

THE DEFENSE MONITOR

The Newsletter of the Center for Defense Information

The Chaos in America's Vast Security Budget

BY WINSLOW T. WHEELER, STRAUS MILITARY REFORM PROJECT DIRECTOR

THE NEW 2009 DEFENSE BUDGET has just been released. The more you look into the numbers, the more things become unclear, very unclear. Most of the numbers that have been released are inaccurate or incomplete, or both. Other numbers will change as the year progresses, but we do not know if they will go up or down.

The Department of Defense (DOD) says its budget request for the next fiscal year – 2009 – is \$515.4 billion. U.S. President George W. Bush's budget as shown by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) says the Pentagon request is \$518.3 billion, a \$2.9 billion difference. OMB is right; the Pentagon "forgot" to include some permanent appropriations (also called "entitlements" or "mandatory" spending) for retirement and some other non-hardware spending.

The \$518.3 billion is also incomplete; it does not include \$70 billion requested to pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But even with the inclusion of this number, the total is still inaccurate. It does not include enough money to fight the wars for more than a few months in 2009. If



WHAT IS THE "DEFENSE BUDGET"?

(\$ Billions, Total Budget Authority)

Category	2007	2008 (Estimated)	2009 (Request)
DOD (Includes War \$)	603.0	670.5	588.3
DOD War Funding Included Above	169.3	86.8 (appropriated) + 102.4 (requested)	70.0
"Atomic Energy Defense Activities" (DOE)	17.2	16.4	17.1
"Defense Related Activities" (GSA, etc.)	3.6	3.8	3.2
Total "National Defense"	625.8	693.2	611.1*
Homeland Security (DHS)	39.7	41.1	40.1
Veterans Affairs (DVA)	79.6	88.0	91.3
International Affairs	68.4	39.5	38.4
Non-DOD Military Retirement	16.2	13.7	12.1
21% of Interest on the Debt	50.2	51.3	54.5
Grand Total	879.9	926.8	847.5

Source: See http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2008/pdf/ap_cd_rom/27_1.pdf

* The above numbers do not add up to Total National Defense; for an explanation, see the text of the article.

INSIDE

- 3 **The State of the (European) Union** Making U.S. Defense Spending Look Efficient
- 4 **The Future of Nuclear Disarmament** U.S. and Russian Public Opinion ►►
- 6 **Missile Defense and the Czech Republic**
- 8 **Was the Satellite "Shoot Down" Worth It?**
- 9 **Prospects for an African Headquarters for AFRICOM**



the violence in Iraq stays at its recently reduced levels – or even declines – that \$70 billion should be about doubled to get through the entire year. If things fall apart in Iraq and continue to deteriorate in Afghanistan, as is very likely, that \$70 billion should be about tripled. In either case, the amount requested in the budget for the wars is off by \$70 to \$140 billion.

This barely scratches the surface of the numbers in the Pentagon's budget that are cooked by the military services, civilian managers and budget personnel. But, to add to the confusion and obfuscation, there are other national security costs, and uncertainties, in other agency budget requests.

The Department of Energy (DOE) has requested \$17.1 billion for nuclear weapons research, storage and related activities. Programs sure to be rejected by the Democratic Congress have been included, and Congress loves to add pork to DOE's budget, just as it does to the Pentagon's budget. How much could this add up to? It could be as much as 10 percent, but it is not clear if Congress will add the money for its pork or force DOE to pay for it out of the programs DOE requested.

The president is requesting an additional \$3.2 billion for miscellaneous defense costs in other agencies, such as the General Services Administration's National Defense Stockpile, the Selective Service and the FBI's international activities. Quite minor and usually ignored, these accounts are not usually the subject of gimmicks from OMB or enough attention in Congress to mean significant changes.

If you add all the official estimates from OMB for the above, you get a total of \$608.6 billion for 2009. That

total equates to a category in the president's budget called "National Defense." It includes the programs that should be included, beyond just the Pentagon, to calculate what we spend for our security. But none of the numbers are right; not only are they incomplete, as indicated above, but \$608.6 billion is not the number OMB shows for the combined total for these activities, which is \$611.1 billion. The budget materials released in February do not seem to explain. Your guess is as good as mine.

There is more – both spending and confusion – lots more.

Any inclusive definition of U.S. security spending should surely also include the budget for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS): add \$40.1 billion. With DHS being one of the worst managed federal agencies – according to both conventional wisdom and OMB's rating of federal agencies called the scorecard of the "President's Management Agenda" – there is no telling just what will happen to its budget request. Will it go up because homeland security is important, or will it go down because DHS is incompetent?

There are also important security costs in the budget of the State Department for diplomacy, arms aid to allies, UN peacekeeping, reconstruction aid for Iraq and Afghanistan, and foreign aid for other countries. Surely, these contribute to U.S. national security; add \$38.4 billion to our total. Recently, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates argued that the nation spends too little on diplomacy and aid to other nations. Will this help boost Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's budget, or will Congress take a few whacks at politically unpopular "foreign aid" in an election year, as it usually does?

Surely, U.S. security expenses include the human costs of past and current wars; add another \$91.3 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Does this budget underestimate the costs for veterans from current and past wars, as has been the case for the last few years? Very possibly, but by how much is currently unknown.

We should add the share of the interest for the national debt that can be attributed to national defense spending, but few agree what that share is. One reasonable calculation argues that the "National Defense" budget category constitutes about 21 percent of federal spending, and that percent of the 2009 deficit should be calculated. That would be \$54.5 billion. However, that number is certainly too small as the deficit is likely to grow with spending not yet counted for the wars and economic stimulus. Moreover, some argue that spending for the wars has come on top of other spending and, thus, a larger percentage of the deficit should be charged to national defense.

There's more: add the cost to the Treasury Department for military retirement that is not counted in the DOD budget – that's \$12.1 billion. Some would also add the interest earned in Treasury's military retirement fund, another \$16.2 billion.

Get the point? The articles that newspapers all over the country publish on the budget are filled with numbers to the first decimal point; they will seem precise. Few of them will be accurate; many will be incomplete, some will be both. Worse, few of us will be able to tell which numbers are too high, which are too low, and which are so riddled with gimmicks that they lose real meaning. ■

The State of the (European) Union

Making U.S. Defense Spending Look Efficient

BY MARK BURGESS, WSI BRUSSELS DIRECTOR

FRENCH PRESIDENT Nicolas Sarkozy's proposal to establish a core defense group comprising the six biggest members of the European Union (EU) is typically ambitious. It also belies the limited progress made by the EU toward defense integration. Key requirements for members of the new group are the establishment of a common defense procurement market and the raising of defense spending to 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). The conditions will prove difficult to fulfill. Yet, as the Sarkozy initiative correctly identifies, the question of EU military spending must be adequately addressed if the Union is ever to realize its full potential with regard to a common defense policy.

Differing budget procedures impede the effectiveness of any EU-wide defense budgeting. These differences also create difficulties when comparing European defense budgets with that of America – or indeed within the EU itself. There is no EU defense budget, just individual member state budgets. However, such considerations notwithstanding, to a degree, the fig-

ures involved speak for themselves.

According to the European Defense Agency, EU countries spent €201 billion [\$309 billion] on their defense budgets in 2006 (up from €193 billion [\$296 billion] the previous year) – an average of 1.78 percent of GDP across the 26 participating Member States. This compares to €491 billion [\$755 billion] spent by the United States (up from €406 billion [\$624 billion] in 2005) – or 4.7 percent GDP – during the same period. While this huge and growing expenditure gap raises questions as to the degree of overspend and overkill in U.S. defense spending, EU countries are often criticized for spending too little in this area. The fact that defense spending across the EU varies so much (see charts below) also complicates the building of a common EU policy, creating what is often perceived as unfair burdens on some countries, with others are accused of “freeloading.”

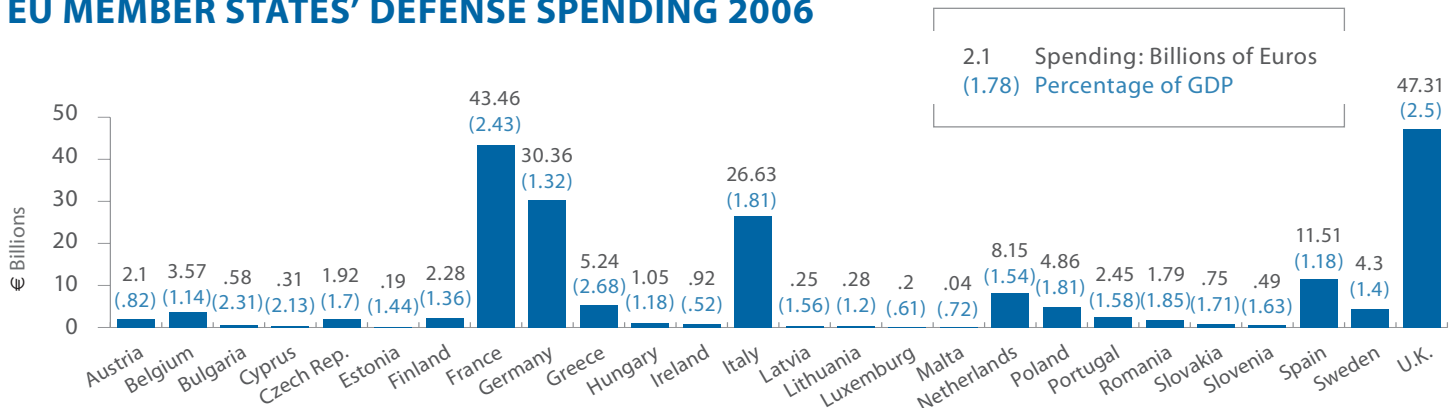
In addition, there are serious questions over how wisely EU defense spending is applied. For instance a 2005 European Commission report

found that the EU had 89 different defense programs running across 12 different land, sea and air systems, compared to 27 American ones.

EU defense spending problems also extend to its military operations. While something under 10 percent of the costs of such operations are generated by the Athena mechanism (which estimates contributions based on the Gross National Income of participating states), the remainder are financed under a “costs lie where they fall” principle as with NATO. This principle effectively double charges countries participating in EU military missions. Such countries not only have to pay for the military capabilities involved but also the extra costs associated with any EU deployment. According to the general commanding the EU military staff, this practice proved detrimental to the force generation for the Union's recently launched operation in Chad.

Even without such issues as uneven (and often too low) spending levels, irrational procurement programs, and a principle for funding operations which discourages participation, EU defense integration would be an uphill struggle. However, unless these underlying budgetary issues are resolved, it may well prove Sisyphean. ■

EU MEMBER STATES' DEFENSE SPENDING 2006



Source: European Defense Agency, “2006 National Breakdowns of European Defence Expenditure.”

The Future of Nuclear Disarmament

U.S. and Russian Public Opinion Strongly Supports Eliminating Nuclear Weapons

BY BRUCE BLAIR, WORLD SECURITY INSTITUTE PRESIDENT

The following commentary is an analysis of "Americans and Russians on Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Disarmament," a joint study of U.S. and Russian public opinion on nuclear proliferation, conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes and the Advanced Methods of Cooperative Security Program, CISSM, released on Nov. 9, 2007.



U.S. President George W. Bush with Russian President Vladimir Putin, two heads of state whose nuclear agendas seem poles apart from the views of their publics.

WHAT IS MOST STRIKING about the results of the Program on International Policy Attitudes' poll, "Americans and Russians on Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Disarmament," is that the public's view is poles apart from the views and actions of their governments. The publics in both Russia and the United States support a raft of arms control steps – de-alerting, cutting off fissile production, permanently ending nuclear testing, deeply reducing the arsenals, pulling nuclear weapons out of Europe, and getting to zero nuclear weapons. But our governments are not actively pursuing any of these agendas. On the contrary, they've been sliding backwards on most of them, and have suffered a loss of credibility on nuclear weapons issues.

The one notable exception is the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Re-

duction program, which continues to make headway in securing Russian nuclear weapons and materials from terrorist theft. Curiously though, 52 percent of Americans in the poll disapproved of this program, even though the vast majority of both Americans and Russians say that their countries should place top priority on cooperating to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons. It is interesting to note that this approval of Nunn-Lugar is down from 81 percent 10 years ago, and today Democrats are more disapproving than Republicans – 59 percent of Democrats disapprove of Nunn-Lugar, while 56 percent of Republicans approve of the program.

In spite of widespread public support for the larger basket of arms control measures, including the elimination of nuclear weapons, Washington no longer makes the case for non-proliferation, for serious nuclear disarmament, or for bilateral negotiations with Russia on nuclear forces or missile defenses. Not since 2002 has there even been an official statement of U.S. intentions regarding nuclear forces, and that statement actually moved the government farther away from public opinion by lowering the threshold for the first use of nuclear weapons. The Bush administration's position is shared by only a small

minority of Americans: 74 percent of them think that the United States should never use nuclear weapons, or should only use them in response to a nuclear attack.

The gap between Russian policy and public opinion is equally wide. Russia's nuclear doctrine since 1993 allows for the first use of nuclear forces even though 77 percent of Russians say that their country should never use them or only use them in response to a nuclear attack.

The discrepancies between what the publics favor and what their governments deliver are striking across the board. By large majorities, Americans and Russians favor reducing the number of nuclear weapons on high alert. Yet neither nation's nuclear establishment has paid any serious attention to this desire, inasmuch as they have not been responsive to calls for reducing alert levels and relying less on launch on warning. They did pay lip service to de-alerting over 10 years ago when the United States and Russia took cosmetic steps to de-target their nuclear missiles, but meaningful steps remain to be taken.

Both the United States and Russia today maintain about one-third of their total strategic arsenals on launch-ready alert. Within a few minutes they can launch hundreds of missiles armed with thousands of

nuclear warheads – the equivalent of about 100,000 Hiroshima bombs, three times more firepower than needed to kill 25 percent of the population of the United States, Europe, Russia and China combined. This fuse is short from the top to the bottom of the U.S. and Russian chains of nuclear command. As they strain to provide the capability to launch on warning, much of the decision-making process is checklist-driven, rote and quasi-automatic.

The public knows very little about the details of nuclear operations. It doesn't know that in the early warning centers, crews labor to meet a three-minute deadline for assessing whether attack indications from surveillance sensors are real or false, and that they go through this drill practically every day. Nor does it know that in the event of an apparent nuclear threat to North America, Strategic Command in Omaha, Neb., is allowed as little as 30 seconds to brief the president on his response options and their consequences. Or that the president would then have between zero and 12 minutes to absorb the information and choose a course of action.

If the public knew these details it would probably even more strongly support a stand down of U.S. and Russian missiles from high alert. PIPA's poll clearly indicates that the publics in both countries appreciate the dangers of keeping weapons on hair-trigger alert and of relying on launch on warning. They intuitively understand that de-alerting would buy us a significant margin of safety against mistaken and unauthorized launch. But again, it's striking how far removed this common-sense view is from the world of nuclear planning. The public and the planners are worlds apart.

Another example of this gulf goes to the heart of the existential nuclear danger. Two-thirds of Americans and Russians alike favor the goal of eventually eliminating all nuclear weapons. It's not a goal on the agenda of either nation, however. On the contrary, both Russian and U.S. nuclear programs and policies suggest a commitment to keeping nuclear weapons indefinitely, and oppose negotiating any next steps on the path toward zero. Both Russian and American officials have set their sights much lower than the public; very few in either country appear eager to restart negotiations to pursue even modest goals, much less the elimination of nuclear weapons.

For those of us who do support these goals, we struggle to imagine how we can influence governments to align themselves more closely to the public's more enlightened vision of the nuclear future. The second aspect of the poll that I found striking is its bipartisanship. On nearly every question the opinion of Republicans and Democrats converge far more than I would have expected. For example, 75 percent of Republicans and 95 percent of Democrats think that the U.S. government should make it a top or important priority to take steps toward eliminating nuclear weapons. This bipartisan consensus – combined with the surprising amount of bilateral consensus, between Americans and Russians – on the big issues like global elimination, leads me to believe that the political moment is close at hand to make real progress on the nuclear agenda. After the changing of the guard in four of the P-5 nuclear states is completed next year, the time will be ripe to encourage the public to energetically express its opinion to their new leaders. ■

OPINION



De-alerting All Nuclear Weapons

If the U.S. and Russia established a system for verifying that nuclear weapons have been taken off high alert, would you favor or oppose your country agreeing to take all of their nuclear weapons off of high alert?

Americans:	Favor 64%	Oppose 33%
Russians:	Favor 59%	Oppose 23%

Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Assuming that there is a well-established international system for verifying that countries are complying, would you favor or oppose all countries agreeing to eliminate all of their nuclear weapons?

Americans:	Favor 73%	Oppose 24%
Russians:	Favor 63%	Oppose 13%

Source: http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/nov07/CISSM_NucWeaps_Nov07_rpt.pdf



Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., co-author of the Nunn-Lugar Act establishing the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, inspects an SS-18 ICBM being readied for destruction in Russia.

Missile Defense and the Czech Republic

BY PHILIP E. COYLE, CDI SENIOR ADVISER

TRIP
REPORT

IN JANUARY 2008, I made a trip to Prague, the Czech Republic, to provide advice regarding the proposed U.S. missile defense system that the Bush administration wants to establish in Eastern Europe: a powerful “X-band” radar in the Czech Republic some 90 kilometers southwest of Prague, and 10 missile defense interceptors in Poland. Together these systems would make up part of an overarching missile defense network proposed by the United States for Europe.

The trip came about because Greenpeace.cz and other Czech non-governmental organizations had noticed that information being provided to Czech citizens by the Czech government and U.S. officials was often misleading or incorrect and did not give Czech citizens an accurate picture of likely capabilities of the proposed system, nor of the new dangers the proposed system would bring to the Czech Republic.

For example, Mr. Tomas Klvana, Czech government communication coordinator for the missile defense program, said: “There is no actual opposition among U.S. key political actors to the plan of extending components of Ballistic Missile Defense to Central Europe. Absolute agreement exists between politicians from both parties – Democrats and Republicans – on that plan.”

However, the reality is that the U.S. Congress voted to zero out all of the money in the fiscal year 2008 budget for site preparation and construction of the proposed missile bases in Poland and the Czech Republic.

CDI’s expertise in defense matters and missile defense is well known in the Czech Republic, so Greenpeace.cz invited me to Prague and organized my trip along with the League of Mayors Against the Radar and the

Green Party.

During my visit I gave four seminar presentations, three in the Czech Parliament and one with municipal leaders in the Brdy region near the proposed site of the U.S. X-band radar. I also held a press conference in the Parliament, met with Czech political leaders and members of Parliament, and conducted dozens of interviews for television, print and radio.

The Czech Republic has five political parties ranging from the conservative right to the liberal left. The Czech coalition government is made up of three of those parties: the Civic Democrats – conservative, Euroskeptic and nationalistic; the Christian Democrats – centrist, international; and the Greens – centrist, socially liberal and pro-environment.

With respect to the proposed missile defense system, Czech government officials have even been known to say that the decision to host the radar is too important to be left to the voters. Nevertheless public opinion polls show that 70 percent of the Czech public opposes the proposed system, and opposition has been growing. Not surprisingly, many Czechs feel that their members of Parliament are too insulated from public opinion and don’t listen to what the voters want.

Proponents in the Czech Republic

For the most part, the ruling Czech government supports the proposed system and argues that the United States and the Czech Republic are friends and should cooperate on important national security matters.

Many proponents in the government also believe that while the proposed system is not something that can be relied upon today to defend Europe, American technological prowess will eventually succeed, and that with enough time and enough money, the United States can eventually make missile defenses work.

Also, the Bush administration has suggested that the United States would spend \$1 billion dollars in the Czech Republic, and in late January 2008, Deputy Director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) Patrick O’Reilly said that the United States has set aside \$90 million that may be earned by Czech firms during the construction of the U.S. radar base.

This is serious money for a country whose GDP in 2007 was 25 percent less than the Bush administration’s latest supplemental budget request just for the war in Iraq.

Czech businesses imagine they might make money from missile defense, despite the Pentagon’s poor track record of sharing work with foreign companies. Also some Czechs told me, essentially: “It doesn’t matter if the system works. It’s going to be free for us. Why should we care if America wants to spend its money this way so long as it helps the Czech economy?”

More generally, the United States

is slowly increasing its military presence in closer proximity to Russia, and a base in the Czech Republic would add another stepping stone. Some Czechs retain enough resentment toward Russia that they enjoy “poking the bear with a stick,” in this case, the stick being the missile defense radar. They think that a U.S. military base in their country – even a lone radar base – will protect them from Russia.

In response, Russia has threatened to target Poland and the Czech Republic and place medium-range missiles in Kaliningrad; suspended participation in the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, potentially restarting the Cold War; announced the successful development of new ICBMs and new maneuvering RVs; put its strategic bombers back on training flights; and threatened to pull out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty.

Surprisingly, some Czech missile defense proponents believe the missile threat from Iran is real, but don't take the threat from Russia as seriously.

Opponents in the Czech Republic

On the other side, only 22 percent of the Czech population supports the proposed system. Czechs have a tradition of healthy skepticism and many Czechs correctly understand that the proposed system has no demonstrated capability to defend Europe, let alone the United States, under realistic operational conditions.

Worse still, the location of a missile defense radar in the Czech Republic makes them the first target an enemy would attack. If the system were effective, under normal military strategy an enemy would attack the radar before attacking anything else in or-

der to blind the “eyes” of the system.

Throughout history Czechs have shown that they are a courageous people and this might be a risk they would accept if the system were actually capable of protecting them, but sadly it is not.

To make matters worse, the MDA has artificially defined the threat from Iran to be one or two missiles with no decoys or countermeasures to confuse the defense. This is because the best the MDA says it can handle is an “unsophisticated threat” – that is, one or two enemy missiles with no decoys or countermeasures. Many Czechs do not believe that they face a threat from Iran, and that if they did, they see it as unlikely that Iran would attack Europe – or the United States – with just one missile and then wait to see what would happen. Thus, if Iran actually believed that U.S. missile defense worked, they would attack with more missiles or with decoys and countermeasures, and by the Pentagon's own admission in its FY 08 budget request, “This initial capability is not sufficient to protect the United States from the extant and anticipated rogue nation threat.”

Again from the FY 08 budget request: “Because we must protect these radars or risk losing the “eyes” of our system, we are planning to field ground-based interceptors and an associated ground-based midcourse radar site in Europe. This achieves four goals: protecting the foreign-based radars, improving protection of the United States by providing additional and earlier intercept opportunities; extending this protection to our allies and friends; and demonstrating international support of ballistic missile defense.”

As this candid budget justification shows, the MDA sees the proposed

missile defenses in Europe as a first line of defense to protect existing radar sites in Greenland and the United Kingdom necessary to defend the United States, not first and foremost to defend Europe. It is sobering for Czechs to see that the Pentagon does not see protecting them, let alone Europe, as its first priority.

Czech citizens are also concerned that while Europe does not face a threat from Iran today, the establishment of missile defenses in their country ostensibly directed against Iran could motivate new animosity from Iran and other Muslim populations against them, or against Europe in general.

Finally, citizens in the Brdy region are concerned about the safety and long-term health effects from the proposed high-power radar, and about potential television, radio and cell phone interference. The MDA has said that there are no public health effects from operation of the X-band radar, but U.S. citizens in Hawaii and Alaska have voiced similar concerns.

Next Steps

Before its term is up, the Bush administration is anxious to “pour concrete” in Europe; both concrete, signed missile defense agreements with Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as physical concrete for missile defense installations.

In turn, this threatens to divide Europe and raises questions about the effectiveness of NATO, which under Article 5 of its charter, is to provide protection to all of Europe.

Policy-makers both in the United States and Europe have said that the establishment of any missile defense system in Europe should proceed solely under NATO auspices rather than on a bilateral basis with just

two NATO partners, Poland and the Czech Republic. The NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania in early April 2008 may be a forum where this issue can be resolved.

However, there will be many other difficult items on the NATO agenda, not the least of which calls for increased NATO support in Afghanistan and for the expansion of NATO. Accordingly, the NATO summit could come and go without missile defense in Europe being resolved.

Furthermore, in nine months, the United States will have a new president whose views on missile defense in Europe may be different from

those of the Bush administration.

One option for the Czech Republic is to make a decision similar to that made by Canada in 2005 when it decided not to participate in U.S. missile defenses. While still committed to North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), Canadians were skeptical that U.S. missile defenses would be effective, were concerned about the costs, and they did not want to contribute to an arms race in space.

Interestingly, on Jan. 3, 2008, the South Korean Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo announced that South Korea also will not participate in the

overall U.S. missile defense system, preferring to sustain their Sunshine Policy with North Korea.

Thus the Czech people find themselves in the middle of an international struggle over missile defenses in Europe. This struggle has already pitted Russia and the United States against each other in ways not seen since the Cold War, and questioned the effectiveness of NATO. Thanks to its central location and its tradition of generosity, the Czech Republic is often described as the “heart” of Europe. As for missile defense, whether Czech hearts will embrace it remains to be seen. ■

WAS THE SATELLITE “SHOOT DOWN” WORTH IT?

BY THERESA HITCHENS, CDI DIRECTOR

Ever since U.S. President Ronald Reagan launched “Star Wars,” countries such as Russia and China have been suspicious that the real aim of the U.S. missile defense program was to develop offensive technology to control space, arguing that U.S. missile defense interceptors are really anti-satellite weapons in disguise. Not to indulge what is arguably paranoia, but the use of the SM-3 interceptor – designed to shoot down intermediate-range ballistic missiles – to hit the out-of-control spy satellite USA-193 in February threatens to validate these fears. With a relatively simple software switch-out (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright said took only three weeks to develop), the SM-3 was able to target a satellite. Cartwright stressed that this is a one-time mission for the Navy’s interceptor, and that the satellite-targeting software is not compatible with the software necessary for the interceptors to target incoming missiles so would not be replicated through the fleet. But the fact of the matter is that the software wasn’t all that hard to develop, and it now exists. And while the SM-3 missiles don’t have the range to reliably target most active satellites, the U.S. Ground-Based Midcourse interceptors in silos at Fort Greeley and Vandenberg do. The bottom line is that the attempted intercept only increases concern about missile defense and U.S. plans in space.

And about that Chinese ASAT test last January. It is also clear that the US-193 shoot down will be read by many abroad as a deliberate “signal” to Beijing that the United States can rapidly match, indeed outstrip, any ASAT capa-

bility the Chinese may be building. Even if there was no intention by the White House to saber rattle, that will be the perception – especially as the announcement of the planned intercept attempt came only two days after Russia and China put forward a proposed treaty to ban space weapons at the UN Conference on Disarmament. The geopolitical risk here is twofold. First, it is likely to increase the Sino-American tensions in space and spur negative reaction in China (and perhaps also Russia), such as galvanizing research on ASATs into pursuit of an operational program. Second, it sends a signal that destructive ASAT tests are OK, as long as they are low in altitude and can be given plausible deniability by the rational of “saving lives.” The United States might regret setting that precedent if the planned Iranian satellite “fails” and Tehran decides to destroy it with its Shahab missile. The proliferation of debris-creating ASAT technology is in no one’s self-interest, because sooner or later, someone will be tempted to use it. And as the Chinese test proved in spades, that would threaten us all. ■



Prospects for African AFRICOM Headquarters

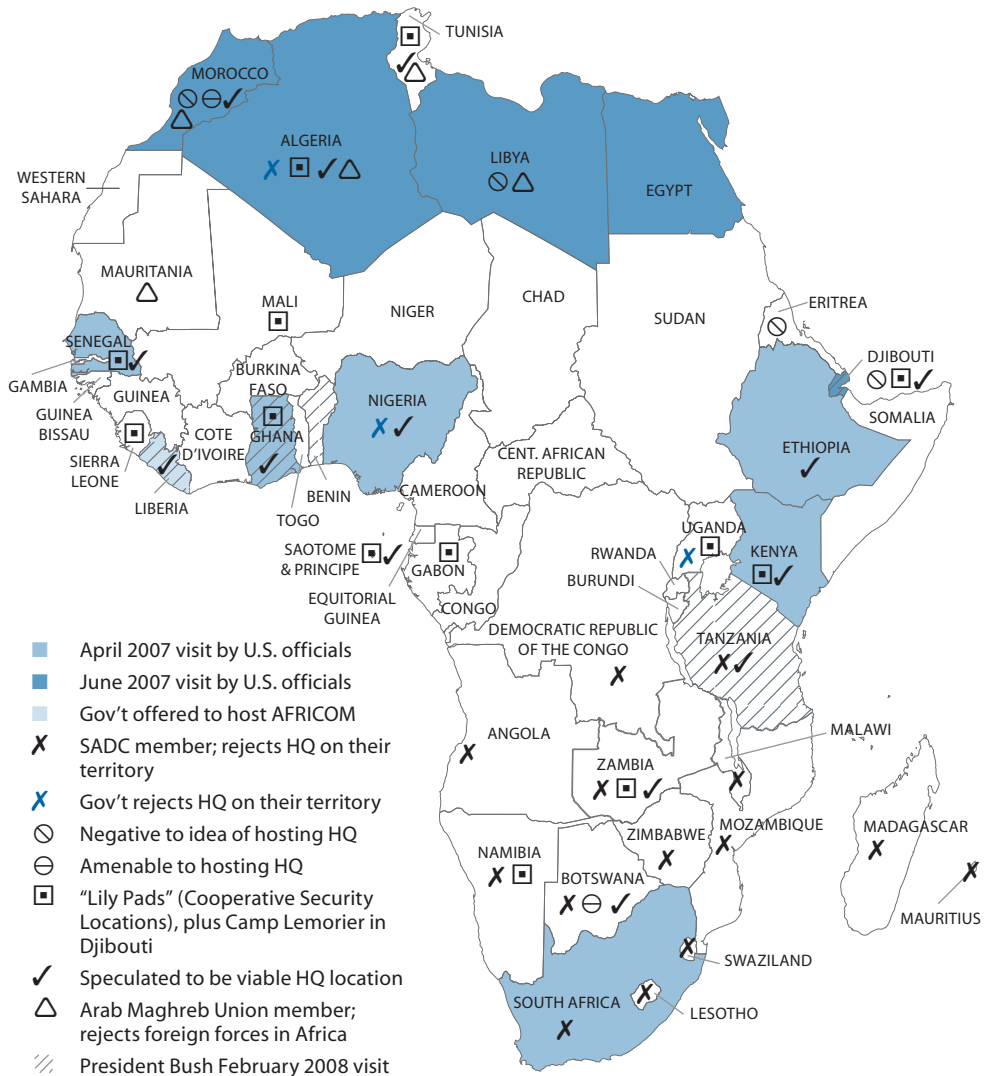
BY VALERIE REED, RESEARCH ASSISTANT, STRAUS MILITARY REFORM PROJECT

U.S. AFRICA COMMAND (AFRICOM) is set to be fully operational in October 2008 and aspires to improve Africa's security environment through military cooperation, training and humanitarian assistance. Currently operating out of U.S. European Command's headquarters in Germany, U.S. plans to establish Command headquarters in Africa are proving more challenging than anticipated due to an overwhelmingly negative response from countries on the continent.

According to AFRICOM Commander Gen. William "Kip" Ward, there is no timeline for the headquarters decision. And as of February 2008, the latest word from AFRICOM officials is that the Command will be in Stuttgart, Germany for the "foreseeable" future, though Kelley Barracks is cramped and hopefully temporary.

African states are hesitant to host AFRICOM headquarters for many reasons, mainly due to concerns about terrorism, loss of regional influence, fear that AFRICOM will militarize America's Africa policy, and that AFRICOM is merely part of a U.S.-China scramble for resources.

Media outlets and scholars have speculated on several suitable headquarters locations, and though DOD claims several countries offered to host, only Liberia has confirmed its offer. However, the Economic Community of West African States is obstructing Liberia's bid, claiming the right to determine if a member coun-



try can host. Numerous countries and regional organizations have opposed hosting and some hope the AU will follow suit, arguing that AFRICOM undercuts AU efforts to develop its own security capabilities. The AU, however, has been neutral thus far.

African leaders continue to object to new U.S. "bases," though U.S. officials stress that this is not AFRICOM's intent. They have tried to address specific myths and offer details on AFRICOM's logistics during African consultations, emphasizing AFRICOM as a "win-win" situation, that the State Department will still direct

foreign policy, and that they are eager to receive African insight.

Because headquarters talk has been so contentious, it has been downplayed and the immediate focus is on finding issues where cooperation is likely. AFRICOM will not succeed if a realistic assessment of African perspectives is not made. While there will not be universal approval among countries on the continent, if African perspectives are prioritized, then U.S. officials may win over countries that are waiting for evidence that the new Command will respect their sovereignty and enrich their security capacities. ■



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