



U.S. Missile Defense Plans for Europe

John C. Rood, Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security

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Secretary Gates, General Obering, Members of Congress, distinguished delegates, thank you for the opportunity to address this conference. I'm pleased that the Ambassadors of the Czech Republic and the Republic of Poland have joined us today, and would like to thank the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and The Boeing Company, along with the Missile Defense Agency, for hosting this event.

This annual gathering affords experts in business and government the opportunity to exchange information and ideas about the latest missile defense technical and programmatic details. The conference is a testament to our nation's enduring, bipartisan commitment to developing and deploying missile defense capabilities to protect against ballistic missile attack. It is a pleasure to be here.

Before I review with you where we are in our diplomatic efforts to establish U.S. missile defense assets in Europe, an objective which represents a significant portion of my portfolio at the State Department, I would like to "preach to the choir" somewhat, and talk to you about the international ballistic missile threats we face which have propelled us to take steps to defend ourselves.

Let me begin with a couple of quotes – "We do not approve of Iranian actions that are aimed at persistently demonstrating intentions to develop missile technology and to continue enriching uranium." And another -- "This achievement (the launch of the Explorer-1 missile) has shown that Iranian specialists have become familiar with production of liquid-propellant rocket engines, which will also allow them in the long-term to create ballistic missiles of 3,500km-4,000km in range or even more."

These sound like statements made by a U.S. official, maybe even myself - but I can't take credit for either of them. The first was made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov several days after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad proudly witnessed the launch of Iran's "Explorer-1" rocket, a rocket that looked a lot like a version of Iran's Shahab-3 ballistic missile. Col. Gen Viktor Yesin, former Chief of General Staff of the Russian Strategic Missile Troops, made the second. Our Russian colleagues share our concern of Iran's increasing capabilities and the threat they pose.

In his testimony before Congress on March 5, 2008, LTG Maples, Director, DIA noted that:

Iran continues to develop and acquire ballistic missiles that can hit Israel and central Europe, including Iranian claims of an extended-range variant of the Shahab-3 and a new 2,000km medium range ballistic missile (MRBM) called the Ashura. Beyond the steady growth in its missile and rocket inventories, Iran has boosted the lethality and effectiveness of existing systems with accuracy improvements and new sub-munition payloads.

For his part President Ahmadinejad has boasted of Iran's intention to become a space faring nation. Iran plans to place into orbit its first home-produced satellite "Omid" (Hope) in May or June of this year. Obviously the sort of rocketry that can place a satellite into orbit demonstrates the key technologies needed to develop missiles with intercontinental reach.

I know that there are some commentators who would challenge the notion that Iran has the technology base to develop ballistic missiles of an intercontinental range by 2015, which is our intelligence community's estimate. But we have been surprised before at how rapidly a nation can make technological advances. In 1998, intelligence experts indicated that North Korea was years away from testing a multi-stage rocket. Shortly thereafter, on August 30, 1998, North Korea launched a Taepo-dong-1 over Japan. More recently, the North Korean launch of seven missile launches on July 4 and 5, 2006, demonstrates a high degree of operational sophistication and reliability. Recall that six of these seven launches were successes, with only the Taepo-dong-2 a failure. We know that there is cooperation between Iran and North Korea, suggesting that Iran may accelerate its programs and acquire missiles with even longer ranges.

In World War II, Adolph Hitler understood both the military and political value of his V-1s and V-2s. The fact that they were inaccurate did not matter to those Londoners who had to live defenseless under a torrent of Nazi missiles. Prime Minister Winston Churchill's decision to focus the Allies' dwindling supplies on gaining control of the missile launch sites along the coast played an integral role in leveraging the Allies' broader strategic assets. The Iranian leadership understands this lesson. Left defenseless, Iran's asymmetric weapons provide a means to pursue their objectives through blackmail and intimidation. We see the Iranian regime use such tactics by supplying rockets to Hizbullah.

I have talked a lot about Iranian capabilities – one element of what constitutes the definition of a "threat." Let me take a few moments to talk about the other element – "intent." President Ahmadinejad has spoken quite plainly about the intentions of the Iranian regime over the years. He has visualized "wiping Israel off the map," his plans for the "destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization", and, in the context of a possible Israeli-Palestinian war, threatened our European allies by noting that "...the Americans are far away, but you are the neighbors of the nations in this region...We inform you that the nations are like an ocean that is welling up, and if a storm begins, the dimensions will not stay limited to Palestine, and you may get hurt."

I know many commentators would like to dismiss this talk as hyperbole, political theater for the masses. It is hard for those of us in liberal societies to understand how anyone could be ideologically committed to the destruction of another society. We often repel at the very thought. History shows us that this can be a tragic mistake. We learned this again on 9/11 when Osama bin-Laden showed us that he meant what he said.

I hope that you will now understand the context within which we at the Department of State have approached our European Site initiative and why, over the past year, we have proceeded with such vigor and determination. I think we have made tremendous progress over the past year, in no small part due to the efforts of many of you in this room. I want to personally thank you for your dedication and support to me and my staff.

To deal with the missile threats we face from Iran, we began negotiations to base missile defense assets in Europe in May 2007. Since that time, we have had seven rounds of negotiations with the Czech Republic and six rounds of negotiations with the Republic of Poland. Technical analysis showed that Poland and the Czech Republic are the optimal locations for fielding U.S. missile defense assets in Europe to maximize the defensive coverage of both Europe and the United States.

Polish and Czech interest in hosting these installations clearly demonstrate their understanding of the emerging threat to the U.S., our NATO allies, and other European friends. Our Polish and Czech colleagues have been just as committed as we are to enhancing the collective security of the NATO Alliance and strengthening transatlantic security. One part of the alliance – Europe – should not be left unprotected. We need to avoid the danger associated with the decoupling of European and American security interests. If Europe is not secure, the United States is not secure.

In recent weeks, we have made significant progress with both countries in terms of our negotiations. Part of our success has been due to a robust public diplomacy campaign designed to get accurate information out to the public in a timely manner both to inform and correct misinformation concerning our European initiative. It's

important to recall that the United States has pursued missile defense for over 20 years. We have a cadre of trained and experienced military and civilian personnel who understand missile defense technology, operations, and policy. We have a legislature that, in 1999, passed the National Missile Defense Act, and has subsequently demonstrated its resolve by funding the missile defense program throughout President Bush's administration. Many of our friends and allies, however, have not had this long experience with BMD. Their governments and publics have rightly asked tough questions and as true partners we owed them accurate and thorough answers. The interagency team that I have had the pleasure to lead has done a remarkable job helping our partners work through the issues associated with BMD.

President Bush's meetings with Czech Prime Minister Topolánek late last month and with Polish Prime Minister Tusk just a couple of weeks ago went very well, reaffirming their shared goal of completing these negotiations as soon as possible. While I cannot get into the specific issues that remain to be resolved in both sets of negotiations, the U.S. is optimistic that these matters can and will be addressed to the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned. In general, though, the negotiations have involved the multifaceted issues that come with regard to both missile defense as well as the placement of U.S. military facilities in the sovereign territory of other nations. As you might expect, many ministries with many different, but often overlapping, areas of responsibility are necessarily involved on all sides. The complexity of some of the issues has required sustained discussions over a lengthy period of time in order to resolve them, but let me stress again that there are, in the U.S. view, no major outstanding issues which are insurmountable. I'm very optimistic about our ability to conclude these agreements successfully.

Before I go on and talk about my discussions with the Russians I must mention an important event that will occur in a few days. In Bucharest, NATO Heads of State and Government will meet at their annual Summit. NATO is at a cross-road on MD. NATO's ALTBMD program is focused on providing the command and control backbone to sensors and shooters that NATO nations provide to protect deployed forces. We hope that at Bucharest, NATO Heads of State and Government will take another important step forward by recognizing the growing ballistic missile threat and supporting territorial MD as one means of safeguarding Alliance territory and population centers against the risk ballistic missile proliferation poses. We also hope that NATO will welcome the fact that the European-based U.S. assets will protect most Allies against long-range ballistic missiles and agree to task the development of missile defense options for consideration at the 2009 Summit.

This brings us now to my discussions with the Russians. The Russian Government has been clear about its concerns regarding the potential fielding of U.S. missile defense capabilities in Europe. The United States equally has been clear that the U.S. missile defense sites proposed for Europe are not aimed at Russia. In an effort to allay Russian concerns, we continue to engage them in the most extensive and far-reaching dialogue of its kind. The information we have exchanged and the proposals we have offered have been unprecedented. Let me provide some brief background on our cooperation and transparency efforts with Russia to date.

In April 2007, the U.S. State and Defense Departments gave to Russian counterparts a comprehensive proposal for bilateral cooperation across the full spectrum of missile defense activities. It offered the prospect of a strategic partnership in the field of missile defense, including joint cooperation on the research and development of sensors and/or boosters, modeling and simulation, cooperation on targets and joint testing, and the sharing of early warning data. That proposal remains on the table.

On the margins of the G-8 Summit in Heiligendamm, President Putin offered on June 7, 2007, to share data from the Russian-leased, Azerbaijani-owned, early warning radar at Qabala for the sole purpose of monitoring Iranian ballistic missile flight-tests. During their July 2 meeting at Kennebunkport, President Putin also offered data from the Russian early warning radar currently under construction at Armavir in southern Russia. Russia's constructive offers to share data from the Qabala and Armavir radars are positive developments, on which the U.S. subsequently built in its own cooperation proposals.

Presidents Bush and Putin established a framework for further dialogue on July 2, 2007, at Kennebunkport, when they agreed to convene working group meetings of policy and technical experts, culminating in a "2-plus-2" ministerial in October. Since last July, and most recently in Budapest last month, I have led 7 U.S. interagency delegations in these experts talks with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak and his delegation to discuss the full range of missile defense issues. Our delegations included intelligence professionals, and we have conducted an extensive exchange of intelligence threat information that the United States previously only shared with our NATO Allies. Another "2-plus-2" meeting is planned for some time this spring.

From the United States perspective, we remain very interested in pursuing a strategic cooperation with Russia on missile defense. We have discussed with our Russian partners the desire of the United States to pursue cooperation on missile defense across the full spectrum of activities. The United States has put forward proposals for missile defense cooperation that envision a joint regional missile defense architecture. In so doing, our objective would be to defend not only the United States and Europe but also Russia from missile attack. The United States, Russia, and our NATO allies would supply elements of this integrated system. We continue to discuss this concept in Brussels. As our missile defense program evolves we will make revisions to the system. The exact size and shape of any regional missile defense architecture is a detail to be worked out. Certainly, the system should be responsive to changes in the threat.

Perhaps Secretary Rice described the missile defense situation vis-à-vis Russia most aptly:

We live in a world in which Russia and the United States have a good working relationship in which...very few would even contemplate the notion of...a nuclear exchange between the United States and Russia. Rather, we live in a world in which we face nuclear threats, small potential missile threats from, for instance, Iran. And in that world, a limited missile defense that can deal with small threats is very much a stabilizing factor...

Our view is that no missile defense system in Europe in which Russia has a direct role in devising and operating could possibly be used against Russia. In addition to cooperation, we also continue to discuss with Russia the transparency and confidence-building proposals that the United States has made which seek to address our Russian colleagues' concerns. We have not come to agreement as yet on any of these issues, but the United States believes there is value in understanding more clearly the positions on the Russian side. On that positive basis, perhaps we can reach an arrangement that could lead to broader cooperation down the road. That being said, while we value the goal of collaborating with Russia in the area of missile defense, we will continue to negotiate with Poland and the Czech Republic.

Bush Administration policy deliberately has avoided relying upon traditional deterrence alone. As the President's most recent National Security Strategy states:

The new strategic environment requires new approaches to deterrence and defense. Our deterrence strategy no longer rests primarily on the grim premise of inflicting devastating consequences on potential foes. Both offenses and defenses are necessary to deter state and non-state actors, through denial of the objectives of their attacks, and, if necessary, responding with overwhelming force.

Rather than being forced to respond to a ballistic missile attack with massive retaliation, we have responsibly opted to develop defenses, as well. Should Iran, North Korea or some other outlaw state attempt to pursue their objectives through force, coercion, and intimidation by employing ballistic missiles, missile defense will afford the United States yet another option to neutralize the threat. As we saw in July 2006, when we activated our system for the first time in response to North Korean missile launch preparations, missile defense allowed our national leadership to consider a wider, more flexible range of responses to a potential attack.

Missile defense promotes stability as part of a contemporary deterrence strategy. Not only does it increase our options in responding to a ballistic missile attack, it decreases incentives for missile proliferation in the first place by undermining the military utility and attractiveness of these weapons. Missile defense mitigates the deterrence relationship Iran and North Korea are seeking to create with the United States, Europe, and the Russian Federation. We have no intention of being deterred by rogue regimes.

There is a famous scene in the movie "Casablanca" when Rick Blaine, played by Humphrey Bogart, sits in his nightclub after closing time, drinking. He looks to his friend "Sam" and says "If its December 1941 in Casablanca, what time is it in New York?...They're sleeping. All across America they are sleeping." What the script writers were communicating through Rick Blaine was that before Pearl Harbor America was "sleeping," ignoring all the signs of a looming threat, and failing to take action that could save lives.

Our missile defense program – and our cooperative activities with our allies and friends – demonstrates that we are not "sleeping." Unlike Rick Blaine's America, we refuse to rationalize inactivity, to deny a blatant challenge to international security and stability, to be constrained in our ability to respond to aggression, to wait for the first blow to land. We hope that in conjunction with traditional non-proliferation tools, our missile defense program will dissuade governments from investing in ballistic

missiles; that they will see that it does not represent a good return on investment.

As President Bush said on February 27 following his meeting with Czech Prime Minister Topolanek: "...[O]ur job as leaders is to deal with the issues of the day, but also deal with the issues of tomorrow in a way that yields a peaceful world. And that's what we're doing."Thank you.

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