

At any rate, MDA's operating mode, despite having created these task forces, has not in any real way changed.

What becomes apparent from reading these seven reports is that changes are imperative. If MDA continues in the same vein it has been, the United States will see itself saddled with a missile defense system that costs tens of billions, possibly hundreds of billions, of dollars, yet provides no actual defense. What's more, by diverting that money to an unfeasible system, the United States will miss out on the protection it could be getting from weapon systems that actually work. An honest assessment of the overall architecture is required before more time and funding is lost.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment because it would have a great negative impact on national security by severely curtailing or terminating programs that protect our country against rogue nations.

Simply put, now is not the time to gut our missile defense programs by slashing the Missile Defense Agency's budget in half, given the threats posed by such countries as North Korea and Iran.

This amendment would freeze in place both ground-based and the Aegis midcourse defense capabilities prior to finishing what we started with the Fort Greeley, Alaska, GMD installation. We have had tremendous success with the Aegis program. Six of the seven last intercept tests have been hits. Why in the world would you stop this now?

In addition, this amendment would kill the Airborne Laser and Kinetic Energy Interceptor boost phase defense programs, just when both promises are approaching significant milestones in 2008.

General Cartwright, Commander of STRATCOM, has repeatedly told me how important it is to stay the course with the Airborne Laser Programs, whose directed energy capability is of a critical importance to the Department of Defense. This amendment would kill the ABL program after more than \$3 billion has been invested. It would be a tremendous waste of taxpayers' money not to go ahead and follow through with the ABL program to see how well it works.

The amendment cites the Congressional Budget Office report on long-term implications of current defense plans and alternatives. Let me repeat, "and alternatives." The evolutionary alternative in this CBO report is neither a recommendation nor an endorsement by CBO of cutting MDA programs. This report simply looked at the impact of future defense budgets, of alternative options to meet hypothetical, hypothetical spending targets. The CBO, and this was confirmed this today by my staff, does not endorse or support this proposal. It was merely another option as part of funding a "what if" drill, an academic situation, if you will.

This amendment could drastically cut the budget of our missile defense. While we all understand the missile defense architecture is complicated and costly, long term, it is crucial in today's world if we will continue our primary national defense into the future.

There will never be a time to cut investments in our Nation's protection. That is what this does. I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote against this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlemen from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, the Missile Defense Agency has before it really an impossible task. Our current missile system programs have not worked, and wishing will not help it to overcome the physics. The tests have failed repeatedly. It has been confused by decoys, faced numerous testing troubles, and despite spending over \$100 billion over the years, we have failed to develop a working system.

Mr. TIERNEY referred to the seven separate reports that are critical of various aspects of this program. Our amendment is not just pulled out of a hat, it focuses this program down to allow the Missile Defense Agency to work in those areas where it can make progress. The programs have gotten so far out in front of the basic facts that it is time to focus this down.

You know, our colleagues say they do not want to shortchange our national defense, but I can assure you that cutting wasteful programs does not shortchange our national defense. Seven separate reports by independent agencies here say that aspects of this program are wasteful. They simply are not working. It is time to focus it down.

You know, one of the craziest ideas I have ever heard is that we should deploy this missile defense system as a way to test it. I cannot think of any aspect of your life, any aspect of military preparedness, any aspect of business or industry where you work that way. It should be thoroughly tested before it is deployed. And to deploy something like this is worse than a waste.

To deploy a flawed system, well, simple strategic analysis tells us that a provocative yet permeable defense is destabilizing and weakens the security of all Americans.

The idea that we have sunk lots of cost is the argument that keeps coming back. That is one of the worst fallacies in human reasoning. We need to stop throwing good money after bad and focus this program down.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Chairman, before I yield to my friends on the other side, let me say that the gentleman is probably not aware of a missile which was deployed before it was finally finished, which the Israelis used.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 45 seconds to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) who is on the Intel Committee and also on the Strategic Forces Committee that handles missile defense.

(Mr. REYES asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REYES. I thank the gentlemen for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment in support of the committee's efforts to obtain effective and fully tested missile defense capabilities aimed at defeating real threats.

Today is not a time to be cutting funds from this critical program. I am particularly concerned about the restrictions the amendment would impose on the Aegis and THAAD theatre defense systems, because just this morning a THAAD interceptor was successfully launched against a simulated target.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot afford to slow down this important theater defense program. I urge my colleagues to support this committee's bipartisan approach and to defeat this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment and in support of the Committee's efforts to obtain effective, fully-tested missile defense capabilities aimed at defeating real threats.

H.R. 5122 redirects missile defense funding from longer range programs—such as the multiple kill vehicle—to near term needs, such as buying upgrades for the Patriot and Aegis interceptors that can protect our service members and allies today. It also places restrictions on developing improvements to the ground-based midcourse defense system until after it successfully intercepts two operationally realistic warheads, and it prevents any development of space-based interceptors.

While we might disagree about whether further adjustments or reductions are possible, I commend the subcommittee chairman for this good-faith effort to develop a bipartisan approach to missile defense.

The amendment before us today goes too far in radically restructuring missile defense programs. It would essentially freeze our missile defense capabilities at their current level and it would terminate numerous programs before we obtain useful information about whether they can improve our defenses against missiles launched by a rogue nation.

I am particularly concerned about the restrictions the amendment would impose on the Aegis and THAAD theatre defense systems. Just this morning a THAAD interceptor was successfully launched against a simulated target. We cannot afford to slow down this important theatre defense program.

I urge my colleagues to support the Committee's bipartisan approach and to defeat this amendment.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Chairman, let me now yield any time remaining to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER) who is also very knowledgeable about missile defense and also on the Intel Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. CRAMER. I thank my colleague from Alabama and also my colleague from Texas.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the Tierney-Holt Amendment. I do so reluctantly, because I respect the two gentlemen, and we serve on the House Intelligence Committee together as well.