

The U.S. is warning China THE JAPAN TIMES-1993.09.07

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By MINEO NAKAJIMA

The United States government's announcement on Aug. 25 that it was imposing economic sanctions on China for violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime caused big repercussions both at home and abroad. Apart from the surprising suddenness of the announcement, it also raised two points of interest.

First, the administration of President Bill Clinton translated into action a foreign policy based on a clear idea. Until now that administration seemed unable to spell out a clear foreign policy or diplomatic philosophy and was preoccupied with reconstruction of the domestic economy, though unable to produce the desired results. This time the Clinton team was unmistakably clear that it intended to limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction such as missiles.



The sanctions on China are similar to the attack on Baghdad which the Clinton administration carried out in June in retaliation for the Iraqi intelligence agency's reported plan to assassinate former President George Bush. As a result of this bold action, Clinton — who had been accused of being irresolute — recovered public support. The sanctions on China to prevent missile proliferation should likewise obtain the strong support of the U.S. Congress and people.

Second, China seems to have shifted to pursuit of a "socialist market economy" according to its policy of "reform and openness," yet it has increased military spending by an annual 12-14 percent over the past few years. It is a dangerous country, a "merchant of death" selling

large amounts of arms to dictatorships in the Middle East and Asia.

China has taken no clear stand regarding the suspicion that North Korea is trying to develop nuclear arms. It has supplied military technology to Libya and is suspected of selling to Iran materials for making chemical weapons. It also intends to import weapons from Russia under a military cooperation agreement expected to be signed this autumn.

The U.S. was irritated at seeing all these developments. Its patience snapped when it obtained information on China's missile technology sales to Pakistan. The U.S. sanctions spelled a warning to China concerning Beijing's incomprehensible military weapons conduct.

As is well known, Washington's action this time was a substantially measured step. Since it became clear that the missile technology China sold to Pakistan was peripheral, the Clinton administration banned only the exports to China of some electronic, military and missile technologies and parts. Moreover, Clinton separated the sanctions from his decision in May to conditionally extend most-favored-nation treatment to China for one year. He does not wish to see U.S.-Chinese economic relations of the moment too greatly affected by the sanctions.

The sanctions do deal a big blow to U.S. companies already doing business with Beijing. A good example is Hughes Aircraft of Los Angeles, which has concluded an \$80 million satellite-related deal with China and wishes to continue exporting to that country. But, as the New York Times of Aug. 26 pointed out, "preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the most important arms control issue in the 1990s." The Clinton administration is quite firm in this regard.

Disarmament is unavoidable for post-Cold War America. It is Clinton's urgent public commitment. The U.S. must abide by this pledge even though it may cause various economic repercussions.

California is experiencing the most serious recession among all the American states, and San Diego, where I live, has been greatly affected by the reduction or closure of its various naval facilities. But the Clinton administration maintains that all this cannot be avoided in the reconstruction of the U.S. economy. Under the circumstances, China's attempt to strengthen its military influence in the Asia-Pacific region following the crumbling of the Soviet Union is impermissible in the American view. This perception is reflected in the decision to impose the sanctions on China.

Japan's diplomatic position — emphasizing friendship with China — may be rendered awkward.

Lynne E. Davis, U.S. undersecretary of state for international security, expressed the hope that the Western allies would "share our goal for nonproliferation of missiles." Davis is demanding, in effect, that Japan make a proper decision along this line.

As the matter concerns the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Asian region, Japan should be faithful to "duties beyond borders" if it wishes to be one of the Western allies. It should demonstrate its sincerity in this regard. The coalition government of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa is being asked to make its diplomatic stance clear in an unexpected way.

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