

# Heritage Lectures

No. 1135

Delivered September 15, 2009



Published by The Heritage Foundation

September 23, 2009

## Missile Defense and the Defense of Freedom

*The Honorable Jim DeMint*

**Abstract:** *In any situation, the friend of freedom is the friend of the United States, but it is becoming apparent that the current Administration does not seem to abide by this rule or the moral and strategic clarity it demands. In office only eight months, President Barack Obama and his foreign policy team seem uninterested in the true nature of American leadership in the world. If President Obama continues to insist on bargaining away U.S. and European security in order to obtain Russian help with Iran, then he jeopardizes the support necessary to ratify a new START treaty.*

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I have a particular distrust for political labels or political doublespeak. I dislike theories and ideologies; I prefer things that are real, things that are true, things that work. I like clarity. So, to break through diplomatic double-speak, I tend to follow a simple rule when I come across any foreign policy question: In any situation, the friend of freedom is the friend of the United States.

It is becoming apparent that the current Administration—at the very least—does not seem to abide by this rule or the moral and strategic clarity it demands. In office only eight months, President Barack Obama and his foreign policy team seem uninterested in the true nature of American leadership in the world. They seem not to understand that our most binding alliances are not with nations, but with all people who yearn to live in freedom.

With friends of freedom, we may not always share treaties, but we share something far more binding and

### Talking Points

- Missile defense represents freedom's ultimate shield, not just for us, but for friends of freedom around the world. It has the potential to deter the aggressive impulses of freedom's enemies and to strengthen the resolve of its friends, even in the most oppressive regimes.
- This is why missile defense is always unpopular with leaders who seek to subdue human freedom and welcomed by those willing to fight for it.
- President Barack Obama and his foreign policy team seem uninterested in the true nature of American leadership in the world. If President Obama continues to insist on bargaining away U.S. and European security in order to obtain Russian help with Iran, then he jeopardizes the support necessary to ratify a new START treaty.

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This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:  
[www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/hl1135.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/hl1135.cfm)

Produced by The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom

Published by The Heritage Foundation  
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4999  
(202) 546-4400 • [heritage.org](http://heritage.org)

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enduring. It is this bond, at least as much as the NATO Treaty, that unites our interests with Europe generally, and with former Soviet satellites Poland and the Czech Republic in particular.

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***There is not supposed to be a “Bush” foreign policy or an “Obama” foreign policy: There is supposed to be an American foreign policy that stands for freedom and against tyranny. The current Administration seems not to understand that a confident, decisive, and assertive America is a stabilizing force for freedom and justice in the world.***

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The Czechs and the Poles—like the people of Cuba, Taiwan, Israel, and, today, Honduras—are friends of freedom and are thus friends of the United States. The current Administration does not see things this way.

### **America: A Stabilizing Force for Good**

This can be seen in myriad policies and decisions of the past eight months.

- In Iran, this year, for the first time in decades, a democratic movement stood up to a tyrannical regime without the verbal support of the United States.
- In Honduras, a deposed would-be Marxist dictator finds himself with more friends in Washington than the citizens of the republic he attempted to commandeer.
- And in Russia, the leaders of an increasingly troublesome regime are demanding—and may even be winning—concrete strategic concessions from the United States in exchange for vague offers of diplomatic assistance.

These and other developments are not just the result of an untested foreign policy team learning on the fly. They are the inevitable result of an American foreign policy unmoored from our commitment to human rights and human freedom and tied instead to the President’s personal ambitions.

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dom and *against* tyranny. The current Administration seems not to understand that a confident, decisive, and assertive America is a *stabilizing* force for freedom and justice in the world.

Nowhere is this problem more pronounced than in Eastern Europe or in the area of missile defense.

### **Russia, Iran, and Missile Defense**

Earlier this year, President Obama wrote to Russian President Medvedev and said he was willing to bargain away U.S. missile defense plans in Europe if the Russians helped to completely eliminate Iran’s threats to global security.

Furthermore, an Administration spokesman recently admitted that the so-called third site for missile defense won’t protect Europe from a strike launched in Iran. But this ignores the fact that Iran is not the only place from which a ballistic missile could hit Europe—and in that case, if our missile defenses will not protect Europe, what will?

I don’t think President Obama’s personal popularity in the international community will protect them. Or the self-imposed restraint of terrorist states. Or the moral force of U.N. Security Council Resolutions. No, missile defense is our best chance to check the aggression of imperialist regimes and terrorist thugs alike. It undermines their motivations to spend billions on missile technology.

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***At issue is whether missile defense represents a threat to the security and stability of the world or whether missile defense is, in fact, as Ronald Reagan said, the greatest hope the cause of peace has ever had.***

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This is why former leaders of Central and Eastern European countries recently wrote an open letter to President Obama to remind him of the sacrifices they had made on behalf of freedom and the need for leadership now from Washington. It is also why Poland and the Czech Republic have bravely volunteered to host the “third site.” Its deployment there makes the most strategic sense, both for the United States and our allies, and also represents the most cost-efficient option available to us.

As frustrating as this ongoing process is, it represents an important opportunity for the American people, the Congress, and our allies. At issue is whether missile defense represents a threat to the security and stability of the world or whether missile defense is, in fact, as Ronald Reagan said, the greatest hope the cause of peace has ever had.

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It says a great deal about the world that enemies of freedom reflexively distrust missile defense, and that free people have difficulty understanding why anyone would find it even remotely controversial. It says even more about the United States and the American people that, even as the world's lone superpower, our greatest achievement in military technology is exclusively defensive in nature. No powerful society in history could ever make such a boast—indeed, no other society would want to.

Wrapped up in that fact is everything one needs to know about American exceptionalism—the clearest, truest, and most reliable fact in international affairs. Even when we discover ways to defend ourselves, Americans seek to share the benefits of that discovery with those nations who share our love of freedom. Missile defense is not a projection of American power, but of American ideals. Anyone who objects says more about himself than about America.

This was the case for those who blindly argued, in an age of unimaginable innovation, that missile defense was a technological impossibility. This was the case for those who howled in 1986 when Ronald Reagan said “Nyet” to abandoning missile defense, walked away from the Reykjavik Summit, and by doing so began the endgame of the Cold War.

Yet there are still those who believe, as President Obama suggested in Prague, that voluntary disarmament is the path to peace and who make spurious arguments about cost when the fact is that studies by the Congressional Budget Office and the

Pentagon have demonstrated that ground-based interceptors in Poland are both the least expensive and most effective option available to us.

## **Defense of Freedom**

Aside from the ideals missile defense reflects, there remains another, far more practical reason for its deployment.

It is undeniable now that the President's overtures toward Moscow and away from Europe have gained us nothing. Nuclear and ballistic programs continue unimpeded in North Korea, Iran, and elsewhere. Russia has announced its opposition to any new sanctions against Iran.

If history has taught us anything, it is that freedom is the exception, not the norm. It is not enough for democracies to “bear witness” to threats against freedom: Those threats must be countered. Everywhere and always, liberty must be earned, won, and defended.

Missile defense represents freedom's ultimate shield—not just for us, but for friends of freedom around the world. It has the potential to both deter the aggressive impulses of freedom's enemies and strengthen the resolve of its friends, even in the most oppressive regimes. This, after all, is why missile defense is always unpopular with leaders who seek to subdue human freedom and welcomed by those willing to fight for it.

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The question now is, “Which kind of leader does Barack Obama intend to be?”

Before the July summit in Moscow, several colleagues and I sent a letter to the President cautioning against any linkage or deal with the Russians on missile defense in or outside of negotiations for a new START treaty. Several more Senators have since sent letters of their own.

The President has yet to get the message, so let me be clear: If President Obama continues to insist on bargaining away U.S. and European security in order to obtain Russian help with Iran, then he jeopardizes the support necessary to ratify a new START treaty.

Unfortunately, hope is not a strategy, and abandoning friendships in order to achieve

short-order diplomatic victories is foolish. Going forward, I sincerely hope President Obama will follow President Reagan's example and tell the Russians, "Nyet."

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