



Missile Defense After the Bucharest NATO Summit: European and American Perspectives

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Thank you opportunity to speak to you today. I also want to thank the sponsors of this conference, the Czech MFA and the Czech Euro-Atlantic Council for inviting me to speak to you.

It's fitting that we gather here in Prague to discuss missile defense and the strong statement by leaders at the recent NATO Summit in Bucharest, for it was at the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002 that NATO Heads of State and Government first agreed to move forward to examine options for protecting Alliance territory and populations and tasked a feasibility study.

We have come a long way on missile defense in NATO since 2002. In my remarks today, I thought I would briefly review the security environment, talk about why we in the United States think missile defense is an essential element of an effective response to the security challenges we face in the 21st century, and talk about where we see missile defense going in the Alliance.

Threat

The security challenge facing the Alliance from weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles continues to evolve and grow more concerning. At one time, ballistic missiles belonged to an elite club of nations. In the last 30 years, however, the number of states possessing ballistic missiles has increased from 9 in 1972 to more than two dozen today. Ballistic missiles have been used in a range of conflicts since that time such as the Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the first Gulf War, and the most recent conflict with Iraq.

The trend today is toward missiles of increasing range and sophistication. The countries pursuing these capabilities include some of the world's least responsible states -- states which sponsor terrorism and seek to coerce their neighbors. And in the last couple of years, we have seen the emergence these capabilities in the hands of a non-state actor, Hezbollah, which used rockets and ballistic missiles in the 2006 conflict with Israel and continues to arm itself today with even greater capabilities due to assistance from Iran and Syria. As French President Sarkozy said on March 21, 2008

"Today we must all be mindful of the fact that the nuclear missiles of even distant powers can reach Europe in less than half an hour. Currently only the Great Powers have such means. But other countries, in Asia and the Middle East, are vigorously developing ballistic capabilities. I am thinking in particular of Iran. Iran is increasing the range of its missiles, while grave suspicions surround its nuclear program. It is indeed Europe's security that is at stake."

Iran's activities have indeed been particularly concerning. As the Director of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, LTG Maples said in testimony to the U.S. Congress earlier this year,

"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 2,000 km medium-range ballistic missile 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."

The ballistic missile threat is something that has been examined and debated extensively at NATO in recent years, with exchanges of intelligence information and analysis by Allies. I'm pleased that as a result of these exchanges that we now have an agreed NATO threat assessment. As NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Schefer summed up nicely after the April 19, 2007 North Atlantic Council meeting, "...there is absolutely shared threat perception between the Allies. Allies all agree that there is a threat from ballistic missiles. Full stop." I would also point out that this shared assessment of the missile threat was also recognized in the communiqué from the Bucharest summit.

Security Strategy

Since the dawn of the "missile age," these weapons have altered our thinking about effective defense strategies. As President John F. Kennedy observed on October 22, 1962, "We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril"

What Kennedy was alluding to is the coercive power that comes from long-range missiles and other strategic weapons when there is no effective defense or counter-measure. In the bipolar world that existed during the Cold War, NATO relied upon the prospect of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons to deter the major threat we faced then from a Soviet land invasion in the heart of Europe or a missile attack. Yet the global landscape has changed dramatically since that time. In today's new security environment, effective deterrence must rely upon more than the grim prospect of retaliation with the most destructive weapons invented by man.

Missile defenses strengthen deterrence. The presence of such defenses undermines the ability of potential adversaries to seek to coerce NATO states. Missile defenses also make it far less likely that our adversaries will ever use missiles during a conflict, since such a missile attack could be defeated. And, even after a successful missile defense engagement, NATO would retain our full capabilities to respond with counter-strikes.

Missile defenses are an important means to promote stability in today's security environment. This principle was demonstrated in the summer of 2006 when North Korea began preparations to launch its Taepo Dong 2 ICBM. We did not know North Korea's intentions or the payload atop this missile. But we thought North Korea's leader wanted a crisis. Serious defense experts such as President Clinton's Secretary of Defense William Perry wrote that the risk was so large that the United States should conduct a pre-emptive military attack on the launch site to destroy the Taepo Dong 2 ICBM. Yet I can tell you that we in the Bush Administration never seriously considered such a course of action because we had another option. Instead of moving forces to the region to give ourselves the option of a pre-emptive attack or to be poised to strike in retaliation, which would have escalated the situation, instead we activated our missile defense system for the first time, putting the system on alert with crews manning it 24 hours a day. This allowed us to stabilize the situation, instead of contributing to the crisis.

Growth of Missile Defense

In light of the security environment and the advances in technology that have made effective defenses possible, we have seen significant growth in the number of countries pursuing missile defenses. A growing number of countries are in varying stages of pursuing missile defense efforts that range from hosting or deploying missile

defense systems, conducting R&D, to the early stages of conducting architecture and requirements analysis. These countries include Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Taiwan, the U.S., and the United Kingdom. And I would note that Russia clearly believes in the value of missile defense as demonstrated by the fact that it continues to maintain the Moscow ABM system and to field systems like the S-300 and S-400.

Within NATO, several member states are engaged in missile defense efforts that range from hosting key facilities on their territory, pursuing joint research and development programs, participating in missile defense exercises and simulations, or fielding their own capabilities. For example, the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands are deploying the Patriot PAC-3 system. Germany, Italy, and the United States are jointly developing a new missile defense system called MEADS. And, of course, in addition to the radars in the U.S. missile defense system hosted by the UK and on Denmark's territory in Greenland, we have been engaged in negotiations with the Czech Republic and Poland to place a radar and interceptors on their soil.

We are very pleased with the outcome of NATO's Bucharest Summit. At this meeting the Heads of State and Government agreed on a communiqué in which NATO clearly recognizes:

- Missile proliferation poses an increasing threat;
- Missile defenses are an important part of an effective response to this threat;
- That the U.S. proposed facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland would make a substantial contribution to the protection of NATO Allies, thus endorsing our efforts in this regard; and
- That the Alliance should examine ways to expand protection for Allies.

This summit was a watershed event for missile defense and NATO efforts in this regard. But we did not get here overnight. First, this would not have been possible if President Bush had not made the decision that the United States would withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty. That outdated treaty would have prohibited the defense of Allies from missile attack as we have proposed to do with the deployment of a radar in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland.

Moving beyond the ABM Treaty was consistent with President Bush's decision to drop the "N" from "NMD" or national missile defense to make clear that we intended to pursue missile defenses to protect both the United States and our allies from missile attack. History has shown us the importance of linking our security to that of our allies. As President Dwight Eisenhower said in 1957, "American alone and isolated cannot assure even its own security. We must be joined by the capability and resolution of nations that have proved themselves dependable defenders of freedom. Isolation from them invites war."

We have also seen a steady forward progression by the Alliance in recent years on missile defense culminating in the Bucharest summit communiqué. We clearly did not get to the Bucharest summit communiqué overnight. To touch on some of the highlights:

- In 1999, NATO's Strategic Concept recognized the need for missile defense to counter nuclear, biological, and chemical threats.
- From 2001-2003, NATO conducted two feasibility studies on theater missile defense involving two independent contractor teams.
- In 2002, at the NATO Summit in Prague, the Alliance agreed to examine options for protecting Alliance territory and populations against ballistic missiles of all ranges, and tasked a feasibility study.
- In March 2005, NATO's North Atlantic Council approved establishment of the Active Layered Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) program, thereby taking NATO's first step towards building a capability to defend its forces and other high value assets against ballistic missile attack.
- In May 2006, NATO's follow-on feasibility study was delivered to the North Atlantic Council. The study concluded that missile defense protection of territory and populations was technically feasible.
- In November 2006, at the Riga Summit, NATO welcomed completion of the missile defense feasibility study initiated by the 2002 Prague Summit Declaration and tasked continued work, including an update on missile threat developments.

Trans-Atlantic Next Steps

So with Bucharest behind us, what does the trans-Atlantic community need to do now? Clearly, NATO needs to maintain the momentum coming out of Bucharest. This includes completing the overdue Riga taskings on missile defense. These study efforts will support the development of options for a NATO missile defense architecture to extend coverage to all Allied territory and populations not otherwise covered by the U.S. system.

While we have completed negotiations with the Czech Government on an agreement to place a missile defense radar here in the Czech Republic, we still have several steps to complete. First the agreement will be formally signed by Ministers in the near term. Secondly, we expect to complete negotiations on an accompanying Status of Forces Agreement with the Czech Republic shortly that is necessary for establishment of the radar on Czech soil. And of course, the Czech Parliament must act later this year.

Regarding deployment of interceptors in Poland, I remain optimistic that we can successfully conclude negotiations with the Polish Government as well, although there are still some important issues yet to be resolved in that negotiation.

The negotiations we have held with Poland and the Czech Republic have brought about strong complaints from Russia. In response, the U.S. has sought to allay Russian concerns, by engaging in the most extensive and far-reaching dialogue of its kind. We have made clear that the missile defenses we hope to deploy in Europe are not directed at Russia and have shown technical analysis explaining why 10 interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic are not a threat to the thousands of strategic nuclear warheads and hundreds of ICBMs that Russia possesses.

In this process, we have learned a great deal about Russia's concerns. As part of this dialogue, the United States has also offered far-reaching proposals on missile defense cooperation. Our thought has been that missile defense cooperation is the best confidence building measure that we could offer, which is why last April the U.S. offered to cooperate with Russia across the full spectrum of missile defense activities. Since then, we have gone further, offering the prospect of a joint regional missile defense architecture between Russia, the United States, and NATO.

The United States has also developed ideas for transparency and confidence building measures to try to allow Russia to develop greater trust that the system is not aimed at them. This has included measures like reciprocal exchanges of liaison officers that could conduct monitoring and inspections at facilities in the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, and the United States, as well as information exchanges and technical measures. In the process, we have closely coordinated with the Czech and Polish Governments, while making clear that any arrangement would need to be approved by these governments. The bottom line is that the Czech and Polish government will have the final say on what occurs in their countries, including any potential activities by Russian or American personnel.

We are pleased that we are making some progress in this regard with Russia. At the recent meeting in Sochi between President Bush and President Putin, a Strategic Framework Declaration was released in which Russia agreed that the transparency and confidence-building measures, if agreed and implemented, "will be important and useful in assuaging Russian concerns." I plan to meet again in the next few weeks with my Russian counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak to further develop these measures.

Czech Leadership

I also wanted to take a moment to recognize the leadership that has been shown by the Czech Government in NATO. Over the past year, the Czech Government has been one of the driving forces in NATO and at the cutting edge of the Alliance's efforts to combat the new threats we face from WMD and ballistic missiles. This is not surprising given the Czech Government's leading role within NATO in countering another WMD threat – the threat from chemical and biological weapons.

I am also pleased that the missile defense negotiations have also begun a new era in the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Czech Republic. In fact, in March, the U.S. and Czech Republic agreed to establish a framework for a strategic dialogue to further strengthen our relations. This dialogue will enable us to address a broad range of strategic issues including:

- The international security environment;
- Mutual efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law;
- Economic, industrial, and scientific cooperation; and
- Security and defense cooperation.

Conclusion

The missile defense efforts we have undertaken to protect NATO forces and populations demonstrate that we are responding to existing and future challenges to international peace and security. It takes determination and leadership to accomplish these tasks and I'm pleased to say that the Czech Government has demonstrated both.

As President Bush said on February 27 following his meeting with Czech Prime Minister Topolanek, "...Our 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."

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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