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Missile Defense

John Rood, Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security

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MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for coming this morning. We're extremely pleased to have Acting Under Secretary John Rood. He is the Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security at the Department of State. He's here to speak about missile defense and other nonproliferation issues, and so I give the floor to the Under Secretary. Thank you so much.

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Well, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. What I thought I'd do is just offer some very brief opening remarks and then spend the time taking your questions.

Missile defense has been an active area over the last couple of years and certainly over the -- during the administration of President Bush. We -- and the reason that we're pursuing missile defense is that we continue to see an evolution in the threat that we're facing. You start with the fact that there is a wide availability of ballistic missiles in the world today. Some roughly two dozen countries either have or are pursuing missile programs.

In the type of missiles being pursued, they are longer range, they're more sophisticated, they are in larger number, and many of them are in the hands of some of the countries that we are most concerned about from a security perspective, such



as North Korea and Iran.

With respect to Iran as an example, you saw just in the last few months the Iranian Defense Minister announcing that Iran is pursuing new missiles of new range and capabilities. And we also saw the Iranians, of course, conduct a flight test of a space launch vehicle, which, of course, the technology used in a space launch vehicle and that for ballistic missiles is very similar.

So we continue to see this progression of a threat that concerns us, both of missile technology. And of course, weapons of mass destruction are being -- programs like that are being pursued by countries of concern to us in the security sphere.

When the President took office, we had had a missile defense program in this country for some time, but one of the major changes he made was he dropped the N from NMD, or national missile defense, and we call it missile defense now. And the reason we did that in the administration was to make clear that the United States was interested not only in missile defense protection for the United States, but also for our friends and allies. And we have pursued a range of cooperative efforts with allies, and we feel like we've had a very successful track record here over the past few years.

One of the things that was necessary to allow us to cooperate with friends and allies was we needed to move beyond the 1972 ABM Treaty which prohibited that kind of cooperation with allies. Today, as an example, between the United States and Japan -- Japan is now our largest missile defense partner -- we've had significant cooperation and we think very successful cooperation. Japan spends itself a little over a billion dollars per year in terms of their budget. And with us in the United States we have efforts at every phase, whether that be from conceptual development, research and development activities, we have efforts underway with our operational forces to coordinate their tactics and operational procedures, we have interchanges between the various units and elements of the United States military and the Japanese military. I think that's been very successful from both sides' perspective. And of course, the United States has deployed a radar on the soil of Japan for the purpose of providing missile defense information not only for Japanese forces but also for American forces.

We have other very strong cooperative efforts elsewhere in the world. For example, we have a joint program with Germany and Italy called the MEADS program to jointly develop and deploy a missile defense system. We're very active with Israel in cooperative efforts. And of course, we've had some important basing negotiations where we have reached agreement with the UK Government to upgrade an existing early warning radar called Fylingdales. We had a successful negotiation with the Danish Government to upgrade early warning radar on Danish soil called Thule. It's in Greenland. And we are now engaged in negotiations with the Polish and Czech governments about placement of missile defense facilities in Europe.

So I think we've seen a recognition of the threat and the need to move forward with missile defenses, particularly among our NATO allies. I was at NATO headquarters last week for a meeting of the North Atlantic Council and in Warsaw Thursday for another round of negotiations with our Polish counterparts.

And the thing that strikes me is I've been going to NATO now for almost a year, and the progression and evolution in the debate within the alliance, I think is really substantial. We've come a long way in a year. We've seen now, I think, most of the discussions in NATO center around the degree of protection, missile defense protection afforded to allies, how allies will cooperate to provide that protection, what the different roles and responsibilities will be of the different NATO bodies and indeed of national efforts.

I think the question of moving forward on missile defense is increasingly one where allies agree on the need to move

forward. And we're hopeful that in the days and weeks ahead that we're going to continue to see that progression and see some expression of that view at the Bucharest summit in April.

So let me remark just briefly on the state of our negotiations with our allies. I think we're doing very well in those negotiations. We're very close with the Czech Republic to completing an agreement on missile defenses there. Just a few words remain to be worked out. In our business, in diplomacy, sometimes just a few words can matter a great deal and it's important to get these things right. But we're very close there.

With respect to the negotiations we're having with Poland, as I said, I was in Warsaw last Thursday, we continue to make progress in those negotiations and move closer to an agreement. The Prime Minister of Poland, Mr. Tusk, was here yesterday for a meeting with President Bush. We thought that that went very well, productive exchange among the leaders and a desire to move forward in this area.

And then, of course, I have led the U.S. interagency teams that have met with our Russian colleagues to try to address some of their concerns. Let me just touch on that for a moment. We have had, I think, an unprecedented exchange of intelligence information with our Russian counterparts, intelligence information we previously only shared with NATO allies, to talk about the threat and why we in the United States think missile defense should be one element of a broader response to that threat. But we do think missile defense is an important element of this broader response. We've explained to our Russian colleagues the reason for our threat assessment. We have described the capabilities of the U.S. proposed system in some great detail, with technical exchanges among experts, to try to make clear to the Russians why we don't think this system, with up to ten interceptors in Poland, can pose a threat to the thousands of strategic nuclear warheads that the Russians possess. And we've also shown on a technical basis why we don't think these particular systems are effective against Russian ICBMs aimed at the United States. We don't think that our system would have any real capability in that regard.

We have also explored avenues for cooperation with our Russian colleagues. We have put on the table proposals for cooperation across the first spectrum of missile defense activities, including the possibility of a joint regional missile defense architecture. The objective of this architecture would be to defend the United States, Europe and Russia from missile attack. It would include elements provided by all three of those bodies: the United States, Russia and our NATO allies.

And we've also explored more modest cooperation proposals. Things such as radar cooperation, building on the proposal that President Putin made last year. And finally, we've explored a range of transparency and confidence-building measures to give our Russian colleagues some greater assurance about the nature of the U.S. system elements that would be deployed in Europe.

So with that as a very brief scene-setter, I'd of course be happy to take any questions you might have. Sir, or do you want to call on them?

MODERATOR: I just want to remind everyone to state the name of your publication and your name. And please wait for the microphone. Thanks so much.

QUESTION: Dimitry Kirsanov from TASS, the Russian news wire service. Thanks a lot for coming over to brief for us. Following up on what you just said about the cooperation with the Russians, earlier today some of my colleagues in

Moscow reported that Secretaries Rice and Gates plan to travel to Moscow for the next 2+2 meetings later this month in March. I was wondering if you could provide us with the date of this meeting.

And secondly, sir, I was wondering if you could give us a timeframe, a timeline on when exactly this Administration plans to give the Polish side proposals on Poland army modernization, basically what President Bush promised him yesterday.

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Okay. With respect to your first question, I don't have any announcement to make with respect to a meeting between our ministers - well, in the United States, we call them Secretaries of State and Secretaries of Defense. So I would urge you to - I don't have any particular announcement in that regard.

With respect to the timeline for Polish military modernization, we have been engaged for some time, of course, between the United States and Poland in the area of defense and security cooperation. And that cooperation predates the Bush Administration's time in office.

Poland is an important ally of the United States and, recently, we have launched another dialogue to try to add more life to our discussions on security assistance and the modernization of the Polish armed forces. This is a parallel track to the missile defense discussions. It's led by Assistant Secretary Steve Mull. Steve was in Warsaw about two weeks ago now for discussions in this regard. And this is something that will take time to progress, to conduct a proper analysis of the threat environment and the capabilities of the Polish armed forces, but it's something that we expect in the coming months to be able to complete. And I think you saw the President yesterday indicate that this analysis would be completed during his time in office.

QUESTION: This is Umit Enginsoy with Turkish NTV television. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. About a month ago, Missile Defense Commander Lieutenant General Henry Obering said that in addition to planned capabilities in Poland and the Czech Republic, there were other plans to set up a third leg of the missile defense system for an X radar, a mobile X radar, probably to be deployed in Turkey in the Caucasus or the Caspian area. And yesterday, Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell admitted that when Secretary Gates visited Turkey some 10, 12 days ago, the matter was discussed, the missile defense issue was discussed with Turkish leaders, military and civilian. Now what's happening with the Turks?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Well, the Turkish Government, as I understand it - I've not participated directly in these discussions, but over the years, there have been various discussions about missile defense between our two countries. We're not presently engaged in any negotiations with respect to placement of missile defense facilities except in Poland and the Czech Republic. But from time to time, our allies, in NATO in particular, they do have interest in missile defense. We are certainly open to engaging in a dialogue about the capabilities of various missile defense systems and, you know, views on doctrine and our approach. But at the moment, we have no plans for negotiations about placing other system elements of the U.S. system other than in Poland and the Czech Republic.

QUESTION: Can I follow up? What about the X radar? Its deployment is not something urgent because it could come at a later stage. It's very mobile and a forward-based thing. Is it possible that you asked Turkey to deploy it there? And what did General Obering mean to say, apparently, when he mentioned Turkey, the Caucasus, and the Caspian as a potential site for the X radar, whose installments or construction is not something urgent?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: The missile defense system that we're deploying, it does rely on different radars. Some are

in the X band, which is what you're referring to. For example, the radar we've proposed to place in the Czech Republic, that would operate in the X band frequency. This is a more precise type radar for tracking of smaller objects. We have - as I say, have been pursuing negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic. We are not, at present, planning to open negotiations with other countries.

With respect to the hypothetical question you posed, I've learned some time ago to try to not answer hypothetical questions. So I can't say for certain what would happen in the future, but I - of course, there isn't a fixed final architecture for missile defenses, just in the same manner there isn't a fixed final architecture for how our Air Forces will be configured or naval forces. Over time these things can and do evolve and that would certainly apply to missile defense.

QUESTION: Hello. My name is Daniel and I'm with Czech Daily, Hopodarske Noviny. The Czech Government still insists that the radar and the interceptors has to be a common project. But recently they said that it doesn't mean that it has to be the Polish (inaudible) interceptor. They said that they could imagine that it could be connected with other kind of missiles or system in Europe. So could that be if, for any reason, you couldn't reach agreement with Poland, could that be a possible scenario for you to have a radar in Czech Republic which then would cooperate with other system than the Polish side? And the other question concerning the negotiation with Poland, it's not clear to me when they are asking, let's say, for some other organization like Patriot, do they speak about buying - purchasing it or just be given it? Thank you.

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Mm-hmm. Right now we are pursuing negotiations both to place a radar in the Czech Republic as well as interceptors in Poland. Now, these would be linked, of course, with facilities, as I say, which are on Danish soil and on the UK soil and in the United States. So there would be elements of the system in five countries, if we are - five NATO nations -- if we are successful in these negotiations.

Of course, we - in practice, we would like to see these facilities come into being together for the obvious reason that the radar's purpose is to support interceptors in the European area and certainly that's the reason for the interceptors in Poland. Of course, these sites were chosen not only because we have a good relationship with those countries, but secondly because the geometry was favorable in terms of maximizing missile defense coverage for allies -- NATO allies -- in Europe as well as the United States, which was our objective. And in the area of missile defense, geography counts for a lot. We are not at present, as I say, we're seeking these - pursuit of both of these facilities.

In the area of the benefits of a radar in the Czech Republic, though, I think the comments you're referring to, I suspect, are driven by the fact that the radar will have benefits beyond simply supporting interceptors in Poland, if we are successful in those negotiations. That kind of radar data, when linked to other missile defense facilities, whether those be in other NATO allies' territory in Europe, will expand the capabilities of those systems, for example, a THAAD or a Patriot system, when using this data, can defend a much larger area. And the reason is that this is a more capable radar than the one directly associated with that system. It's so you can use this data. And in essence, if a hostile missile is launched, the larger radar in the Czech Republic can sense it and the smaller radar that is associated with, say, THAAD or Patriot before it can ever see the target coming in, an interceptor can be launched and therefore, the defended area, if you draw a sort of a radius around the area where those missile defense systems are located, is much larger.

So there are benefits above and beyond that which will only be provided by interceptors in Poland that this radar would have foreign NATO allies and their own defense capabilities and for NATO's capabilities through things like the ALTBM program, which is a system under which NATO is pursuing the means to protect forces that are deployed, including out of area.

QUESTION: The other question was whether Poland is negotiating for buying some system or they are basically asking to get it?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Well, I think, in terms of our discussions with the Poles, we are, of course, beginning with an analysis of the threat environment and of -- you have to begin, I think, with an assessment of the capabilities of the Polish forces and their -- where are the gaps in capabilities reside in. All armed forces have areas where they would like to have improved capabilities, including the United States. This is not uncommon, this kind of gap analysis. So we're in the beginning stages of this kind of discussion. And obviously, there are a range of means by which the United States can and does provide defense assistance to our NATO allies, including things such as training and the kind of assistance and the analysis we're doing, all the way up to sales of hardware. So we -- at this stage, I would simply say it's a discussion that we're having, but we've not yet reached any particular conclusions as to the types of assistance that could be provided.

QUESTION: Thank you. Desmond Butler from the AP. What are you expecting at the Bucharest summit in terms of -- I understand there's going to be some kind of statement on missile defense. And a second thing, my understanding is that the system for Europe that's being planned won't quite cover all of the NATO allies in Europe. What do you -- are you looking for ways to address that?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Yes. I think at the Bucharest summit there'll be a number of topics that the alliance will discuss, Afghanistan obviously being a major one and a number of other things. Missile defense will be one of the subjects in this expanded list of subject areas discussed.

My expectation is that at the Bucharest summit, you will see a recognition by the allies of the threat and the need to address that threat. And as I say, missile defense is one of the elements in a broader response. Sometimes in discussions like this, I -- from the nature of the questions, you can come away, I think, mistakenly with the impression that that's the primary response or the only response to the threat. But actually there are quite a few things in our toolkit; missile defense being one of them to address the threat. But I think in Bucharest you'll see allies recognize the threat and the threat environment and the need for the alliance to take steps to deal with that threat, and missile defense being one of those things that we recognized as a proper response.

The particular wording and language as to how the alliance does that, of course, is still under discussion. But I do think that I'm on solid ground in saying you'll see the alliance move in that direction and recognize the benefits from the U.S. system that would be provided to ally security.

The system that we've proposed to place in Europe with interceptors in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic will provide coverage against longer range missiles launched from the Middle East to allies in Europe. And to the extent those missiles can travel longer ranges, all the allies that fall in this longer range area will be covered. There are some allies that, by geography, fall closer to Iran, and those are shorter range missiles that would be used against them because it's a shorter distance. The system we've proposed to place in Poland and the Czech Republic would not have the ability to deal with that.

And so that's one of the questions allies are debating, is how do we go about, as an alliance, dealing with this situation wherein the coverage from the U.S. system is such that it provides protection against longer-range missiles for allies. And that's still under discussion. A number of the NATO bodies which have different acronyms are looking at this question in

earnest. And I think options will be developed and put before the alliance about how to deal with that.

QUESTION: Is it - and that could involve that or medium range --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROOD: You would - in order to defend against these shorter range systems, you would use the type of systems that you're alluding to. And in NATO's ALTBMD Program, which looks at these shorter range threats in defense of deployed forces, that's already the type of architecture that has been examined and so that would naturally be where it would lead you. And they're not all U.S. systems, by the way. As an example, the French are developing a missile defense system called SAM-T(ph). So the alliance will have a number of potential options from which to choose.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mounzer Sleiman with Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi. Assuming the threat from Iran that you alluded to, the threat probably was more imminent on - potentially on the presence of U.S. forces and their allies in the region in the Gulf. Are you confident that there is a system of missile defense in place to protect U.S. forces in the area of responsibility of the Central Command and what kind of system there and coverage? At the same time, do you think the approach of area of -- free of mass destruction weapons - weapon of mass destruction and its delivery in the Middle East is probably -- and another approach would be less costly to the United States and its allies?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROOD: I think with respect to missile defense in the Middle East and in the Gulf region, in particular, there is - there has been a real growth in interest in missile defense among a number of the U.S. allies, principally driven by their threat perceptions that they have developed, of course, on their own. The Gulf allies don't presently have an integrated multinational system, as you know, for defense, but they are cooperating more closely together and that's something that we in the United States are certainly encouraging through the Gulf Security Dialogue, where we are - missile defense is one of the subjects that is discussed in that dialogue with the various countries in the region.

Certainly, we in the United States are open to the idea of missile defense cooperation with our allies in that region. We think they've got a legitimate security need and certainly missile defenses are, we think, a stabilizing response to that kind of threat. After all, this is a purely defensive system. Its use is after an attacker should happen to launch a missile to -- in order to intercept it. Of course, it has some uses before that time. The presence of a defense, the reason I say it's stabilizing, is that it provides some means to deter and dissuade other countries that could be hostile from pursuing missiles or launching them at you because of the presence of an effective defense. As an example, we went through a case last year or - well, now about 18 months ago where North Korea began stacking a missile on a launch pad and we didn't know what capabilities, what was on top of that missile or what North Korea's intentions were, but we did think they wanted to create a crisis.

So for the first time, we put the U.S. missile defense system on full alert and it gave us an option where we didn't have to contribute further to that crisis. We didn't have to seriously consider options like preemption or overwhelming retaliation. We had a defense and we were content to use that defense and it was a way of not contributing to the crisis being larger. Here in the Gulf region, again, the Iranians have conducted military exercises where they featured the simultaneous launch of multiple missiles. They have been making statements featuring their ballistic missile capabilities. And I think it has - that Iran's pursuit of these capabilities principally has caused countries in the region to be concerned about it. And they are asking questions of us and seeking cooperation with the United States and that's certainly something we're open and willing to pursue with them. And so we're active in that area.

Now with regard to other solutions that you suggested, things such as - more in the arms control domain, obviously,

diplomacy and arms control and other issues, they have their place and they should be pursued. But I think that, in our view, would not take the place of having defensive capabilities. I think here, that's important. Unfortunately, eliminating weapons of mass destruction programs in the Middle East has been a difficult challenge. We're certainly not going to diminish our efforts in other regards.

I spend a lot of my time working on other efforts, whether that be in the disarmament area, things like the Proliferation Security Initiative, Missile Technology Control Regime, the Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological Weapons Convention. I travel frequently to venues where that's my principle mission. Missile defense, we think, should also be one of those elements. It doesn't take the place of these other things, but it should be a part of the broader toolkit.

QUESTION: I gather from your first answer that there is a defense system in place now to protect U.S. forces in the area - central command area of responsibility and that, in a way, will protect the Gulf states or the allies in the region. And the other issue is why there is no active initiatives in the area of arms control with regard to area of free zone of weapon of mass destruction in the Middle East?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Well, with regard to your first question, U.S. forces have capabilities and as needed, we will provide - we deploy them and move them in order to protect our forces, whether that be in the Middle East or elsewhere. I don't want to make any definitive statements as to the - to our force posture in the Middle East or elsewhere. I think that's something that would be more appropriate for our colleagues at the Defense Department to provide for you. But I will say American forces - our capabilities both in the missile defense area and elsewhere, they do change over time and they are deployed as needed.

On your second question, I would say we're very active still in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non - multilateral nonproliferation activities. I think we are - and the Middle East is a key area of focus. And so I wouldn't accept that we're not active in the diplomatic area as an example. I think the activity that we've undertaken at the Security Council to deal with Iran's nuclear program and other activities, this has been an intensive effort not only by the United States, but a grouping of countries, of six nations that are very concerned about this.

And it goes beyond that. As an example, we're devoting a lot of time in the Administration to work at the Conference on Disarmament on things like a fissile material cutoff treaty. There are a number of initiatives and they don't, inandof themselves, each one cover all of the elements of the threat that you'd like to.

But that's why you need to have a range of things that you're pursuing. We're active also in the Missile Technology Control Regime. We'd like to update it, make its rules more stringent. This has been a U.S. initiative and we've been engaged with a number of countries in this regard. So certainly, missile defense, though, has a place in dealing with the threat.

MODERATOR: We probably only have time for one more.

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Maybe one more and then we'll --

QUESTION: Thank you. Satoshi Ukai of *Asahi Shimbun*, Japanese newspaper. And my question is on the other sort of (inaudible), namely North Korea. There's going to be a U.S.-DPRK meeting in Geneva this week and they will talk about how they get over the problem with declaration. And the issue has been the North Koreans' involvement in HEU program

and the proliferation to other countries like Syria. How much concern do you have on these issues?

And secondly, there's a lot of talk about the - dealing those issues in separate document from declaration, like appendix or do some Shanghai Communiqué (inaudible) declaration. And are these forms sufficient to do a complete and correct declaration?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: Yes. Clearly, the issue of North Korea's nuclear program is one of continuing and significant importance to us. My colleague, Assistant Secretary Chris Hill, leads that diplomacy for us and so I'll defer your specific questions about documents and our specific discussions to him because I think it's more appropriate that he address them.

But I will say the importance of North Korea following through on the commitments it has made to us in the six-party talks is of significant importance. And one of those is for a complete and accurate declaration of their nuclear programs and that's certainly something that we continue to feel strongly is important. It's - it will be what is necessary in order to continue to move this process forward. And so we are - we're still trying to achieve that and I know that Chris and others are engaged in a number of discussions not only with the North Koreans, but with our six-party talks partners to try to move that process forward.

Thanks for the chance to talk to you all. I appreciate it.



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