

US BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR ASIA

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us ballistic missile defenses: implications for asia by Brad Roberts *

ABSTRACT

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This paper examines the potential benefits and drawbacks to US national missile defense deployment and its implications for Asia. The potential drawbacks to NMD include possible acceleration of China's strategic modernization, potential promotion of nuclear build-ups in Asia, a shift in China's regional role from restraint to obstructionism, and a diminution of China's participation in arms control and nonproliferation regimes. However, the potential benefits to NMD include the reassurance provided to US allies, the prevention of the rememepence of a less desirable political order in East Asia, and reduced reliance on US nuclear threats or actual attacks to achieve US regional security goals.
It is against these potential benefits and drawbacks that the Bush administration needs to understand and examine NMD deployment. Despite the unique circumstances that brought the Bush administration to power, it believes it enjoys a strong mandate to move forward with missile defense, and some type of deployment now appears inevitable. However, a great variety of views exsist within the Bush administration about how to proceed and what type of defense to construct. Beyond that, technology remains the essential constraint that will shape the timelines associated with each missile defense point. When it comes to the Asian atability consequences of NND, how the new administration proceeds is a simportant as what it decides to do. The Asian debate about NMD is rife with misperceptions and the new administration should do everything it can to understand those perceptions, the concerns of its allies and partners in Asia, and the interests that fuel them.

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BACKGOUND: THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

As this paper is written, the Bush administration is just settling in to the seats of power in Washington. Although uncertainty remains about many of the personnel and policies of the new administration, this much is certain: President Bush comes to office with a strong commitment to deploy a national missile defense (NID). His Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, has played perhaps the leading role of any person outside the U.S. government in advocating such a defense. (1) A team is coming together in both the Pentagon and White House of people far more strongly committed to ballistic missile defenses than the out-going team. (2) In general, the Republican Party believes it enjoys a strong mandate, despite the unique circumstances in the recent electoral context, to move defenses. Such the defenses to some type of defenses now appears invelvable.

General Republicant Party believes it enjoys a strong mandate, despite the unique circumstances in the recent electoral context, to move defenses the defense of the propose of the propose of some ground based in encore two locations and in relatively modest numbers (and limited space-based sensors) may well be scrapped. The new administration will reconsider all possible technologies and architectures. Bush has made it clear that he intends to extend the shield over U.S. allies, in 1810 washed to the propose of th

Review, with a due date of December 1. (4) Decisions about wat type to the second of NMD and Sala NMD AND ASIA

What might be the impact of NMD on Asian stability and security?

This is a question that has been of considerably more interest to Asians than to Americans. Among supporters of NMD in the United States, a general view of the strategic impact has taken hold. NMD is aimed at ensuring that regional aggressors made newly powerful a ambitious by their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (and especially nuclear weapons) are not able to achieve a relationship with the United States analogous to the relationship of mutual assured destruction (MAD) that prevailed between the United States and ambitious by their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (and especially nuclear weapons) are not able to achieve a relationship with the United States and ambitious by their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (AMD) that prevailed between the United States and the world community more generally are trying to deemphasize made and reduce nuclear risks. NMD with the regions believed that a declenes can be constructed to deal with the rogue WMD threat while also preserving MAD in the relationship with Russia. Until recently, Clinia has figured barrely if at all in their calculus of the strategic

inhibition by their acquisition of wespons of mass destruction (and especially incider wespons) are not able to achieve a relationship with the registed to the fore in Washington and the relation of the present of the control of the present of th

ago. In a worst case situation, decision-makers in seigning may conclude that they must attempt a military southout the challenge of talwan periore Us missile detereness are operational. Inits could pring military controllation between two superpowers shadow.

Sixth, it is possible that the US move to defenses could precipitate a broader proliferation of ballenges. And given the fact that conventionably tipped anti-missile missile are strengely difficult even for the United States to build, we must specified the proliferation of proliferation of proliferation of offense and defense (as driven by the US) might lead to build, we must specified the proliferation of offense and defenses (as driven by the US) might lead to build, we must specified the proliferation of offense and defense (as driven by the US) might lead to the label of such defenses to India. Chinese experts are also keenly interested in improving Indian air defense capabilities, development efforts of the Akash and RF-S300 systems, and efforts to import Israeli technologies. A broader proliferation of offense and defense would seem to have consequences that few have thought about.

Seventh and lastly in this short review, the potential build-up of nuclear arsenals in response to the pressures generated by NMD would bring with it heightened concerned about the command and control of such systems, especially when and if they are "flushed" in time of crisis. In other words, more weapons bring with them heightened concerned about so-called "loose nukes."

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regional security challenges even if and as WMD proliferate. This reassurance is intangible and thus difficult to quantify. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that many of those allies whom Washington seeks to reassure have protested loudly that NMD is eroding their sense of stability.

A second important henefit is the effect ballistic missile deployments—including both theater and national—would have on the long simmering debate about how long America will remain engaged in the defense of its interests in Asia and retain a military presence in the region that many value as preventing the rememerapence of a more perverse balance of order politics in East Asia and sense that Washington is serious when it says that it intends to remain in Asia for as long as its Asian allies with it to do so. Of course, this is part of the reason that those wishing an eventual U.S. withdrawal from the region press vigorously against US defenses. A third important benefit is similarly intangible—and indeed many forever remain entirely notional. This is the benefit would be fell at a time of WMD aggression or a backing down and winping out by the United States and/or the United Waltons Security coulcil in the face of nuclear threats by a rouge state. The "right answer" would entail being able to reverse the aggression and to achieve where a many deemed politically necessary by the international community. (12) One of the values of NMD would be to reduce reliance on US nuclear threats or actual attacks to achieve these results. This is a "benefit" of NMD that should not be lightly dismissed.

Against these potential benefits, how do the costs tally? In the worst case, with realization of the full set of potential costs listed above, these benefits might not seem particularly compelling, except perhaps to those U.S. allies who in this never the aggression to a back the sense of the sense of the potential costs lis

In all political debates there is a tendency to reduce the discussion to black and white terms. A debate among analysts requires us to paint in shades of gray. US NMD may well contribute to an erosion of aspects of Asian security and stability. It may also contribute positively in other respects. It depends in significant part on Moscow. Can Moscow tolerate new U.S. preferences and accept a new deal that preserves arms control but in some new guise? If so, bilateral arms control will continue, the major powers will cooperate to promote nonproliferation, and fears for the future of the international legal regime inhibiting WMD will be greatly eased, with very positive repercussions in Asia. It depends in significant part on belging. Can belging days to new features of the U.S. strategic positive without deeply unsetting its neighbors—and negatively affecting the debate about China in Washington? Will it be content to modernize to restore the status quo ante (meaning approximately retention of an ability to deliver 20 warheads through a defense onto targets in the United States) or will it be motivated to seek to become the number two nuclear power on the world stage and also to counter the world's "regue hegemon" through support of an artificiation. Will be Bush administration seek to cap China's deterrent with the new defenses, or will it tolerate a MAD-type relationship with Beijing? Will it sell theater missile defense systems to Taiwan? Will it deliver the promised unilateral reductions in its offensive forces as defenses increase?

reductions in its offensive forces as defenses increase?

When it comes to the Asian stability consequences of NMD, how the new administration proceeds is as important as what it decides to do with NMD. The Asian debate about NMD is rife with misperceptions and the new administration should do everything it can to understand those perceptions, the concerns of its allies and partners in Asia, and the interests that fuel them. As a new administration, it enjoys the benefit of starting afresh, which it can exploit by listening and explaining in ways that a long-seated administration cannot reaccomplish. By responding carefully to these concerns, and making its case in terms appropriate to the Asian security environment, the administration outle help settle one of the most important questions in Asia today: A smerica a reliable and progressive power committed to the resolution of common problems in the region, or is it a hyper-power on the fool's errand of seeking invulnerability while unleashing, unwittingly or not, major changes in the balance of power that will lead to the eclipse of its power in Asia? Providing the right answer to this question will go a long way toward promoting the security that all proclaim to seekin Asia.

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**D. Roberts is a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defense Analyses in Alexandria, Virginia. The views expressed here are his own and should not be attributed to IDA or any of its sponsors.

(1) Rumsfeld chaired the Commission on the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States. The commission's summer 1999 report proved extremely influential in shifting thinking in the U.S. Congress toward a consensus that the threat is more imminent and real than many had believed and to the formal legal commitment to deploy a defense as soon as technically feasible. See also Statement of the Honorable Donald H, Rumsfeld, prepared for the confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Enuary 11, 2001.

(2) A number of prominent members of the new administration were associated with a private report entitled "Rational and Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Forces and Arms Control." I sused in January 2010 by the National Institute for Public Policy (www.nipp.org), the report elaborates the key strategic concepts guiding a policy agenda aimed at moving aware from reliance on cold war vintage deterrence and toward increased reliance on defenses.

(3) For a description of the four Clinton administration criteria, See National Security Strategy for a New Century, Tubik Houses (2000) and remarks by John D. Holum, senior adviser for arms control and international security, Department of State, "The President's NMD Decision and U.S. Foreign Policy," to a conference on International Reactions to the U.S. National and Theater Missile Defense Policyments, "Stanford University, March 3, 2000. See also Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-DE), "Moving from Politics to Policy: The President's Challenge on National Missile Defense," Congressional Record, January 25, 2001. See also Kalpana Childranjan, "US NNDL and Insilate World Co.," State S

Nautilus Institute 608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org