# Weaponization Negative – What is it?

#### This negative case advances two arguments throughout the constructive.

#### First, South Korean nuclearization.

Very recently in response to the North’s tests, Trump and Moon agreed to lift caps on weapons sales. This will allow South Korea to be able to modernize their own defenses and eventually nuclearize. The evidence in the contention creates a couple reasons for this including the advancement of anti-missile systems. The harm is that it complicates a conclusion to the scenario as the United States & South Korea could/would behave differently with a modernized SK defense.

#### Second, an arms race.

The argument in this contention is pretty straight forward and based on the perception of anti-missile systems in the region. Most authors will conclude that they increase the chance that other nations want to proliferate and add more offense and defense to their military capabilities. The contention offers two likely harms to an arms race. First, the materialization of a China/Russia arms race could have devastating impacts for the region and for South Korea. Second, it makes negotiation and resolution to the conflict impossible.

#### We negate. Resolved: Deployment of anti-missile systems is in South Korea’s best interest.

### Contention 1: South Korean Nuclearization

#### Brianni Lee of the Harvard International Review wrote in 2017 that:

(Brianni Lee, 2-17-2017, "THAAD Deployment in South Korea: Militarism Leading To Political Regression," Harvard International Review, http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=14503, Date Accessed 9-2-2017 // JM)

The militarization of South Korea is not a new phenomenon; after the Korean War, South Korea inevitably became one of the most militarized nations in the world, especially given that it is one of few countries in the middle of an extended ceasefire and one of the only divided nations in the world. While the South Korean government had shown reservations about deploying US weapons and further militarizing the peninsula, mainly because of its concerns about spoiling Sino-Korean relations, North Korea’s ever-increasing military aggression caused South Korean President Park Geun-hye to announce the deployment of THAAD. The decision sparked a new controversy between South Korean liberals, who are against any further militarization of the peninsula, and conservatives, who see THAAD as a first step towards further militarization. THAAD deployment may be the beginning of further militarization of the Korean peninsula, and could lead to broader instability in East Asia and a renewed confrontation between a US-South Korea alignment and a China-Russia-North Korea alignment, reminiscent of Cold War-era factions. China’s strong reaction against THAAD deployment sparked stronger nationalistic demands for nuclear armament within the Saenuri Party, South Korea’s conservative ruling party, highlighting THAAD’s risk of regional tension and greater militarization. The Saenuri Party argues that in order for South Korea to be independent of foreign powers for its protection, it has to establish a well-organized nationwide missile defense (MD) system. However, it is impossible for South Korea to immediately deploy an extensive MD system throughout its territory because of a lack of technology and available weapons. South Korea would have to buy more weapons from the United States, resulting in increased dependence on the United States for national defense. For China and Russia, which have openly expressed discomfort with the presence of the US military in nearby countries, an increased US military presence in South Korea could be the perfect reason to unite against the United States and South Korea. This not only would create acute tension between two separate alignments, but would also prevent South Korea from achieving peaceful reunification of the two Koreas under democratic rule.

#### Unfortunately its now possible. On September 2, Reuters reported that:

(Reuters, 9-2-2017, "U.S., South Korea To Revise Missile Treaty in Face of North Korean Threats," NBC News, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/u-s-south-korea-revise-missile-treaty-face-north-korean-n798296, Date Accessed 9-2-2017 // JM)

U.S. President Donald Trump agreed with South Korean President Moon Jae-in to revise a joint treaty capping the development of the South's ballistic missiles, Moon's office said on Saturday, amid a standoff over North Korea's missile and nuclear tests. Trump also gave "conceptual" approval to the purchase by the South of billions of dollars of U.S. military hardware, the White House said. The South wants to raise the missile cap to boost its defenses against the reclusive North, which is pursuing missile and nuclear weapons programs in defiance of international warnings and UN sanctions. "The two leaders agreed to the principle of revising the missile guideline to a level desired by South Korea, sharing the view that it was necessary to strengthen South Korea's defense capabilities in response to North Korea's provocations and threats," South Korea's presidential Blue House said. Impoverished North Korea and the rich, democratic South are technically still at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North regularly threatens to destroy the South and its main ally, the United States. North Korea sharply raised regional tension this week [with the launch of its Hwasong-12 intermediate-range](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/north-korea-fires-unidentified-ballistic-missile-through-japanese-airspace-south-n796951) ballistic missile that flew over Japan and landed in the Pacific. That followed the test launch of two long-range ballistic missiles in July in a sharply lofted trajectory that demonstrated a potential range of 6,000 miles or more that would put many parts of the U.S. mainland within striking distance. North Korea has been working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the United States and has recently threatened to land missiles near the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam. South Korea's development of its ballistic missiles is limited to range of 500 miles and payload weight of 1,100 pounds under a bilateral treaty revised in 2012. South Korea has said it wants to revise the agreement to increase the cap on the payload. The two countries agreed to the cap as part of a commitment to a voluntary international arms-control pact known as the Missile Technology Control Regime, aimed at limiting the proliferation missiles and nuclear weapons. The two leaders pledged to continue to apply strong diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea and to make all necessary preparations to defend against the growing threat by the North, the White House said. The White House did not mention the voluntary bilateral agreement but said the two leaders agreed to strengthen their defense cooperation and South Korea's defense capabilities. Trump "provided his conceptual approval of planned purchases by South Korea of billions of dollars in American military equipment", the White House said. Trump, who has warned that the U.S. military is "locked and loaded" in case of further North Korean provocation, reacted angrily to the latest missile test, declaring on Twitter that "talking is not the answer" to resolving the crisis. North Korea defends its weapons programs as necessary to counter perceived U.S. aggression, such as recent air maneuvers with South Korean and Japanese jets

#### This coincidentally came at the same time as Park Byong-su explained on August 30 that:

(Park Byong-su, 8-30-2017, Senior Staff Writer, "Moon administration plans big increases in defense spending ," The Hankoyreh, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\_edition/e\_national/808971.html, Date Accessed 9-2-2017 // JM)

The South Korean government set a 43.1177 trillion won (US $38.4 billion) defense budget on Aug. 19 to be submitted to the National Assembly for next year. The 6.9% increase from the 2017 national defense budget of 40.3347 trillion won (US $35.9 billion) is the largest since the 7.1% increase in 2009. More recently, the rate of increase in defense spending has stood at 4.2% for 2013, 4.0% for 2014, 4.9% for 2015, 3.6% for 2016, and 4.0% for 2017. The jump is being seen as reflecting the Moon administration’s intent to actively invest in defense capabilities. The governance planning advisory committee, which served as the administration’s transitional committee, announced in May that it planned to raise the rate of increase in the defense budget to the range of 7–8% from 3–4% under the previous government. The defense budget plan, which is to be submitted to the National Assembly on Sept. 1, includes defense capability improvement spending of 13.4825 trillion won (US $12.0 billion), up 10.5% from this year, and military strength management spending of 29.6352 trillion won (US $26.4 billion), up 5.3%. The defense capability improvement spending includes a budget of 4.3359 trillion won (US $3.9 billion) in response to the North Korean nuclear and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threats – a rise of fully 13.7% from 2017. The Ministry of National Defense said it planned to “build a ‘3K system’ consisting of a kill chain, Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), and Korean Massive Punishment and Retaliation (KMPR) by the first half of 2020.” To hasten the building of its 3K system, the military is purchasing or developing five spy satellites (by 2023), high-altitude Global Hawk unmanned surveillance aircraft, long-range air-to-surface Taurus cruise missiles, Ballistic Missile Early Warning Radar-2 systems, and long-range surface-to-air missiles (L-SAM). It is also planning performance improvements to its Cheolmae-2 and Patriot (PAC-2) missiles as part of a medium-range surface-to-air missile (M-SAM) project. For KMPR, it is planning the purchase of special operations grenade launchers (six rounds, 40mm) to be carried by special forces and performance improvements to the CH/HH-47D helicopter for transporting special forces units. An additional 1.6189 trillion won (US $1.4 billion, up 22.4%) was earmarked for preparations against local provocations, 6.3772 trillion won (US$5.7 billion, up 7.9%) to reinforce preparations for full-scale war and independent defense capabilities, and 2.8754 trillion won (US$2.6 billion, up 3.3%) to promote defense R&D and the defense industry. The Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs also included a large-scale increase in compensation for national persons of merit for its 2018 budget plan. The special fund for surviving patriots from the independence movement is to be raised to 1,575,000–2,325,000 won (US $1,400–2,070) per month from its current 1,050,000-1,550,000 won (US $930–1,380), while the honorary allowance for veterans of merit is to be increased to 300,000 won (US$270) a month from 220,000 won (US$200).

#### There are two harms for South Korean nuclearization.

#### First, a South Korean economic crisis. Jeff Daniels of CNBC wrote on September 2 that:

(Jeff Daniels, 8-24-2017, "South Koreans want their own nuclear weapons but doing so risks triggering a wider war," CNBC, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/24/south-koreans-want-their-own-nukes-but-doing-so-risks-wider-war.html, Date Accessed 9-2-2017 // JM)

Acton said it's understandable there's uneasiness from South Koreans watching their neighbor to the north develop nuclear weapons, but added that there's still not been a serious debate about the costs of acquiring nuclear weapons. "If there was a very serious discussion of the costs, I think you would find much less support for nuclear weapons," he said. For instance, Acton said if South Korea were to arm itself with nuclear weapons it would a violation of the country's international commitments, which means Seoul "would be very likely to have serious sanctions imposed on it." Also, he said [and] the U.S. might decide to no longer offer its own security commitments to South Korea. "The costs to South Korea of acquiring nuclear weapons are actually very, very high," said Acton. "For South Korea, a country that's become successful through international trade and engagement, the sanctions would be incredibly painful and damaging." Back in the 1970s, South Korean President Park Chung-hee secretly began a nuclear weapons development program. Once the U.S. learned about it, the U.S. pressured Seoul to halt the program. As was the case then, it remains U.S. policy to oppose the spread of nuclear explosives in the region. At the same time, another option is the U.S. could redeploy tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea. But doing so would violate the 1992 Seoul-Pyongyang joint agreement on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang violated its end of the agreement in 2006 when it exploded its first nuclear device under Kim Jong Il, father of the regime's current young leader. Also, bringing back tactical weapons to South Korea could make the U.S. perhaps an even bigger target of North Korea and its communist neighbor, China. Pyongyang recently threatened to lob ballistic missiles toward U.S. military bases on the Pacific territory of Guam, which hosts the Air Force's B-1B bombers and a Navy submarine base.

#### Second, it removes the security guarantee. Jungmin Kang wrote in 2016 that:

(Jungmin Kang,  scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, 1-6-2016, "A nuclear South Korea would be a mistake," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, http://thebulletin.org/nuclear-south-korea-would-be-mistake9301, Date Accessed 9-2-2017 // JM)

Since the news of KAERI’s undeclared experiments in fall of 2004, South Korea’s nuclear establishment has been striving to increase the transparency of its nuclear power research and development activities. Meanwhile, the country has emerged as a player and a leader in the global nuclear industry. In 2009, the United Arab Emirates [contracted with South Korea](http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-o-s/south-korea.aspx) to build four of its nuclear power reactors, and in 2012 South Korea [hosted](http://www.state.gov/t/isn/rls/fs/187208.htm) the second Nuclear Security Summit. Unfortunately, dangerous talk about acquiring nuclear weapons continues in the South. Two prominent professors of nuclear engineering argue that the country could build large numbers of nuclear weapons within 18 months using plutonium separated from spent fuel discharged from its Candu reactors. [They argue](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2016/02/19/2016021900376.html) that reprocessing this fuel would not require US consent but it [would require](http://www.mofa.go.kr/incboard/faimsif/treaty_popup.jsp?ITEM_ID=2994B02038AFBB2E492567130021FD94&ITEM_PARENT_ID=846DE668AFA78F65492565FF0002D89C#print) Canadian consent. For a country that has a record of secret nuclear programs, South Korea should understand how long it takes to build up [nuclear] credibility—and how easily it can be lost. If the South acquired nuclear weapons, it would inevitably provoke a nuclear arms race among China, Japan, and the two Koreas that would be almost impossible to reverse. It also would damage South Korea’s bilateral security arrangements with the United States. Such a scenario would most likely increase the probability of nuclear war in the region, ultimately leaving South Korea worse off with nuclear weapons than without them. The better course would be for the government in Seoul to continue its current policy of sheltering under the nuclear “umbrella” provided by Washington while working toward a de-nuclearized Korean Peninsula as well as preserving a nuclear-weapons-free Japan. With the stability of the region and the credibility of the country’s peaceful nuclear program at risk, South Korea’s government—specifically President Park Geun-hye—should go beyond the prime minister’s remarks and unequivocally denounce proposals for a South Korean nuclear deterrent that would only make a bad situation worse

### Contention 2: Arms Race

#### Christine Kim of Time Magazine wrote on August 11 that:

(Christine Kim & Heekyong Yang, Time Magazine, 8-11-2017, "Experts Warn North Korea Missile Crisis Could Trigger Arms Race," http://time.com/4896754/north-korea-missile-south-korea-crisis/, Date Accessed 8-28-2017 // JM)

The escalating threat arising from nuclear-armed North Korea's recent series of missile tests is prompting South Korea to beef up its military muscle and experts warn it could spur an arms buildup elsewhere in Northeast Asia. South Korea and Japan are accustomed to the North's frequent threats to attack. But the war of words between Washington and Pyongyang has raised fears of a sudden clash along the world's most militarised border dividing the two Koreas, which might quickly escalate to all-out war. After North Korea's second test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on July 28, South Korean President Moon Jae-in ordered a speedy deployment of the controversial U.S. THAAD anti-missile defence system, reversing his earlier decision to postpone it pending an environmental review. This week, the U.S. Defence Department said it was "actively" considering revising bilateral ballistic missile guidelines with South Korea to allow Seoul to build more powerful missiles -- at the South's request. Moon told (U.S. President Donald Trump in a telephone conversation on Monday South Korea also wants to build a nuclear-powered submarine, presidential officials said. "All of this could lead to further militarization of South Korea," said Yang Uk, a senior research fellow at the Korea Defence and Security Forum.

#### Patrick Tucker explained in March that:

(Patrick Tucker, 3-10-2017, "As Missile Defense Technology Improves, So Do Odds of an Arms Race in the Pacific," Defense One, http://www.defenseone.com/technology/2017/03/As-Missile-Defense-Technology-Improves-So-Do-Odds-of-an-Arms-Race-in-the-Pacific/136067/, Date Accessed 8-28-2017 // JM)

In early March, U.S. troops began setting up Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, anti-missile batteries in South Korea, shortly after a quartet of North Korean missile launches. Though THAAD’s deployment will help protect Seoul against North Korean missiles, it’s far from a perfect solution; it antagonizes China while leaving allies like Japan still vulnerable. Next year, a new shipboard interceptor is slated to arrive in the region, promising more protection — and more controversy. The deployment of THAAD, announced last year and sped up by several months after North Korea’s most recent tests, brings to the Korean peninsula land-based missile launchers and sophisticated radars. China views the move as hostile because the radars could allow the U.S. to better track some Chinese missiles. “It’s a classic case of a security trilemma, where actions taken by one country in response to the actions of another—here the deployment of enhanced U.S.[missile defense] capabilities to offset North Korea’s growing missile capabilities—complicate relations with a third player,” Rod Lyon explained in The National Interest. Beijing’s worry is rooted in a Cold War-ish anxiety about deterrence. A nuclear-armed adversary that can destroy your ability to wage war has more incentive to launch a first strike against you. By no means would THAAD’s deployment give the United States any sort of serious advantage if World War III were to break out. But it might give the U.S. a smidge of extra early-detection capability. And nuclear deterrence is an area where superpowers are disinclined to surrender even an inch. What THAAD does not do is offer protection from North Korean missiles much beyond the Korean peninsula. “THAAD would improve defense of South Korea, and U.S. forces deployed there, but would not have sufficient range to defend Japan,” Heritage Foundation senior researcher Bruce Klingner writes. So the United States, with Japan, is looking to deploy a new interceptor system. It would use Raytheon’s Standard Missile-Three, or SM-3, to offer a defense against North Korean mid-range missiles, working with an radar system common to many ships called the Aegis (after the shield of Zeus in Greek mythology). The U.S. currently has Aegis deployed on 33 ships, 16 of which are in the Pacific. By 2020, Aegis will be aboard four Japanese destroyers as well. The SM-3 differs from the THAAD missile in worldly ambition and physical reach. Whereas THAAD is designed to take out missiles as they descend through the endoatmosphere — that is, less than 100 kilometers up — the SM-3s are designed to intercept missiles beyond the Earth’s atmosphere, the so called exoatmosphere. So while THAAD’s missiles are intended to hit missiles as they are rocketing back to Earth, SM-3s are designed to hit them in space. That allows a warship firing the SM-3 to protect a larger area. This is one reason why the Obama Administration [was bullish](http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/09/17/missile.defense.shield/index.html?eref=onion) on SM-3s as a means to curb North Korea’s missile ambitions, at least those ambitions related to short- and mid-range missiles. It was to be a kind of silver bullet. The military soon found that while hitting a bullet with a bullet is hard enough beneath the 100-kilometer ceiling, it is harder in space. SM-3s missed what they were supposed to be hitting during tests in 2012 and 2015. But the continual miniaturization of electronics, enabling ever-smaller processors to crunch more data, eventually allowed engineers to approach the challenge of exoatmospheric missile interception from a new angle. Today, the eyes and brains of the newest SM-3s function very differently than those of its predecessors. Lenses and mirrors that would narrowly focus on an object at a great distance, like a telescope, gave way to one that was more broad but did not see as far, like a panoramic lens. Better onboard processors, and more data from external satellites, radars, and other sensors, allowed the system to better differentiate targets with less detailed visual data. Mitch Stevison, vice president of Raytheon missile systems, described it as the difference between looking through a soda straw and using full peripheral vision. “You have one picture and then you start looking at object, object, object, picking out the objects, and then correlating the objects to say, ‘not a threat, threat, potential threat, not a threat.’ Then you make decisions on what to do with that much more efficiently than you could with the old systems,” said Stevison. “Certainly the advancing [computer] capabilities gives us the ability to process more data…The advanced processing and advanced algorithms, with the advanced discrimination capabilities, all of those things put together gives us a confidence.” In February, the Pentagon [announced](https://www.mda.mil/news/17news0002.html) that the newest version of the missile, the SM-3 IIA, had launched from a warship off Hawaii and intercepted a target in the exoatmosphere. Combined with THAAD, the U.S. now had a defense against intermediate-range missiles at multiple altitudes. In theory, that sort of deterrent should convince North Korea to stop its missile tests. Since North Korean test missiles can be destroyed well above the Earth’s atmosphere, why waste money on them? Its potential effects on Pyongyang notwithstanding, the new weapon is unlikely to calm international fears, according to other experts. “Everybody’s going to complain that that’s a bad thing to do,” said RAND analyst Bruce Bennett, regarding shooting down North Korean test missiles with Aegis warships. “It is aggressive. It is risky. But these missile launches have been sanctioned by multiple UN Security Council resolutions. They’re illegal.” Physicist and arms control watcher [Mark Gubrud](http://thebulletin.org/bio/mark-gubrud-0) said SM-3-equipped warships would not be welcomed by China or Russia “Deployment of more Aegis systems to this area is a major irritant to both China and Russia, which see these systems as building toward a future capability that could threaten their ability to respond to a US first strike,” Gubrud said. “One can argue that it is better to have some chance of stopping a nuclear missile than none. But this must be balanced against the risk that pursuing an arms race makes the eventual launch of that missile more likely. With or without missile defense, we are stuck with the same need to avoid a major war which could lead to nuclear weapons use.” For evidence of that, look to Poland. In the wake of its successful tests, the Aegis/SM-3 system will proliferate to [land-based Aegis launchers in Europe](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Phasedadaptiveapproach), part of an expanded missile defense agenda championed by the Obama Administration. “All of these milestones were riding on the success of this test,” said Stevison. Adversaries aren’t likely to stop innovating simply because the U.S. has a new missile. In the future, “it is also possible for North Korea to add countermeasures that would drastically reduce the system’s effectiveness,” Gubruds[a](http://thebulletin.org/bio/mark-gubrud-0)i[d](http://thebulletin.org/bio/mark-gubrud-0). The Pentagon is already worried about how North Korea and other actors might adapt to the new development by fitting future missiles with multiple heads, or decoys, that diverge after launch. The military is eyeing the [development of](http://www.seeker.com/military-missile-us-countermeasures-space-weapons-2121770632.html) new so-called multi-object kill vehicles in response. “I’m really careful about talking about threats because those immediately go into areas that we can’t really talk about,” said Stevison. “I would characterize it like this. The pace that we see the potential adversaries testing should tell us something.” Today’s THAAD is tomorrow’s SM-3 IIA, which shall beget more sons and daughters not yet fully conceived. The lesson, if there is one: technology does not end arms races. Unaccompanied by policy, it is merely an accelerant.

#### There are two reasons THAAD increases the likelihood of an arms race.

#### First, China and Russian reaction. Finian Cunningham corroborates in 2017 that:

{Finian Cunningham, 3-10-2017, a former editor and writer for major news media organizations, “US targets China & Russia under guise of ‘Korea protector’”, available online at <https://nexusnewsfeed.com/article/geopolitics/us-targets-china-russia-under-guise-of-korea-protector/>, Date Accessed 7-6-2017 // JM)

The sped-up deployment of America’s THAAD missile defense system in South Korea this week has triggered alarm over a new arms race in the Asia-Pacific region. Central to regional concerns is the following question: why is the US missile system capable of penetrating deep inside Chinese and Russian territory? The installation of the US-made Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) in South Korea this week has gone ahead despite earlier protests from China and Russia that it would upset the strategic balance in the region. China’s reaction has been particularly furious, with media outlets there calling for economic sanctions on major South Korean commercial ties between the two countries. Deployment of the THAAD system near South Korea’s capital Seoul has also been brought forward by several months since it was first announced by Washington and its South Korean ally last year. The apparent prompt for the latest move was the test-firing of four ballistic missiles by North Korea earlier this week in the Sea of Japan. That test reportedly spurred the Americans to deploy the THAAD in South Korea. Components arrived this week onboard giant C-17 military transport planes from a base in Texas. Both Japan and South Korea have been unnerved by a spate of nuclear and ballistic weapons testing in recent years carried out by North Korea in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions. Washington says it is obliged by long-held defense pacts to allay its allies’ fears by installing THAAD. However, Beijing and Moscow are apprehensive that their territories are the real target for the American missile system and that they represent the ultimate strategic objectives behind Washington’s declared defense commitments. In other words, Washington is playing a charade of acting as a virtuous protector when in fact it is being an aggressor. According to China’s Xinhua news outlet, South Korea earlier had claimed that the THAAD would be deployed with a detection range of some 600 kilometers, sufficient to cover its North Korean foe. Now though it appears that the US Pentagon is upgrading the radar working range of the system to reach 2,000 kms. With that much greater additional scope, the American missile system on the Korean Peninsula will be able to ~~penetrate~~ [Enter] deep into Chinese and Russian territory. Beijing and Vladivostok are less that 1,000 kms from South Korea’s capital Seoul. The extended missile systems being deployed by Washington on the Korean Peninsula have a disturbing resonance with similar American deployments in the eastern European countries of Romania and Poland. In the latter case, the Aegis missile system is officially said by Washington to be in defense of Europe from Iranian ballistic weapons. Moscow has dismissed those US claims as a flagrant ruse to conceal the real purpose of targeting Russian defenses. Pentagon public relations of declaring THAAD and Aegis as being «defensive anti-missile systems» does not bear scrutiny either. For such missile «shields» act, in effect, to destabilize the existing strategic balance of forces, by giving the US side a «first-strike» capability, or at least the temptation of such, because in theory the system nullifies counter-strikes. That is, these systems are far from «defensive». As part of a concerted military arsenal, they are offensive. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly warned that the unilateral American deployment of anti-missile systems in eastern Europe is undermining regional security. Likewise, Washington’s headlong rush to deploy THAAD in South Korea can be viewed as a dangerous military escalation in a region historically fraught with tensions. Washington’s claims that it is merely protecting its allies in Seoul and Tokyo from North Korean «aggression» are hardly convincing when the new missile system has the capability to target China and Russia as well. From China and Russia’s standpoint, the latest American move in Korea is just part of an ongoing process of offensive US military encirclement against them. Last week, Washington provoked Beijing’s ire when it made the surprise announcement that it was dispatching an aircraft carrier strike group to the South China Sea. The USS Carl Vinson carries 60 warplanes and will be accompanied by the guided missile destroyer, USS Wayne E Meyer. That deployment is but the latest in a series of American military forces ramped up near Chinese territory under the former Obama administration and with renewed impetus by President Trump. Washington justifies its military presence in Asia-Pacific as being in the interest of protecting international «freedom of navigation» in maritime territory disputed by China and American regional allies. But again, just like Washington’s claims of «protecting» its allies against North Korea, the use of euphemism seems intended to conceal a hidden agenda of projecting US hegemonic interests. The grim dynamic over the latest Korean tensions has the torque of a death spiral. North Korea said its testing of four ballistic missiles was a drill for hitting US bases in Japan. Then the US responds by installing its THAAD system in South Korea. But, as noted, the system destabilizes Chinese and Russian defenses, which will inevitably be bolstered by deploying missiles that can overcome the THAAD shield. And all the while, tensions between North Korea and South Korea and Japan keep spiraling. North Korea’s claim of running a ballistic missile drill to hit US bases in Japan may sound provocative – but only if heard in narrow isolation. The communist government of Kim Jung-un had warned that the latest ballistic test firing would go ahead in response to the current US war maneuvers being conducted with its South Korean ally. The Foal-Eagle US war exercises are carried out every year and last for two months, involving up to 300,000 troops, aircraft carriers and aerial bombers. The annual «war games» have been going on for decades since the end of the Korean War in 1953, which North Korea has repeatedly denounced as a drill for the eventual invasion of its territory. Shouldn’t North Korea’s grievances of having to endure nuclear-armed American aggression year after year be considered? Arbitrated upon? North Korea is also subjected to a punishing array of economic sanctions imposed over the past two decades by Washington. Is it any wonder given this wider geopolitical context that the secretive Kim Jung-un regime in Pyongyang feels under siege from an implacably hostile American power? In this perspective, Washington’s move to install its THAAD system is not «defensive». It is a further reckless escalation in a tinderbox region – an escalation that is dragging in China and Russia. It should be obvious that a radically different approach to the region is urgently needed to break out of the recurring death spiral. If the US were to withdraw its military forces from the Korean Peninsula and if Washington revoked its policy of isolating and demonizing North Korea, then a space for regional dialogue and detente would be created. And de-escalation of military forces could begin. There is only one party that has a vested strategic interest in fanning conflict in the region – and that is the United States, from billions of dollars of arms sales and giving itself a pretext for hegemonic meddling. The political class in Tokyo and Seoul no doubt also benefit from the existing crisis-prone American «partnership». But public protests across Japan and South Korea – against the THAAD in particular – show that popular demand is for Washington to stop interfering in regional affairs. What ever happened to Trump’s «America First» promises? Unfortunately, antagonistic US policy in Asia-Pacific seems set to continue under Trump. Even though, objectively speaking, it is far from inevitable. Indeed, there is a viable alternative to the conflict-ridden path, one that could restore peace to the region. But as can be seen in other areas of relations between the US, China and Russia, peace is not part of Washington’s calculus. Nor ever will be under its existing regime, dictated as it is by profits for the Pentagon, corporate and Wall Street oligarchy.

#### Second, it takes negotiation off the table. Zheng Jiyong wrote in 2015 that:

(Zheng Jiyong, 4-2-2015, Director of the Center for Korean Studies at Fudan University, “THAAD Exacerbates Peninsula’s Tension”, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/915151.shtml>, Date Accessed 7-6-2017 // JM)

Deploying THAAD in the Korean Peninsula will pose a severe threat to the vulnerable stability and peace in Northeast Asia. The region has witnessed a serious arms race and a growing security plight due to historical, territorial and maritime disputes. This **will be complicated by THAAD deployment and plunge the region into the chaos** that the Middle East or Ukraine is undergoing. In this sense, any move that will threaten regional stability and peace will surely incur strong opposition from stakeholders including China. Deploying THAAD provides no fundamental solution to problems in the peninsula but rather worsens the situation. It will push stakeholders to develop more advanced missiles and weapons to counter the defense system and as a result undermine the hard-earned peace and disrupt the relations between countries in the region. By this definition, **THAAD is more an offensive weapon than defense system**. Moreover, debate over the THAAD system has caused huge rifts in the political and social arena of South Korea as opponents and supporters fiercely trade barbs. It also confuses Sino-South Korean relations that have previously been on a fast track. Russia has also expressed its concern. The involvement of these three big powers presents a serious test for Seoul's diplomacy. Seoul claimed that THAAD is targeted at the nuclear weapons and missiles from Pyongyang, but in fact the system can only have very limited effects that are inadequate to defend it from the threats cited. Even if THAAD shoots down North Korea's nuclear weapons, they are likely to impact the southern peninsula. Besides, the chances of a nuclear war in Northeast Asia are far slimmer than predicted since using nuclear weapons risks self-destruction. What Seoul should be wary of is the low-altitude aircraft and artillery from the North, which THAAD is unable to bring down. The missile system can at most offer some psychological consolation. Some experts suggested that unnecessary conflicts with China may be avoided by lowering the capacity of the THAAD radar so that China doesn't need to be concerned. The logic makes no sense. It's unwise and unsustainable for Seoul to seek economic benefits from ties with China while leaning on Washington for security, which will eventually harms itself. The US cites nuclear weapons in North Korea as an excuse for deploying the THAAD system. However, if it truly feels the necessity to address the nuclear issue, it needs to seek a solution instead of complicating the situation. Likewise, the US and South Korea have turned their previous prudence on North Korea's nuclear capability into frequent exaggeration probably to find an excuse for the THAAD deployment. However, a true solution to the North Korean threat should be figured out at the negotiation table, not by deploying THAAD.

#### This is especially problematic because Douglas Gibler quantified in 2005 that:

Douglas M. Gibler, Department of Political Science, University of Kentucky, 2005, "Taking Arms Against a Sea of Troubles: Conventional Arms Races During Periods of Rivalry," Journal of Peace Research, <http://saramitchell.org/Gibleretal.pdf>, Date Accessed 2-4-2017 // JM

In summary, our analysis of strategic rival dyads suggests, first, that arms races do not deter conflict. Our dataset takes the possibility of deterrence seriously as we identify arms races independently of whether a dispute has actually occurred, but our results still demonstrate that engaging in an arms race increases the likelihood of both disputes and wars. Second, by analyzing the potential selection effects between dispute onset and escalation, we are able to say with some measure of confidence that we have accounted for the variables that could potentially lead strategic rivals to escalate their disputes to war. Since only contiguity increases the chance of dispute escalation in our model in any statistically significant way, we are left with the conclusion that arms races do not provide for deterrence and contribute to dispute escalation to war among strategic rival dyads. Third, we control for the possibility of spuriousness by selecting a sample of dyads with high perceptions of mutual threat – the existence of rivalry. In this sample of cases, we conclude that the arms race to war findings are not spurious to factors inherent in rival relationships. We hope our research resolves some of the discrepancies found in the arms race literature, allowing future studies to develop a clearer understanding of the relationship between arms races and war.