

'U.S. beam defense emphasis is reassuring for allies'

Japanese defense expert Makoto Momoi attended the Shimoda conference. Currently guest research fellow at the Tokyo daily Yomiuri Shimbun, Momoi joined Japan's National Defense College in 1954, and later served as the dean of the Faculty of Defense Studies. Momoi, along with Prof. Masashi Nishihara, interviewed below, gave off-the-record comments on the Soviet downing of KAL 007, but both stated that they did not have enough information to make a qualified judgment at the time of the interview. Momoi was interviewed by Richard Katz on Sept. 3.

EIR: The Northwestern Pacific now is an area armed to a degree not seen in years. A U.S. carrier is being deployed on the Vladivostok side of Japan, rather than on the Pacific side. There will be F-16s at the new northern Japan base of Misawa. The Soviets are moving in SS-20s and Backfires, and there are recent reports of Soviet mine sweepers going through the straits.

Momoi: But this has been very evident since 1975. We wondered how the United States had a scenario in which the most likely case was for the Russians to go to the Persian Gulf rather than the Northwestern Pacific. The Soviet Union has acquired global simultaneous capability. Whenever they start a conflict, say in Africa or somewhere else, they can always use the resources they have in the Northwestern Pacific.

EIR: Prime Minister Nakasone discussed the idea of Japan blocking the straits between Japan and Korea, through which the Soviet Vladivostok fleet would have to go in time of war. Do you think Japan would have the realistic capability to do this, now or in the medium term?

Momoi: Capability of mining or blockading the straits is one thing. Doing it prior to the outbreak of conflict, or in the middle of conflict, is another matter. We can do it after conflict has broken out, and when the Russians want to come back, we can stop it. But if I were a Russian strategist, I wouldn't start a war until I deployed most of my fleet *outside* the straits.

EIR: Andropov made a speech the last week of August saying that if agreement on intermediate-range missiles were reached in Europe, then Moscow would agree to destroy the SS-20s, and *not* move them to Asia. Is this just for public relations, or is it more?

Momoi: This is a change from previous Russian statements. Gromyko said in Germany earlier this year that they would move SS-20s to Asia and target Japan if Japan allows a new U.S. F-16 base in Japan. That was really lousy diplomacy.

That simply provoked the Japanese. Now, Andropov has changed his stance. But I don't know if the military planners in Japan believe him. It's hard to believe he would destroy missiles.

We are facing a stronger threat than we have been used to. The Soviets have 120 SS-20 launchers in Asia, with three warheads per launcher. We are also facing about 130 submarines, including 35 missile-carrying submarines, plus other missiles, and aircraft carriers. These additional 20 to 30 SS-20s mean only a marginal increase in the threat, unless we are delighted to be killed twice. Therefore, we are using the SS-20s as a political-military needle against the Soviet Union—just like we use the northern territories—without expecting that the Russians will agree.

EIR: In light of this buildup, Reagan's March 23 proposal for defensive beam weapons is very important on two counts. First, it changes the strategic doctrine from Mutually Assured Destruction to emphasis on defense—and Reagan offered to share technology with the Soviets. Also, the technology spin-offs from building beam weapons would help the economy in ways that producing conventional arms would not.

Momoi: In terms of concept, the Russians have been putting emphasis on strategic defense like anti-missile systems. Also technologically, it was the Russians who started to spread the rumors that they were developing charged particle beams and so on. But the U.S. Congress and Pentagon under Carter denied this, and denied what General Keegan [formerly of Air Force intelligence] said. The United States is always late on this. The United States has pride in its technology and thinks, "Oh, the Russians cannot do it." Then they find that it's true.

Now the United States is putting emphasis on defense and laser beams. This is good, particularly from the standpoint of reassuring the allies. It's very reassuring for us to learn the United States is not trigger happy.

EIR: But I have heard no comment from the Japanese government.

Momoi: No. We are discussing this inside. Maybe it's the first time it's been disclosed. Of course, now I'm out of government, so I can say these things.

EIR: Is your view regarding beam weapons a minority view or a consensus?

Momoi: I think it's a majority opinion among enlightened people. Amateurs say it's "Star Wars" or that the United States is bluffing.

EIR: Do you think the Soviets might agree to joint or parallel development? They have generally been attacking this, up to the Erice conference Aug. 20 to 23 on "Technological Bases for Peace," in which they agreed to explore this idea in cooperation with U.S. scientists.

Momoi: That's a good question. If you look back at the

history of arms-control proposals, that has been the Russian tactic: if they are ahead, they say nothing. If the United States is catching up, then they want an agreement to prevent the Americans from moving too quickly.

'Moscow buildup toward Japan is backfiring'

Masashi Nishihara is Professor of International Relations at the Japanese National Defense Academy. He was interviewed at the Shimoda conference by EIR's Richard Katz on Sept. 3.

EIR: You said in your background paper for this conference that Japan and the United States might have different conceptual frameworks on security, and this might put Japan into a different, or even conflicting, attitude from the United States at the time. You mentioned in particular Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's concept of "horizontal defense" that might involve Japan in a conflict not of its own choosing because of some incident in the Persian Gulf.

Nishihara: The United States would like to develop a multi-theater strategy. If a conflict starts in the Middle East, it would like to be able to cause military tension in other areas, for example Japan and the Northwestern Pacific. In this case, if Japan's national interests happen to match the Americans', this is fine. But if Japan does not agree, then Japan might not want to go along with it.

There is another problem. If there is a nuclear conflict, the battle may happen over Japanese territory, causing a great deal of damage. Suppose, after that, the United States reaches a compromise with Moscow and stops the war. The United States may not be damaged, but Japan would be destroyed. The superpowers would be involved, but they might, in effect, sacrifice the Japanese or European theaters for their own survival. This fear is rather strong among the Japanese, not just among the people, but also among some of the strategists. Of course, even strategists don't think nuclear war is a strong possibility, and this is an ultimate case. This presents another possible conflict between Japanese and U.S. security interests.

EIR: Right now the Sea of Japan area is becoming a cauldron of tension in an unprecedented way.

Nishihara: Well, the Soviet Union thinks the Pacific Ocean is very important to them. And they have built up their power. Therefore, the United States has to balance this.

EIR: Do you think one of reasons for renewed emphasis on the northwestern Pacific is Reagan administration reaction to the fact that the "China card" is less reliable than people used to think it was, so direct U.S. presence and Japanese military buildup is needed?

Nishihara: I don't think that's the cause. I would like to think the main reason is the Soviet increase. U.S. cooperation

with China still continues. Defense Secretary Weinberger is going to China.

EIR: Of course. I just meant that the momentum had slowed. And the Chinese are improving their ties with the Soviet Union. If that trend continues, will that lead the Soviets to change the pace of their Asia buildup?

Nishihara: If Sino-Soviet ties improve, there could be some impact on Soviet policy, maybe slowing its pace of buildup in Asia overall. But I don't think they will reduce their buildup toward Japan. Their major objective remains to separate Japan from America. They threaten Japan, hoping Japan will try to accommodate to those threats by creating some distance from the United States.

EIR: Do you think that's working or is it backfiring?

Nishihara: It's backfiring, but I don't think Moscow really understands that. I think the Soviet Union believes that if it continues to apply pressure, Japan *may* consider a more neutral position.

EIR: Do you think Moscow has given up on the idea of major Japan-Soviet economic cooperation for the medium term, or on a reduction of tensions? In other words, do you think Moscow is presuming a continuation of tensions for the next several years, and will rely on what you called the intimidation strategy?

Nishihara: I think so, because U.S.-Soviet relations are bad. And I think they realize that Japan-Soviet relations are a function of American-Soviet relations.

EIR: One issue that was not discussed here is the relation between economics and security. The IMF austerity against Southeast Asian countries is similar to their policy toward Latin America; perhaps a year behind. This will undermine the political stability of Southeast Asia. Yet, Secretary Shultz on his last trip supported this kind of austerity. In contrast, Japan's concept of "comprehensive security" seems to embody a relationship between economics and security. How does that work in this situation? And what does this mean for a U.S.-Japan "division of labor" in which Japan takes on the economic underpinning of security responsibility? For example, Shultz said that Japan gives Pakistan more aid than does the United States.

Nishihara: The Japanese economy is in serious recession, and cannot do as much as we would like. Still, the Nakasone administration has given much aid to South Korea, Singapore, and so forth. In a way, we are taking over the responsibility the United States used to bear. In that way, there is a sharing of roles. But, if the United States really has to cut back, and Japan then has to take over much of the aid, this will cause a new problem, because then ASEAN will become dependent on Japan. It is better for aid to be diversified, to avoid ASEAN-Japan tension, or to avoid any sense of U.S.-Japan competition for economic influence.