

# Missile Defence Systems: Global and Regional Implications

Dennis M. Gormley, Catherine M. Kelleher  
and Scott Warren

Conference Rapporteur: Thorsten Wetzling



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# I. Summary of Workshop Proceedings

The GCSP hosted a workshop on missile defence systems, supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. A range of experts, officials and academics contributed to the policy discussion on current and future issues related to missile defence systems. Participants sought to develop a common understanding of current missile defence capabilities, as well as potential threats. Throughout the workshop, experts explored military-technical and political-diplomatic responses to these identified threats.

Following this summary of conference proceedings, two participants provide in-depth commentary. Dennis Gormley, Senior Fellow at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, analyses and critiques US-centric threat perceptions and related missile capabilities. He explores likely consequences of missile defence policy, including complex missile proliferation at the regional level. Gormley offers a series of “concerns about new dangerous developments that will present significant new challenges for missile defences, as well as non-proliferation policy and military stability.”

Catherine McArdle Kelleher, College Park Professor, University of Maryland, Senior Fellow, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, and Associate Fellow, GCSP, with Scott Warren, examines President George W. Bush’s legacy as it relates to missile defence systems in Europe. Finally, the authors examine the new context created for missile defence in Europe by the Georgia–Russia crisis.

## A. Objectives and Conclusions

The overall objective of the seminar was to provide a unique opportunity to engage in a policy discussion on current and future issues related to missile defence systems.

The programme was designed for key actors in the field of international security policy concerned with missile defence issues, be it on national or multinational operational levels. A range of experts and officials, as well as academics, from different countries and regions gathered for this seminar.

The rationale of the programme's structure was first to establish a heightened awareness and common understanding of the current scenario of missile capabilities across the globe and make an assessment of which nations are perceived as threats. Once clarified, potential responses were delineated on several levels. First, military-technical responses were addressed from the US, Russian and NATO perspectives. Following this, political-diplomatic responses were discussed from regional, global, bilateral as well as EU perspectives. The concluding panel synthesised the findings of these three main sessions and discussed the way forward.

Four major conclusions emerged from the discussions:

### Short- and Medium-Range Missiles Remain a Concern

While all participants welcomed the decline in Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), the discussants were concerned that the international community lacked a promising control regime for short- and middle-range ballistic missile proliferation. Despite the fact that concrete estimates varied, most participants agreed that these weapons will increase in quantity and quality in the foreseeable future. They pose a great threat to regional security and may lead to new arms race.

### Public Diplomacy with Russia Remains Essential

Several participants acknowledged that Russia has legitimate concerns about the envisaged US-run missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic. The undercurrent of the discussion suggested that it is less the technological concerns that may thwart the chances of a satisfying dispute resolution in this field. Rather, many participants deplored a reckless pursuit of short-term political goals. Such behaviour

was seen by some as an indicator of the still-unfinished adoption of post-Cold War strategic realities in modern Russia's defence strategies. Thus, the current political impasse between Russia and its Western partners was largely seen as unnecessary, while few doubted that Russia needs to be further integrated into the strategic dialogue around missile defence systems.

#### Militarisation of Outer Space Should be Prevented

In the eyes of many participants, the advancement of missile defence technology entails the risk of militarising outer space, and national military decision makers were urged to proceed in a cautious and vigilant manner. Most participants advocated a position that the US, NATO and Russia should go 'soft' on space. The international community was called upon to prevent the situation where the space becomes single-handedly dominated by one actor. A consensus emerged that, in the interest of modern societies, outer space is best protected as a common resource.

#### Europe Must Develop a Strategic Weapons Policy

Many participants deplored the European Union's (EU) hesitation to develop a concrete and resolute strategy about how to deal with the threat of ballistic missile proliferation. Some participants argued that the more serious the EU becomes as a player in its own right, the better this will be for the cooperation achieved on missile defence technology among a larger group of states. To this end, many discussants urged the EU to press ahead with the creation of a functioning early-warning system of its own.

### B. Missile Defence Systems

The first panel speaker updated participants on the proliferation of ballistic missiles and possible defence strategies since the Cold War, reminding listeners that they have many advantages over combat aircraft. Ballistic missiles are fast, independent, weather-resistant, reliable, and less likely to be intercepted, thus attracting the interest of developing countries. Ballistic missiles are not by themselves weapons of mass destruction (WMD); it is their potential liaison with WMDs that is most worrisome. To illustrate this, the speaker referred to the current discussion of Iran's alleged nuclear ambitions. If Iran had only acquired ballistic

capabilities, the situation would be far less threatening. But since ballistic missiles can be used in conjunction with nuclear weapons, it is imperative for the West to develop cost-effective protection systems.

The speaker remarked that most of those ballistic missiles that are difficult to account for are based on Soviet technology of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Scuds have a range that varies roughly between 300 to 700 km. Iran's Shahab 3, which began with a range of 1'300 km, might be further developed to reach targets within the range of 2'500 km. The technological advancements in North Korea may enable them to expand the reach of their new ballistic missiles even further. Yet, the speaker emphasised, there is also a limit. Since these ballistic missiles are based on fluent instead of solid propellant, their maximum reach is likely to be an estimated 3'000 km. However, if ballistic missiles were to be based on solid propellant systems (as currently being researched in some Middle Eastern countries), this may render defence more challenging. Not only will such ballistic missiles become faster, they will also no longer have to refuel. But, ICBMs are not likely to emerge from such technological advances.

Defence strategists, this speaker contends, are further challenged by the sheer difficulty of making accurate predictions. Historically, almost all estimates have turned out to be wrong. This can be attributed to the fact that such predictions are based on a number of political, economic and technical dimensions because analysts need to rely on controversial intelligence. Focusing only on the capacities of states to develop missile technology may be misleading. Some states have acquired complete missile systems by purchasing them off the shelf (e.g. Saudi Arabia from China).

With respect to the question of whether and how countries can best defend against such threats, the speaker stressed the importance of developing an objective assessment based on its potential merit. In this regard, the speaker identified the basic question to be whether missile defence technology allows governments to regain room for manoeuvre. So far, these systems have not been completely reliable, which begs the question about the extent to which governments can afford potential damages.



In this respect, the United States and Europe have performed different calculations. Whereas the former may put its world power status in jeopardy, the latter does not enjoy such status and therefore cannot lose it. This provides Europe with a small foundation on which to build a pre-emptive strategy. In Washington, however, the government can certainly gain room for manoeuvre and therefore seems to embrace the missile defence system more readily. That said, the speaker also deemed it too simplistic to negate Europe's need for missile defence altogether. With a view to the growing proliferation of ballistic missiles – a phenomenon that the speaker sees likely to grow rather than to diminish – Europeans also ought to think more creatively about additional filters and auxiliary



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protection systems. Generally, in a world where a growing number of players might pose a nuclear threat, damage limitation capacity will become essential and missile defence technology has a future in this.

The first speaker concluded by arguing that missile defence technology may have the additional advantage of making it easier for the international community of states to 'go non-nuclear'. The basic rationale was that, no matter what actions the West will take, Iran will continue to pursue nuclear weapons. If that is the case, then the Western response ought to be to continue developing missile protection, so as to continuously demonstrate that, no matter what its potential adversaries do, it will always be several steps ahead. Unlike others in the audience, the speaker was not much concerned about a possible arms race between Iran and the United States. To him the technological advantage is far too much in favour of the US.

### C. National and International Responses

The workshop program included additional presentations that focused on national policies, followed by those that highlighted responses from international organisations, and the prospects of multilateral problem-solving in the field of ballistic missile proliferation.

#### United States

The speakers offered their expertise on recent policies pursued by Washington, characterising the basic backdrop against which Washington decided to pursue a more determined missile defence policy in recent years. The more assertive policy arose from a radical shift in strategic thinking, outlined as follows. Decision makers in Washington were no longer prepared to assume that a robust retaliation capacity was sufficient to *prevent* strikes against the US or its allies. This view was prominently introduced in the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review that illuminated in greater detail a diverse set of new threats. In effect, the 2002 Review replaced the Air-Land-Sea nuclear capacity doctrine. Its novelty was derived from its focus on long-range missile capacity and the ambition to create a global missile defence. This required a radical shift from previous threat-based planning to capability-based planning in US defence strategy. Donald Rumsfeld can be credited with this conceptual shift, maintaining already in 1998 that new threats were impossible to estimate. This

seemed to leave the US with little choice but to adopt capability-based planning. Since 2001, the strategic ambitions of the US have thus been oriented toward the capability of fully developing likely responses to a wide range of threat scenarios.

One speaker did not fully endorse the Bush administrations's assumptions behind their recent policies in the field of anti-ballistic missiles. Conventional weapons are still credible; the 2003 Iraq War is a case in point. The speaker also questioned the notion that we constantly have to hedge against uncertainty. A notable level of certainty is exemplified in the fact that the West knew in 1998 that North Korea had more than 1'000 Scud type warheads. The five-year development cycle assumption was then confirmed by North Korea's failed nuclear testing. The speaker emphasised the extreme technical difficulties that countries face when they want to move from a medium- to an intercontinental-nuclear capacity. While outside assistance may come in various forms (for example, the provision of highly experienced engineers to furnish and finish nuclear equipment), it is important to remember that, the further a nation proceeds, the more visible its efforts will become. Given the enormous technical difficulties facing Iran and North Korea, they are forced to enlist outside assistance. This means that they will struggle to develop intercontinental weapons in the foreseeable future.

Another speaker briefed participants on the US position with regard to the missile defence system currently negotiated between Washington, Warsaw and Prague. This speaker deemed it necessary to reassure his listeners and his Russian colleagues, in particular, that the envisaged system is "a limited defence against emerging threats that may need non-conventional means." Despite all the recent debates in the news media, and in political capitals in Europe and the US, a simple explanation is the most appropriate. The planned missile defence system, with only ten interceptors, will not be aimed at either Russia or China. To this speaker, the facts rather obviously underline this position, and the speaker regretted Russia's apparent difficulties with the project. Russia's rather fierce resistance to the missile defence system can be explained by the fact that the country has not yet come to terms with the reality that "after four decades, it no longer serves as the driver of US security policy."

The second speaker asserted that North Korea has become an exporter, and Iran an importer, of missile technology. With the planned interceptors on Polish and Czech territory, the US government solely intends to reassure its friends and make it clear to potential aggressors, that the US is able and ready to deploy its newest weapons technology. The speaker also responded to criticism of the US missile defence project in Europe, which hinges on the fact that the new system, if at all functional, can only give coverage to some NATO member states and not to others. The speaker asserted that NATO security is indivisible and that further research and development (R&D) in the field of missile defence technology will provide coverage to all NATO member states. Thus, this technology will further strengthen, rather than weaken NATO's overall security. To



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further illustrate this point, the speaker maintained that interceptors do not kill people and that ten interceptors in Poland do not pose a threat to Russian security. By contrast, the existence of missile defence technology, here agreeing with the first speaker, provides a policy decision-maker greater flexibility and room for manoeuvre to find the appropriate response.

## Russia

This session focused on the Russian view about the envisaged US missile defence system in Eastern Europe. While the underlying US concerns are basically understood in Moscow, some of them even shared, scepticism prevailed within the government and the population at large about the deployment plans. The biggest puzzle was the US selection of Poland and not, for example, Turkey. Despite Russian familiarity with the more sophisticated arguments emanating from US experts, the US has thus far done a good job in maintaining broad scepticism. 'Just look at the map' was a frequent expression of Russian bewilderment. The US position is further undermined by virtue of the fact that some NATO members, such as Turkey and Romania, will not benefit from the missile defence system.

Russia's concerns can be better understood by taking into account the fact that the technology has been a central strategic concern for decades in Russian strategic doctrines. Inevitably, the country will become sceptical of any kind of deployment of missiles next to its border. A participant then clarified that interceptors are missiles and that ten interceptors might be just the first step in a series of developments that will threaten Russian security. Currently, the envisaged interceptors have only limited capabilities, but the US has already conceded that this is an open-ended process. Understandably, the Russians are concerned that, in the future, the quality and quantity of these interceptors will increase. These concerns remain acute, which is why one participant doubted that the current negative reaction is likely to be overcome soon.

One participant highlighted the broader diplomatic repercussions of this current impasse. Moscow understands that a confrontation with the US is not in Russia's long-term interest; many common and overlapping interests continue to permit strategic cooperation. At the same time, a stark Russian reaction has helped them to revitalise the somewhat

dormant strategic consultations between the two countries. Before the missile defence debate, there had been limited progress in this field and the Putin administration has now capitalised on this debate. It will continue to do so in the remaining months of the Bush administration, because Russia estimates that any future US administration will be less conciliatory on these matters. Participants were asked to understand that, if Russia has not reacted in the most astute way, this was the result of a simple and widespread fear that Russia had to quietly swallow this action now, only to be asked soon for more concessions.

## Poland

The envisaged missile defence system has only recently become a major public issue in Poland. Once the US Department of Defense made an official request in January 2008, however, the issue has rarely been in the news. In general, the request from the US was perceived as valid and legitimate by the Polish government. Certainly, certain aspects, such as the failure to locate WMDs in Iraq, have reduced the credibility and the sense of urgency among the Polish populace. Yet, the Kaczinski administration that had been in power when the missile defence negotiations became more concrete has had a particular take on Polish security. It can be best characterised by referring to an omnipresent sceptical undercurrent that neither NATO nor the EU is a solid guarantor of Polish security.

This explains, at least partially, why the Kaczinski administration was quite ready to cooperate with the US on the envisaged system in Poland. In the current state of negotiations between Warsaw and Washington, while the question of location has essentially been settled, many practical questions are still under deliberation.

A major remaining problem for the new Polish government has to do with the fact that, according to a recent poll, 58% of the population is not convinced about the envisaged project. Public opinion in Poland shares many of the concerns raised in Western Europe, and Poles are displeased with the bilateral character of the envisaged arrangement. However, the difficult task of the Polish government's management of public opinion

has recently been made less difficult by virtue of the remarks made by Russian General Baluyevsky.<sup>1</sup>

One participant deemed that confidence-building mechanisms (CBMs) between Warsaw and Moscow were an inevitable tool to make mutually acceptable progress on this matter. Reminding participants that Poland has proposed “robust transparency mechanisms” to Moscow, this person added that these were coldly received in Moscow. Evidently, the Russian side rejected the very idea of reciprocity behind CBMs. Provided that Poland allows Russian technical experts into Poland to visit and assess the missile defence technology, it would only be natural that Warsaw demands that Polish experts be granted the same rights inside Russia.

One participant regretted Moscow’s unwillingness to cooperate with this, and reckoned that most of Russia’s technological and military concerns could be accommodated. However, this is only a fraction of the political reality behind this stalemate. The main problem has to do with the fact that Russia is still undergoing post-imperial trauma. This is not only deplorable for Russia, but for the international community at large, since, without Russia, there will be no stable ballistic order. In the foreseeable future, Russia will not be likely to give in, which is why the West should continuously raise transparency initiatives, CBMs and educational mechanisms as a means of convincing Russia to discard what the participant sees as false military arguments. So far, Russia has benefited politically from its diplomatic reaction to the envisaged missile defence project. It seized an excellent occasion to split the cohesion of NATO member states, and to bring Russia back into the strategic dialogue.

## France

A forthcoming White Paper on Defence lays out France’s strategic posture for the next fifteen to twenty years. The long view expressed in this paper can be summarised as follows: the ballistic missile threat will be rising, and Europe will come within range of several countries that

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1 The General made a well-known speech to a military conference broadcast on state-run cable TV in which he referred to potential threats to Russia from international terrorism or countries seeking global or regional hegemony. He stressed Russia’s resolve to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia and its allies by military force, including prevention with the use of nuclear weapons. BBC News, 19 January 2008. “Russia warns of nuclear defence.” Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7198181.stm>

already have, or might by then have, acquired ballistic missiles. With respect to their underlying intentions, the White Paper assumes a high probability that Iran will use cruise missiles against Europe and that these missiles will have a greater range than currently estimated. The document also acknowledges the possibility (albeit not necessarily a probability) of a further spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. This might well break the already fragile spell of the nuclear taboo in security politics. Thus, a currently fragile state of deterrence is likely to be further weakened in the future.



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Given this long view, what consequences does the White Paper recommend the French government should draw? First, the French government should be clear about the fact that its citizens will, in all likelihood, not accept a 'do-nothing approach' from politicians when confronted with an increased nuclear threat. While this certainly does not imply that France and its allies should dash to nuclear defence, it provides a 'walk, don't run' warning signal. According to the speaker, the past history of conflating promises in arms control has led to humility. This means that Europe should respond by adopting a system-by-system deterrence approach, rather than developing the system-of-systems defence. Deterrence is a matter of 'piece-by-piece,' 'brick-by-brick' work.

Europe's focus needs to turn more radically to threat assessments. The single most pressing issue is the need for greater certainty about what exactly Iran is doing, in terms of nuclear proliferation. This necessitates a revitalised early warning system that has rarely been Europe's focus in recent years. Here, only the US and Russia constitute the 'haves.' Yet, it is impossible to put forward a coherent missile defence policy if there is only one source of information. To one participant's knowledge, Russia has never provided anything to Europe in this regard, and this person urged the EU to try much harder to become a player on its own. Thus, the French position vis-à-vis the envisaged US missile defence system in Europe is that Europeans should not be invited to a ballistic missile defence theatre without having its own early warning capacity. Investing further in a European early-warning system will also be beneficial for Russian-American cooperation in this field. This is because history has shown, in many related fields, that cooperation improves when a third party becomes involved.

With respect to the diplomatic row between Washington and Moscow on the missile defence system, one participant welcomed a remark made by the US Secretary of Defense last October, which hinted about Washington's willingness to link the activation of the envisaged system to an objective set of criteria. This sends a positive sign, which could become even more elegant if regulated by NATO, or even better, a joint NATO-Russian initiative.

This participant urged the EU to work towards the preservation of a de-militarised outer space. A global missile defence system raises

questions about how far and how many interceptors may intrude into the commons. S/he warned about the likelihood of creating something equivalent to submarine warfare. This ought to be prevented, given that our modern societies depend far too much on modern satellite technology.

## NATO

The session on NATO responses to missile defence issues focused on the political calculus behind NATO strategy in the field. The 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest initiated a conceptual breakthrough in the organisation's thinking about missile defence. Before the summit, it was very much considered as a national prerogative, with very little room for NATO. This view was further embedded in the reduced nuclear posture that was commonplace in the aftermath of the Cold War. This view changed in Bucharest, due to the realisation of the risk to 'NATO security' inherent in increased ballistic missile proliferation. While the rate of proliferation was not staggering, it is possible, nonetheless, to identify more players who have made notable progress, and whose intentions remain unclear. This has nurtured a commonly-felt fear about possible Article 5 scenarios and it would be perverse for NATO not to do anything about it.

Traditionally, NATO's focus has been on tactical R&D for the protection of its soldiers, whereas progress now seems possible for extending the protection to member state populations. It is this ambition, where one participant identified missile defence as part of a new and bigger defence package. Yet, the degree to which NATO might be selling a whole package and, if so, in what dosages it will be provided, is far from clear. NATO cannot deny the fact that the US is pressing ahead in its bilateral negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic. While some members may deplore the bilateral character of these negotiations, the project brings clear advantages to NATO. For example, some members will automatically be covered by the system, which also means that NATO faces a less pressing need for costly R&D. However, given that countries such as Turkey and Romania are currently not covered, it also entails a

clear and present danger of NATO politicisation. NATO must do its utmost to maintain the principle that NATO security is indivisibly viable.

In regard to the implications of NATO's gradual shift towards the long-term endorsement of missile defence systems, one participant noted that it will place NATO in a business in which it has not been very good, namely anticipation. Given that anticipation is in great demand for other emerging security fields such as climate change, this participant deemed that anticipation is an unavoidable business for NATO in the near future, where it will no longer suffice to have NATO working as a successful fire-brigade only. Due to limited resources, the challenging question is about where NATO's money should go: to protection against climate change, cyber defence or missile defence technology?

Drawing attention to the future of arms control frameworks in this field, one participant criticised the organisation and its member states for a "deplorable lack of thinking about order visions." While public opinion requires, and international politics depends upon, such larger visions, it is not quite clear what is the preferred future in this field. With respect to public diplomacy, NATO officials and governments alike face the problem of how to make a more convincing case for missile defence technology. The time is ripe to leave the East-West paradigm behind. Given that it is currently difficult to achieve an agreement with Russia, one participant pleaded for greater effort to de-emotionalise the current missile defence debate and to seek creative ways to integrate Russia, Israel and Japan. It is crucial to engage in new debates on the nature and the improvement of information sharing on anti-ballistic missile defence systems.

Finally, turning to internal debates on NATO's 'best take' on missile defence, a participant voiced a preference for a strategy that sees the US taking the lead and moving on with its bilateral negotiations. In the meantime, given the organisation's limited budget, NATO should invest in radar technology, such as air defence systems, and go 'soft' on missiles until a more concrete threat materialises. A recent remark by Secretary Gates indicated that the US Department of Defense is sympathetic to this view.

## Multilateral responses

This session shed critical light on multilateral responses to ballistic missile proliferation and missile defence systems, deploring the lack of activity that would lead to sustainable progress. Despite various high-level discussions at several prominent meetings, few initiatives went beyond the debating stage. To illustrate this further, one participant referred to the work of three key multilateral meetings devoted to either curbing ballistic missile technology proliferation or to the introduction of transparency measures, such as annual declarations and pre-launch notifications. These were the UN Study Group on Missiles, The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC), and the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF).

With regard to the UN Study Group, this participant deemed that the prospect of achieving notable progress in this forum was rather slim, reminding the audience that the study group faced difficulties right from the beginning. The remarks of a South African delegate participating in the deliberations illustrate this: “We can’t reach consensus as we can’t agree on the nature of the problem.” Even though several more meetings have been held since then, only few signs of progress have emerged. The participant blamed a missing taboo on ballistic missiles in the international arena for the stalled progress. Taboos are a powerful tool for establishing binding norms through stigmatisation. This has worked with a number of weapons technologies, most notably the taboos on landmines and BCW weapons, where several conventions were signed due to a shared understanding that these weapons are unusual and worthy of control. Without a comparable taboo on ballistic missiles, multilateral arms control in this field will be very difficult to establish.

With regard to the HCOC, a participant emphasised that this is a very cautious initiative that tries to link ballistic missile and the control of WMDs. Under the code, the signatories make politically-binding commitments to exercise maximum restraint in developing, testing and deploying WMD-capable missiles. Interestingly, this initiative seeks to harmonise the behaviour and policies of the signatory states in this field, rather than to prescribe whether and how many WMD-capable ballistic missiles states should possess. In other words, it seeks to develop norms based on behaviour, rather than on possession. Consistent with this approach, it set up test launch and application regimes which this participant thought

were progressive and ingenious. Yet, the HCOC remains fundamentally weakened, given that important countries such as China, Iran, Pakistan, North Korea and Saudi Arabia have not yet signed the code.

In regard to the future of the INF treaty, one participant sought to draw attention to a joint US–Russian statement issued in October 2007. It was officially meant to pave the way for a more global character of this important and successful regime, yet a careful reading gives the impression that the two parties were keener on withdrawing from the treaty than expanding its reach. In particular, the person referred to the sentences: “We are concerned with the proliferation of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. An ever-greater number of countries are acquiring missile production technologies and adding such missiles to their arsenals. At the same time, the Treaty, being of unlimited duration, is limiting the actions only of a few states, primarily Russia and the United States.”



Ambassador Patrick Villemur, Special Advisor to the Director, Faculty Member seconded from the French Government, GCSP

## D. Assessments and Critical Discussion

The individual presentations were followed by lively and informative debates that centred on the following issues:

Missile Defence Systems: advantages, disadvantages and unintended consequences

According to one participant, neither the US nor the international community at large will gain very much from an operating missile defence system. To the contrary, s/he feared a reversal into Cold War mentality between the USA and Russia. The development of missile defence systems is merely another form of missile proliferation. With its current reliance on boost phase interception technology, the participant warned of a notable risk that missiles will shoot down objects which have peaceful intentions. What is more, and here s/he agreed with another participant, the main problem with the development of such new systems is that it divides nations into haves and have-nots. Rather than creating stability, it will destabilise world order. Another participant followed up on this point, and asked the audience to think more clearly about unintended consequences of missile defence system advances in the West. A nation that designs these systems is inevitably boosting cruise missile technology in its defence strategy. If this is meant to have a stabilising effect, why should other nations not be allowed to equip themselves with the same technology? In this respect, s/he asked the audience to imagine what would happen if Iran acquired missile defence technology, responding by discarding the likelihood of this scenario, given the limited aerial testing options available to Iran.

The initial participant also questioned the general wisdom of betting on the 'missile defence' horse. History is replete with telling examples where precisely those threats that defence ministries had not planned for materialised. Another participant agreed in opposing the envisaged missile defence shield, albeit on different grounds. S/he doubted the assumed technical capabilities of the system in Europe and pointed out that the US already had a comparable defence system readily available at sea level. S/he also warned that, even if we talk about interceptors, they are still missiles. Thus, unless R&D development is handled very carefully, a renewed unrestricted arms race may be likely.

Another participant's remark that missile defence technology may contribute to a 'non-nuclear' world was questioned by one speaker, who maintained that getting nuclear proliferation to zero is very unlikely, regardless of technological missile defence system advances. This target constitutes the 'long pole of the tent' with simply too many obstacles on the rear end. To illustrate this, s/he asked the audience to put themselves in the position of China. Would China like to be in a world where the US was an unbridled superpower and it no longer had the option to go nuclear? To this speaker, it seems highly unlikely and, therefore, identifies the key problem behind any assumptions that view missile defence technology as a constraining factor for nuclear proliferation.

One participant raised another question of importance to the current negotiations between Poland and the United States. The issue of who decides and who authorises the identification of missiles that have been launched is insufficiently accounted for in the envisaged missile defence system in Europe. A US participant responded to this critique by suggesting that the envisaged system foresees a degree of flexibility. As an example, the participant mentioned that it is technically possible for one country (e.g., a NATO member state) to be spared from the missile defence cover. However, the unity of command remains crucial for the success of the system, and therefore cannot be subjected to bilateral negotiations. Having said this, the participant assured that both the Czech and Polish partners would remain fully cognisant of the policy-making decisions.

In regard to the diplomatic row between the US and Russia over the envisaged missile defence system in Europe, one participant maintained that, while ten interceptors stationed in Poland would not pose a threat to Russian security, it was more worrisome how little is publicly known about the development of missile defence technology in Russia. According to US intelligence, Moscow possesses an estimated 400 interceptors, which makes Russia second to none in the field of this technology. While the Russian capacity in missile defence remains a confidential matter, a participant pointed out that it is important to remember that the US is preparing for eventual failure of negotiations with Iran. What makes the envisaged missile defence system so controversial is that no one has asked the US to protect its allies against Iran, certainly not the Poles nor the Czechs. The entire system boils down to overall American command and control that quite naturally provokes strong reactions. The participant

then voiced strong disagreement, and suggested that Russia does not want to revert to a Cold War mentality. This said, s/he also stressed the need to remind the UN administrators to understand that strategic defence is about capabilities. If one is being provoked, one has to respond. Therefore, the suggestion that the Russians should simply ignore US plans might not be taken seriously.

The participant then responded to the assertion that the envisaged missile defence system will not be aimed at Russia by criticising the fact that the US has not even once tried to prove to its Russian partners that the selected locations are the best for the intended purpose. With respect to the reciprocity in CBMs proposed by Poland, one participant stressed that, since Russia has no comparable missile defence system plans, there is no situation that gives rise to Polish reciprocal transparency demands.

One speaker deplored the level of argumentation on both sides, and referred to the situation as a set of interlocking crises that did not need to happen. Unfortunately, this reveals an even bigger problem in the future. Such arguments forestall the trust needed for truly pressing threats to our societies, such as those emanating from Islamic terrorism.

With respect to NATO's position on the envisaged missile defence system, a participant suggested that it is probably wise to pursue the project further. If threats change, missile defence technology might become easily more prominent, and might even provide NATO with a potential investment that could be planned in close cooperation with China, Russia and Japan. The participant personally rejects the militarisation of outer space, given that our societies are too dependent on the peaceful use of the outer space for satellite technology, warning of the sensitive nature of this subject and urging all parties to cooperate 'before the toothpaste is out of the tube.'

Also central to the discussion was the importance of public opinion about missile defence systems, and how it may constrain or enable the advancement of missile defence technology. Whereas one participant maintained that the French White Paper on Defence assumes that citizens will not tolerate a 'do-nothing approach' to an increasing threat of ballistic missile proliferation, another participant elaborated on the current problem that European governments face. Given that the public is not



convinced about an imminent threat from missile proliferation, it will be hard to accrue the tax money necessary for further R&D investments. To this, a participant responded that public opinion would be more benign if future missile defence questions were based on better cooperation with Russia.

Related arms control initiatives: ABM, START and INF

The workshop participants also focused on specific arms control regimes that are related to the threat of ballistic missile proliferation. In particular, the demise of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and the future of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty were the subject of controversial debates. With regard to the ABM framework, one participant elaborated on the weaknesses of the treaty system, identifying a period of détente and maintaining that both parties, the US and Russia, were equally guilty of its various flaws. An American participant did not challenge this analysis, but questioned the perceived alternative. Should the US and Russia choose to remain vulnerable in the face of nuclear proliferation? In this regard, s/he asked the audience to consider the financial costs of not engaging in defence. If one major US city were successfully targeted with a ballistic missile, the economic damage alone could easily exceed figures of 150 billion USD.

With respect to Russia's commitment to the INF treaty, this participant stressed that, although some parts of the Russian military industry would very much like to begin reproducing intermediate-range ballistic missiles, Moscow is also aware that it is politically unwise to withdraw from international treaties on an annual basis. The American participant further assured that the US remains committed to the INF treaty. One participant on the multilateral responses panel indicated, however, that the current Russian commitment to the INF treaty seems to be far less robust than in the previous years. In fact, s/he argued that the INF has long been a bone in the throat of Russian military, but maintained that internal political concerns in Russia have prevented the withdrawal from the treaty. One such concern has to do with the fact that Russian military decision makers realise that giving up something at a time when you get little back in return is not in Russia's long-term interest.

One participant in the final panel referred to the unstable future of the INF treaty framework. As the 'little brother of START,' the INF treaty concerns medium-range missiles, to which the Middle East is not domestically ready to subscribe. Progress in this field must be done in small steps, through regional approaches first. The future is not looking very bright, given that no matter what treaty framework one is looking at, the international community will remain divided into haves and have-nots. This situation, s/he concluded with references from social sciences and animal psychology, is destabilising in the long term.

One participant then drew attention to START, calling it the treaty of the moment. Its treaty obligation will expire next year and, while extensions are politically possible, the quintessential question will be how much transparency will exist and which CBMs are going to be negotiated.

One of the final panellists argued that START will remain critical for the US–Russian strategic relationship because it concerns technical, nuclear capabilities. However, while an extension of the treaty framework might be vital, the main task must be to find agreement. S/he urged those parties involved in the START negotiations to seize the opportunity to come up with joint strategic thinking on a bigger scale. Ideally, this would culminate in a joint strategic statement on how to resolve the missile defence question. The panellist reminded participants about the lessons that ought to be drawn from the Reykjavik deliberations. An objective account of these negotiations makes progress-minded citizens of the world lament the opportunities missed. Such negotiations must not be about elite preferences, but about the protection of people from unimaginable harm. It would be a shame if the START deliberations ended up in a diplomatic tit-for-tat between Russia and the US.

# II. Missile Capabilities and Threat Perceptions

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Threat perceptions largely emanate from the position one occupies. With that in mind, I offer two dominant, naturally US-centric sets of threat perceptions and related missile capabilities, along with my own critique of each, in order to stimulate discussion and debate. I will then end with my own set of concerns about a set of dangerous new developments that will present significant new challenges for missile defences, as well as non-proliferation policy, and regional military stability.

## Missile Capabilities and Threat Perceptions as Seen Through the Eyes of the Bush Administration

According to Bush administration officials, the end of the Cold War ushered in a new set of requirements for strategic deterrence. No longer was the mere possession of a robust retaliatory nuclear capability sufficient to deter strikes on the American homeland or on American allies in Europe, the Middle East, or Asia. This notion was most evident in the still-classified 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The Posture Review sought to articulate the elements of a new denial strategy that was seen as essential to dealing with new post-Cold War threats. Such threats were seen as more diverse and less amenable to threats of nuclear retaliation. These diverse threats, of course, included so-called 'rogue states,' such as North Korea, Iraq, and Iran, who all were seen to have the potential capability to threaten the US homeland, as well as America's allies, sooner more than later, with ballistic missiles armed with weapons of mass destruction.

Most importantly, the 2002 NPR articulated a rationale for why existing US nuclear weapons were incapable of dealing with the following threats: hardened underground targets; mobile missiles; and weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Absent more capable nuclear options, or denial capabilities such as ballistic missile defences, the United States risked being self-deterred in a crisis, or so the argument went.

The 2002 NPR therefore introduced the 'New Triad,' consisting of advanced long-range conventional strikes joining nuclear offensive options, together with active and passive defences (most prominently, global missile defences), and a revitalised and supporting defence infrastructure.

Specifically with respect to ballistic missile defences, the Bush administration sought to distinguish itself from the Clinton National Missile Defense (NMD) and theatre missile defence (TMD) programs by drawing all missile defence capabilities under the management of one system. A global missile defence system would not only protect the US homeland but also friends, allies and deployed forces. And given the freedom born of the demise of the ABM Treaty, the administration was free to explore air, sea, ground, and space concepts of missile defence designed to intercept any range of ballistic missile threats.

Another key change introduced by the Bush administration was the application of 'capabilities-based,' as distinct from 'threat-based,' planning to guide defence decision-making. Traditionally, defence acquisition programs had required a specific explication and validation of the threat in order to justify the expenditure of major resources. The new Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, had come away from chairing the 1998 Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States newly appreciative of the tendency, he believed, to underestimate the tenacity, resourcefulness, and determination of adversaries to acquire WMD and their means of delivery. Rumsfeld formalised the new emphasis on capabilities-based planning in the 2001 QDR. It was predicated on the belief that, since no one can know with enough confidence precisely what and when threats will emerge, planners must therefore identify specific capabilities needed to deter or defeat adversaries who are prone to employ surprise and deception. Put slightly differently, capabilities must

be developed to handle a full range of likely future challenges rather than a narrow set of predictable threat scenarios. Bush defence planners also saw virtue in such an approach not only as a means of positioning the US to cope with threats before they emerge, but also in possibly deterring adversaries from pursuing certain threat capabilities in the first place.

## Critique

The notion that global missile defences and new nuclear options are needed to enhance the credibility of US deterrence threats is belied by even Bush administration beliefs. In the summer of 2006, as North Korea readied its Taepo-dong-2 missile for a test launch, Bush administration officials conveyed that were a rogue state ever to brandish a nuclear-armed missile threat against the United States, they would face the prospect of a devastating, last-resort nuclear response that would be adequate to deter even enigmatic countries like North Korea.



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Still, it should also be noted that the 2002 NPR emphasised that US nuclear weapons were needed not just to deter nuclear threats, but also biological and chemical ones. This would require foregoing American negative security assurances introduced in 1978 when the US pledged not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states that are signatories to the NPT.

These pledges notwithstanding, administrations have since 1978 employed ambiguity with regard to what kind of weapon might be employed were biological or chemical weapons used against the US or its allies. This existing nuclear arsenal is more than adequate to handle biological and chemical threats. Moreover, there is a danger in conflating nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons into the common appellation 'weapons of mass destruction,' as if they were of equal consequence if employed, each deserving of the threat of a nuclear retaliatory response. I also think that the much-ballyhooed credibility of such nuclear retaliatory responses against biological and chemical threats is not as robust as one might believe. This is particularly so in light of George H.W. Bush's admission, in his memoir co-written with Gen. Brent Scowcroft after the 1991 Gulf War, that he had ruled out in advance a nuclear response to Iraq's use of chemical or biological weapons.

In regard to the Bush administration's introduction of capabilities-based planning, it has certainly been employed generously in regard to ballistic missile defence deployments. The logic of these deployments is predicated on the basis of hedging against the uncertainty surrounding just when rogue state missile threats capable of reaching U.S. territory might emerge. In this regard, one cannot help but recall an important metric established by the Rumsfeld Commission in 1998. Quoting the now decade-old report, the commissioners unanimously concluded as follows: "With external help now available, a nation with a well-developed, Scud-based ballistic missile infrastructure would be able to achieve first flight of a long-range missile up to, and including, intercontinental ballistic missile range (greater than 5,000 km), within about five years of deciding to do so. During several of those years, the US might not be aware that such a decision had been made."

In 1998, both North Korea and Iran possessed much more than just a Scud short-range ballistic missile infrastructure. Moreover, as we now confidently understand, Iran and North Korea have had a symbiotic relationship in missile development through shared research, development, and test results, bolstered by Iran's purchases of North Korean missiles, missile components, and technical assistance. A critical component of this relationship included Iran's willingness to conduct proxy missile tests of No Dong missiles for North Korea during the latter's nearly eight-year test moratorium after the 1998 TD-1 test engendered such a strong regional backlash.

The five-year development conclusion was solidified by North Korea's launch of a three-stage TD-1 roughly a month after the Rumsfeld Commission delivered its findings. Although the third stage failed, the event catalysed support for the commission's conclusions, particularly that foreign assistance to North Korea and Iran was no longer a wild-card phenomenon, but an assumed one.

But what accounts for the fact that despite nearly two full cycles of the Commission's five-year finding neither North Korea nor Iran has conclusively achieved ICBM ranges? In my view, it attests to the difficult technical challenges associated with successfully moving from medium-range ballistic missiles to intermediate and intercontinental-range ones.

When one speaks of outside assistance no longer being a wild card, one must also realize that technical assistance comes in various forms: in its simplest form, explicit representations of missile technology embodied in engineering drawings and blueprints, to component technologies (such as light alloys to replace steel bodied airframes) and production equipment, to what is arguably the most prized and essential technical support: sustained and direct help from systems integration and engineering support personnel who can furnish the specialised knowledge needed to grapple with advances in propulsion systems, re-entry bodies, and the complex staging needed to achieve intercontinental range.

Added to that is the stiff challenge of designing and manufacturing a light-weight (say, 500 kg nuclear warhead) deliverable re-entry vehicle. It took the United States between six and eight years of intensive engineering development and considerable testing to reduce its first ICBM warheads from 5'000 to just 1'000 kg, let alone to 500 kg.

There is reason to believe that the more advanced forms of external assistance to North Korean and Iranian missile programs began to dry up as much as seven years ago. In many respects, this shortage of specialised assistance increases the need for North Korea and Iran to cooperate and set up a division of labour in pursuit of their missile ambitions. Yet both are likely to struggle mightily if not impossibly toward the goal of achieving intercontinental range ballistic missiles.

### Missile Capabilities and Threat Perceptions as Seen Through the Eyes of Missile Defence Critics

An American missile defence critic would likely argue that ballistic missile proliferation and the threat that it engenders have actually declined substantially since the end of the Cold War. Of course, the perceptive lens employed by this critic is a decidedly North American one, concerned exclusively with ballistic missiles capable of striking the American homeland, which thus provides the needed rationale for the US deployment of ballistic missile defences.

This same critic would also assert that ballistic missile defence will never work as designed—and even if it did, the same states that cannot seem to deploy missiles capable of reaching the American homeland can readily design and build responsive countermeasures that would overwhelm such missile defences. Thus, in either regard, missile defence expenditures are foolhardy and destabilising to the extent that they prompt offensive missile build-ups.

### Critique

Missile defence is an enormously difficult military mission to perform, but depending on what one's expectations of success happen to be, it is by no means impossible. Whether or not one could ever make missile defences affordable, particularly at the margin, compared with a determined offence's incremental additional deployments, is another matter altogether. But the Bush administration's \$US 12.5 billion request in fiscal year 2009 for spending on missile defence certainly suggests a strong determination to persist toward its goal of at least a limited missile defence system capable of operating against just a few rogue state missiles.



A slightly more even-handed approach is needed in assessing Iran's or North Korea's capacity to develop countermeasures. It is one thing to build simple decoys, but quite another to have any confidence that they would work as designed. The latter requires actual flight-testing and validation, which depends on the availability of sensors and engineering forensic skills needed to achieve such validation. The assumption of an easy, straightforward path to deploying simple yet effective countermeasures ironically depends on a key Rumsfeld Commission assumption: that there is no need for either Iran or North Korea to conduct any serious flight test program before their ICBMs take on a threatening character.

Yet, the Missile Defense Agency must believe that the current US missile defence system's existing discrimination limitations warrant the development of alternative means to deal with decoys. MDA launched the "multiple-kill vehicle" system in 2004, which is designed to deploy a number of small kill vehicles on one booster to destroy both decoys and the real re-entry vehicle. Assuming no delays, it would be available by 2014 or 2015, which is roughly the time frame in which the US intelligence community believes Iran could achieve a long-range ballistic missile capable of striking US territory.

### Some Final Considerations on Missile Capabilities and Threat Perceptions

Given more time, and especially more specialised foreign assistance, Iran or North Korea could surely become capable of developing a long-range ballistic missile that could threaten the US homeland. But between now and 2015, there is even a more pressing missile proliferation challenge: not only has the spread of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles increased, but so too have land-attack cruise missiles.<sup>2</sup> Since 2005, Iran, Pakistan, India, Taiwan, South Korea, and China have begun development, tested, or deployed land-attack cruise missiles with ranges from 300 to over 1,500 km. Flying under the radar, both literally and figuratively, cruise missiles add a dangerous new dimension to projecting

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<sup>2</sup> For an elaboration, see Dennis M. Gormley, *Missile Contagion: Cruise Missile Proliferation and the Threat to International Security* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008).

force safely and to preventing regional military instability. It is important to note that cruise missiles are not destined to supplant ballistic missiles, but when both are employed together, they could severely test even the best missile defences.

Perversely, however, the US quest to sell ballistic missile defences may be hastening the contagious spread of cruise missiles. Knowing that dual-capable missile defences are not nearly as effective against cruise missiles as they are against ballistic ones, some states, such as China, Pakistan, and Iran, are now developing new cruise missile programs to complement their ballistic missile arsenals. Others, like Taiwan and Japan, have decided to complement their missile defence purchases with much cheaper land-attack cruise missiles. And worse yet, these states, and others, are linking cruise missile use to pre-emptive strike doctrines. In either case, the unintended consequence is likely to be regional arms races and crisis instability.

While these developments are occurring, missile defence policy is fixated on defending against ballistic missiles, while missile non-proliferation policy pretends only in a declaratory way to deal equally with ballistic and cruise missiles. In practice it focuses most of its weight on controlling the spread of ballistic missiles. Left that way, by 2015, we are all likely to face a set of dangerous regional challenges of far greater consequence to all of us than any significant long-range ballistic missile threat to the US or European homeland that cannot be dealt with adequately through traditional means of deterrence.

# III. An Ambivalent Bush Legacy: Missile Capabilities and Threat Perception

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With Scott Warren, Brown University

## Introduction<sup>3</sup>

### Overview

One of the first consequences of the Russian incursion into Georgia in August 2008, was a rapid US–Polish agreement to base ten missile interceptors near the Baltic on Polish soil to provide a ground-based missile defence in Europe (MDE) against limited missile attacks by a rogue state, Iran, or another potential aggressor. This closed almost two years of often-heated negotiations and debate about a relentless Bush Administration campaign to fill out the ‘third site’ of the MD system already in place in Alaska and California. The contentious debate over the efficacy and actual implementation of the system had already reached fever pitch in Russian elite circles and throughout Europe. There had been a parallel United States–Czech Republic agreement in July 2008 on an associated radar site, as well as an official NATO communiqué declaration in support of the MDE plan in April 2008.

It was a fitting political ending designed first and foremost to demonstrate to all deep displeasure with Russian actions in Georgia. The time remaining for a lame-duck administration to achieve concrete MDE

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<sup>3</sup> This essay reflects research and interviews done in the context of the DARE Project (Dialogue among Russians, Americans, and European) funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and based at the Watson Institute, Brown University.

results is short. Despite the two agreements, it was always unlikely that major elements in the system would be deployed on the ground before, at earliest, 2012 or 2013. In addition, the agreements must be ratified by both the Czech and Polish Parliaments, and the US Congress; battles that will primarily turn on the political impacts on relations with Russia and with the transatlantic community, rather than military or technical aspects of the system. The Bush Administration will undoubtedly present the Czech and Polish agreements as a proud legacy, and proof of the rightness of its concerns over the last eight years. They will also create 'facts on the ground' that a successor will find politically hard to change.

But many unanswered questions remain. Whatever their present rhetoric and emotions, several major NATO countries remain hesitant about the efficacy of this approach to missile defence, and do not wish to rupture the already testy relations with Russia at this critical juncture. Citizens in both Western and Central Europe have always opposed the proposals: as late as spring 2008, populations in Poland and the Czech Republic expressed deep distaste for any such deployments. Moreover, although the Bush Administration hailed the NATO communiqué as a success, the wording of the statement was imprecise in its nature, failing to provide a complete endorsement of the system. The alliance is now committed to a year-long study of possible options, a study that post-Georgia will have far more to do with Russian–European–American relations than on the technical specifications of particular systems. Germany, having pushed for the NATO study, remains worried about remaining engaged with Russia, and Chancellor Merkel has always argued for a slower, more multilateral process for eventual MDE decision making.

Russia, under its new President Dmitry Medvedev, has stepped up the earlier Putin rhetoric-laden campaign of resistance, motivated more by concerns about radar penetration of its territory and future add-ons to the present limited MDE and the loss of political control to the United States in its very 'near abroad.' Russian–American relations are now in a deep freeze, and presumably growing even colder, with Russia formally claiming that the missile defence systems represent a direct threat to their nuclear arms, and that Poland in particular has now made itself a special target, perhaps even of nuclear attack. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has already gone as far to compare the current situation

to the Cuban Missile crisis, and hardliners in Moscow's military circles have talked loosely about possible compensatory bases in Cuba.<sup>4</sup>

The strategic and technical aspects of the system are still somewhat unknown. Despite recent tactical success in the defence of troops against short-range missiles, the concept of a missile defence system in Europe is largely still declarative, rather than a fully-developed strategic option. The American plan involves a number of uncertainties. It involves a new, untested missile that will not be ready for rigorous testing until 2010 or 2011, which would prove that it would achieve its expressed purpose—destroying incoming ballistic missiles potentially originating in Iran or another rogue state with limited missile capability. Its planned location and range mean it would fail to provide defence for NATO's southeast-members such as Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece, and the affiliated Balkan states, problematic for the system's integration into a larger European defence structure.

#### Prediction

Yet the political escalation in Georgia probably means at least short-term success for the Bush Administration, and perhaps even a point of no return for the MDE. Senator McCain has already endorsed the core plan; Senator Obama is essentially opposed to it without further study and allied agreement, but will undoubtedly face heightened pressure to appear 'strong' on national security, and endorse the agreements. As this essay will argue, despite the present heat and emotion, it would be prudent to defer its deployment until its value has been proven, and its specifics have been agreed upon with relevant NATO members and, importantly, arrangements fully revealed to Russia. There are also fundamental questions and alternative options that deserve further exploration, especially the all-important questions of political decision making and the integration of command and control into the wider western security system. But the chances of outright revision appear slim.

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4 The 4 August Associated Press release "Putin Eyes Renewed Russian Ties with Cuba," quotes Putin as saying "We should restore our position in Cuba and other countries."

## The Missile Defence Historical Framework

### The Early Phase

Although the Bush Administration has made notable progress in recent months in aggressively pushing for the deployment of MDs in Europe, the issue has evolved over the greater part of the last decade. The development of missile defence systems is not a spontaneous lame-duck whim, but rather, the culmination of a fundamental shift in the direction that the Bush Administration has taken in the field of arms control and defence. Establishing missile defence systems as part of a larger strategy to shift to a pro-active military defence approach against weapons of mass destruction has been in Bush's plans since before he took office, evidenced when then-candidate Bush announced in a 1999 speech at the Citadel that his "administration (would) deploy anti-ballistic missile systems, both theater and national, to guard against attack and blackmail."<sup>5</sup>

Setting the tone for the Bush Administration's fervent support of a missile defence system was the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, an independent commission convened by the US Congress in 1998 to assess the potential threat of ballistic missiles to the security of the United States. The commission was led by Donald Rumsfeld, who became Bush's first Secretary of Defense, and largely focused, not on previous Soviet/Russian capabilities, but on the new post-Cold War military threat. In its report to Congress, the Commission powerfully, and controversially, asserted that rogue nations like North Korea or Iran could soon have the capability to strike against the United States with 'little or no warning.'<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the Commission asserted that no country, besides Russia and China (which already possessed inter-continental ballistic missiles), would be able to obtain the capabilities of such an attack in the near future, with the possible exception of North Korea. It did not itself explicitly endorse any specific defence system, as that was not its mandate. But Republican politicians joined with a few Democrats to use the Commission's finding to amplify

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5 Bush, George W. "A Period of Consequences." South Carolina, the Citadel, 23 September 1999 Available at: [http://www.cital.edu/pao/addresses/pres\\_bush.html](http://www.cital.edu/pao/addresses/pres_bush.html).

6 The report, initiated by the then Republican majority in Congress is available at: <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/missile/rumsfeld/ibndex.html>.

the debate on a national missile defence system and attempted, with little overt success, to make it an election issue.

Despite the Commission's findings, in September 2000, the Clinton Administration announced it would not move ahead with plans for the deployment of a National Missile Defense program (NMD).<sup>7</sup> Clinton declared that MDs were still a largely unproven commodity; they would require a breach in the core ABM Treaty limits; and they would likely be opposed by the NATO allies. European states feared more that a missile defence program could negatively provoke Russia into another arms race, as well as leave the continent on the whole more susceptible to attacks. Significantly, Russia acknowledged Clinton's refusal to commit to an extensive MD program, and pledged to work with the US on a more limited system in the future.

The Bush Administration immediately signalled a vastly different perspective. Bush's appointment of Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense underlined his commitments from the Citadel speech to work towards the deployment of an MD system as soon as possible. High-level officials immediately began aggressively to make the case for the deployment of a system in Europe, as well as in Asia, arguing that NATO had become more susceptible to political coercion and blackmail, largely due to its failure to define a joint missile defence program. In 2002, the US withdrew from the ABM treaty, citing the need to undertake new tests against the new threats and asserting that the new Russian-American strategic partnership rendered the ABM treaty unnecessary. After withdrawal, the Bush team began to explore earnestly the possibilities in Europe for an effective multilayered defence system involving air, sea, and land assets.<sup>8</sup> Bush officials also began unofficial probes and preliminary talks in several Central and Eastern European states, including conversations with Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary over the possibility of a missile defence bases on their soil.

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7 Clinton cited the lack of confidence in the technology and the effectiveness of the entire NMD system as his reasons not to go forward. See his speech at Georgetown University available at: [www.fas.org/spp/starwars/program/news00/bmd-000901c.htm](http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/program/news00/bmd-000901c.htm)

8 Several broad gauge missile defence concepts were approved by NATO in general, summarised at the Riga Summit in 2006, and although the pace of implementation and funding was glacial, there were a number of relevant planning exercises, including some related data-exchange trials involving the Russians themselves.

In view of heightened Bush Administration concerns about Iran, and the desire to finalise arrangements in Alaska and California as a 'legacy issue,' the administration began to push its MDE or 'third site' initiative even more vigorously in 2005-2006. The goal was to extend defences, justified first in terms of US security needs, and then increasingly, through the defence needs of US allies. Lt. General Henry Obering, the Missile Defense Agency Director, first provided the technical framework for testing ABM technology that would be based in Europe and space in 2005. Concurrently, the Administration continued to appropriate massive amounts of money into the US anti-missile system budget, allocating \$US 9.3 billion to the Missile Defense Agency in 2006, a 20% increase



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from the previous year. The administration continued to demonstrate their priority to the missile defence issue through increasingly large appropriations to the Agency, supported without significant US Congressional opposition until 2007.

#### Enhanced Pressure 2007-2008

In February of 2007, after more than a year of serious negotiations, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek asserted that both the Czech Republic and Poland were prepared to host the stationing of ten missile interceptors on Polish soil, and a site for a radar detection system in the Czech Republic.<sup>9</sup> The announcement sent off negative waves throughout Europe and Russia, with major European allies claiming that they had not been consulted about the final agreements and were sceptical, at best, about the urgency of an Iranian missile threat. Russian outrage stressed that the plan threatened their security, despite repeated American efforts to demonstrate that, technically, these limited forces would have no utility in the face of existing Russian missile capability. Russian military figures, past and present, thundered at the breaking of the Gorbachev-Bush agreements of 1990 relating to NATO incursions into Eastern Europe, and called for the immediate breaking of existing East-West arms control agreements such as CFE and the INF agreements.

In 2008, the Bush campaign continued, and began to garner results and produce heightened debate. The April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest became the target of substantial American diplomatic pressures for legitimising the MDE plans and the role of Poland and the Czech Republic. In the final communiqué, all allies appeared to endorse the concept of a missile defence system on European territory, acknowledging “the substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long-range ballistic missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of European-based United States missile defence assets.”<sup>10</sup> The Bush Administration claimed a momentous victory, framing the communiqué in terms of the recognition of an actual threat of ballistic missiles, rather than addressing

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9 Topolánek’s words quoted by the Guardian were “We have agreed our response to the [US] offer will most likely be positive.” Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/feb/19/usa.nato>.

10 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Bucharest Summit Declaration. 3 April 2008. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html>

the still-controversial missile defence system. Bush's national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, asserted that, "There has been, over ten years, a real debate as to whether there is a ballistic missile threat. And I think that debate ended today."<sup>11</sup>

Until the Georgian crisis, Poland remained uncommitted. It reneged on a previous tentative deal under a previous government, and the issue became enmeshed in intra-governmental tactical moves and ploys to gain more direct commitment and air defence capabilities from Washington.<sup>12</sup> The United States continued to step up pressure, utilising senior officials, including Vice President Cheney, to negotiate with the Poles in the hopes of guaranteeing a deal before the end of Bush's term.

Reaction to Russian actions and pressures has moved the MDE debate to a far more symbolic and significant level, and the outcome is still far from clear. The complex history of the negotiations, however, has exposed the fragility of the MDE as an incredibly contentious political issue, domestically and internationally. In many ways, the Bush Administration has failed to productively change the tone of the argument during its eight years in office, and instead, has ploughed forward, without a genuine concern for the opinions of all the allies. It has exposed the cracks among the NATO allies and ignored the costs and tensions involved. Even domestically, most Democrats have declared their desire to slow the progress and consider the entire missile defence anew. Congress refused to appropriate the full funds for the system without Polish and Czech ratification, facts that will almost certainly now give way to increased hostility to any Russian objections or concerns.

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11 Press Briefing with Secretary of State Rice and National Security Advisor Hadley  
Available at: <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/04/102935.htm>

12 The former top Polish missile defence negotiator, Witold Waszczykowski, recently suggested that the delay in reaching an agreement was entirely political, and that Prime Minister Donald Tusk wanted to prevent President Lech Kaczynski from receiving any credit for the deal. Waszczykowski forcefully declared that, "I got the impression that political interests were more important than the safety of the nation." He was promptly fired. Available at: <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3555878,00.html>

## Critical Current Debates

### The Efficacy and Need for the System

It is perhaps easiest to start with the issues in the technical and strategic debates. Despite the Bush Administration's aggressive efforts to deploy an MD system as soon as possible, there are still major doubts as to the need for such a system relative to the existing threats, and to whether a deployment could actually protect against even a limited missile attack. To some observers, the Bush Administration has made a premature decision, both because of a need to cement the MDE system as a legacy before leaving office, and as a deterrent response to what they define as the increasing North Korean and Iranian missile threats.

Iranian tests, so far, have been largely staged to support rhetoric, rather than the actual deployment of nuclear weapons, and seem to suggest that even basic longer-range capabilities will not be ready, at least for an attack against the United States, before 2015, at the earliest. Europe will likely be vulnerable earlier, given Iranian intermediate range capabilities.

North Korea's potential against American homeland targets does seem more imminent. In July of 2006, the North Koreans fired six short-range missiles, and a newer ballistic missile that some estimated possessed the capability to reach the continental US. All the missiles landed harmlessly in the Sea of Japan.<sup>13</sup> Leading up to the tests, the US put its ground-based midcourse defence system (GMD) into operational readiness mode, effectively putting crews at a missile defence system based at Fort Greely, Alaska, on alert to fire upon the missiles if ordered. This involved more than two-dozen interceptors in Alaska and California, oriented to Asia broadly, but especially towards North Korea.

American critics doubt the Bush Administration assertion that the GMDs possessed the capabilities to destroy the missiles, had they been fully launched. Statements from White House officials have appeared to acknowledge that they were aware that the North Korean launch was

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13 News report available at: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/07/04/korea.missile/>

purely of a preparatory nature, and instead, used the opportunity to tout the capabilities of the MD system, without fully having tested its operational capacity.<sup>14</sup>

Many of the same critics argue that the Bush missile defence testing program has consistently involved sleight of hand and unorthodox methods to conceal the limited potential of the existing systems and those planned for eventual deployment, including in Europe. Various reports, undertaken by agencies such as the Government Accountability Office and organisations like the Union of Concerned Scientists, have asserted that the longer-range exo-atmospheric missile defence system is fundamentally untested, and that the kinetic kill concept relies on a level of sensor integration, real-time intelligence, and complex command and control that is not presently practicable or reliable. Many suggest that far better results exist with the new technology in shorter-range systems—Aegis, Patriot-3 upgraded, and even the renewed THAAD. Furthermore, they argue that there are more creative ways to harness these proven capabilities for a defensive shield in Europe.<sup>15</sup>

#### US-European Decision-making

Post-Georgia, the shift in transatlantic debate is largely travelling in a direction favoured by the Administration, although many critical details are not yet visible. There is a growing perception that key European allies have begun to warm to the idea of a system, as long as it remains clearly limited in capability and non-nuclear in its makeup. In part, this reflects growing European exasperation with Iran and their frustration with the pugnacious Iranian rhetoric, launched in response to efforts to halt the emerging Iranian nuclear program. This also demonstrates a greater, and more effective, effort from the Bush Administration to enumerate the benefits that the system would bring to Europe itself. Bush envoys have made more detailed presentations about Iran and its missile plans, and

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14 A congressional staffer asserted in *Arms Control Today* that the Bush Administration blew the North Korean situation out of proportion in order to make "a lot of hoovey meant to build confidence in the [GMD] interceptors." Available at: [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008\\_07-08/NewsAnalysis](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_07-08/NewsAnalysis)

15 Among those who call for a utilisation of the shorter range systems are John Pike, the Director of GlobalSecurity.org and the expert physicist, Richard Garwin, of the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center and a member of the original Rumsfeld Commission.

how MDE would protect European countries from any long-range missile threat, except land-attack cruise missiles for which Europe has no defence. The US has also pledged that the present system would serve as a complement/constituent part to any future NATO ballistic missile defence system, if and when it is finally developed.

Some European states worry that the system presents a regional bias that leaves certain countries more exposed to attacks against Iran because of their proximity to the rogue state. This is not based necessarily solely on altruism; it also highlights the real problems that inequitable coverage will cause not only for the NATO guarantee system, but also for the delicate politics of integration within the European Union.<sup>16</sup> Many officials, including NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, find this distinction problematic, as it would de-facto separate NATO countries into 'A-grade and B-grade' allies. Although the US promises to provide closer-in theatre missile defence systems, such as Patriot, and potentially, sea-based Aegis missiles, to these states, these plans have yet to be fleshed out, let alone implemented.

The major NATO allies have always insisted that the US take a more multi-lateral approach to the deployment of the system and to decision-making within its command and control system. While the Bush Administration successfully tempered some of this criticism by agreeing to officially present the agreement before NATO, concerns still abound that the US has not fully consulted its allies on any crucial aspect. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been most vocal in these appeals since 2006, asserting that any missile defence system in Europe should be 'seen as a task for the alliance collectively,' rather than as strictly an American endeavour. Echoing, albeit at a lower level, the divisive alliance debate over Iraq in 2002-2003, the Bush Administration, however, has continued to define the system as a national project, using bilateral agreements with the Czech and Polish governments that will then be 'presented' to NATO, and 'bolted on' to an eventual NATO system.

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16 In 2007, Lt. General Obering confirmed for example, the findings of a previous NATO report: Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Turkey would be among countries in Southeast Europe that would not be protected by the current plan. Available at: [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007\\_04/EuropeSplit](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_04/EuropeSplit)

The NATO communiqué did provide a definite boost to Bush's prospects, but it also created a hedge to the future of the proposed system. The statement endorsed the exploration of possible options to protect European countries from ballistic missiles, but it did not explicitly endorse the US-proposed missile defence system.

The key factors going forward, however, will be the future of US and European relations with Russia in the weeks and months after the Russian incursions into Georgia. In August of 2008, it is simply too early to tell and, short of new events or what some predict will be heightened Russian pressure against Ukraine or other states that are in the 'very near abroad,' it is too early to tell.

## US–Russia Relations

### Russian Arguments: True and Rhetorical

A third core issue is the subject of US–Russian tensions: the possibility of a cooperative Russian–US strategic partnership is increasingly in question. Since the 1980s, and certainly since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, Europeans and Americans alike have put their trust in the politics of engagement with Russia, and have engaged in a plan to integrate Russia firmly into the international community, the rule of law, and perhaps eventually, the league of democracies. Some critics, on both the left and the right, have expressed doubt that such a partnership has, or even could, materialise, despite encouraging rhetoric from the Bush Administration and an emphasis on the personal Bush-Putin ties.

This doubt has increased in recent months. A new US governmental strategic dialogue aimed at ameliorating relations with Russia, launched in 2007-2008 by the Secretaries of State and Defense, has produced few concrete results. As the US moves closer and closer to an actual deployment of an MDE, Russia's rhetoric had grown increasingly hostile. Even more problematic, Moscow's disputes have come to encompass the entire Russian catalogue of nationalist woes and disrespect since 1991—issues ranging from NATO expansion, to the disregard of Russian preferences in the Balkans, especially Kosovo. The Georgian crisis has only escalated the tensions.

Russian antagonism, in some ways, has been contradicted by a number of creative, or at least, distracting olive branches that Russia extended in 2007, that would have provided Russian cooperation or involvement in a missile defence system in Europe.<sup>17</sup> In late spring, Putin offered Americans the use of the Russian-operated Gabala radar system, based in Azerbaijan, as a substitute for the Czech sites. He also suggested the deployment of Russian monitoring observers at the potential base in Poland. While the Pentagon cast this move as pure theatre, Putin followed with a second offer during a private visit with the president at Kennebunkport, the addition of a more advanced radar site in Armavir, which would provide an unprecedented view of Iranian airspace from Russian territory. Meetings of Secretaries Rice and Gates with their Russian counterparts failed, however, to establish an agreement, with Rice insisting that the Russian bases serve as add-ons, not substitutes for the Czech and Polish sites.

In addition to Moscow expressing public concern about the possibility of being a target of the missile defence system, a number of Russians say that it is the unilateral nature of the MDE system that worries them most. They assert that the American capability to upgrade and re-orient the MDE system without Russian agreement poses the most direct threat to their national security.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, Moscow has expressed alarm that radars and missile interceptors placed close to their borders will have the future capability of monitoring a substantial percentage of Russian air space, and thus, will have the potential to directly defend against, or, eventually if re-oriented, target their nuclear weaponry. Moscow has articulated frustration that the Bush Administration will not suspend its

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17 A June 2008 CRS report notes that: "On June 7, 2007, in a surprise move during the G-8 meeting in Germany, Putin offered to partner with the United States on missile defence, and suggested that a Soviet era radar facility in Azerbaijan be used to help track and target hostile missiles that might be launched from the Middle East. President Bush responded by calling the proposal an "interesting suggestion," and welcomed the apparent policy shift. The following day, Putin suggested that GMD interceptors be "placed in the south, in U.S. NATO allies such as Turkey, or even Iraq ... [or] on sea platforms." Available at: Hildreth, Steve, and Carl Ek. Long-Range Ballistic Missile Defense in Europe. Congressional Research Service. June 2008.

18 Moscow's concerns in this regard are made more concrete because the Missile Defense Agency has no publicly available architecture defining the longer-term goals of its intended MD system. Rather, the MDA pursues a block approach to deploying MD components. In effect, whatever the nearly \$10 billion investment produces each year, regardless of whether or not it is fully tested, gets deployed. Under such circumstances, it is not at all surprising that Russia—and China—fear what might eventually result from such an uncertain future. We are indebted to Dennis Gormley for this and other helpful comments on the essay.

deployment plans while carrying out negotiations. This dissatisfaction is compounded by Russia's sentiments that the US is not serious about exploring other MDE options in which Russian interests in its bordering regions can be accommodated. This issue has become the main area of political disquiet: Russia believes that the defence system will lead to American control over key defence capabilities in areas they believe belong to their particular sphere of influence. This, they dispute, could provide unbridled opportunities for American unilateralism. Responding to this possibility, and in parallel with its cut-off of about half of the Czech Republic's gas flow from Russia, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued its



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sternest warning days after the announcement of the Czech agreement, stating that if an MDE agreement were ratified, Russia would “be forced to react not with diplomatic, but with military-technical methods.”<sup>19</sup>

### Bush Administration Responses

Before the recent Czech and Polish agreements, and the events in Georgia, the Bush Administration largely dismissed Russian threats of retaliation. This American governmental attitude conformed to a general second-term strategy of providing Russia with far less positive attention that Putin received in his first term. This stemmed, in part, from the distraction of high-level attention with Iraq and Iran, as well as a general ‘Russia fatigue’ occurring throughout the government. There has also been a continuing, increasingly combative, internal debate within the Bush Administration over the best strategy to employ in negotiations with Russia. The increased Russian hostilities over the MD agreements, coupled with the Western decision to recognize Kosovo over Moscow’s objections, have led the remaining hawks within the Bush team, led largely by Vice President Cheney, to renew their long-standing case: Russia has begun to revert to former Soviet-style tactics and attitudes. These hawks claim that the West must ignore Russian rhetoric, and instead, counter with strong actions.<sup>20</sup>

The Bush Administration has largely ignored Russian warnings, while continuing to express their desire to engage Russia in negotiations on the deployment of the system. In the days after reaching an agreement with the Czechs, Bush told Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he sought “strategic cooperation on preventing missiles from rogue nations, like Iran, from threatening our friends and allies.”<sup>21</sup> This conciliatory mindset may become less viable, given the recent turn of events.

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19 Russian Foreign Ministry statement, Russia: Missile defense needs military reaction. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/07/08/missile.defense.ap/>

20 An 18 August 2008, New York Times analysis, “Europe Wonders if It Can Square Its Need for Russia With a Distaste for Putin,” emphasizes the role of Vice President’s staff and Assistant Secretary of State Dan Fried in pushing this perspective. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/18/world/europe/18europe.html>

21 Missile Defense Chess, posted by Adam Blickstein, 22 July 2008 Available at: <http://www.democracymuseum.org/2008/07/missile-defense.html>

Days after Bush appealed to Medvedev for collaboration, the Russian President attacked the defence system, accusing the US of “aggravating the situation”<sup>22</sup> and promising to retaliate appropriately. This disappointed many European observers, who had hoped that Medvedev might present a change for the positive in affairs with the West. Although Prime Minister Putin undoubtedly retains a large hand in international affairs, and heavily directs the Russian response to the MDE system, Medvedev has seemed every bit as hawkish as the former President with his heightened rhetoric about Georgia, and his assertion that the US is playing an illegitimate role in the conflict and in other issues affecting Russia’s vital interests.

### Future Interactions

While the actual extent of the Russian threat is debatable, Moscow’s continued, and increased, opposition to the potential MDs in Europe may prove the key factor hindering the potential acceptance and deployment of the MDE system. A Russia that appears implacably opposed to a US presence near its border, and that insists on maintaining its own sphere of influence, is hard to define as a partner, and instead will be seen by many as an adversary, at least in geopolitical terms. Russia’s military campaign in Georgia has alarmed a number of the former Soviet states and allies, who worry that the recent Russian warnings may not be as hollow as suggested by the US. More concerning, Russia has demonstrated a degree of contempt for the West, ignoring criticism and suggesting that the US must now choose between its US ‘virtual project’ in Georgia and its need for Russian agreement in its more ambitious global projects.

Some analysts have suggested that Russia was only waiting for an opportunity to demonstrate its resistance to US dominance. In their eyes, Russia is using the violence to re-assert itself in, not only the near abroad, but also in the greater geo-political domain as a re-born powerful force. Russian statements since the onset of hostilities in Georgia reflect a punitive, self-confident tone. Moscow has considered itself to be empowered, if not totally justified, by actions it considers parallel to the US unilateral use of force in Iraq and in the bombing of Serbia over

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22 Medvedev renews tensions with US over missile shield, 15 July 2008.  
Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/15/russia.usa>

Kosovo in the late '90s. Recognition of an independent Kosovo caused a change in Europe's borders; Russia claims its redefinition of the two enclaves in Georgia as Russian space presents a corresponding and equally legitimate course of action.

### Options for the Future

In the short term, MDE has become a political symbol, agreed to in the heat of augmenting anti-Russian reactions and fears in Warsaw. Especially for the hardliners in Washington, the system will be perceived as a fundamental and final referendum on the Bush Administration's attempt to promote aggressively a new defence strategy that will last beyond its final term. Yet, the fact that a new American president will take office in January 2009 means that there may still be a second look or reconsideration before the critical second phase of decisions on implementation begin. A new effort may even be launched — similar to the beginning of arms control in the early 1960s — to view the missile defence system as a technical project through which mutual cooperation could re-engage both Russia and the United States in areas where their political and security interests converge. There need be no assumptions about global partnership or even converging security interests; simple functional cooperation and non-contradictory interests will probably be suffice. The US could still accept, or at least fully explore, Putin's proposals for MDE cooperation, in order to create direct engagement on the basis of transparency and convergent interest.

But, in the heat of emotional post-Georgia tensions, the prospects for reconciliation, even at this minimal level, seem slim. The Polish agreement seems to have stemmed directly from Russia's newfound desire to re-establish its present in the former Soviet bloc. And the US response — with Republican candidate Senator McCain promoting a harder-line against Russia than Bush, and the Bush Administration increasingly emphasizing the legitimacy of American interests in Georgia — is certain to further aggravate the situation.

One wild card continues to be Russia. How accommodating will the Russians eventually prove in their promised withdrawals from Georgia? How willing are the Russians to continue 'near abroad' politics of this type? Will there be a pattern of pressure on Ukraine, which, like Georgia, has been promoted by the Bush Administration for NATO membership?

How acceptable in Moscow will the politics of the 'big chill' become vis-à-vis the United States, once the flush of Georgia fades and the lack of Western investment or needed technology, especially in the energy sector, becomes evident?

However, it does not seem that, except in the most extreme foreseeable case, the Russians will deter the Bush administration in its remaining months from its current MDE course. Even the more moderate Bush officials are now committed to MDE deployment, and echo Lt. General Obering's sentiments that Russian threats continue to ring as baseless. Even before the events of Georgia, Obering himself asserted that, "I think it's incumbent upon them when they make increasingly aggressive statements ... to justify those. There is absolutely no justification in our eyes for some of their statements and some of their concerns about these sites."<sup>23</sup>

The attitudes of the NATO states, both old and new, serve as the other wild card. Currently, all European countries seem united in their demands that Russia return to the status quo ante in Georgia, and retreat from its bellicose rhetoric about Western orientations and choices in the conflict. On the question of the missile defence system itself, Russia's actions may serve to unite the major European states, which may perceive the system as a polarising issue, and prefer siding with the US, rather than Russia. This created schism may result in increased support for the deployment of the MDs. The newer members of NATO may view the impending crisis as a demonstration of their worst fears regarding Russia, and use it as leverage for stronger protection guarantees, including a guaranteed US presence on their soil — as Poland did.<sup>24</sup> This may ultimately resemble attitudes held by NATO states in the 1960s: should a Soviet attack occur, US abandonment in a crisis would be likely and easy without an American physical presence on European soil and thus, acting

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23 Department of Defense News Briefing with Lt. General Henry Obering, 15 July 2008. Available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4263>

24 The Poland agreement includes "a mutual commitment to come to each other's assistance immediately if one is under attack." This would, of course, be a guarantee in addition to that contained in NATO's Article 5 and is predicated on the Polish leadership's assertion about NATO's inability to mount a swift response in a crisis. The declaration was also accompanied by a promise from the U.S. to help modernise Poland's armed forces and to place a battery of Patriot missiles at an American based there by 2012." Available at: <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5hdNtXPW9-1UZEmhgLC5VZ3dDa25wD92M70GG1>

as a down payment on the deterrent threat of escalation. An MDE system would serve as one more critical stone in the bulwark.

Above all, however, the fact remains that the new president will receive most of the burden in guaranteeing MDEs actual deployment. Over the last eight years, Bush's Washington has pushed the question of the missile defence system in Europe so far forward that deployment no longer seems a question of 'if,' but rather, 'when.' It will be up to the next president, as well as the actions and words of America's allies, to sort out this ambivalent legacy and to decide the importance of the deployment of the MDs for both the United States and Europe, and, perhaps most importantly, what the system itself is worth in terms of the impact on strategic relations between the US, Europe, and Russia.

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# Annex II: Workshop Programme

Welcome Address

Introduction

Missile Capabilities and Threat Perceptions

Potential Responses: Military-Technical

Potential Responses: Political-Diplomatic

Concluding Panel: Next Steps – What is the Way Forward?

# Annex III: List of Participants

**Mr. Richard Davison**, Principal Director for Strategic Capabilities, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense, United States

**Dr. Dennis M. Gormley**, Senior Fellow, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies

**Professor François Heisbourg**, Chairman of the Foundation Council, GCSP

**Professor Andrzej Karkoszka**, Managing Director, Aerospace, Defence and Security, Central & Eastern Europe, PwC Polska

**Professor Catherine Kelleher**, College Park Professor, University of Maryland, Senior Fellow, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, and Associate Fellow, GCSP

**Dr. Patricia Lewis**, Director, UNIDIR

**Dr. Alexander Pikayev**, Director, Department for Disarmament and Conflict Resolution, IMEMO

**Ambassador Jacques Pitteloud**, Centre for International Security Policy, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

**Dr. Jamie Shea**, Director, Policy Planning, Private Office of the Secretary General, NATO

**Dr. W. Pal Sidhu**, Course Director, New Issues in Security Course, GCSP

**Dr. Mark Smith**, Wilton Park

**Ambassador Dr. Fred Tanner**, Director, GCSP

**Dr. Oliver Thränert**, Head, Security Policy Research Group, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

**Ambassador Patrick Villemur**, Special Advisor to the Director, Faculty Member seconded from the French Government, GCSP

Other participants included disarmament officials from member States of the Conference on Disarmament.



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