



THEATER MISSILE DEFENSE AND NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

Our nation's armed forces are focused on a post-Cold War national security strategy of rapid power projection for major regional conflicts. At the same time the probability is increasing that future potential adversaries could be armed with sophisticated missile systems. To meet this threat, advanced technologies are being aggressively pursued by all the services to develop theater missile defenses.

More than a dozen nations already possess short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, and the list will grow in the future. Most of those nations also possess the capacity to employ chemical, biological and, in some cases, nuclear weapons. The threats are real and U.S. commanders must have the ability to protect their forces from these systems during contingency operations.

The development of advanced technologies to counter theater ballistic missiles that is currently underway is a part of the larger function of force protection and area defense. Theater missile defense builds on the complementary capabilities of each service to detect, track, engage and destroy incoming missiles at any point in their trajectory from launch to terminal phase.

Cruise missiles, which in the past have not been given the same defense priority as ballistic missiles, are a growing part of this threat. This technology — essentially the same as aircraft technology — is increasingly available on the international market. Flying below radar coverage, cruise missiles can be a major concern in the

protection of deployed forces. Therefore, cruise missile defense is an important component of the overall theater missile defense program.

Theater missile defense is one part of the total missile defense equation. The other is the defense of the United States against possible missile attack. Since the end of the Cold War, a massive nuclear missile attack against the United States has become much less likely; however, a limited missile attack *is* possible and

cannot be disregarded. Presently, the United States has no assured protection against such a limited missile attack.

According to a report by the Heritage Foundation, by the next decade as many as 10 countries could have long-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States. Today, China and the republics of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Russia have such missiles, armed with nuclear weapons. Rogue nations such as North Korea and Iran possess nuclear weapon and missile technology.

A recent poll of a random sample of 1,000 American citizens conducted for the Coalition to Defend America found that about 60 percent of those polled believed that the United States had a national defense system which could intercept a ballistic missile attack. Eighty-eight percent of those polled indicated an awareness about ballistic missile proliferation around the world, 70 percent expressed concern about the fact, and 81

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percent indicated that action should be taken to ensure that America is not vulnerable to missile attack.

While the priority of effort and funding is properly focused on theater missile defense, national missile defense of the United States cannot be disregarded. The potential future threat of a limited missile attack, to include missiles armed with weapons of mass destruction, is real.

With limited funds available and the overriding urgency of theater missile defense for U.S. projection forces, the priorities are correct. Fielding a national missile defense on even a limited basis would be a very costly undertaking at this time. Nevertheless, we must *move in this direction* and be technically ready to field a national missile defense capability when a credible external threat develops.

While there has generally been administration and congressional support for the development of strong battlefield protection against short-range missiles, the level of support for national missile defense has been far less. Of \$2.9 billion in the DoD FY 1996 budget for ballistic missile defense, 80 percent is allocated to theater missile defense and the other 20 percent is for funding national missile defense and advanced technologies.

In recent testimony before the House National Security Subcommittee on Research and Development and the Subcommittee on Procurement, Ballistic Missile Defense Organization Director Lt. Gen. Malcolm O'Neill said, "We have a program in place right now that after a total of six years could put {a} system in place." During the same testimony, O'Neill estimated the current missile threat: "While these systems pose a threat today that is largely regional in character, the trend is clearly in the direction of systems of increasing range, lethality, accuracy and sophistication."

The debate, disagreements and discussions about the probability, possibility and degree of threat to the United States will continue. The fact remains that regional instability and the proliferation of ballistic missile technology and weapons of mass destruction remain a threat to U.S. security. As with Scud missile attacks during Operation Desert Storm, the United States may face future attacks from theater or even strategic missiles, including the potential use of weapons of mass destruction.

Theater missile defense properly demands priority in funding, development and fielding. But a defense capability for the United States must not be overlooked or abandoned. Some form of national missile defense will be needed in the future and an aggressive technology program is imperative. The United States cannot afford to be naked in this respect.

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