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Missile Defense

1. US Politics

US Senator Carl Levin, the next chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that missile defenses would not likely be fielded in President George Bush's current administration. He added that missile defenses should not be deployed at all until tests have proven the system's effectiveness. Levin said, "I don't think the technology is likely to develop fast enough, even if he decided to violate the treaty," referring to the 1972 ABM Treaty. Levin said that he planned to "make sure that we look at the realities of a national missile defense, not just look at that one threat that has been focused on, the North Korea threat, or just the threat from ballistic missiles." "The terrorist threats to us, which are reflected in World Trade Center-type attacks," he added, "Attacks on our embassies, on the Cole. Perhaps using weapons of mass destruction. These are the most likely threats we face." Frank J. Gaffney Jr., a former Defense Department official during the Reagan administration and now president of the Center for Security Policy, a conservative defense analysis group, described Levin's technical requirements for deploying missile defense as "a delaying action."

"Missile Defenses Need More Tests, Key Senator Says"

Frank J. Gaffney, a former Defense Department official during the Reagan administration and now president of the Center for Security Policy, writes that when Democratic Senators Biden and Levin take control of their committees, they will work to interfere with the Bush administration's missile-defense programs, just as they interfered with Bush administration appointees who would be responsible for missile defense and arms-control policy. To move forward his missile defense agenda, Gaffney quotes William Kristol argument in an op-ed article in the Washington Post, "Bush will have no choice but to follow Reagan's example. He will have to show that on a few key issues he can use the bully pulpit to strike fear into Democratic hearts. Any successful president needs to be not just liked but also feared." Gaffney argues that Bush should: state that there is an immediate threat to US national security from ballistic missiles; deploy defenses immediately in the form the questionably effective US Navy Aegis system to deter rogue states; fund short-term upgrades to improve the Aegis' effectiveness within the next six months; withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty as neither withdrawal nor current funding needs Congressional approval; then seek approval of Americans to further fund improvements.

"Changed Circumstances in Senate Require Bush to Move Now on Missile Defense"

US Senator Jack Reed spoke at the National Defense University and said that as the US turns from the protection of Mutually Assured Destruction towards the pursuit of missile defenses, polls show that most Americans think the US already has such a shield. He argues that the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 is not a mandate to develop a National Missile Defense, but only a competing vision for US security. Reed states that many states have short-range missiles that are a threat to our forces and allies overseas, but DPRK is the only "rogue" state with a long-range missile nearly developed that is capable of hitting the US. He argues that this justifies further development and deployment of Theater Missile Defense now; investment in National Missile Defense should the need arise and be justified by its complete security impact; and that the US should better pursue homeland defense through investment in non-proliferation programs with Russia and reducing the threat the US faces from accidental launches by Russia or the PRC.

"US Senator Jack Reed: Speech to the National Defense University"

2. US Consultations with NATO

US Secretary of State Colin Powell met with NATO officials and was unable to convince US allies to support missile defense, or even to convince them that a missile threat existed that justified national missile defense. A senior State Department official said, "Clearly not all allies are on the same page." US allies said raising the level of perceived threat was unreasonable because they did not feel endangered and did not deem it wise to provoke a potential confrontation by declaring that they were. French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine expressed concern about the impact a defense system would have on arms control treaties and the danger of provoking an arms race. However, US allies in NATO did take a softer tone on the 1972 ABM Treaty, which the Bush administration is seeking to end and somehow replace, by not mentioning it in this round of consultations.

"Powell Fails to Persuade NATO on Antimissile Plan"

"NATO Divided on Missile Defense"

3. Russian Statements

The New York Times reported that according to Bush administration officials, President Bush hoped to involve Russian President Vladimir Putin more deeply in US missile defense by offering Russia a package of weapons purchases, joint antimissile exercises and money to rebuild its outmoded early warning radar system and a proposal to include Russian S-300 surface-to-air missiles in a new system. However, the Times reports that Russian officials stated they would not end their opposition to a US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty. Explaining the context of the Bush administration's objectives for missile defense, Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser, said, "We want to convince the Russians that it is in their best interest to move beyond the ABM treaty and to develop a new relationship with us."

"Russia Continues to Oppose Scrapping ABM Treaty"

"U.S. Plans Offer to Russia to End ABM Treaty Dispute"

An essay in the Moscow Times argues that while the US has begun to take positive steps towards consultations on missile defense systems, the US needs to recognize that the goal itself is flawed because development will draw resources away from meeting real threats. The Moscow Time states that it appears that no anti-missile system will be sufficiently reliable to serve as anything more than a last-ditch defense, and that, as analysts state, the US would almost certainly respond to a ballistic missile threat with pre-emptive strikes, with or without NMD.

"Diplomacy May Be the Best Defense"

Michael R. Gordon writes in the New York Times that the US missile defense proposal has not been well received in Russia because it neglects to include limits on the system, limits that protect the effectiveness of the Russia nuclear arsenal. Joseph Cirincione, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said, "They can't go along with an open-ended defense that has the potential to overwhelm their deterrent." Gordon states that despite the Bush administration's expressed interest in getting Russia to accede to the system, its proposals to close the gap in expectations between the two countries have been underwhelming. Gordon argues that the Bush administration must explain the other elements of the new global strategic environment, including arms control and nonproliferation efforts, before other countries will agree to missile defense.

"Military Analysis: Russia's Role in Missile Defense"

4. Commentary on Missile Defense

Justin Anderson, Junior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues that the success of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty that recently concluded may be one reason the NATO allies are reluctant to abandon proven arms control arrangements for untested missile defenses.

"Pre-Boost Intercept"

Nuclear Weapons

1. Iranian Missile Program

After Iranian state television broadcast pictures of a successful test of its surface-to-surface ballistic missile, named the Fateh (Victorious)-110, US National Security Council spokeswoman Mary Ellen Countryman said, "We have long-standing concerns about Iran's proliferation behavior, including its missile development and weapons of mass destruction programs." Iran last year test-fired a new version of its Shahab-3 ballistic missile, believed to be based on a DPRK design and said to have a range of 1,300 km (800 miles). The Fateh-110 appeared far smaller and would therefore have a shorter range.

"U.S. Repeats Concerns About Iran's Missile Program"

Justin Anderson, Junior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, stated in a report that Iranian news reports on the Fateh-110 did not indicate a range, but that it was most likely a liquid fueled, short-range ballistic missile. Anderson also stated that Iran appears to be running a number of independent missile development projects, and therefore it is difficult to place the significance of the Fateh-110.

"Background on Test of New Iranian Missile"

Security

1. US Nuclear Labs

Jonathan S. Landay reports in the Seattle Times that the Bush administration is considering a six-year plan to renovate and improve US nuclear-weapons laboratories, assembly plants and testing facilities at a cost that could exceed \$2 billion. Department of Energy officials with the Stockpile Stewardship Program, which maintains the country's estimated 10,500 nuclear weapons, report that money is needed to fix crumbling buildings, install modern equipment and attract a new generation of nuclear scientists.

"Modernizing U.S. nuclear weapons to cost millions"

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