

**MISSILE DEFENCE AFTER THE BUCHAREST NATO SUMMIT:
EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES**

**Session I: Risks or Threats to Our Common Security?
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Remarks Presented by

Dr. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr.

President, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis

and

Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Security Studies

The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám. 5, Prague

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At its Bucharest Summit last month, NATO endorsed the plan to install 10 missile defense interceptors in Poland and an X Band radar system in the Czech Republic. This deployment will constitute the third site in the ground-based portion of the evolving U.S. missile defense system. According to the Bucharest communiqué, NATO is exploring how best to “link this capability with current NATO missile defense efforts” and to “ensure that it would be an integral part of any future NATO-wide missile defense architecture.” In order for missile defenses to have maximum effectiveness, it is best to deploy them ahead of, rather than simply in response to, the emerging missile threat. As missiles proliferate – and we cannot easily predict how, where, and to whom they will proliferate – the missile threat to NATO-Europe and to North America will grow in the coming years. Missile defense is an essential insurance policy against this threat.

Missiles launched from Iran are already capable of reaching NATO-European targets, but not yet targets in the United States. This situation will change with longer-range missiles. Vulnerability to missiles of whatever origin will increase on both sides of the Atlantic. Therefore, the Bucharest Communiqué specifically tasked the NATO Council “to develop options for a comprehensive missile defense architecture to extend coverage to all Allied territory and populations not otherwise covered by the United States system...” The planned third site in Europe forms an important part of an evolving missile defense capability for NATO territory. Central to the Atlantic Alliance has been the indivisibility of the security of each of its members set forth in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, according to which, we should remind ourselves, an “attack on one is to be regarded as an attack on all.” The third site will reinforce this security commitment.

Thus the issue is not when or whether, but instead what kind of missile defense will be deployed. The debate in the Czech Republic in some ways resembles the discussions, pro and con, on missile defense that took place a decade or so ago in the United States. Let me walk us briefly

through some of the arguments that in a few years' time will probably be as out of date here as they are on the other side of the Atlantic. Such arguments have far less resonance in the United States than they once did because they have largely been overtaken by an emerging consensus on the need for missile defense:

- **Argument one:** It is sometimes said that missile defense is not needed until we understand more fully the extent and timeframe of the emerging missile threat. To that argument I would respond that the threat is already here. We do not need additional time. The threat will only increase in the years ahead, especially if we do nothing about it. Fortunately, we are addressing it by deploying missile defenses. On this need there is now widespread agreement on both sides of the Atlantic, as set forth in the Bucharest Summit Communiqué.
- **A second argument** against missile defense is that it is provocative because it will lead to an arms race in which others will deploy additional missiles to overwhelm the missile defense. To that assertion, I reply that the failure to deploy missile defense may actually provide an incentive for our enemies to deploy missiles if we have no means to intercept them after launch. The huge increase in missiles in recent decades has come about in a world that has lacked missile defense, not as a result of missile defense. There is simply no evidence in support of this contention.
- **In a third argument**, critics often allege that missile defense will not work and, in any event, it is destabilizing. To this I reply that if it will not work, it can hardly be destabilizing. This is a logical non sequitur. However, missile defense now has far more test successes than failures. We have moved beyond the arguments of the naysayers. Our successes include the interception of a dead U.S. satellite several weeks ago 150 miles above the Pacific Ocean as it descended toward earth. This was not a test but a real interception that showed how far we have come in perfecting our ability to shoot down missiles.
- **A fourth argument** that is sometimes heard is that other missile defense systems could be deployed to intercept the shorter- or medium-range ballistic missiles that are more likely than longer-range ballistic missiles to threaten NATO-Europe. However, the third site should be seen as a vital contribution to a layered or multi-tiered missile defense architecture designed to give multiple interception opportunities that will include missiles of varying range that could be targeted against NATO-Europe and North America.
- **In a fifth argument** against missile defense it is suggested that the interception of a missile carrying one or more nuclear warheads could result in deadly debris falling to earth. In response, wherever the intercept took place, its impact would be such as to obliterate the missile and its payload, with any remaining debris burning up upon atmospheric reentry. This is far preferable to the missile and its warhead reaching its intended target. I need not draw out more fully any such comparison.
- **A sixth argument** is that the United States, after the forthcoming presidential election and depending on who is the next President, may alter course against missile defense. Of

course, I cannot predict what will happen. However, the technologies that are now being deployed were developed in and before the 1990s. The Bush Administration inherited and built on the program of the preceding Clinton Administration. Thus there is considerable continuity in the U.S. missile defense program that has transcended administrations of both political parties.

- **Last but not least, there is also the argument** that because Russia objects to the planned missile defense installation, we should be highly sensitive to Russian concerns. In response, just as with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, we cannot allow Russia to drive a wedge between the United States and NATO-Europe on this or other important issues. This is especially the case when we consider NATO's newer members whose security requirements and defense decisions we cannot allow to be dictated from Moscow. In any event the U.S. deployment of missile defense has not damaged relations with Russia despite the dire predictions of several years ago when the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty and began the deployment of missile defense.

Perhaps the most important argument for missile defense is the need to provide an alternative to retaliation as the basis for deterrence and to move away from the outmoded Cold War strategic concept of mutual vulnerability. In the changed twenty-first-century security setting, we can no longer base our security on the idea that our civilian populations should be held hostage. It has long been argued that, having witnessed the destruction of a NATO-European city by a missile armed with one or more nuclear warheads, the United States and other NATO members would be obligated under the NATO collective defense commitment to retaliate in kind against the country that had launched the attack. This is an unsatisfactory basis for twenty-first-century deterrence.

Would it not be preferable to be able to shoot down the missile before it reached its target in order to prevent the loss of hundreds of thousands of civilians in a NATO country rather than avenging their loss by inflicting retaliation resulting in hundreds of thousands of additional casualties against a civilian population, say in Tehran, that had little or no role in the decision to launch the attack in the first place? There should be no doubt about the answer to this question. Missile defense provides the necessary alternative to such carnage, whose ultimate cost cannot be calculated in advance because we are dealing with irreplaceable human lives.

Therefore, as we work to prevent twenty-first-century wars, we should regard the third site as an essential contribution to a missile defense architecture that ultimately will include NATO short-range interceptors, together with sea-based and space-based defenses. Together, they can provide an indispensable part of a comprehensive, multidimensional counterproliferation strategy that also includes other elements. Missile defense reinforces this strategy by making it less likely that a missile would reach its intended target and therefore contributes to the common and indivisible NATO defense.