

In any consideration of recruiting and organising young workers it is important to acknowledge that the union movement has a poor record for safeguarding their interests. Yet it has the capacity to recruit, and thus counter the economic liberal offensive by helping to secure the entitlements of all workers, the unemployed and the union movement itself. The effects of this offensive have been seen by the near collapse of the full-time youth labour market since the mid-1970s, as a result of simply disestablishing hundreds of thousands of full-time jobs. This has partly been offset by increases in the number of junior part-time jobs, although most only offer insecure work with little real opportunity for skilling or movement into a career.

In consequence we have seen a dramatic increase in the participation and retention rates in education and training institutions both in the higher levels of the secondary system and in post-secondary education. Typically, young workers are employed part-time in service industries, many of which offer only precarious jobs that are not unionised.

Given the anti-union publicity run by the Liberal-National Coalition, plus the insecure, dissipated and un-unionised nature of the youth labour market, it is little surprise that few young people belong to unions.

What can be done to overcome what appears to be a high level of resistance by many young people to joining a union? In a setting where we have large numbers of non-unionised young workers who are also in many cases studying either full or part-time, what can be done to make unions more attractive? I would like to make one suggestion.

My idea is to have unions and their peak bodies like the Victorian Trades Hall Council, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and regional Trades Hall Councils establish links with universities and the Vocational Education and Training (TAFE) sector for the purpose of facilitating employment placement for students and graduates. This could take the form of an 'Employment Unit' operated jointly by both the participating university or TAFE college, as well as the relevant academic or administrative units, and the union movement. The job of an Employment Unit would be to provide vocational guidance and education for students about both their immediate employment options as well as their career prospects; organise industry placements for students who need an income while studying; organise placements for graduates in addition to organising and overseeing placements for new Employment Units.

Such Employment Units could in time become a major part of post-secondary institutions, enabling increasing numbers of students to spend, for example, one semester in the workforce as part of their degree, and to be placed in internships, or permanent positions on graduation.

Judith Bessant teaches at the Australian Catholic University.

RICHARD TANTER

JAPAN AND THE COMING EAST ASIAN EXPLOSION

A NEW ARMS RACE

The precise point at which an arms race begins is always hard to pin down, but there can be little doubt that East Asia is rapidly moving towards a dangerous period of international tension characterised by new weapons technologies, changing strategic positions, and significant shifts in domestic political attitudes towards foreign policy and military affairs.

Increasing tension on the Korean peninsula and over the Taiwan Strait are the most immediate flashpoints, but almost every country involved in the region is being drawn into the deteriorating situation. Japan's involvement is central and deeply worrying, providing further confirmation of long-held fears that the Japanese state is seeking to throw off the limitations imposed by both the US alliance and Japanese pacifist public opinion.

Arguably the most serious Japanese contribution to the militarisation of the region comes from two new military technology decisions. Following the test launch of the North Korean three-stage Taepo Dong I rocket on 31 August last year, the Obuchi Government announced that by the year 2004 Japan would launch four military-standard surveillance space satellites, at an estimated cost of 11.3 billion yen. Prime Minister Obuchi also cited the possibility of North Korean missile attacks on Japan as the main reason for Japan's decision to participate in joint scientific research with the United States to develop a Theatre Missile Defence [TMD] system for Japan.

Three aspects of the TMD and satellite decisions were extraordinary. Firstly, there is little doubt that both decisions will heighten the chances of a regional strategic and nuclear arms race, and greatly upgrade Japan's military posture. Secondly, both decisions will prove extremely expensive in the future, opening the door to costly follow-on technologies. And most extraordinary of all, these two decisions which will affect the character of Japanese foreign policy for decades to come have been taken with virtually no public discussion. By contrast with this silence in Japan, the public debate in the United States about Theatre Missile Defence has split the Washington political and military elites, with even former Air Force and Army gen-

erals publicly criticising TMD as possibly the most dangerous and wasteful strategic policy initiative since the early years of the Cold War.

The panic response to the North Korean Taepo Dong rocket launch also provided the political momentum required to take another decision that had also been waiting in the shadows for some time. In December last year Prime Minister Obuchi announced that Japan would participate in joint research with the United States to develop technology that could provide a system of missiles that could defend Japan against attack by missiles from another country. Japan will spend 20–30 billion yen over five to six years, beginning with 960 million yen for fiscal 1999. Details are scanty, but at this stage Japan will be contributing to research on the US sea-based Navy Theatre Wide Defence system, one of three main US TMD research efforts. Japan's involvement is at this stage necessarily limited to research, since no deployable system yet exists. The Clinton Administration, under intense pressure from a Republican-dominated Congress in the run-up to a presidential election year, is committed to taking a decision on deployment by mid-2000. After spending 20 billion yen on joint development costs, Japan would be most unlikely to not deploy if the United States does.

The Bush and Clinton administrations have been pressuring Japan since the early 1990s to make a commitment to joint Theatre Missile Defence research for three reasons.

Firstly, the US missile defence program has already cost more than \$100 billion since the 1950s, and is likely to cost much more in the future. For the United States, the Japanese financial contribution is more than welcome following the decision by France to withdraw from participation in the \$40 billion MEADS [Medium Extended Air Defence System] US Theatre Missile Defence system. because the future costs were likely to be enormous, and in any case,

the United States would retain control of any system actually deployed. The Japanese government appears to have no qualms on either ground.

Secondly, while US aerospace technology is generally the most advanced in the world, in particular areas access to Japanese technology and research will make a significant difference to the success or failure of the development of an extremely complex weapons system. As far back as 1995, Japanese scientists claimed the Technical Research Development Institute (TRDI)

had already developed military technology comparable to the best in Europe and the United States.

Thirdly, the aggressive US planning for Theatre Missile Defence has provoked an extremely hostile response from Russia and China, and the United States is looking for political allies in the face of deep Russian and Chinese hostility to Theatre Missile Defence, and a rapid slide in relations between the United States and the two countries.

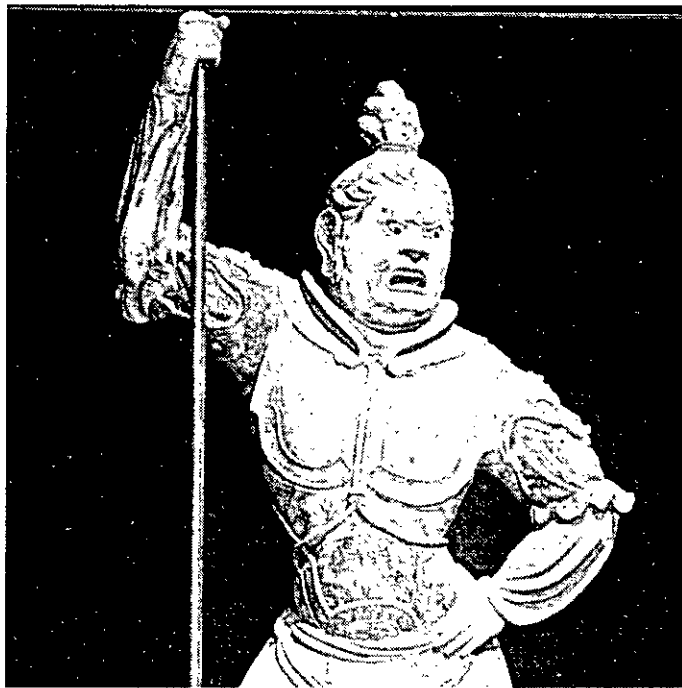
To understand this Russian and Chinese sense of threat — and the political and military danger posed by TMD — we have to remember that the end of the Cold War did not mean the end of the nuclear balance of terror. The United States and Russia both have very large numbers of land- and sea-based nuclear missiles on full alert, targetted at each other. China also has its handful of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) on full alert, targetted on the United States. The present US Theatre Missile Defence systems under development are quite different from earlier missile defence systems. The defending missiles will be launched to actually collide with the incoming missile in space — in Pentagon-speak, 'hit-to-kill' missiles. Given the closing speeds of two missiles travelling on intercontinental trajectories in space in a matter of minutes, the 'hit-to-kill' mission has been likened to expecting a person firing a rifle from the top of the Empire State Building in New York to be able to hit a bullet fired by another

person from the top of the Congress Building in Washington.

The madman logic of nuclear deterrence, however, remains in place: 'if you launch your missiles at us, in our dying moments we will launch our remaining missiles in a counter strike against you which will annihilate your population'. President Reagan's 1983 Star Wars speech echoed the dream of everyone in such an insane world: imagine, he said, a space defence system that would stop any missile ever reaching the territory of the United States, a system of sensors and mis-

siles that would detect enemy missile launches, and hit and destroy them safely in space. If all countries possessed such a system, then the nuclear threat would be gone forever.

Unfortunately Reagan's dream had two problems that turned it into a nightmare. Firstly, if all countries actually possessed such a defence, then all would be safe. But if only one possessed it, then other countries immediately become immensely vulnerable, since any nuclear deterrent they possess becomes useless. In



their worst imaginings, they can be attacked with nuclear weapons with impunity.

Secondly, any missile defence system poses immense technological difficulties, and the attempt to solve those difficulties amounts to a bottomless pit which absorbs vast amounts of taxpayers' monies. Even though Reagan's Star Wars plan was a technological chimera, the Soviet Union felt so threatened that the pursuit of a counter-defence virtually bankrupted the Soviet economy, helping to persuade Gorbachev that the pursuit of state socialism under Cold War conditions was an impossibility.

Since Reagan's speech in 1983, the United States has spent more than \$60 billion on missile defence system research, with an unassisted test success rate of precisely zero. Out of fifteen missile defence tests, thirteen have failed completely, and the remaining two 'succeeded' only because they knew the target's location or characteristics in advance. Critics point out that even if one of the two tests scheduled before the decision to deploy the system should succeed without 'assistance', minimal already existing missile decoy and diversionary tactics would negate TMD. As one critic, John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists, puts it, 'There is no other program in modern American history which has managed to chew up \$60 billion with absolutely nothing whatsoever to show for it'.

Almost any of the current US Theatre Missile Defence plans require major amendment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, signed by the United States and Russia in May 1972. Russia has indicated that it is completely opposed to any such amendment, fearing that it will be the trigger to another fantastic round of strategic weapons spending to maintain even minimal deterrence. The US Defence Secretary William Cohen, when asked for a US response to that attitude said: 'Then we have the option of our national interest indicating we would simply pull out of the treaty'. Like almost all post-World War II treaties, the ABM treaty allows six months notice of intention to quit — but no country has ever left a treaty since 1945. The Russian and Chinese responses indicated that the Cold War could very easily be reconstructed.

The official reason for the decision to deploy the four military surveillance satellites and to participate in the TMD research is to protect Japan from a rapidly emerging threat of missile attack, possibly with nuclear or biological warheads, by North Korea.

The satellites, it is argued, will give Japanese political leaders timely information to enable them to make considered judgements about the actual intentions of North Korea, and other possible antagonists. Such accurate information, it is rightly argued, is extremely helpful in reducing political tensions, and avoiding misjudgments and worst-case interpretations based on inadequate information.

The United States has a complex and highly effective system of satellite and aerial- and ground-based visual and electronic surveillance yielding highly accurate information. Japan is a signatory to the secret

UK/USA intelligence sharing agreement, but only at the level of a 'Third Party', with severe limitations on what is passed on from the United States, and the timeliness of its delivery. Essentially, the United States passes on only such intelligence as it thinks fit, and in its own time.

An independent space intelligence capacity, Japan's Defence Agency head Norota argued, would overcome the 'humiliatingly poor' performance of Japan's intelligence agencies when North Korea launched a ballistic missile that crossed over the Japanese main islands on 31 August (*Japan Times*, 26 November 1998, p. 2). Moreover, Norota argued, the establishment of a Japanese intelligence satellite system would reduce the nation's dependence on the United States for timely and complete strategic intelligence.

According to the Pentagon and the Japanese government, a theatre missile defence system would, if it could ever be made to work, provide an effective defence against the threat of North Korea armed with strategic missiles, possibly with nuclear warheads. For the United States, North Korea is now the most important 'rogue state' after Iraq. With the Taepo Dong rocket, North Korea could, in theory, hit targets in Alaska and Hawaii, and it is argued, in due course, the main part of continental United States.

Yet there is reason to doubt almost every aspect of these justifications. Firstly, many military analysts argue that North Korea has no intention of attacking anyone. Rather, under the guidance of the Great Leader and after the disappearance of subsidised oil from the Soviet Union/Russia and China, the economy has collapsed, up to three million people may be dead from starvation. Normal exports have completely collapsed, and there are only two possible — and related — sources of serious foreign revenue for North Korea: exporting missiles and blackmailing the United States, South Korea and Japan.

In the United States, the Taepo Dong launch has strengthened the hand of the those who argue that the 1994 Agreed Framework, under which the United States, Japan and South Korea agreed to provide \$4-5 billion for two new nuclear power stations in return for North Korea allowing International Atomic Energy Agency monitoring of its nuclear activities and permit the dismantling of existing reactors, was money for nothing. The economic position of North Korea has not changed — only worsened since that time. It is quite plausible that the Great Leader decided that what was needed was another injection of US funds into the North Korean economy, and that a missile launch would do nicely.

The most vociferous critic of the US-backed Theatre Missile Defence alliance in East Asia has been China — mainly because it fears that it, rather than North Korea, is the target. The combination of increasing US military spending, the US pressure on the Japanese government to pass legislation to implement the new Ampo Guidelines, and the possibility that South Korea and Taiwan would join with the United States and Japan under a TMD umbrella, all these have driven

the Chinese government to make extremely strong statements on the future of its nuclear deterrent force.

While it is ostensibly designed to provide the Japanese government with independent and accurate information, the development of a military surveillance satellite system by Japan will increase tension in East Asia considerably in the long run. This is because the same system used to assess the real intentions of North Korea or China is also potentially a key part in any future Japanese strategic military capacity.

For a country to possess the capacity to project military force at a distance — a strategic military capacity — three things are necessary: a weapons system, a delivery system, and a surveillance and targeting capacity. Japan has perfectly competent advanced munitions factories, and beyond that the scientific talent to build a nuclear weapon in short order, as well as a small mountain of plutonium. As the world's fourth space power after the United States, Russia, and Europe, Japan has plenty of experience with ballistic missile development — vastly more than North Korea. The surveillance satellites will provide the third arm.

The United States has undoubtedly been exerting great pressure on Japan over the Ampo guidelines, and over the TMD issue. The alliance between the Liberal Democratic Party and the Liberal Party under Ozawa Ichiro was extremely welcome to the United States, and marked a considerable shift in the overall Japanese government posture on military issues. While there has been almost no public debate on either of these issues, they were both undoubtedly subject to fierce internal discussion within the iron triangle of the LDP, the bureaucracy, and the heads of the major corporations. Especially after Japan's somewhat bitter experience over the FSX fighter aircraft co-development with the United States, nationalist advocates of an autonomous military industrial base would have been unhappy about the TMD decision, and delighted about the satellite decision. Japanese defence industry will benefit enormously from both the TMD and satellite decisions — in that regard, both decisions amount to diversion of enormous amounts of Japanese taxpayers' funds to prop up the limping corporate sector, which in the defence area, even more than the rest of the economy, has been looking extremely unhealthy. The long run accounting of costs and benefits to the United States and Japan remains to be done — the balance of profits, technology transfers, subsidised research breakthroughs, and strategic market positioning will not be clear for some time.

Yet what remains most striking about both decisions is their irresponsibility and the cynical exploitation of the North Korean issue. If Theatre Missile Defence is introduced in East Asia, it will almost certainly trigger an expansion of Chinese strategic nuclear weapons stockpiles. It will certainly lead to enormous resentment in an already deeply suspicious Russia, and most likely set back the possibility of deeper cuts in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia.

Richard Tanter teaches politics at Kyoto Seika University.

DIANNE CULLEN

GROLLO'S POSTMODERN ICON

CONSTRUCTING DIVERSIONS
IN VICTORIA

In December 1998, developer Bruno Grollo received the green light from the Victorian state authorities to construct the tallest building in the world. Commencement of the project was dependent upon the Grollo Corporation obtaining the necessary finance to cover the estimated cost of 1.5 billion dollars. The glass obelisk tower was to stand 560 metres high, more than double the current tallest building in the city. When completed it would consist of car parks, shops and supermarkets, commercial offices, 450 apartments, a 350-room six-star hotel and twelve storeys of telecommunications equipment.

Supporters of the development claimed it would showcase Melbourne as one of the world's most sophisticated cities. They believed that being the home of the tallest building would mean the capital of Victoria would be the focus of international attention, thus enhancing the city's commercial and tourist trade. Moreover, in the achievement of such a technological feat, Australia's reputation as a technically sophisticated country would be further advanced. At a level more fundamental for the people of Victoria, it was anticipated that the project would provide approximately 5,700 jobs for workers, over 3,000 of which would be in the construction industry.

So far the debate surrounding Grollo's tower has been limited to discussions on the pros and cons of the development as mentioned above. A deeper interpretation of the building suggests that Grollo's icon may be read as a symbol of the transformation of the cultural and social whole, indicative of the change from the modern era to that of the postmodern.

The emergence of a postmodern cultural form is linked to fetishism of images. The image promoted by the present Kennett Liberal Government is that Victoria is in the hands of forward thinkers, in touch with the future and able to provide a leadership style that enables the state to compete with the rest of the world. This is supported by the slogan 'Victoria on the Move', and is given a more tangible form by Melbourne hoping to be the site of the tallest structure in the world. Like a number of others, Jeff Kennett believes that this type of project adds to the image of Melbourne as a city capable of gaining international

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