

THAAD in South Korea: From a Clausewitzian-Aronian Perspective

클라우제비츠와 아롱의 시각에서 분석한 한국 사드배치 문제

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Abstract

The decision to deploy the THAAD missile defense system in South Korea has raised criticism, both at the national and international level. Even though Clausewitz lived long before the missile age, and missile defense was in its early years when Raymond Aron wrote his books, lessons may be learned from their theoretical insights. Both authors share a common view on the primacy of the political, Clausewitz insisting that war is political in its essence, and Aron concluding that the political might in turn limit war and prevent escalation. This paper starts with an assessment of the strategic situation in Eastern Asia – in Aron's words the “diplomatic constellation” –, then discusses the military and political stakes of ballistic missile defense in the Korean context. The wide capabilities and practical limitations of the THAAD system and its AN/TPY-2 radar should not be ignored, nor should be their political implications on the regional and global scales. This analysis is based on the assumption that the Korean conflict, at least since 1951, belongs to what Clausewitz called “the second kind of war”, in which a usually protracted trial of will replaces the swift and violent moves to overthrow the enemy. And this is the strategy, not fully developed in Clausewitz's *On War* and later theorized by the German historian Hans Delbrück, that Aron, back in 1962, put forward in *Peace and War*, a theory of international relations. Applied to the Korean case, the Clausewitzian-Aronian perspective suggests that the deployment of THAAD in the ROK, though not an end in itself, may be recommended, mostly on political grounds.

□ Key Words: Missile defense, Clausewitz, Raymond Aron, deterrence, Korea

초록

한국에 사드를 배치하는 문제는 국내정치적 비판과 국제정치적 비판을 동시에 야기하고 있다. 미사일은 클라우제비츠가 활동한 시기를 한참 지나서야 등장했고, 미사일 방어 문제는 레이몽 아롱이 저술활동을 하던 시기에 아직 초보적 단계에 머물러 있었지만, 우리가 그들의 이론적 통찰로부터 배울 수 있는 바가 없는 것은 아니다. 우선 두 사람은 '정치 우위의 원칙'을 공유한다. 즉 클라우제비츠는 전쟁의 본질이 정치적 성격을 지녔다고 강조했고, 아롱은 정치 우위의 원칙을 견지해야만 제한전쟁(limited war)이 가능하고, 전쟁의 확산을 방지할 수 있다는 결론에 도달했기 때문이다. 이 논문에서는 먼저 동아시아의 전략적 상황, 즉 아롱이 '외교적 상황'(diplomatic constellation)이라고 지칭했던 것을 검토할 것이다. 이어서 한국의 전략적 상황에서 탄도 미사일 방어체계가 차지하는 군사적, 정치적 중요성을 논의할 것이다. 그러면서 사드와 그것에 장착된 AN/TPY-2 레이더의 광역 커버 능력과 현실적 한계를 무시해서도 안 되지만, 그것이 동북아 지역정치 차원과 세계정치 차원에서 차지하는 정치적 의미도 무시해서는 안 된다는 점을 주장하고자 한다. 이런 분석은 적어도 1951년 이래 한반도에서 발생한 분쟁이 클라우제비츠가 지칭한 '제2종의 전쟁'(the second kind of war)에 귀속된다는 전제에 기초를 두고 있다. '제2종의 전쟁'이란 통상 장기전을 전개하려는 의지가 적을 신속하고 강렬하게 제압하려는 작전을 대체하는 것을 의미한다. 클라우제비츠의 『전쟁론』(On War)에서는 이런 전략을 충분히 소개하지 않았지만, 이는 훗날 독일의 역사학자였던 한스 델부룩을 통해서 이론화 되었고, 1962년에 출간된 아롱의 『평화와 전쟁』(Peace and War)에서 상세하게 소개되었다. 클라우제비츠와 아롱의 시각을 작금의 한반도 사례에 적용할 경우, 한국에 사드를 배치하는 결정은 그 자체가 목적이 될 수는 없지만, 주로 정치적 이유 때문에 권장할만하다고 할 수 있다.

□ 주제어: 미사일방어, 클라우제비츠, 레이몽 아롱, 억지, 한국

At first sight, it may look awkward or irrelevant to ask Clausewitz, the Prussian theoretician from the age of Napoleon, or even Raymond Aron, sociologist and strategist during the Cold War, when it comes about deploying the THAAD ballistic missile defense system in South Korea. How could they provide any insight on today's cutting-edge technologies? Clausewitz's treatise *On War*¹⁾ refers mostly to the classic means of European warfare in the age of Enlightenment: infantry, cavalry and artillery. Raymond Aron was among the first thinkers to embed nuclear weapons into a theory of international relations²⁾, but he did not lay much im-

1) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, 1984, Original German edition Dümmler, 1832).

2) Raymond Aron, *Peace and war: A Theory of International Relations*, with a new introduction

portance on antiballistic defenses which, with the technologies available in his time, could hardly work. For instance, Aron did not make significant comments on Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, announced in March 1983, only seven months before Aron's sudden death.

Yet, some analysts³⁾ have already invoked Thucydides – a major source of inspiration for Raymond Aron⁴⁾ – while weighing the pros and cons about THAAD deployment in South Korea. The comparison with Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian war⁵⁾ makes sense when we consider, beyond the North-South Korean conflict, the increasing tensions between the United States, a global and maritime power, and China, a regional and continental power that is becoming more assertive in the wake of its economic growth. For Aron, Thucydides' *Peloponnesian war* provides a Weberian ideal-type of war⁶⁾ as it displays all the possibilities of humane conflict, which Thucydides himself emphasized in his introduction when he wrote that his narrative was “composed as a permanent legacy, not a showpiece for a simple hearing”⁷⁾. If we try to understand Aron's interest in the work of Thucydides, we should bear in mind that he was a European who had lived through both world wars and was confronted, in the aftermath of WW2, with the perspective of a third, nuclear, one. And that is where Aron anxiously studied the Korean war, in which escalation – in Clausewitz's words “ascent to the extremes” – was looming. In the Korean war, however, Harry Truman chose a peace without victory⁸⁾ and fired General Douglas MacArthur for who there was “no substitute to victory”. The US president had decided to limit the war because he was thinking at the global level, and considered that building up the defenses

by Daniel J. Mahoney and Brian C. Anderson (New Brunswick and London, Transaction Publishers, 2003). (Original French edition : Calmann-Lévy, 1962). See also Aron, *Le Grand Débat: Introduction à la Stratégie Atomique* (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1963).

- 3) Sungtae Jacky Park, “THAAD and Thucydides: Seeing the Forest Beyond the Trees.” <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/thaad-thucydides-seeing-the-forest-beyond-the-trees-17784>. (September 21, 2016).
- 4) Aron, “*Thucydide et le récit des événements*”, *History and Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1961), 103-128.
- 5) Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Martin Hammond (Oxford, 2009).
- 6) Aron, “*Thucydide*”, 107.
- 7) Thucydide, *The Peloponnesian War*, 12.
- 8) Aron, «De la paix sans victoire. Note sur les relations de la stratégie et de la politique», *Revue française de science politique*, Année 1951, Vol. 1, No. 3, 241 – 255.

of Europe was foremost to ensure the success of his strategy of containment.

In this paper, we intend to follow Aron's method to understand the quandary about the deployment of THAAD in South Korea. In any case, Aron would first assess what he called the "diplomatic constellation⁹⁾": the balance of power, the intentions and *Weltanschauungen* of those involved, the state of the public opinion which, especially in democracies, may influence political decisions. This will be the first part of this paper. Aron himself, beyond his academic works, was an indefatigable editorialist. Though not a politician, he was a politically committed philosopher whose influence in politics was mostly based on his usually twice a week foreign policy articles in *Le Figaro*¹⁰⁾. Having assessed the geopolitical context, our second part shall explain Aron's own interpretation of Clausewitz and how it could apply to the Korean case. Only then shall we try to draw some conclusions from this Clausewitzian-Aronian perspective. Though humility is required in face of great thinkers like Clausewitz or Aron, whose insight we cannot possibly approach, even less equal, it is nevertheless possible to use their lessons while dealing with a current crisis like this one.

I . The Diplomatic Constellation in Eastern Asia

The nuclear and missile tests that have been carried out by Pyongyang over the last decade are considered a threat by both the neighbouring countries (Japan and the Republic of Korea) and the United States. South Korea's capital is within range of North Korea's short-range missiles. Longer range missiles, as those recently tested, threaten Japan and possibly the United States : for the time being, North Korea does not have an operational ICBM capability, but the satellite launch of December 2012 "was widely perceived to be a test of many aspects of ICBM technology¹¹⁾". Besides, Pyongyang has carried out acts of war against the Republic

9) Aron, «De l'analyse des constellations diplomatiques», *Revue française de science politique*, Année 1954, Vol. 4, No 2, 237 - 251.

10) Aron, *Les Articles du Figaro*, édition présentée et annotée par Georges-Henri Soutou. Tome 1: *La Guerre froide 1947-1955*, Paris, Éditions de Fallois, 1990, Tome 2: *La Coexistence 1955-1965*, Paris, de Fallois, 1994 ; Tome 3 : *Les Crises 1965-1977*, Paris, de Fallois, 1997.

of Korea, e. g. when *ROKS Cheonan* was sunk by a North Korean torpedo¹²⁾ on 26 March 2010, killing 46 of her crew, or with the repeated shellings of Yeonpyeong Island in August and November of the same year¹³⁾. North Korea's recent record remains ominous, with an alleged hydrogen bomb test in January, a submarine-launched missile test in August, and its biggest ever nuclear test in September. Seen from Europe, the tension between the two Koreas looks much more dangerous than the relationship between the two German states during the Cold War. In the German case, a relationship had been established through Chancellor's Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Brandt took advantage of the years of Détente in the late sixties and early seventies to create a framework that would preserve the unity of the German nation – which he feared might gradually fade away as political division was enduring. In exchange, mutual recognition was accepted and both Germanies entered the UN in 1973. While the Republic of Korea is an active member of the UNO, represented by Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon since 2007, the Democratic's People Republic of Korea has been a mere observer since the change of recognition of the Chinese seat in 1971. And the end of the Cold War did not entail any Korean reconciliation. On the contrary, Pyongyang remained a totalitarian regime and with the passing of Kim Il-sung in 1994, the world could witness something that would certainly have astonished Karl Marx: the advent of a communist dynasty.

At the regional level, the resilience of the North Korean regime owes much to China. In Europe, the GDR collapsed as early as it was deprived of Soviet support, which happened in 1989 following Mikhail Gorbachev's new foreign policy. Raymond Aron had seen this as early as June 1953, when an uprising nearly overthrew the communist regime of East-Berlin, which was eventually saved by the intervention of Soviet tanks.

Contrary to the Soviet Union, China has been able to reform her economy while maintaining the grip of the communist party. And the latter has become

11) James M. Acton, "U.S. National Missile Defense Policy" in Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Peter Dombrowski, ed., *Regional Missile Defense from a Global Perspective* (Stanford, 2015), 36.

12) <http://www.cfr.org/north-korea/investigation-result-sinking-roks-cheonan-may-2010/p22180>.

13) Deborah Jerome, "North Korea's Escalating Aggression."

<http://www.cfr.org/north-korea/north-koreas-escalating-aggression/p23492>.

a guarantee of social and political stability when China, following Deng Xiaoping's reform, entered globalization. In that new era, the People's Republic of China has become the world's second largest economy by receiving unprecedented foreign investments, mostly from the United States, Europe and Japan. The investors were lured by the huge and cheap Chinese workforce, so that China has become, on a much bigger scale, what 19th England used to be: the world's factory. Yet, there are differences with Victorian England: China's growth still depends on what is actually a mutual dependence between the USA and China. Besides, China is still a mostly regional power, whose military does not have the global reach of the United States and whose mastery of advanced technologies still lags far behind American capabilities. The Chinese leadership shows restraint not to provoke the US at the global level, as it was visible when the US, under the George W. Bush administration, invaded Iraq in 2003. Though her economic growth generates a powerful upwards trend, China does not increase her military spendings in percentage of her GDP: a mere 1.9% in 2015 compared to 3.3% for the US, a military budget which nevertheless ranks 2nd in the world and dwarves those of China's Asian neighbours: in 2016, Japan ranked 8th with a budget that amounts to 2.4% of her GDP and South Korea 10th with 2.2%¹⁴⁾.

Yet China is increasingly seen as a global competitor by the United States, which led to Barack Obama's "Pivot to Asia" strategy announced in 2012, at the end of his first term. The US is willing to increase her air and sea-power in the Pacific and in the Far East. Tensions have been increasing over the Diaoyu-Senkaku islands dispute between China and Japan, as well as about the South China Sea reefs occupied and polderized by China¹⁵⁾. Even though the US denies recognition of what Washington considers Beijing's fait accompli, and President Obama reaffirmed US supports to local allies like the Philippines and repeatedly sent USN ships or even B-52 bombers to the area, Beijing still holds the ground and defies what it is its

14) See Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

<http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1604.pdf>

15) Ralf Emmers, ed., *Geopolitics and Maritime Territorial Disputes in East Asia*, (Routledge, 2010); "Examining the South China Sea Disputes" Papers from the Fifth Annual CSIS South China Sea Conference, CSIS (September 2015).

https://csisprod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/legacy_files/files/publication/151110_Hiebert_ExaminingSouthChinaSea_Web.pdf

view a show of American hegemony. Inferior by far to the US in naval, air and space power – the second hand Soviet-built Liaoning carrier looks barely operational –, China boasts about her new weapons like the “carrier-killer” DF-21 missile. By denying US aircraft carriers large tracts of water in the Far East, China could prevent American task forces from approaching the shores, making them useless. Relatively inexpensive, the DF-21 might prove an efficient deterrent against American naval supremacy. But this, as we are going to see, may be more Chinese propaganda than reality.

The Republic of Korea, like European countries, depends on the American alliance for her defense. In a recent essay, Christian Malis, a French historian noted for his book on Raymond Aron and the French strategic debate¹⁶), distinguishes between three different worlds¹⁷): a post-westphalian world in which states have renounced war as a means to solve their dispute, as it happens in the European Union, North America and Latin America; a pre-westphalian world in which the risk of war is linked to state disintegration as it is the case in the Middle East (Iraq and Syria) or in Africa. The last category is a “neo-westphalian” world mostly represented by Asian nations. About them Malis quotes Henry Kissinger : “ An international system is relatively stable if the level of reassurance required by its members is achievable by diplomacy. When diplomacy no longer functions, relationships become increasingly concentrated on military strategy—first in the form of arms races, then as a maneuvering for strategic advantage even at the risk of confrontation, and, finally, in war itself¹⁸).” Contrary to Europe, Eastern Asia does not feature any common market or security community that might, like the European Union, have brought about reconciliation among former foes. Nor does it have a common alliance like the Atlantic alliance and its military organization NATO. Therefore, defense depends mostly on bilateral alliances, the most powerful of which is the US-Japanese alliance¹⁹).

16) Christian Malis, *Raymond Aron et le débat stratégique français 1930-1966* (Paris: Economica, 2005).

17) Christian Malis, *Guerre et stratégie au xxie siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2015).

18) Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), 515.

19) “U.S.-Japan-R.O.K. Trilateral Relationship,” remarks by Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, Washington D.C., March 29, 2016. <https://www.state.gov/s/d/2016d/255277.htm>

Even before the inauguration of Donald J. Trump, whose election raises some questions about the future of American foreign policy, a closer look at Barack Obama's legacy in that field is required. As exemplified by a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the judgements are mixed, especially on Obama's record with China²⁰). Yet, Thomas J. Christensen, in his recent book on China's rise, concludes that "China's increased military, economic, and political power poses challenges for US national security and regional stability in Asia. But we need not panic. Not only does China have many disincentives for aggression, but it is not likely to catch up or surpass the United States in terms of comprehensive national power anytime soon." Furthermore: "China is unlikely to have the military wherewithal to become a global peer competitor of the United States for decades to come²¹)." The same author emphasizes the inner weaknesses of China: the PRC is still a developing country whose economy is very sensitive to the ups and downs of the global market. Last but not least, Christensen underlines the strength of the alliances created by the United States, even in Asia. Notwithstanding the Chinese attempts to divide America's allies in Asia, and the recent statements by the Philippines highly controversial president Rodrigo Duterte in Beijing – "America has lost²²)" –, the USA is still the only counterweigh to Chinese hegemony in Eastern Asia and American hegemony is less abhorrent to most countries of the area than its Chinese counterpart²³). Accordingly, Washington's first two allies in Eastern Asia, Tokyo and Seoul, are both strongly committed to upholding their respective alliances. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Japan²⁴), as well as President Park Geun-Hye in Korea, have showed their determination on that score.

20) Thomas J. Christensen, "Obama and Asia. Confronting the China challenge," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2015.

21) Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (Norton, 2015), Chapter 3, "Why Chinese Power Will Not Surpass U.S. Power Anytime Soon."

22) <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/20/asia/china-philippines-duterte-visit/> (20 October 2016).

23) Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in world politics* (Public Affairs, 2004).

24) Michael Auslin, "Japan's New Realism: Abe Gets Tough," *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 2016).

II. Clausewitz and Ballistic Missile Defense: an Aronian View.

In *Peace and war: A Theory of International Relations*, Raymond Aron explains how much the efficacy of deterrence depends on the context: “the verb to deter requires two complements; who to deter? from what ?”²⁵⁾ He insists that in nuclear deterrence, the ability to withstand a first strike is foremost. South Korea is undoubtedly highly vulnerable, since her capital is close to the border with North Korea. And the latter has recently behaved in such a way that the worst could possibly happen. Even a limited non-conventional strike could hurt the ROK very badly. In such circumstances, the deployment of a local missile defense system makes sense. From the viewpoint of the South Korean leadership, such a system shows the government’s determination to protect its own population. From the standpoint of the United States who provides the system, THAAD is an all-in-one answer to multiple issues. First, it is a token of the US commitment to defend South Korea, even though the core of that commitment is represented by the 28,500 servicemen of the United States Forces in Korea (USFK)²⁶⁾. Besides, THAAD is a means to provide security for the US military in Korea, thus strengthening the whole alliance. In any case, an attack against the USFK would trigger retaliations from the United States. Another benefit from THAAD is that it also contributes to deterring South Korea from building up her own deterrent. The policy of the United States is to prevent nuclear proliferation, but the development of a nuclear stockpile in North Korea may encourage South Korea and Japan to do the same. Contrary to general Gallois, one of the strategists involved in the creation of the French deterrent, Aron did not believe that a world in which every country would possess atomic weapons would be safer. He did not trust the “levelling power of atoms”, precisely because deterrence is also a matter of psychological resilience and physical strength, i.e. the ability to survive a first strike. As long as the USFK does exist, South Korea does not need nuclear weapons of her own. The investment would be too heavy and the drawbacks exceed any expected

25) Aron, *Paix et Guerre entre les Nations*, 407.

26) <http://www.usfk.mil/Portals/105/Documents/2016%20Strategic%20Digest.pdf>.

benefits.

But there is another American interest in THAAD. The system consists in two different elements, a radar and the interceptors. And the powerful X-band AN/TPY 2 phased-array radar could also provide cues on Chinese missiles to the US ballistic missile defense²⁷⁾. While THAAD is intended to intercept incoming missile in the terminal phase of their flight, its radar can also provide some data on the boost phase, increasing the possibilities of a midcourse intercept by other US ballistic missile defense systems like the shipborne Aegis. It is also known that THAAD interceptors are capable to send back data about the incoming warhead they are tracking, which, if need be, could increase the probability of successful interception by other BMD systems²⁸⁾. In other words, THAAD's value is not limited to the regional level. Originally developed as a tactical US Army system, it was later placed under supervision of the National Missile Defense, which denotes its significance at the strategic level.

That strategic importance of THAAD should not be overestimated. Critics have questioned the efficacy of ballistic missile systems²⁹⁾, arguing that they could not discriminate between actual warheads and decoys, that most systems deemed combat proven have worked poorly, which raises the question : can they work at all? Theodore Postol, a expert in ballistic missiles, insists that the Israeli Iron Dome system lacks the efficiency claimed by its conceivers. He is adamant that the low number of casualties in Israel is mostly the result of the very efficient local civil defense, not of the accuracy of the interceptors, which Postol doubts: "The Israeli government is not telling the truth about Iron Dome to its own population, or to the United States, which has provided the Israeli government with the bulk of the funding needed to design and build the much-heralded but apparently ineffective rocket-defense system³⁰⁾". If BMD systems perform poorly against the

27) Christopher P. Twomey and Michael S. Chase, "Chinese attitudes toward Missile Defense" in Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Peter Dombrowski, ed., *Regional Missile Defense from a Global Perspective* (Stanford, 2015), 197.

28) George N. Lewis, "Technical Controversy: Can Missile Defense Work?" in Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Peter Dombrowski, ed., *Regional Missile Defense from a Global Perspective* (Stanford, 2015), 71.

29) George N. Lewis and Theodore A. Postol, "Portrait of a Bad Idea," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Jul/Aug1997, Vol. 53 Issue 4, 18.

most primitive ballistic missiles, how could they deal with more sophisticated weapons? George N. Lewis emphasizes that “Given that nuclear weapons are likely to be an extremely limited and valuable resource to a country like North Korea or Iran, and given the known existence of ballistic missile defenses, such countries have powerful incentives to take steps to attempt to enhance the likelihood that they can penetrate a defense.³¹⁾” The development of decoys is inexpensive compared to the build up of any missile defense. Besides, countermeasures are likely to overwhelm interception capabilities. Lewis refers to the countermeasure package which was developed by the British for the cancelled Blue Streak missile of the late 1950s, noting that it was then deemed invincible and suggesting that it might still be impossible to defeat it nowadays³²⁾.

Nevertheless, Lewis raises an essential question: “what does it mean to work” when it comes about missile defense? During the Gulf war in 1991, as he explains, the Patriot system was successful in preventing potentially coalition-fracturing Israeli strikes against the Iraqi Scud launchers. Yet although Patriot was then widely perceived as being highly effective, its actual effectiveness in destroying Scuds was essentially zero.” And Ariel Levite and Schlomo Brom do not share Postol’s pessimism on Iron Dome. While believing in the efficacy of the system, they also note its political implications, as the population asks for protection, consequently for expansion of the ballistic missile defense system³³⁾. From the viewpoint of the Israeli leaders, Iron Dome offers wider political options to manage crises.

As a matter of fact, current ballistic missile defense does not have enough accuracy nor reliability to face the threat of a nuclear (or non-conventional) attack. Lewis states that in a single-layer defense, to shoot missiles in salvos improves the allocation of interceptors without increasing defense effectiveness. Only a multi-layered defense could achieve an increase in efficiency³⁴⁾. The poor record of ground based interceptors (GBI) is arguably one of the reasons why the US has limited

30) <http://thebulletin.org/evidence-shows-iron-dome-not-working7318> (19 July 2014).

31) George N. Lewis, *op. cit.*, 73.

32) *Ibid.*, 74.

33) Ariel Levite and Shlomo Brom, “From dream to reality. Israel and missile defense” in Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Peter Dombrowski, ed., *Regional Missile Defense from a Global Perspective* (Stanford, 2015), 137.

34) Lewis, *op. cit.*, 70.

their deployment at home and renounced deploying them in Europe. Instead, Defense Secretary Robert Gates chose the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) based on SM3 missiles³⁵). EPAA is intended to be more flexible, leaving the US more options to adapt her policies depending on technological breakthroughs and the evolution of the threats. What comes here to the forefront is Clausewitz's main idea: the primacy of the political.

Postol's opposition to developing ABMs was mostly based on his high technical expertise and the idea that those systems could not work. They would represent a waste of resources. More, they were likely to trigger a new arms race. That's why Postol criticized the Strategic Defense Initiative and went on questioning ballistic missile defense, a position which he still represents today. We must acknowledge that Postol has consistently based his views on a political argument: if ABMs do not work but trigger arms races, they are prone to destabilizing international relations without any benefit. Robert MacNamara's vision that deterrence could only work if each contender felt the threat led to restraining ABMs in the SALT treaty. The Soviets deployed the Galosh ABMs, whose efficacy was questionable, while the US installed the Safeguard system on a single site, quickly phased out as Congress stopped funding. Back in the 1970s, the major hindrance to making ABMs work was that the blast of the interceptor's nuclear warhead would preclude detection of other reentry vehicles. In the meantime, technological progress has made a direct hit possible, so that – at least in the West – nuclear warheads are no longer used for interceptors.

If we try to think the Korean situation in Clausewitzian terms, then we should bear in mind that Clausewitz sees war as a trial of will³⁶) in which the usual aim is the destruction of the enemy force. Back in 1950 in Korea, both sides nearly achieved that war aim: the North before Douglas MacArthur's landing at Inchon, the UN forces when they came close to the Yalu, which triggered the Chinese intervention. As we have previously stated, General MacArthur believed he was following Clausewitz when he claimed that there is “no substitute to victory”.

35) Status of Implementing the Phased Adaptive Approach to Missile Defense in Europe, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, House Armed Services Committee, 111th Congress 32 (December 1, 2010).

36) Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations*, p.37.

Clausewitz, however, has always defended the primacy of the political, so that he insists that military victories are always tactical. In the case of the Korean war, both Truman and McArthur would have been satisfied if it had been possible to conquer North Korea and to reunify the country in the fall of 1950. Yet, the massive onslaught of the Chinese raised the stakes to the point that maintaining that aim would have implied to go a step further in escalation, which required, as McArthur put it right, the use of nuclear weapons against the Chinese, either in North Korea or on their rear bases in Manchuria. When Raymond Aron commented on the Korean war, he was aware that the fate of South Korea might be the destiny of Western Germany, in which case all Western Europe, including France, his country, would have been dragged into a very probably nuclear war. Contrary to other intellectuals, Aron was never afraid that an American general might challenge the constitutional power of the president. He never believed that McArthur might plot a coup.

Nevertheless, the stakes were high: it was about the limitation of war. From that perspective, the US had never been Clausewitzian, because since the American Civil War, the destruction of enemy forces had always been considered a prerequisite to unconditional surrender. When, in 1943, Franklin D. Roosevelt firmly established that aim at the Casablanca conference, with the support of Winston Churchill, it became clear that the US was following the same pattern as during the Civil War. During the latter indeed, Abraham Lincoln had no other option but to compel the Confederates to unconditional surrender, because any negotiated peace would have enabled the Confederacy to survive, and Lincoln's victory could only consist in reunifying the country. In the context of WW2, Raymond Aron feared that the principle of unconditional surrender would entail further escalation and prolong the war, as it appeared when Josef Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, answered the Casablanca proclamation by a call for "total war". In 1949, Aron made a positive review of Hanson W. Baldwin's *Great mistakes of the war*³⁷⁾, a short essay in which the American publicist explained that by dissociating the military and political objectives, by postponing the latter until after the end of the war, the US had created the conditions in which Stalin would control the Eastern half of Europe and large parts of Asia. The Korean war was the first conflict in which

37) Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War* (London: Alvin Redman, 1950).

an American president departed from the primacy of military victory, because Truman stuck to his global strategy of containment.

So, the first and main conception of war documented in Clausewitz's *On War*, which implies the “ascent to the extremes³⁸⁾”, came to an end in Korea in the years 1951-1953, after Truman had decided to limit the war and McArthur's successor managed to contain the Chinese, so that they would abandon the idea to conquer Southern Korea. And what began in 1953 was not actual peace, because the regime of PyongYang has not ceased to threaten its neighbour. The regime of PyongYang presumably first wants to maintain itself and fears the principle, embedded in the constitution of the ROK, that “Korea shall seek unification”. Knowing that the DPRK does not match, and by far, the economic and cultural achievements of the ROK, PyongYang relies on blackmail and intimidation, using the only part of its apparatus that works: its military and industry of armaments.

Looking at the situation from the standpoint of the Clausewitzian theory, this leads us to what Aron called “the second kind of war”. In 1890, when the German *Reichswehr* considered the absolute destruction of the enemy the highest objective in war³⁹⁾, Delbrück observed that neither Frederick II the Great nor Pericles had represented such a strategy and pointed that, if their art of war was to be judged after the rules of Napoleonic warfare, they would fare poorly⁴⁰⁾. Clausewitz presents the difference between the two kinds of war as follows: “either the objective is to overthrow the enemy—to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent, thus forcing him to sign whatever peace we please; or merely to occupy some of his frontier-districts so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations. Transitions from one type to the other will of course recur in my treatment; but the fact that the aims of the two types are quite different must be clear at all times, and their points of irreconcilability brought out⁴¹⁾.” While

38) Clausewitz, *On War*, I, 1.

39) Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2005).

40) Hans Delbrück, *Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen, mit einem Anhang über Thukydides und Kleon* (Berlin, Reimer, 1890). A French translation is available : Hans Delbrück, *La Stratégie oubliée, Périclès, Frédéric le Grand, Thucydide et Cléon* (Paris, Economica, 2015).

41) Clausewitz, *On War*, notice of 10 July 1827.

the second kind of war is not thoroughly theorized in the treatise, because Clausewitz died before completing it, Hans Delbrück undertook to develop it in *The Strategy of Pericles*. Clausewitz explains in that way the circumstances in which the second kind of war happens: “Even where determination and strength will not suffice to bring about a great decision, one may still want to mount a strategic attack against a minor objective.⁴²⁾” In the second kind of war, the aim is no longer to overthrow the enemy – either for lack of will or for want of capabilities to do so –, it is rather to wear down the enemy’s willingness to fight. Therefore, Delbrück coined the term of *Ermattungsstrategie* (strategy of harassment) opposed to the *Niederwerfungsstrategie* (strategy of overthrow). Raymond Aron stated that the Cold War exemplified the second kind of war: Stalin wanted an overall victory in the classic sense. But the resistance of the West forced him to adopt a strategy of the second kind, so that, Aron concluded, “the coincidence of two strategies of harassment, with limited means, [could] lead to an extended trial of strength over a generation⁴³⁾.”

The Korean conflict belongs obviously to the same kind of war. It has been so since the decision made in 1951 by the United States to limit the war and to prevent further escalation. The ceasefire signed on 27 July 1953 in Panmunjeon officialized the acceptance of that limitation of war by the Chinese and North Korean side. The outcome was an armed peace in which neither side recognizes the full legitimacy of the other one and one of them – the DPRK – relentlessly provokes its neighbour and enemy. In *Peace and war*, published in 1962, Raymond Aron recommended a strategy for the Europeans within the context of the Cold War: “to survive is to win”⁴⁴⁾. Like Western Europe during the Cold War, the ROK has demonstrated the superiority of its political regime. The institutions of the ROK, whatever the criticisms, have enabled the development of a thriving and powerful economy, combining political freedom and a high living standard. Korean companies have assumed a leading role in the world economy and the

42) Clausewitz, *op. cit.*, VII, 16.

43) Aron, “De la paix sans victoire,” 253. For an overview of Raymond Aron’s analysis of Clausewitz see our chapter “Citizen Clausewitz: Aron’s Clausewitz in Defense of Political Freedom” in José Colen and Élisabeth Dutartre, eds., *The Companion to Raymond Aron* (Palgrave, 2015).

44) Aron, *op. cit.*, chapter XXII.

country has hosted several major international events like the Olympic games and the soccer world cup, while also playing an important part in the domains of arts and sciences. The Parisians, for instance, have admired the genius of Myung-whun Chung, music director of the Paris Opera in the early nineties. The late President Kim Dae-jung, Korea's Nobel Prize laureate, had embodied a spirit of reconciliation which, even though he did not reach his aim because it was not shared by the North, may some day be revived, when the regime of Pyongyang will leave place to another one.

All those achievements could take place because the ROK was also willing to defend herself against the threat from the North. Like Western European countries during the Cold War, the defense of the ROK has depended on the American alliance and the commitment of her own army and population to maintain capabilities at a level that would deter any attempt by the North. And the attacks carried out by the DPRK have been mostly skirmishes which, even though they might take their toll of victims – as it happened with the sinking of the *Cheonan* – did not escalate further because there was no doubt that the US would intervene and could inflict greater damage in retaliation.

The announced deployment of THAAD has entailed two kinds of protest: the first one is by South Korean farmers and dwellers who fear that the electromagnetic radiation produced by the AN/TPY 2 radar may be harmful for their health and environment⁴⁵). Likewise, European protesters against the Pershing II and Cruise missiles during the euromissile crisis of the early eighties felt anxious about the possibility that the missiles might increase the risks of a nuclear war in Europe. A similarity is that the protesters, in both cases, considered that the deployment of the new weapons would worsen the existing tensions. Those opposed to THAAD also object that the system is unreliable, so that its detrimental effects should exceed its uncertain benefits. While the Soviet Union supported the demonstrations against the deployment of the Pershings through the Peace Movement, there is no evidence that the DPRK or China are doing the same against THAAD.

45) Hyun Lee, "The South Korea Protest Movement against the THAAD Missile System. 'Seongju is Korea and Korea is Seongju,'" *Global Research* (August 20, 2016). <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-south-korea-protest-movement-against-the-thaad-missile-system-seongju-is-korea-and-korea-is-seongju/5541743>.

In both cases, the dynamic of protest depends on the culture of dissent in a liberal democratic society. It derives from political freedom. Raymond Aron did not question the right of citizens to demonstrate against the Pershings. But he insisted that the historical situation of the Cold War should not be forgotten. Individual freedom could no longer exist if the citizens neglect their duties, among which the duty to defend their homeland, if need be by risking their lives⁴⁶).

In 1977, the Soviet Union had installed new medium range ballistic missiles in Eastern Europe, the SS-20s⁴⁷). Mobile, equipped with three nuclear warheads for each missile, they had the capability to destroy most of NATO's command and control infrastructure in Western Europe. A strike by the SS-20s and the Soviet Backfire bombers would leave the US with no other option but to escalate the war at the strategic level. In that case, would the US president risk the existence of American cities to prevent Europe from being invaded by the Warsaw Pact ? As a matter of fact, the SS-20s could be a game changer. They were far more capable than the SS-4 and SS-5 systems that they were supposed to replace. With a superior range, though not sufficient to reach the US, they might uncouple the European countries of the Atlantic alliance from the US. Consequently, NATO adopted the "double track decision": negotiations would be undertaken with the USSR to remove the SS-20s. Should they fail, from 1983 onwards NATO would deploy 572 euromissiles (464 land-based cruise missiles and 108 Pershing IIs). The Soviet Union feared the Pershings because Moscow knew they would be able to hit the Warsaw pact's command and control infrastructure with a great accuracy. The USSR warned the Europeans that the Pershings would increase the risk of war, which had a significant effect in the Federal Republic of Germany, Western Europe's most exposed country, where huge demonstrations took place with the motto "Lieber rot als tot" (better red than dead).

Raymond Aron died on 17 October 1983. His last article asked for the deployment of the Pershings⁴⁸). The euromissile crisis was a trial of will in which the

46) See, among other writings, Aron, *Penser la Guerre: Clausewitz* (Paris, Gallimard, 1976), Vol. 2, 286. Aron, «Une citoyenneté multinationale est-elle possible?», *Commentaire*, n° 56, hiver 1991, 695-704.

47) Leopoldo Nuti, Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, eds., *The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford, 2015).

48) Aron, «Pershing: le test du courage européen», *L'Express*, 7 October 1983.

Europeans had to show their willingness to defend themselves. Aron's reasoning was based on his idea, presented in his 1976 masterpiece *Clausewitz, philosopher of war*⁴⁹⁾, that although Europeans were tempted to say "farewell to arms", their own historical experience, epitomized by Clausewitz, had taught them that national defense was foremost and that a show of strength and determination was more likely to preserve peace than pacifism or appeasement. In another essay, *In Defense of Decadent Europe*⁵⁰⁾, Aron had explained that even though he considered Western Europe far more economically powerful than the Soviet block, yet the might of the Red Army was impressive and Soviet expansionism dangerous, all the more as some Western Europeans were in a situation of denial. What followed vindicated Aron's plea for firmness. He had witnessed the first cracks in the Soviet grip in Eastern Europe, when Lech Walesa started to challenge Poland's communist government with the catholic trade-union Solidarnosc. Aron, however, believed that the USSR would enforce normalization as it had happened in 1956 in Hungary and in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Contrary to those expectations, the USSR would disintegrate from within. Its last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was not able to reform the system as he intended to. Nevertheless, he signed in 1987 the treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) which stated that both SS-20s and NATO's euromissiles would be withdrawn and dismantled. The deployment of the Pershings had not triggered WW3. It had hastened the end of the Cold War in a way that matches Delbrück's and Aron's interpretation of Clausewitz's second kind of war: the stubbornness of the Western allies combined with their technological superiority had worn down the willingness of the Soviets to expand their own ideology, to the point that they no longer believed in it. The Cold War ended in a victory of the West, without a single shot fired between the two alliances. In the aftermath of that victory, the West would indulge in delusions. In particular, would a non-communist Russia be easier to deal with than the USSR ? The reaction that followed, when Vladimir Putin committed himself to restoring Russia in her pristine grandeur, reveals both the depth of those delusions and the permanent features of power politics.

49) Aron, *Penser la Guerre: Clausewitz* (Paris, Galliamrd, 1976), 2 volumes.

50) Aron, *Plaidoyer pour l'Europe décadente* (Paris, Robert Laffont, 1977).

III. Conclusions: Why Deploying THAAD Might Be the Right Decision.

The first reason to deploy THAAD in Korea is that it is an additional token of the US commitment to defend the country. Though a defensive weapon system, THAAD is also part of the mightiest military power in the world. George N. Lewis argues that THAAD has succeeded in a series of thirteen interception tests, compared to “the 150 consecutive successful flight tests (as of June 2014) of the Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missile since 1989.⁵¹⁾” Conversely, it means that THAAD is backed by a very efficient deterrent. It is not an end in itself, and should not be isolated from the larger military system of which it is part. Whatever the flaws and teething problems of American missile defense, THAAD and Aegis add significant capabilities to the US and allied forces, militarily as well as politically. For example, a missile attack on the ROK forestalled by a successful THAAD interception would give the US president the possibility not to escalate immediately towards an all-out war.

Ballistic missile defense is a means towards a more flexible response, and the gain in flexibility increases the efficacy of deterrence. That is the reason why Aron had always questioned the Eisenhower’s administration massive retaliations strategy and felt much more satisfied with Robert McNamara’s flexible response, based on the idea that the nuclear threshold had to be raised in order to improve the credibility of the menace.

The development of ballistic missile defense is mostly aimed at preventing “rogue states” like the DPRK to acquire the capability to threaten the American territory. Washington is not willing to let North Korea establish a situation of mutual deterrence with America, as it is the case with Russia or China. This, beyond the consequences for the United States, would considerably weaken the safety of the ROK. Indeed, one of the reasons why the US commitment in South Korea is much convincing is the presumed invulnerability of the US territory to North Korean attacks. During the Cold War, the development of Soviet nuclear weapons made the protection by the US nuclear umbrella more uncertain: would the US president sacrifice New York or Boston for the sake of Berlin or Paris? This evolu-

51) Lewis, *op. cit.*, 80.

tion created in incentive to develop independent deterrents in Europe or to endow NATO's European members like the FRG of nuclear warheads. The development of THAAD in South Korea is one among other steps that tend to reduce the probability that in a near future, North Korea might be able to threaten the US. While PyongYang is likely to increase its ballistic capabilities, the odds are that US ballistic missile defense will also make some progress which creates a rationale for deploying forward-based sensors.

Besides, US ballistic missile defense is not aimed at upsetting the Russian or Chinese deterrents. Russia knows that its strategic forces based on heavy ICBMs would easily overwhelm any existing American defenses. While the Chinese deterrent is arguably more vulnerable, it is nevertheless still credible in the current state of American missile defense.

The dilemma between the economic interest of the ROK in good relations with China and the deployment of THAAD which raises Chinese protests should not lead to pusillanimity. Back in the 1980s, Western Europe also had a huge economic interest in good relations with the USSR. West Germany depended increasingly on Siberian natural gas. Determination ought to bear more fruits than shyness. The deployment of THAAD will not preclude the ROK from negotiating a better relation with Beijing once the anger of Beijing will have subsided. The Chinese leadership is determined but pragmatic.

Aronian prudence was never the “reptile prudence” which Edmund Burke contemplated with contempt during the war with revolutionary France⁵²⁾. On the contrary, when Raymond Aron created the journal *Commentaire* in 1978, he chose as a motto the words of Thucydides: “Realize that happiness is freedom, and freedom is courage.”⁵³⁾

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52) Edmund Burke, *Two letters addressed to a member of the present parliament on the proposals for peace with the regicide directory of France* (London, Rivington, 1796), 11, “There is a courageous wisdom: there is also a false reptile prudence, the result not of caution but of fear.”

53) Thucydides, *op. cit.*, 95.

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