

# Chinese Views on South Korea's Deployment of THAAD

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The Chinese leadership and the overwhelming majority of expert Chinese observers and commentators are strongly opposed to the deployment of the THAAD system in South Korea. The sophisticated long-range THAAD X-band radar system seemingly worries China the most. Most Chinese believe that while *perhaps* providing some limited defense for South Korea against North Korean ballistic missiles THAAD is primarily intended to serve the much larger purpose of weakening China's strategic deterrent while contributing to a global anti-missile system that threatens both Beijing and Moscow. The THAAD decision worsens an existing strong sense of Chinese resentment against alleged efforts by the U.S. to peer deep into China from nearby areas and extract sensitive military information in order to degrade China's security. More importantly, for most Chinese, the THAAD deployment decision also represents a kind of betrayal by South Korea and a related strengthening of Washington's overall effort to counter or contain China. Until or unless Seoul abandons or significantly downgrades it, the THAAD system will almost certainly remain a major irritant in China's relations with its Northeast Asian neighbors for the foreseeable future.

On February 7, 2016, South Korean and American military officials announced that their two governments had agreed to begin talks aimed at "the earliest possible" deployment in South Korea of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, known as THAAD, a system designed to shoot down short-, medium-, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles using interceptor missiles, launchers, a radar, and a fire-control unit.<sup>1</sup>

After months of subsequent discussion, on July 8, Seoul and Washington formally announced that the THAAD system would be deployed in South Korea.<sup>2</sup> On July 13, Seoul announced that Seongju will be the location of the THAAD deployment.<sup>3</sup> This decision, highly controversial within South Korea, followed a lengthy period of examination and debate marked by considerable foot-dragging on the part of Seoul, and continuous American pressure in favor of deployment.<sup>4</sup>

The South Korean government had long hesitated to approve THAAD in part because of strong resistance within South Korea and from China and Russia. However, the combination of additional North Korean missile and nuclear tests in early 2016 and a deterioration in the Seoul-Beijing relationship over the past year or so convinced conservative President Park Geun-hye to move forward with deployment, despite continued domestic opposition. In response to China and Russia, both Seoul and the Pentagon have stressed that the THAAD decision "would not be directed towards any third party nations."<sup>5</sup>

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In fact, despite Park's February decision, it is by no means clear that Seoul will actually deploy the THAAD system. In recent months, Park's administration has been rocked by a political scandal involving charges of extortion, fraud, and unethical influence-peddling resulting from the president's relationship with an old friend and advisor, Choi Soon-sil. After months of massive anti-Park demonstrations in Seoul, the South Korean National Assembly voted overwhelmingly in early December to impeach Ms. Park. If the Constitutional Court votes to uphold the impeachment motion, Park would resign and a new election would occur within 60 days.<sup>6</sup>

Such a development would likely result in the suspension, modification, or outright rejection of the THAAD deployment decision, given the fact that the liberal and progressive opposition parties, and a large segment of the public, remain strongly opposed to the system.<sup>7</sup>

China's reaction to Seoul's decision to deploy the THAAD system has been strongly negative. For example, on the day of the February announcement, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu Zhenmin held an emergency meeting with the Republic of Korea's ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Kim Jang-soo, and delivered China's opposing position.<sup>8</sup>

Beijing did more than just protest, however. After the decision was announced, the PRC Ministry of National Defense suspended its high-level defense dialogue with South Korea and postponed the South Korean defense minister's visit to China.<sup>9</sup> And the Chinese government did not send a high-level official as a main guest to attend the South Korean embassy's annual National Day reception in 2016.<sup>10</sup> In addition, China's National Tourism Administration reportedly issued instructions to reduce the number of Chinese tourists to South Korea by 20 percent.<sup>11</sup>

Seoul's decision to deploy THAAD, in the context of the turbulent and uncertain domestic situations on the Korean Peninsula, has become a major factor influencing stability not only on the peninsula but also in relations between both Koreas, China, the United States, and possibly other nations, such as Japan. In this challenging environment, it is critical to understand in greater detail the views of Chinese leaders and knowledgeable observers regarding the THAAD decision and the politics surrounding it.

As in past issues of the *Monitor*, this essay divides Chinese sources into authoritative and non-authoritative categories. As explained in *CLM* 51, it dispenses with the category of "quasi-authoritative" sources altogether. The first section of the remainder of this article summarizes the authoritative Chinese viewpoint on the THAAD issue. The second section presents the non-authoritative outlook, identifying a wider range of viewpoints. Finally, the conclusion offers some thoughts on the ultimate meaning of the THAAD decision for the Chinese.

## Authoritative Sources

Prior to the U.S.-ROK announcement on the deployment of THAAD, Beijing's authoritative public position had been fairly subdued, as evinced in a PRC Foreign

Ministry press conference held in February of 2015:

China holds a consistent and clear position on anti-missile issues. It is our belief that every country should keep in mind other countries' security interests and regional peace and stability while pursuing its own security interests. We hope that countries concerned can properly deal with relevant issues in the larger interests of regional peace and stability and bilateral relations.<sup>12</sup>

Following the February 2016 announcement by South Korean and American military officials, Beijing's previous authoritative statements on THAAD became more pointed. China was now "deeply concerned" about the decision and asserted that "no country shall *undermine* [“损害”] other countries' security interests while pursuing its own." (Author's italics) Beijing also stated that the deployment of THAAD "will not help maintain regional peace and stability, nor will it lead to a proper settlement of the current situation."<sup>13</sup>

On February 12, Foreign Minister Wang Yi informed his South Korean counterpart regarding the deployment, "Obviously it will undermine the strategic security interests of China."<sup>14</sup> A Foreign Ministry spokesperson also stated five days later that China hopes "the relevant side can drop this plan."<sup>15</sup>

In an interview with Reuters, Wang Yi provided details on the logic behind the Chinese stance, stating:

The coverage of the THAAD missile defense system, especially the monitoring scope of its X-Band radar, goes far beyond the defense need of the Korean Peninsula. It will reach deep into the hinterland of Asia, which will not only directly damage China's strategic security interests, but also do harm to the security interests of other countries in this region.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, Wang used some Chinese aphorisms to suggest that the THAAD deployment decision was a malicious deception by the United States designed to "jeopardize China's legitimate rights and interests."<sup>17</sup>

While opposing the THAAD deployment, authoritative Chinese sources also sought to counter any possible notion that Beijing's stance reflected a lowered concern with Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. An authoritative source reiterated China's strong opposition to that program, proposing, for example, that the UNSC "adopt a new resolution and take further steps to make the DPRK pay the necessary price and bear the consequences for its behavior."<sup>18</sup>

Authoritative sources also went beyond criticism of the THAAD deployment decision as a threat to China's interests, stating that it would damage PRC-ROK relations, while undermining the regional strategic balance, triggering an arms race, and promoting a "cold-war mindset."<sup>19</sup>

Chinese authoritative sources have also joined with Russia in opposing the deployment of THAAD as a threat to the strategic security of both countries and a trigger for a regional arms race. While understanding that the ROK has “reasonable defense needs,” the two countries stated that they “could not understand or accept any deployment that goes beyond those defense needs.”<sup>20</sup>

In matching their concern with that of Russia, authoritative Chinese sources have also linked the THAAD deployment to the deployment of the Aegis anti-missile system in Eastern Europe, stating that both these actions undermine efforts to limit missile proliferation.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, the head of the Arms Control Department of the PRC Foreign Ministry asserted in a speech to the UN General Assembly that the U.S.-ROK THAAD deployment decision was linked to the U.S. effort to deploy a global missile-defense system. He stated:

The deployment of global missile defense systems by the U.S. seriously undermines the strategic security interests of related countries. It will impede the nuclear disarmament process, trigger regional arms race [sic], and escalate military confrontation. Particularly the deployment of the THAAD system by the U.S. in the ROK will in no way help address the security concerns of relevant parties, realize denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and maintain peace and stability on the Peninsula.<sup>22</sup>

In reply to press queries regarding the U.S. offer to provide Beijing with a technical briefing on the limits of the THAAD system, authoritative sources have stated that the THAAD deployment is not merely a technical issue, but rather is “a strategic issue that bears on the peace and stability of Northeast Asia.”<sup>23</sup> One authoritative Chinese military source also stated that “those who are fully aware of the matter can see through those [technical] excuses very easily.”<sup>24</sup>

By early July 2016, after the final decision to deploy THAAD was announced, authoritative sources were producing more sharply critical comments on the THAAD issue. On July 8, the day of the announcement, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei stated, in response to a press question:

The deployment of the THAAD system by the U.S. and the ROK will in no way help achieve the goal of denuclearization on the Peninsula and maintain peace and stability of the Peninsula. It runs counter to the efforts by all parties to resolve the issue through dialogue and consultation and will gravely sabotage the strategic security interests of regional countries including China and regional strategic balance.<sup>25</sup>

At the time, Chinese sources also became sharper in criticizing the United States in particular. For example, on July 9, Wang Yi stated:

We believe that the deployment of the THAAD system goes far beyond the defense need of the Korean Peninsula. Any justification to this cannot hold water. We have every reason and right to question the real scheme behind this action. We demand the U.S. not to build its own security on the basis of jeopardizing other countries' security and not to damage other countries' legitimate security interests on the pretext of so-called security threats.<sup>26</sup>

And two days later, in response to a question regarding South Korean opposition to THAAD, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang explained further how THAAD would disrupt the regional balance:

By getting on board with the U.S., the ROK has involved itself in tipping the scale of regional strategic balance. I think that it is completely understandable that people in the ROK are deeply concerned about the greater underlying security risks this decision may bring.<sup>27</sup>

This remark suggests that, for the Chinese government, the THAAD decision signified a South Korean shift to full support of the alleged U.S.-led effort to counterbalance China strategically.

Furthermore, Wang Yi directly warned his South Korean counterpart that the deployment of THAAD “will create negative impact on the Korean Peninsula situation, regional stability and China-ROK relations.” He went on to say, “We once again urge the ROK to take China’s reasonable and legitimate concerns into serious consideration, carefully weigh the pros and cons, be extra cautious, think twice before taking actions, and cherish and maintain the hard-won sound situation of China-ROK relations.”<sup>28</sup>

Authoritative military sources have by and large echoed the critical stance taken by senior Foreign Ministry and other civilian leaders toward the THAAD deployment, stressing in particular its negative effect on strategic stability. In addition, such sources frequently assert that, in response to a THAAD deployment, China will “take necessary measures to safeguard China’s strategic security and regional strategic balance.”<sup>29</sup>

Of particular note, a vice chairman of the CMC stated, in a meeting with the U.S. national security advisor, that “the U.S. insistence on deploying the [THAAD] system in South Korea will . . . severely undermine the China-U.S. strategic mutual trust.”<sup>30</sup>

## Non-Authoritative Sources

In the overwhelming number of cases, non-authoritative sources reinforce the authoritative Chinese view, repeating official statements or adding details to various elements of the PRC government stance. In general, they provide a far more granular and expansive explanation of the Chinese position while also offering a wide range of recommendations on how the Chinese government should respond to the actual deployment of THAAD in South Korea. That said, a few sources flatly contradict one another in their assessment of aspects of the THAAD system’s capabilities and the

specific reasons for Beijing opposing it. And one or two sources express views that are more cautious and conciliatory than the mainstream authoritative and non-authoritative sources.

Perhaps the most prominent and influential non-authoritative commentator on the THAAD deployment decision is Zhong Sheng, a highly visible, pseudonymous (and probably multi-author) source whose articles usually appear in *People's Daily*. Zhong Sheng wrote a four-part series on the THAAD issue in July–August 2016, following the final deployment decision.<sup>31</sup>

These articles contain most of the points found in other similar sources regarding the THAAD deployment decision. Most notably, in opposing the THAAD deployment decision, Zhong Sheng argues that:

- THAAD is useless for South Korea because it only targets missiles from high altitudes and Pyongyang is “unlikely” to use long-distance ballistic missiles.<sup>32</sup>
- The long range of the X-band radar system used by THAAD confirms that it will be aimed at “the heartland of Asia” to conduct surveillance on the Chinese military.<sup>33</sup>
- The U.S. is deploying THAAD in South Korea to enhance its global anti-missile system defense web and is also part of the rebalance to Asia; it is thus another step in the overall U.S. effort to contain China and is intended to undermine security in Northeast Asia.<sup>34</sup>
- THAAD will cause North Korea to develop more advanced nuclear weapons.
- Even though many South Korean citizens oppose THAAD, by approving its deployment, the South Korean government has taken the role of a U.S. “lackey.”<sup>35</sup>
- Seoul should understand how it benefits from China, both economically and in handling crises on the peninsula, and must realize that it will bear the greatest burden if THAAD causes a conflict between China/Russia and the U.S.<sup>36</sup>
- China and Russia “oppose the military presence of outside powers in Northeast Asia...the next step for China and Russia would be to take actions in an unexpected manner to incur unbearable cost to South Korea and the U.S.”<sup>37</sup>

As can be seen, while clearly reinforcing the authoritative Chinese position, these Zhong Sheng articles, and those other cited sources that echo them, take a much more harsh stance, condemning the U.S. for intentionally undermining Asian stability and explicitly connecting THAAD to a global U.S. defense network intended to undermine Chinese (and Russian) security. The articles also criticize South Korea more harshly than authoritative sources and recommend very harsh responses by Beijing (and Moscow).

In addition, several additional non-authoritative sources echo in greater detail authoritative sources in emphasizing that South Korea’s integration into the larger U.S.-led anti-missile defense network means that Seoul has now been brought within the orbit of Washington’s China containment efforts, thus fundamentally changing the nature of the U.S.-ROK alliance by placing it within a larger military bloc.<sup>38</sup>

An article appearing in the *Liberation Army Daily* of July 26 repeated the authoritative PLA remark noted above that THAAD would: 1) damage strategic trust between the U.S. and China; 2) aggravate regional tensions; 3) trigger a new round of arms race; and 4) harm regional security.<sup>39</sup>

Many non-authoritative sources have considered many possible Chinese responses to a THAAD deployment in South Korea. These include urging a significant increase in China's nuclear warheads and the development of advanced hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence drones,<sup>40</sup> enhanced Sino-Russian cooperative countermeasures,<sup>41</sup> the development of technologies to disrupt the THAAD system, and the capability to destroy the system "in the first hour of war," the punishment of South Korea by refusing to cooperate with it on any regional issue, ceasing friendly people-to-people and other bilateral exchanges while applying economic sanctions until the decision is reversed, a Chinese declaration that a large anti-missile system cannot be deployed in Northeast Asia,<sup>42</sup> and linkage of the passage of any new UN resolutions on North Korea and the adoption of any new sanctions with the deployment of THAAD.<sup>43</sup>

Some non-authoritative sources connect the deployment of THAAD to other supposed indications of the more assertive U.S. stance in Asia generally associated with the Obama administration's regional "Rebalance" policy, including its more high-profile approach to the South China Sea disputes, and the selling of arms to Taiwan. For one well-known Chinese analyst of U.S.-China relations (Wang Jisi), these actions, associated with overall increases in Sino-U.S. tensions in the Asia-Pacific, form a large element of the "new normal" of enhanced tension alongside continued cooperation.<sup>44</sup>

Another well-known Chinese scholar, Jia Qingguo, stresses that, by damaging Sino-South Korean relations, the THAAD deployment issue has made it far more difficult for Beijing to fully support Seoul and apply pressure to Pyongyang.<sup>45</sup>

However, in watching President Park's impeachment and the turmoil in South Korean politics, a few non-authoritative commentators recognize that the THAAD decision might be reconsidered if the opposition takes power. They therefore suggest that Beijing should adopt a more "conciliatory" approach toward Seoul in that event.<sup>46</sup>

Some non-authoritative Chinese sources present a more balanced and less confrontational assessment of the THAAD issue. The most notable examples include two well-respected Chinese scholars of nuclear weapons issues, Li Bin, a professor at Tsinghua University and associate of Carnegie's Nuclear Policy Program, and Tong Zhao, a fellow at Carnegie's Nuclear Policy Program.<sup>47</sup>

They argue that THAAD is indeed limited in its effectiveness as a missile defense shield for South Korea. It would apparently prove unable to protect areas close to North Korea's border, including Seoul. But in contrast to many other Chinese critics of THAAD, Tong Zhao also asserts that "THAAD can effectively protect large areas of South Korea's central and southern regions."<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, Li Bin agrees with many other Chinese commentators in asserting that a THAAD radar deployment in South Korea would undermine China's strategic deterrent by making it possible to collect new data on missile trajectories and warheads. However, he qualifies that remark by stating:

the overall impact of the radar on China's capability to strike the United States will be very limited. . . . the vast majority of China's ICBMs are reportedly deployed in regions other than the Northeast, while China's nuclear ballistic missile submarines are believed to be deployed mostly in the South China Sea. THAAD's radar is incapable of monitoring any of these missiles.<sup>49</sup>

Both scholars suggest that Seoul could likely assuage Chinese concerns and still provide effective missile defense by using a more limited radar system, such as the Israeli Green Pine radar.

Finally, in sharp contrast to most of the above non-authoritative sources, the two authors argue for probing, respectful dialogues between China and both the U.S. and South Korea. Li Bin urges Beijing to accept the U.S. offer to engage in a discussion of the THAAD system, and to receive a technical briefing on its capabilities.<sup>50</sup> In addition, Tong Zhao urges that Beijing and Seoul must engage in an "honest, in-depth discussion regarding how THAAD will be used to improve South Korea's national security and whether adjustments could be made to address the security concerns on both sides."<sup>51</sup> In particular, Tong argues that Beijing should "show greater empathy for its situation, and a willingness to talk and listen." These views are exceptional among Chinese commentators.<sup>52</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

There is no doubt that the Chinese leadership and the overwhelming majority of expert Chinese observers and commentators are strongly opposed to the deployment of the THAAD system in South Korea. As expressed in numerous Chinese sources, it is the long range, sophisticated THAAD X-band radar system that seemingly worries China the most.

As we have seen, most Chinese firmly believe that at the very least the deployment of THAAD, while *perhaps* providing some limited defense against North Korean ballistic missiles, is primarily intended to serve the much larger purpose of weakening China's strategic deterrent while contributing to a global anti-missile system threatening to both Beijing and Moscow.

In fact, Beijing could probably neutralize the strategic effects of a South Korean THAAD system by simply deploying more ICBMs and developing more effective counter-measures against it. It has far more capacity in this regard than does North Korea. And as we have seen, some Chinese technical experts acknowledge the limits of the THAAD system as applied to China. That said, Chinese efforts to overcome THAAD could prove costly and deepen an existing offense-defense arms race between the U.S., China, and



Russia. So, if genuinely held, the technical concerns regarding THAAD do contain some logic.

But the logic is fairly weak, and doesn't really reflect the deeper sources of Beijing's anxiety. It is perhaps difficult for many outsiders to understand why most Chinese would object so strongly to a defensive system purportedly designed to protect South Korea, a close U.S. ally, against a very hostile and belligerent, nuclear-armed neighbor. Yet this understandable reaction largely ignores the deep Chinese feeling of resentment and suspicion that the THAAD decision exacerbates.

In particular, the THAAD decision worsens an existing strong sense of Chinese resentment against alleged efforts by the United States to peer deep into China from nearby areas, extracting sensitive military information in order to degrade China's security. This sentiment, reflected in many of the above sources, is similar to the resentment long directed at close-in U.S. ISR operations conducted along the Chinese coast. But more importantly, for most Chinese, the THAAD deployment decision also represents a kind of betrayal by South Korea and a related strengthening of Washington's overall effort to counter or contain China.

The sense of South Korean betrayal (termed by some Chinese as a "stab in the back") results from the strong Chinese view that, by accepting the THAAD system, a friendly Seoul had joined a growing U.S.-led anti-China security network in Asia centered on an invigorated U.S.-Japan alliance. Despite some ups and downs in recent years, Beijing had viewed Seoul as a developing partner of sorts, a U.S. ally, yes, but more independent than Japan and holding very similar, wary views regarding Japanese defense modernization.

From the Chinese perspective, Seoul thus stood apart from American, Japanese, and other Asian concerns over China's military rise, focusing much more on its hostile neighbor to the north while valuing its growing economic and cultural links with China. With the THAAD decision, however, South Korea was seen as clearly moving away from Beijing and toward an acceptance of U.S. and Japanese containment efforts. Such a development arguably generates much greater strategic concern in China than any diminishment of its nuclear deterrent that THAAD might cause.

Depending mainly on political developments in South Korea, it is possible that the THAAD deployment decision will be reversed in the future, or that Seoul will employ a more limited radar and avoid the kind of defense integration with Washington and Tokyo that Beijing fears most. Until that occurs, however, it is almost certain that THAAD will remain a major irritant in China's relations with its Northeast Asian neighbors for the foreseeable future.

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## Notes

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[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/south-korea-united-states-to-start-talks-on-thaad-anti-missile-system/2016/02/07/1eaf2df8-9dc4-45e3-8ff1-d76a25673dbe\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.030fc71cc731](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/south-korea-united-states-to-start-talks-on-thaad-anti-missile-system/2016/02/07/1eaf2df8-9dc4-45e3-8ff1-d76a25673dbe_story.html?utm_term=.030fc71cc731).

<sup>2</sup> Choe Sang-hun, “South Korea and U.S. Agree to Deploy Missile Defense System,” *New York Times*, July 7, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/world/asia/south-korea-and-us-agree-to-deploy-missile-defense-system.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/world/asia/south-korea-and-us-agree-to-deploy-missile-defense-system.html?_r=0).

<sup>3</sup> Jack Kim and Ju-min Park, “South Korea chooses site of THAAD U.S. missile system amid protests,” Reuters, July 13, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-southkorea-thaad-idUSKCN0ZT03F>.

<sup>4</sup> See Kim Soo-han, “North Korea smiling? THAAD controversy deepens divide within South Korea” (속으로 웃는 북한?...사드 논란에 남남갈등 최악 치달아), *Herald Business*, August 3, 2016, <http://biz.heraldcorp.com/view.php?ud=20160803000310>; Park Chul-hee, “Global focus - THAAD controversy: head and tails reversed” (글로벌 포커스 사드 논란, 머리와 꼬리가 바뀌었다), *Chosun Ilbo*, July 27, 2016, [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2016/07/26/2016072602767.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2016/07/26/2016072602767.html).

<sup>5</sup> Missy Ryan, “Pentagon to Deploy Anti-missile System in South Korea,” *Washington Post*, July 7, 2016,

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<sup>6</sup> Choe Sang-hun, “South Korea Enters Period of Uncertainty With President’s Impeachment,” *New York Times*, December 9, 2016,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/world/asia/south-korea-president-park-geun-hye-impeached.html>; Choe Sang-hun, “South Korea’s Impeachment Process, Explained,”

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<sup>7</sup> Kim Tong-hyung, “S. Korean Presidential Hopeful Casts Doubt Over US Missiles,” *Washington Times*, December 15, 2016,

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter shortened to PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs), “Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Hua Chunying’s response to the question on whether China delivered its position to the US and ROK’s official initiation of their discussion to deploy THAAD system,” February 7, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt\\_674879/fyrbt\\_674889/t1339470.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/fyrbt_674889/t1339470.shtml).

<sup>9</sup> Lee, Jeong-jin, “Storm after THAAD: All high-level Sino-South Korean military talks halt,” (‘사드 후폭풍’...한·중 고위급 국방대화 ‘올스톱’), Yonhap, November 6, 2016, <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2016/11/04/0200000000AKR20161104109000014.HTML>.

<sup>10</sup> Ye Young-jun, “Embassy reception used to host ministers and vice ministers, but China sends a bureau chief this year” (장·차관 오던 한국 대사관 행사, 올해는 부국장

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference” February 5, 2015

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<sup>13</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Remarks on ROK and US’s Decision to Officially Start Talks on Deploying THAAD System in ROK,” February 7, 2016.

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1339451.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1339451.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wang Yi Meets with Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se of ROK,” February 12, 2016,

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<sup>15</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference,” February 17, 2016,

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<sup>16</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wang Yi Talks about US’s Plan to Deploy THAAD Missile Defense System in ROK,” February 13, 2016,

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<sup>17</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wang Yi Meets with Secretary of State John Kerry of US,” February 13, 2016,

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<sup>18</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference,” February 15, 2016,

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<sup>20</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wang Yi: Deployment of the THAAD Missile Defense System Goes Beyond Actual Defense Need,” March 11, 2016,

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<sup>21</sup> “Sino-Russian Joint Statement on Enhancing Global Strategic Stability” (中华人民共和国主席和俄罗斯联邦总统关于加强全球战略稳定的联合声明), *Xinhua*, June 26, 2016,

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<sup>22</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Statement by Ambassador Wang Qun, Director-General of the Arms Control Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 71st Session of the UNGA,” October 13, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1405391.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1405391.shtml).

<sup>23</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference,” March 30, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1351862.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1351862.shtml).

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter shortened to PRC Ministry of National Defense), “Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference,” July 28, 2016, [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2016-07/28/content\\_4703117.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2016-07/28/content_4703117.htm).

<sup>25</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference,” July 8, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1378753.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1378753.shtml).

<sup>26</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wang Yi Comments on Plan of the US to Deploy THAAD System in ROK,” July 9, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1379336.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1379336.shtml).

<sup>27</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang’s Regular Press Conference,” July 11, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1379216.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1379216.shtml).

<sup>28</sup> PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wang Yi Meets with Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se of the ROK,” July 25, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1384876.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1384876.shtml).

<sup>29</sup> PRC Ministry of National Defense, “Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference,” September 29, 2016, [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-09/29/content\\_4740052.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-09/29/content_4740052.htm); PRC Ministry of National Defense, “Sun Jianguo Meets ROK Defense Minister Han Min-ku,” June 4, 2016, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/topnews/2016-06/04/content\\_4670059.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/topnews/2016-06/04/content_4670059.htm).

<sup>30</sup> PRC Ministry of National Defense, “CMC Vice Chairman meets with U.S. National Security Advisor,” July 25, 2016, [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-07/26/content\\_4701372.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-07/26/content_4701372.htm).

<sup>31</sup> Zhong Sheng, “Dangerous action that warrants alarm—deployment of THAAD threatens peace in northeast Asia” (值得警惕的危险之举—部署“萨德”威胁的是东北亚和平), *People’s Daily*, July 29, 2016, <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0729/c1003-28593352.html>; Zhong Sheng, “South Korea needs composure and sense of reality—deployment of THAAD threatens peace in northeast Asia” (韩国, 需要基本的清醒和现实感——部署“萨德”威胁的是东北亚和平), *People’s Daily*, August 1, 2016, [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-08/01/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20160801\\_2-03.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-08/01/nw.D110000renmrb_20160801_2-03.htm); Zhong Sheng, “China’s security interests should not be deliberately damaged—deployment of THAAD threatens peace in northeast Asia” (中国安全利益不容蓄意损害—部署“萨德”威胁的是东北亚和平), *People’s Daily*, August 3, 2016, <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0803/c1003-28605744.html>; Zhong Sheng, “The US and South Korea must understand the deep meaning behind China and Russia’s warnings—deployment of THAAD threatens peace in northeast Asia” (美韩须领会中俄严重警告的深意——部署“萨德”威胁的是东北亚和平), *People’s Daily*, August 4, 2016

[http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-08/04/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20160804\\_2-03.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-08/04/nw.D110000renmrb_20160804_2-03.htm).

<sup>32</sup> Zhong Sheng elaborated on this point in subsequent articles of October 1 and 8, arguing that THAAD will be useless in countering the North Korean nuclear threat because its radar reaches 1,000 to 2,000 kilometers, which is beyond the security needs of the Korean Peninsula. See Zhong Sheng, “US, ROK will pay price if persisting in THAAD deployment,” *People’s Daily*, October 8, 2016, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/1008/c90000-9123945.html>; Zhong Sheng, “The US and South Korea should not lose their sense of reality on the Korean Peninsula Problem” (美韩不要在半岛问题上失去现实感), *People’s Daily*, October 1, 2016 <http://cpc.people.com.cn/pinglun/n1/2016/1001/c78779-28754634.html>. Also see Fan Gaoyue, “ROK: the Biggest Loser of THAAD,” *China-US Focus*, August 9, 2016, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/rok-the-biggest-loser-of-thaad>. Fan, a retired PLA officer, states that THAAD is of “little or no use” against the short- and tactical-range ballistic missiles of North Korea, and that Seoul’s acquisition of the U.S.-made Patriot PAC-3 missile system can defend against such missiles.

<sup>33</sup> Wu Riqiang, an expert on missile defense at the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China asserts that a U.S. anti-missile defense system will undermine China’s counter-strike capability by enhancing Washington’s ability to distinguish between warheads and decoys on Beijing’s ballistic missiles. Zhang Han 张涵, “Wu Riqiang: Deployment of THAAD could trigger a chain reaction” (吴日强: 韩国部署萨德导弹可能引发连锁反应), *US China Press*, July 18, 2016 <http://www.uschinapress.com/2016/0718/1071874.shtml>. See below for many additional sources supporting this point.

<sup>34</sup> This very common point is echoed by many other non-authoritative sources. For example, see Yin Chengde, “With THAAD, US and South Korea Are Playing with Fire,” *China-US Focus*, October 19, 2016, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/with-thaad-us-and-south-korea-are-playing-with-fire>. A Chinese Korea specialist, Yang Xiyu, asserts that South Korea dropped consideration of allegedly more suitable missile defense systems with a shorter range, such as the Israeli Iron Dome system, in favor of a THAAD system that is unable to defend South Korea, again showing that the purpose is to target China. He terms such a decision as “morally and ethically repulsive.” See “How should China retaliate against South Korea for its deployment of THAAD?” (因为“萨德”，中国应如何“报复”韩国), *Global Times*, August 1, 2016, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/1152/2016-08/9246419.html>.

<sup>35</sup> The abovementioned Zhong Sheng article of October 8 stated: “even the ROK public are not convinced by the reasons given by their government. More and more locals called on the authority to reconsider the reckless decision, blaming the latter’s approval to deploy THAAD system as the culprit for today’s dilemma.”

<sup>36</sup> “South Korea needs composure and sense of reality—deployment of THAAD threatens peace in northeast Asia.”

<sup>37</sup> “The US and South Korea must understand the deep meaning behind China and Russia’s warnings—deployment of THAAD threatens peace in northeast Asia.”

<sup>38</sup> “Major General Zhu Chenghu: to respond to THAAD, China must be fully prepared” (朱成虎少将: 应对美国“萨德”中国要未雨绸缪), *Zijing Web*, August 2, 2016,

<http://hk.zijing.org/2016/0802/711051.shtml>; “ROK: the Biggest Loser of THAAD”; Sungtae (Jacky) Park, “This Is Why China Fears THAAD,” *National Interest*, March 30, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/why-china-fears-thaad-15637>.

<sup>39</sup> “PLA Daily: U.S., ROK must stop deployment of THAAD missile battery,” *China Military Online*, July 29, 2016, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/pla-daily-commentary/2016-07/29/content\\_7181295.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/pla-daily-commentary/2016-07/29/content_7181295.htm). Also see “Editorial: THAAD topples UN Security Council coordination on North Korea nuclear weapons issue” (社评: “萨德” 冲垮了安理会围绕朝核的团结), *Global Times*, August 11, 2016,

<http://opinion.huanqiu.com/editorial/2016-08/9292217.html>. The *Global Times* editorial stated that the deployment of THAAD not only could mean “the deterioration of Sino-South Korean relations but also the end of US-China cooperation in Northeast Asia.”

<sup>40</sup> “Wu Riqiang: deployment of THAAD could trigger a chain reaction”; “How should China retaliate against South Korea for its deployment of THAAD?” Zhao Xiaozhuo (Director of Center for US-China Defense relations at Academy of Military Sciences) asserts: “Every US decision to remind China of its military weakness is a trigger for China to invest more and reduce the military gap between the US and China.”

<sup>41</sup> “Wang Peng, ‘How should China respond to the deployment of THAAD?’” (面对 “萨德”, 中国应如何出手?), *Asia Pacific Daily*, February 12, 2016, <http://www.apdnews.com/listen-to/698/442775.html>.

<sup>42</sup> These three recommendations are all contained in a single source that presents interviews with many Chinese civilian and military experts on Korea and U.S.-China relations. See “How should China retaliate against South Korea for its Deployment of THAAD?” Zheng Jiyong (Director of Center Korean Studies at Fudan University) states, “If China does not take measures to punish South Korea, which has become US’s puppet that harms China’s security interests, other countries will follow suit and harm Chinese interests more severely.”

<sup>43</sup> “Editorial: North Korea reprocesses plutonium, let’s ask US and South Korea to be more worried” (社评: 朝鲜提炼核武钚, 请美韩多着着急吧), *Global Times*, August 19, 2016, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/editorial/2016-08/9330035.html>.

<sup>44</sup> “Wang Jisi: New norm in US-China relations” (王缉思: 中美关系进入一个 “新常态”), *Global Times*, August 19, 2016, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/1152/2016-08/9330046.html>.

<sup>45</sup> “Dean of School of International Studies at Peking University, Jia Qingguo, discusses how to solve the North Korean nuclear crisis” (北京大学国际关系学院院长贾庆国谈朝核问题解决方案), *JoongAng Ilbo Chinese*, October 14, 2016, [http://chinese.joins.com/gb/article.do?method=detail&art\\_id=158244](http://chinese.joins.com/gb/article.do?method=detail&art_id=158244).

<sup>46</sup> For example, see Cai Jian, “Consequences of THAAD deployment cause South Korea’s dilemma,” December 11, 2016, *Global Times*, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1023077.shtml>. Cai is a professor of the Center for Korean Studies, Fudan University.

<sup>47</sup> Tong Zhao, “China and South Korea’s Path to Consensus on THAAD,” Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, October 13, 2016, <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2016/10/13/china-and-south-korea-s-path-to-consensus-on-thaad-pub-64856>; Li Bin, “The Security Dilemma and THAAD Deployment in the ROK,” *Kyunghyang Daily*, August 3, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/08/03/security-dilemma-and-thaad-deployment-in-rok-pub-64279>.

<sup>48</sup> “China and South Korea’s Path to Consensus on THAAD.”

<sup>49</sup> “The Security Dilemma and THAAD Deployment in the ROK.”

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> “China and South Korea’s Path to Consensus on THAAD.”

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*