-14%. In addition, it has been buying and selling arms abroad at a feverish pace and even encouraging the spread of missiles and chemical weapons. The question is why?

There is no persuasive explanation for such serious actions unless you look at and justify things from the Chinese strategic perspective. To put it simply: the essential lack of freedom of speech and democracy coupled with unbridled worship of "things" and "money" in Chinese society today are reflected in China's actions outside its borders.

As for post-Cold War America's reactions to China's mischief, the public, Congress and the White House are all up in arms. The United States more than anything else wants to concentrate on rebuilding its economy and revitalizing its society, and had hoped to take advantage of the end of the Cold War to convert its military-industrial complex into a new industrial/social structure.

Consequently, as far as the United States is concerned, China's recent penchant for military and social expansionism, along with its shoddy record on human rights, have instilled a very deep-rooted distrust towards Beijing and its motives. But somehow the Chinese authorities seem blithely unaware of this fact.

At the end of September I winded up a stay of close to a year in the United States. During that time I tried to watch TV news reporting as much as possible and compare it with that in Japan. I especially noticed the differences in reporting on China in the two countries.

For example, at the time that the question of whether or not China's "most-favored-nation" trade status should be extended or not was being debated, when U.S. TV stations discussed the issue they inevitably showed footage of the Tiananmen massacre. As a result, images of the Chinese leaders as ruthless supressors of human rights were linked to U.S.-China trade problems, and discussion of the latter was colored by recognition of the former.

So, I came to realize that even though China's economic growth is admired and the China market holds a great deal of attraction for American businessmen, the media in the United States felt that they should remind the public of what it needed to be reminded of in their coverage of China.

Difficult for the U.S. to Compromise

Previously I referred to the seeming incomprehension of the Chinese leaders towards the reaction of the U.S. to their actions. That is illustrated by how they acted in their bid to try to secure the Olympic Games for Beijing in the year 2000. Just prior to when the final decision was to be made by the IOC, they went into a whirlwind of activity. Fifty thousand people got up on the Great Wall to hold a pep rally. The Beijing government took emergency measures to clean up the city's highly polluted air. The prominent dissident Wei Jingsheng was suddenly released without warning. Chen Xitong, who had been Beijing's mayor at the time of the Tiananmen Incident, was made president of Beijing's Bid Committee and ran around everywhere trying to drum up the support for the effort. The Chinese authorities simply did not appear to realize that all these haphazard actions were counterproductive when it came to Beijing's bid.

As a result, the plan by the Chinese leaders to overcome the unclear historical process that it is certain to arrive with the death of strongman Deng Xiaoping prior to 2000 through a fervent celebration of national prestige at the Olympics came to naught.

The obtuseness of the men who rule China can be traced to the global strategy of opposition they have fashioned, based on the belief that with the implosion of the Soviet Union, the United States is the "sole hegemonist nation." However, if Beijing does not curtail its expanding sales of weapons of mass destruction, they will constitute a major threat to all humankind.

Missile expert Joseph ~~Bameudes~~ (phonetic) touched on this point in testimony on September 14 before a sub-committee of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives that should be taken note of. Bameudes has done considerable research on ballistic missile development on the part of China and North Korea. He warned that a number of countries are involved with the missile development in China and North Korea, including Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Libya.

Interestingly enough, not long afterwards on October 5, China held an underground nuclear weapons test at Lop Nor in the Uighur Autonomous Region in Xinjiang Province. This was despite the fact that several days before Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen during a UN General Assembly meeting and strongly requested that his country exercise

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self-restraint in this regard. In effect, China flatly refused the U.S. plea. In turn, Washington strongly expressed its displeasure, calling the Chinese decision to go ahead with the test "highly regrettable."

The U.S. government has also received reports that China has also sold missile technology to Pakistan. That despite the fact that just on August 25 economic sanctions had been evoked against China for violations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). It is significant that at the very time when the Clinton Administration's foreign policy was drawing fire for a lack of clear global policies and a badly elucidated diplomatic philosophy, and concern about U.S. troops being sent to Somalia, Bosnia/Herzegovina or other hot spots around the world was running high, when it came to stopping China's expansion of its production and sales of weapons of mass destruction the Administration pursued a foreign policy based on clearly spelled out ideals.

Considering these developments, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that U.S.-China relations have entered the stage of a "new Cold War." As the August 26 edition of the New York Times pointed out, President Bill Clinton firmly believes that prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will be the most important issue in the arms control field during the 1990s. That being so, I am convinced that as long as China continues to pursue its present policies, it will be extremely difficult to basically improve U.S.-China relations.

The first meeting between Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin is scheduled to take place in the middle of this month in Seattle at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) ministerial forum. But I think that their get-together will accomplish nothing when it comes to finding an essential solution to the problem.

Japan Needs to Do Some Hard Thinking

Considering this situation, there is a clear danger that due to the lack of any clear ideals in its foreign policy and its seeming determination to pursue a China policy of "friendship at any cost," the Japanese government will find itself divided by a chasm from the United States. Tokyo may well find itself in the very difficult position of having to choose between Washington and Beijing.

The question is whether Japan's new government will continue to adhere to the Foreign Ministry-inspired "Japan-China Friendship Diplomacy" that was assiduously followed under Liberal-Democratic Party governments.

We must not fail to bear in mind the fate of Hong Kong: the question of its reversion to China in the summer of 1997 and the current efforts of the British to democratize the colony. Nor should we forget our relations with Taiwan, a nation that has been achieving

remarkable economic, social and political progress. After all, the scale of Japan's trade and human interchange with Taiwan is greater than with China itself. In short, we must take into consideration the direction the entire "Chinese world" is moving in as we develop a new diplomacy in regards to China.

Japan must take into account things like human rights, democracy, free information flow and environmental problems. And in the days to come as the world is certain to become more and more "borderless," I think people are going to recognize that such problems transcend national borders and the age when criticism could be curtly dismissed as "interference in domestic affairs" has passed.

Will Japan continue to remain blind to these developments and pursue the course of "new Asianism" in which "Japan-China friendship" is the supreme standard by which all is measured and Japan throws in its lot with a ballooning China? Or will Japan choose instead the path of a "New Globalism" based on the Japan-U.S. alliance that will recognize the need to contain China's dangerous course?

Now is the time for Japan to make her choice.

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