

A Nuclear Japan

North Korea, Russia, and China all have ambitions to seize territorial islands and international waters surrounding Japan. Japan is vulnerable to a first strike within minutes of launch as soon as North Korea perfects its nuclear capability. Although protected by the American nuclear umbrella via U.S. commitments in the Southeast Asia Treaty for the defense of member states, Japan remains victimized by threats from North Korea, Russia, and China. The time has come for U.S. placement of ballistic missiles in Japan at American bases there.

Since the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II, Japan has steadfastly resolved to maintain only a defensive force and not to become a nuclear nation. Faced with the imminent threat of nuclear weapons capable of hitting the island from North Korea and belligerent actions by Russia and China, the absence of a Japan based nuclear response capability invites further destabilization of the region to the detriment of Japan.

Although it is no doubt reluctant to break with tradition, the time has come for Japan to accept an American military presence that includes an island based nuclear arsenal. If the United States moves swiftly to deploy such an arsenal, while it will no doubt be met with condemnation from North Korea, Russia, and China, it will underscore the American commitment to Japan's defense from nuclear attack and it will provide a major counterbalance to the strategic aggression of these enemies of freedom.

In particular, we are now deadlocked with China on what to do with North Korea. China gains a strategic benefit by North Korean provocations. So long as North Korea does not launch its nuclear weapons at the U.S. or an ally, China benefits from observing our response to the testing of American will.

It can ascertain whether there exists an opening for more aggressive actions in the region. China very much wants to know if the day has yet come when it may without U.S. intervention attack Taiwan, the Republic of China, or may exert sufficient control over the South China Sea to use closure of sea lanes as a form of economic warfare or effective extortion to intimidate pro-Western neighbors into backing down from support for the West.

By taking a bold move now via placement of both nuclear weapons and anti-ballistic weapons systems on the island of Japan, we would send an unmistakable signal to China and Russia that the time has not come for either to presume the U.S. unwilling to defend its allies in the region. Also, it would remove any doubt Kim Jong Un may have about American willingness to defend Japan against a nuclear attack from North Korea.

Those in opposition to this idea believe it will lead to a regional arms race. Well, we already have a regional arms race. North Korea's rapid development of a nuclear weapon is just that. The failure of China or Russia to reign in North Korea supports that arms race. We must act to counter it, and we must be brave and bold enough to expend the resources necessary to leave no doubt that any act of nuclear aggression will be met with a full offensive and defensive response that will not only minimize or negate the threat but will ensure total destruction to those who bring it upon the United States or its allies. Having American forces equipped with nuclear weapons on the island of Japan provides a necessary response, the absence of which ensures further destabilization in the region.