

# Background

No. 2396  
April 8, 2010



Published by The Heritage Foundation

## The Obama Administration's Ballistic Missile Defense Program: Treading Water in Shark-Infested Seas

*Baker Spring*

**Abstract:** *The Obama Administration's plan for ballistic missile defense and its proposed FY 2011 budget for the missile defense program would leave the program treading water. At the same time, the threat of ballistic missile attack on the U.S. and its allies will continue to increase as more state and non-state actors gain and improve the missile capabilities. Congress should begin to correct the Administration's mistakes by adding \$1.358 billion to the FY 2011 missile defense budget, preventing the Administration's arms control initiatives from interfering with missile defense development and deployment, restoring the program to destroy ballistic missiles in boost phase, and resuming development of space-based interceptors.*

---

The Department of Defense released its Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report (BMDRR) on February 1, 2010, laying out America's long-term policy on ballistic missile defense.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the Obama Administration released its fiscal year (FY) 2011 budget request, which includes recommended funding levels for the overall ballistic missile defense program and for the portion of the program that falls under the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). The Defense Department is requesting \$9.9 billion for the overall program in FY 2011,<sup>2</sup> including \$8.4 billion for the MDA.<sup>3</sup> The remaining \$1.5 billion would mainly go to the Army's ballistic missile defense programs, including the Patriot interceptor and the Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) program.

### Talking Points

To correct the Administration's mistakes on missile defense, Congress should:

- Increase FY 2011 missile defense funding by more than \$1.3 billion;
- Prevent arms control initiatives from interfering with the missile defense development and deployment options;
- Restore the planned number of fielded interceptors in Alaska and California to 44;
- Accelerate the development and deployment of Aegis systems and SM-3 interceptors;
- Restore the program to destroy ballistic missiles in boost phase;
- Resume development of space-based missile defense interceptors;
- Give the Navy greater management authority over the Aegis missile defense system and create a test bed for sea-based missile defense on the East Coast, including developing protection against missiles carrying electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons; and
- Continue and expand missile defense cooperation with Israel.

---

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:  
<http://report.heritage.org/bg2396>

Produced by the Douglas and Sarah Allison  
Center for Foreign Policy Studies  
of the  
Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis  
Institute for International Studies

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

Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

Taken together, the BMDRR and the budget clearly indicate that the ballistic missile defense program will tread water in FY 2011. The BMDRR proposes significant steps forward for some programs, such as the sea-based Aegis system and its land-based variant, particularly when compared to the programmatic retreats that the Administration has imposed on other programs in FY 2010. On the other hand, these steps forward may be temporary because they are reversible. Further, the BMDRR proposes continuing retreats in other programs, such as the Airborne Laser system. On the budget side, the Obama Administration's \$8.4 billion request for the MDA is more than \$500 million above projected spending for the current fiscal year. On the other hand, it is almost \$1 billion less than the Bush Administration's budget request for the MDA for FY 2009.<sup>4</sup>

A missile defense program that is simply treading water should be unacceptable to Congress because ballistic missile proliferation trends, including those described in the BMDRR, point to other countries, particularly the rogue states Iran and North Korea, developing missiles of increasing sophistication and range. Further, a program that is treading water will deprive the U.S. of the opportunity to establish improved relations with China and Russia based on more defensive strategic postures.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, Congress needs to demonstrate its commitment to both invigorating and accelerating the ballistic missile defense effort. After all, this program is about defending the U.S. and its allies against strategic attack, and the federal government has no more important responsibility under the Constitution.

## The BMDRR: An Uncertain Vision

The BMDRR presents the Obama Administration's long-term vision for ballistic missile defense. The report contains a number of worthy observations and recommendations, but also commits several errors of commission and omission that will weaken the overall ballistic missile defense effort. The BMDRR is divided into six topic areas, each of which is worthy of examination by Congress.

**Emerging Ballistic Missile Threats.** The BMDRR description of the current and projected expansion of ballistic missile capabilities around the world arrives at a number of reasonable conclusions. For example, it states that both the quality and the quantity of missiles are increasing around the world. The trends point to missiles of increasing accuracy and range, use of countermeasures, and access to biological, chemical, and nuclear warheads. The BMDRR acknowledges that many states are increasing their inventories.

---

***Both the quality and the quantity of missiles are increasing around the world.***

---

However, the BMDRR's assessment of the projected expansion of ballistic missile capabilities suffers from a central contradiction and several errors of omission. The report's central contradiction is that, while pointing to the increasing range of missile inventories around the world, it downplays the capabilities to attack the U.S. homeland.

1. U.S. Department of Defense, "Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report," February 2010, at [http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630\\_for%20web.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf) (March 29, 2010).
2. U.S. Department of Defense, "United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request: Overview," February 1, 2010, pp. 4-5-4-6, at [http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/FY2011\\_Budget\\_Request\\_Overview\\_Book.pdf](http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/FY2011_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf) (February 17, 2010).
3. U.S. Department of Defense, Missile Defense Agency, "Missile Defense Agency Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Budget Estimates: Overview," January 15, 2010, at <http://www.mda.mil/global/documents/pdf/budgetfy11.pdf> (February 17, 2010).
4. U.S. Department of Defense, Missile Defense Agency, "Historical Funding for MDA FY85-10," at <http://www.mda.mil/global/documents/pdf/histfunds.pdf> (February 17, 2009).
5. Baker Spring, "Congressional Commission Should Recommend a 'Damage Limitation' Strategy," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2172, August 14, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2008/08/Congressional-Commission-Should-Recommend-Damage-Limitation-Strategy>, and Andrei Shoumikhin and Baker Spring, "Strategic Nuclear Arms Control for the Protect and Defend Strategy," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2266, May 4, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/05/Strategic-Nuclear-Arms-Control-for-the-Protect-and-Defend-Strategy>.

In fact, justifying the distinction between capabilities to attack the U.S. homeland and regional threats is difficult on two grounds. First, missile development programs do not pursue shorter-range and long-range missile technology independently of each of other. For example, Iran has already fielded a number of different shorter-range missiles and has launched a satellite, which demonstrates an inherent capability to field longer-range missiles capable of carrying light warheads. Second, states with shorter-range missiles could pursue alternative deployment options to give them the ability to attack the U.S. homeland. The most obvious option is to place short-range missiles and launchers on cargo vessels off the U.S. coast.

---

***The BMDRR's most glaring omission is the lack of even a summary examination of the immediate or future indications of hostile intent toward the U.S. and its allies.***

---

Two omissions in the report are particularly important. First, the BMDRR alludes to the expansion of countermeasures to confuse or overwhelm defensive systems, but does not describe these programs in any detail. This omission makes it impossible to determine whether the ballistic missile defense policy and program outlined later in the report is responsive to countermeasure developments. Second, the BMDRR does not discuss the capability of countries to target the U.S. and its allies with electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons and how ballistic missiles could deliver EMP warheads. The unclassified reports of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack clearly stated that the U.S. is quite vulnerable to this form of attack.<sup>6</sup>

However, the BMDRR's most glaring omission is the lack of even a summary examination of the immediate or future indications of hostile intent toward the U.S. and its allies. A threat is the combination of capabilities and intentions. While the U.S. should urgently pursue its missile defense program because of the current and projected trends in capabilities, understanding intentions remains critically important because intentions can change with no notice.

The hostile intentions of other international actors should strongly influence how the military will operate and employ ballistic missile defense systems. However, in describing the threat, the report fails to provide even a sample of the stated hostile intentions of the leaders of several key states and non-state actors. This is not to say that these statements necessarily will result in strategic attacks on the U.S. and its allies, but they would help to prepare U.S. political leaders and the leaders of U.S. allies for the possibility of such attacks.

For example, the report does not point out that Aleksandr Prokhanov, a Russian writer close to the Russian General Staff, has written, "We [Russia] were not defeated by the West in the Cold War, because the Cold War continues. We lost gigantic territories, but we held Moscow. From here we launched our counterattack."<sup>7</sup>

Chinese Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu reportedly stated in his book *The China Dream* that the U.S. and China are in a "competition to be the leading country, a conflict over who rises and falls to dominate the world."<sup>8</sup>

In 2009, around the time of Iran's satellite launch and the 30th anniversary of the Islamic revolution, Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati stated:

The noble and prosperous Iranian nation hit another severe punch against the head of the

- 
6. Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack, *Report of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack*, Vol. 1, Executive Report, 2004, at [http://www.empcommission.org/docs/empc\\_exec\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.empcommission.org/docs/empc_exec_rpt.pdf) (March 29, 2010), and *Critical National Infrastructures*, April 2008, at [http://www.empcommission.org/docs/A2473-EMP\\_Commission-7MB.pdf](http://www.empcommission.org/docs/A2473-EMP_Commission-7MB.pdf) (March 29, 2010).
  7. Robert Horvath, "Beware the Rise of Russia's New Imperialism," *The Age*, August 21, 2008, at <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/beware-the-rise-of-russias-new-imperialism-20080820-3yw6.html> (November 23, 2009).
  8. Bill Gertz, "China Rhetoric Raises Threat Concerns," *The Washington Times*, March 5, 2010, at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/mar/05/harsh-words-from-chinese-military-raise-threat-con> (March 19, 2010).

Americans and the Israelis with that move, starting a soft enemy breaking plan against those who are planning for overthrowing the system softly....

They [the U.S. and Israel] have to get the message and decide whether they wish to confront a 70 million strong nation and urge them to surrender, since the message of the [anniversary] rallies was that this nation will not surrender, and is faithful to Islam, the late Imam [Khomeini], and the revolution, and is still an enemy of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

General Mohammed Ali Jaafari, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, has stated, "Our missile capability puts all of the Zionist regime [Israel] within Iran's reach to attack."<sup>10</sup>

After Hezbollah launched thousands of rockets and missiles into Israel in 2006, Hezbollah spokesman Anwar Raja stated in January 2009, "Don't be surprised to see more rockets launched into northern Israel."<sup>11</sup>

Regarding U.S. ally South Korea, North Korea has stated in the context of U.S.–South Korean contingency planning: "We will start a pan-national holy war of retaliation to blow away the den of South Korean authorities, including the presidential Blue House, who have led and supported the drawing up of this plan,"<sup>12</sup>

The North Korean state-run newspaper *Minju Joeson* said in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, "Our nuclear deterrent will be a strong defensive means...as well as a merciless offensive means to deal a just retaliatory strike to those who touch the country's dignity and sovereignty even a bit."<sup>13</sup>

The BMDRR's failure to examine these hostile intentions permits it to downplay threats, particularly from China and Russia. The reality is that future hostility by Russia and/or China toward the U.S. and its allies is a distinct possibility, and ballis-

---

***Future hostility by Russia and/or China toward the U.S. and its allies is a distinct possibility, and ballistic missile defense policies and programs should address this possibility accordingly.***

---

tic missile defense policies and programs should address this possibility accordingly. While hostile intentions of Hezbollah, Iran, and North Korea are obvious, the BMDRR could have served a useful purpose by reminding both Congress and the American people how extreme these hostile intentions have become.

#### **Ballistic Missile Defense Strategy and Policy.**

The BMDRR then proceeds to describe the Obama Administration's policy for defending against the threats described in the first part of the report. This policy statement has six essential provisions:

1. A commitment to defend the U.S. homeland against limited long-range missile attacks;
2. A commitment to defend deployed U.S. forces and U.S. allies against regional missile threats;
3. The adoption of a robust testing regime;
4. The pursuit of an affordable missile defense program, which emphasizes more mature technologies over less advanced ones;
5. A hedging strategy for addressing future missile threats; and
6. Expanded international cooperation in ballistic missile defense.

9. Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, official Friday sermon, Tehran, February 13, 2009, in Middle East Media Research Institute, *Special Dispatch* No. 2245, February 13, 2009, at <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/3098.htm> (March 3, 2009).

10. General Mohammed Ali Jaafari, quoted in CNN, "Revolutionary Guard Leader: We Can Hit Israel's Nuclear Facilities," July 26, 2009, at <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/07/25/iran.israel.nuclear/index.html> (March 29, 2010).

11. Thanassis Cambinis, "Rocket Fire from Lebanon Unsettles Israel, but Fears of a Hezbollah Attack Subside," January 8, 2009, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/09/world/middleeast/09lebanon.html> (March 19, 2010).

12. Choe Sang-Hun, "N. Korea Threatens to Halt All Talks with Seoul," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2010, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/16/world/asia/16korea.html> (March 19, 2010).

13. Associated Press, "North Korea Threatens 'Merciless' Nuclear Offensive," *Guardian* (London), June 9, 2009, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/09/north-korea-nuclear-threat> (March 19, 2009).



As may be expected, the policy prescriptions when taken together have both good and bad aspects. On the positive side of the ledger, the Administration may be starting to recognize that adopting a multilateral version of the strategic policy of mutual vulnerability that the U.S. pursued with the Soviet Union during the Cold War is problematic. Exercises conducted by The Heritage Foundation in 2005 demonstrated that the absence of defenses in a setting of proliferation of both nuclear weapons and ballistic missile delivery systems is highly destabilizing and carries a relatively high risk of the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>14</sup>

Second, the BMDRR acknowledges that ballistic missile defense's essential roles are bolstering deterrence, maintaining the policy of extending deterrence to U.S. allies, and reassuring U.S. allies about the threats that they face. This is a welcome departure from the Cold War assertion that missile defenses are destabilizing and incompatible with deterrence. Finally, the report indicates that the Administration accepts in principle the wisdom of pursuing options with both China and Russia to establish more defensive strategic postures by helping both to "better understand the stabilizing benefits of missile defense."<sup>15</sup>

On the negative side of the ledger, the BMDRR's policy prescriptions include steps that contradict or undermine the positive elements. First, it states that missile defenses to protect the U.S. homeland are being limited, at least relative to regional defenses. This is to preserve, at least for the near term, the policy of mutual vulnerability toward both China and Russia. Continuing this policy of vulnerability toward China and Russia undermines to a considerable degree the recognition that missile defenses play positive roles in extended deterrence and reassurance to U.S. allies. The report apparently assumes that the defense of U.S. allies against

regional missile threats is sufficient and that direct threats against the U.S. will not weaken the security links to U.S. allies. However, direct threats to the U.S. will weaken these links.

Second, the missile defense policy recommended in the BMDRR displays a bias in development policy toward near-term capabilities at the expense of forward-looking technological developments. For example, no statement in the policy shows that the Administration understands that the most effective defense against ballistic missiles for both the U.S. and its allies is a network of space-based interceptors.

Finally, there is one glaring omission in the BMDRR's policy provisions: arms control. Arms control is clearly the Obama Administration's most important foreign policy priority; the report does not discuss how missile defense fits into the Administration's overall arms control agenda. This may indicate that the Obama Administration has something to hide. During the campaign, President Obama made an unequivocal and unqualified commitment not to "weaponize" space, despite the fact that space is already weaponized.<sup>16</sup>

In 2009, the Administration entered into negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on the subject of preventing an arms race in outer space.<sup>17</sup> An international agreement on this subject will almost certainly require the Administration to dismantle the vast majority of the missile defense programs that it claims to support in the BMDRR. For example, all of the versions of the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) that the Administration says that it wants to pursue under its missile defense program will have an inherent anti-satellite capability. They will need to be severely curtailed, if not banned outright, under a space weapons agreement. President Obama's nomination of Philip Coyle to the position of Associate Director for National Security and International

14. Nuclear Stability Working Group, "Nuclear Games: An Exercise Examining Stability and Defenses in a Proliferated World," Heritage Foundation *Ballistic Missile Defense Technical Study* No. 4, 2005, at [http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf\\_media/2010/pdf/NuclearGames.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/2010/pdf/NuclearGames.pdf) (April 2, 2010).

15. U.S. Department of Defense, "Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report," p. 12.

16. BarackObama.com, "Obama-Caucus4Priorities," YouTube, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o84PE871BE> (March 8, 2010).

17. Rose Gottemoeller, "Statement to the Conference on Disarmament," U.S. Department of State, June 4, 2009, at <http://www.state.gov/t/vci/rls/124463.htm> (March 8, 2010).

Affairs in the Office of Science and Technology Policy is currently on hold because the nominee failed to answer a question about the possible defense systems and programs that could be defined as having a direct or contributory capability as anti-satellite weapons.

**Defending the Homeland.** The BMDRR makes it clear that the Obama Administration intends to stand by its 2009 decision to retreat on the fielding of the ground-based midcourse defense (GMD) system to defend the U.S. and Europe against long-range missiles. The Bush Administration planned to field 54 interceptors: 44 in Alaska and California and 10 in Poland. The Obama Administration is planning to field just 30 interceptors, with none in Poland.

The BMDRR asserts that the Obama Administration is “hedging” against uncertainties about future ballistic missile threats to the U.S. homeland. If the Administration had a serious program for hedging against these uncertainties, the report would include additional steps, including:

1. Fielding the total number of GMD interceptors proposed by the Bush Administration;
2. Accelerated fielding of the SM-3 Block II-B, which will have a capability to counter long-range missiles;
3. Continuing the momentum behind the Airborne Laser program, not relegating it to a technology demonstration program;
4. Maintaining missile defense options to counter the threat from short-range missiles launched off the U.S. coast; and
5. Most importantly, developing and fielding a constellation of space-based interceptors based on the Brilliant Pebbles technology developed during the Reagan and George H. W. Bush Administrations.

**Defending Against Regional Threats.** In contrast to the Obama Administration’s retreats in other areas of ballistic missile defense, the BMDRR indicates that the Administration plans to continue to advance the Bush Administration programs for countering short-range, medium-range, and intermediate-range missiles. This “phased adaptive

approach” is focused on advancing the currently sea-based Aegis missile defense system and its SM-3 interceptors.

The overall approach envisions a four-step program:

1. Between now and FY 2011, procure more of the existing system.
2. Around 2015, develop more advanced versions of the SM-3 (the SM-3 Block IB) to provide broader coverage and deploy them on land. The initial emphasis will be to deploy these interceptors in southern Europe.
3. Around 2018, field SM-3 Block IIA interceptors, which are already under development, primarily to counter medium-range and intermediate-range missiles. This would include fielding interceptors in Northern Europe to protect U.S. NATO allies in Europe.
4. Around 2020, deploy SM-3 Block IIB interceptors to counter long-range ballistic missiles that could threaten the U.S. homeland as well as regional allies.

The phased adaptive approach for improving the Aegis system and the SM-3 interceptors can succeed, but success depends on the Obama Administration providing sustained funding to the program. It also requires that neither the Administration nor Congress impede progress by placing policy-related or programmatic barriers in the way. The most likely policy-related barriers would stem

---

***The phased adaptive approach for improving the Aegis system and the SM-3 interceptors can succeed, but success depends on the Obama Administration providing sustained funding to the program.***

---

from arms control, including buckling to Russian demands to curtail the missile defense program in negotiations on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) follow-on treaty or in pursuing agreements on space arms. The most likely programmatic barriers are attempts to impose traditional acquisition rules on the systems and allowing the MDA, which traditionally has opposed the Aegis-based missile defense system, to

has laid out a program for advancing Aegis and SM-3 technology, but the program remains reversible.

**International Cooperation.** The BMDRR states that the Obama Administration is fully committed to a program of international cooperation in ballistic missile defense. This is essential because of the global scope of existing and projected ballistic missile capabilities and because ballistic missile threats will otherwise undermine the relationships between the U.S. and its allies.

The Administration's policy of missile defense cooperation would be more credible if it had not abandoned the Bush Administration's plan to field a missile defense radar in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland.<sup>18</sup> The Obama Administration abandoned two important allies to "reset" relations with Russia and to advance its agenda for reducing strategic nuclear arms. Subordinating missile defense to the arms control process and Russian demands bodes ill for the long-term success of the missile defense program.

Regarding Russia and the arms control process, it is unclear whether the Obama Administration will ultimately reverse course and use the arms control process to advance missile defense. Despite its announced intention to seek missile defense cooperation with Russia, the Administration also talks about preserving the "strategic balance" with Russia. Clearly, the Administration is referring to preserving the nuclear balance of terror and vulnerability to nuclear attack.

Ultimately, the Obama Administration cannot have it both ways. Either it will work to convince Russia that more defensive strategic postures are in the interests of both countries and U.S. allies or it will fall back to the Cold War position that vulnerability to nuclear attack is a better alternative. If it chooses the latter, the missile defense program as outlined in the BMDRR will be abandoned.

**Program Management.** The BMDRR's recommendations on management of missile defense development and deployment are a mixed bag. The report states that the Defense Department will preserve the structure led by the Missile Defense Executive Board, which was established by the Bush Administration in 2007. Further, the report states that the Department of Defense is committed to transitioning missile defense systems from the MDA to the military departments. Finally, it recommends against bringing the missile defense program into the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process to identify, develop, and field new technologies and capabilities for the military. It also recommends against applying standard Department of Defense acquisition rules to the missile defense program. These are all wise decisions.

However, these wise decisions need to be applied in a clear and consistent manner. For example, there needs to be a determined effort to transition funding and management authority for the Aegis and Standard Missile programs from the MDA to the Navy. By comparison, this transition is far more advanced for the Army's missile defense programs, such as the Patriot and the MEADS program. The Navy is in a better position to integrate Aegis and SM-2 and SM-3 missile defense capabilities into the fleet than the MDA.

Further, the decision to continue to exempt the missile defense program from standard acquisition procedures seems to contradict statements more in keeping with the standard approach. David M. Altwegg, MDA Executive Director, stated in a press conference on February 1, 2010, that the MDA would pursue the standard "fly before you buy" model of operational testing before acquisition.<sup>19</sup> While the fly-before-you-buy approach for operational testing is appropriate for most defense programs, it is not workable for missile defense. The global missile defense architecture will necessarily

18. Mackenzie Eaglen and Baker Spring, "Obama Administration's New Missile Defense Plan Is a Losing Proposition," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2620, September 17, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/09/Obama-Administrations-New-Missile-Defense-Plan-Is-a-Losing-Proposition>.

19. David M. Altwegg, "DOD News Briefing with David Altwegg on Fiscal Year 2011 Budget for Missile Defense Agency," transcript, U.S. Department of Defense, February 1, 2010, at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4554> (March 11, 2010).

become a single integrated system of systems. In fact, major elements of the system must be built in order to be tested. For example, conducting system-wide operational tests of the global command and control architecture for missile defense would be impossible, not to mention unwise and wasteful, without first buying and building significant elements of that architecture.

Regarding the specific testing program for missile defense, the BMDRR touts the Department of Defense's Integrated Master Plan. However, a risk-averse mentality may have pervaded the plan. A risk-averse approach places a higher value on obtaining an ever longer list of test "successes" than on advancing technology. From this perspective,

---

***The Department of Defense should be telling skeptics in Congress and elsewhere that any development program for advancing defense technology in significant ways will experience test "failures" from time to time, and missile defense is no exception.***

---

developmental tests start to take on the characteristics of reliability tests. It is driven by a mindset that states, "Go out and get a successful test before Congress cancels the program."

The Department of Defense should be telling skeptics in Congress and elsewhere that any development program for advancing defense technology in significant ways will experience test "failures" from time to time, and missile defense is no exception. In many cases, more can be learned from test failures than from successes. In fact, Congress should be more skeptical about a development program that has an unbroken record of successes, than about one that has the occasional failure.

### **The Budget for Ballistic Missile Defense**

As indicated, the President has proposed increasing the MDA's FY 2011 budget by more than \$500 million above its FY 2010 budget. On the other hand, it is almost \$1 billion less than

what the Bush Administration proposed in its FY 2009 budget request. Clearly, funding should be added to the MDA's FY 2011 budget and to the missile defense programs outside the MDA. Further, the increased funding levels need to be sustained beyond FY 2011. Determining the size of the needed increase requires an examination of the internal components of the request. However, detailed recommendations for sustained MDA funding after FY 2011 are impossible because detailed descriptions of the five-year defense budget are not publicly available.

The MDA's FY 2011 budget request<sup>20</sup> contains the following highlights:

- **\$1.346 billion for the midcourse defense systems.** This is \$319 million more than the FY 2010 budget, but \$127 million less than was allocated in FY 2009. It would keep the overall number of fielded GMD interceptors for countering long-range missiles at 30, compared to 54 under the Bush Administration plan.
- **\$2.161 billion for the Aegis system and related elements.** This funding level is derived from several separate accounts. In FY 2010, these accounts are designated to receive \$1.943 billion. The proposed FY 2011 budget would be an 11 percent increase. The missile defense budget description provides general information about the five-year funding profile for most elements of the Aegis program. The Aegis system is projected to receive more than \$11 billion during the five-year period.
- **No funding for the European missile defense sites in the "third site" proposal.** Consistent with the Obama Administration's September 2009 decision to cancel the third site, the associated accounts in the missile defense budget have been zeroed out for FY 2011.
- **No funding for boost-phase missile defenses.** The President's budget provides no funding for major boost-phase missile defense programs in FY 2011. In 2009, the Airborne Laser was scaled back, and the Kinetic Energy Interceptor was

---

20. U.S. Department of Defense, Missile Defense Agency, "Missile Defense Agency Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Budget Estimates." This document was released following the release of the overall Department of Defense budget on February 1, 2010.



terminated. In FY 2009, the account for boost-phase missile defenses received \$384 million.

- **No funding for the Multiple Kill Vehicle program.** The Multiple Kill Vehicle program was designed to create smaller and lighter kill vehicles so that an interceptor booster could carry more than one kill vehicle. Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced in 2009 that the Department of Defense was terminating this program. Accordingly, the FY 2011 missile defense budget would provide no funding for the program.
- **Minimal funding for space activities and no funding for space-based interceptors.** The FY 2011 budget allocates just \$11 million to space activities for missile defense, compared with \$12 million in FY 2010 and \$23 million in FY 2009. The funds will primarily support space-based sensor and data collection activities of the Missile Defense Space Experimentation Center (MDSEC). Additionally, the FY 2011 budget will provide \$67 million for the Precision Tracking Space System (PTSS), a new satellite system to track ballistic missiles. The PTSS will build on lessons learned from the two Space Tracking and Surveillance System (STSS) demonstration satellites. The STSS program will receive \$113 million in FY 2011, but its funding is winding down. It received \$210 million in FY 2009 and \$162 million in FY 2010. The five-year STSS program includes a demonstration project for feeding satellite data to the Aegis fire control system via the missile defense command and control system to permit remote engagement by the Aegis system. This is critically important to the future success of the Aegis system. However, failure to allocate any money to develop space-based interceptors is nothing short of self-defeating.
- **Increased funding for command and control, battle management, and communications (C2BMC) activities.** The budget allocates \$343 million to C2BMC development activities in FY 2011, compared with \$275 million in FY 2009 and \$335 million in FY 2010. To be effective, any future global missile defense architecture must be integrated so that it can respond to specific ballistic missile threats by providing seamless connections among the best combinations of sensors and interceptors. Thus, C2BMC is the backbone of such an architecture, and that architecture will evolve over time. The Obama Administration is wise to increase funding for these activities. Additionally, the budget overview indicates that the Administration is committing more than \$1.6 billion to these activities over the five-year period.
- **Reduced funding for missile defense cooperation with Israel.** Israel is the U.S. ally that is most threatened by ballistic missile attack. Nevertheless, funding for the missile defense cooperation program with Israel is slated to fall to \$122 million from \$201 million in FY 2010. Development of the Upper Tier component of the Israeli Arrow system accounts for \$51 million, while another \$24 million will go toward continued co-production of the Arrow system. The remaining \$47 million is for the David's Sling development program, which is designed to field a defense against the short-range missiles, such as those launched by Hezbollah against Israel in 2006.
- **Continued MEADS development with Germany and Italy.** The current missile defense budget request for the Army includes \$467.1 million for MEADS in FY 2011, compared with the \$569 million request for FY 2010. MEADS is being designed to provide battlefield protection for expeditionary forces against missile threats. It has unique capabilities to support multinational expeditionary missions and serves to strengthen the alliance ties among U.S., Germany, and Italy. Its capabilities include 360 degree coverage, complementary capabilities for both air and missile defense, and compatibility with an "open architecture" support structure.<sup>21</sup> However, according to press reports, the Army wants to cancel this program.<sup>22</sup>

21. Baker Spring, "Sustain MEADS, the Other European Missile Defense Program," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2589, August 17, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/08/Sustain-MEADS-the-Other-European-Missile-Defense-Program>.

## What Congress Should Do

Congress needs to ensure that the missile defense program does more than tread water. It needs to advance the program aggressively in FY 2011 and throughout the entire five-year budget period. Congress should start by increasing the missile defense budget by \$1.358 billion in FY 2011. The budget increase should be accompanied by a number of substantive policy and programmatic improvements in the overall missile defense program, while not detracting from the components of the Obama Administration's requests that are already in good shape. Specifically, Congress should:

- **Hold hearings on the foreign policy and military intentions of the states that currently are or are projected to be capable of attacking the U.S. or its friends and allies with ballistic missiles.**

The BMDRR clearly shows that the Obama Administration is not paying enough attention to the intentions of current and projected missile powers. Some of these countries are aggressively hostile, and Congress and the American people should be reminded of this. These countries include China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia. Such hearings could be held by the House Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Intelligence Committees and by the Senate Armed Services, Foreign Relations, and Intelligence Committees.

- **Not permit arms control efforts to interfere with the missile defense program.**

During the Cold War, missile defense was a casualty of a misplaced arms control policy. Congress should not allow this to happen again. Three arms control initiatives could limit U.S. missile defense options or otherwise interfere with progress on the program.

The first initiative is concluding the START follow-on treaty between the U.S. and Russia to reduce strategic nuclear arms, which was signed on April 8,

2010. In response to Russian objections, the Obama Administration has already taken steps to limit missile defense options by canceling the plan to field 10 interceptors in Poland and an engagement radar in the Czech Republic. This linkage between missile defense and the START follow-on treaty put the negotiations on the wrong track.<sup>23</sup> While the Obama Administration asserts that the treaty will not constrain U.S. missile defense options, the Russian government thinks that it does. As long as this linkage continues, the Administration's arms control and missile defense strategies will not serve U.S. interests.

The second initiative is to negotiate a space arms control agreement at the U.N. Conference on Disarmament. On June 4, 2009, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller announced that the Obama Administration accepted the "program of work" for the conference.<sup>24</sup> A space arms control agreement or a similar agreement that establishes a "code of conduct" for military space activities could severely curtail, if not outright terminate, all missile defense systems that operate outside the earth's atmosphere and any support systems. Further, any space arms control agreement or code of conduct agreement reached by the Obama Administration, whether negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament or elsewhere, should be drafted as a treaty, which would be subject to the Senate's advice and consent.

The final initiative is the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The MTCR is a voluntary arrangement among countries, including the U.S., to control the export of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and their components. However, the only specific restriction in the MTCR is a prohibition on transferring missile production facilities. Stemming the proliferation of ballistic missiles is a worthy initiative, but the MTCR was not designed to curtail U.S. cooperation

22. Marina Melnic, "Army Aims to Kill MEADS Development Effort," Defense Daily Network, March 1, 2010, at <http://www.defensedaily.com/publications/smr/9481.html> (March 19, 2010; subscription required).

23. Baker Spring, "A Flawed Approach to Arms Control: START Negotiations Will Not Serve U.S. Interests," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2649, October 13, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/10/A-Flawed-Approach-to-Arms-Control-START-Negotiations-Will-Not-Serve-US-Interests> (March 16, 2010).

24. Gottemoeller, "Statement to the Conference on Disarmament."

with its friends and allies in missile defense. Nevertheless, it could have that effect on some systems. Accordingly, Congress should clarify that the MTCR should not be interpreted to limit missile defense cooperation with U.S. friends and allies.

- **Add funds to the MDA budget to field the original number (44) of GMD interceptors in Alaska and California.**

In 2009, Secretary of Defense Gates announced that the Administration planned to field only 30 interceptors in Alaska and California, a reduction from the 44 planned by the Bush Administration. The projected expansion of ballistic missile defense capabilities around the world indicates that the U.S. needs the higher number.<sup>25</sup> Congress should add \$200 million to the missile defense budget to begin restoring the plan to field 44 GMD interceptors in Alaska and California.

- **Accelerate the development of the Aegis system under the Obama Administration's phased adaptive approach to ballistic missile defense.**

While the Obama Administration's commitment to the Aegis system is commendable and the FY 2011 funding for this system is fairly robust, there remains room for improvement. Specifically, Congress should allocate \$350 million to the Navy to expand development and procurement of the Standard Missile-3 family of interceptors. This additional funding should be used to accelerate the development of the interceptors and the associated fire control software, develop smaller and lighter kill vehicles, initiate establishment of an East Coast missile defense test bed, and increase the procurement of Standard Missiles.

Smaller and lighter kill vehicles will eventually permit interceptors to achieve velocities of 6-7 kilometers per second, enabling them to destroy longer-range ballistic missiles and to destroy attacking missiles in the ascent phase of flight. Destroying missiles in ascent phase will permit future interceptors launched from ships off the U.S. coast to destroy a missile delivering a EMP warhead before it is detonated.

- **Restore the boost-phase element in the broader missile defense program.**

The Department of Defense should be pursuing a layered missile defense architecture with elements that can destroy ballistic missiles in the boost, ascent, midcourse, and terminal phases. However, the Administration's FY 2011 proposal would zero out the boost-phase element. It would relegate the Airborne Laser program to a technology demonstrator status and move the Network Centric Airborne Defense Element (NCADE) program to a different account. The Airborne Laser, which was demonstrated in a successful test on February 11, 2010, uses a laser beam to destroy attacking missiles in the boost-phase. The NCADE is a modified air-to-air missile that will destroy the attacking ballistic missile by the force of collision.

The successful test of the Airborne Laser represents a dramatic technological breakthrough in military applications of directed energy systems. The Department of Defense needs to advance this technology on a more robust basis than would be permitted by the proposed technology demonstration program. More importantly, despite still being in development, this system is already advanced enough to become operational if circumstances necessitate. This would require adding \$300 million to the missile defense budget in FY 2011. A robust development program for the NCADE system would require an additional \$8 million.

- **Permit the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to construct a space test bed for missile defense, including space-based interceptors.**

There is no good reason to omit space-based interceptor development from MDSEC programs. Ballistic missiles fly toward and through space. Therefore, space is an ideal location to deploy missile defense interceptors. Nevertheless, the MDA is clearly not committed to this technology. Accordingly, this mission should go to DARPA, unless the MDA demonstrates that a willingness to reverse course and pursue a robust program for developing

25. Baker Spring, "Obama Missile Defense Program: Numbers Matter," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2590, August 17, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/08/Obama-Missile-Defense-Proposal-Numbers-Matter>.

and fielding space-based interceptors. An appropriate initial funding level for space-based interceptor development and the broader space test bed is \$500 million in FY 2011.

- **Give the Navy greater management authority over the Aegis program within the phased adaptive approach toward missile defense.**

The Navy's vision for the Aegis missile defense system is to integrate that system into its multi-mission fleet with multi-mission ships. It does not plan to pursue missile defense ships as a stand-alone capability. This is a wise approach that takes advantage of the sunk costs in the Aegis ships already in the fleet. Further, this will help to ensure that the Navy assumes the missile defense mission in a way that preserves the health of the entire fleet. Given this wise approach, the Navy is clearly better positioned to identify the best and most efficient way to apply the Administration's phased adaptive approach for missile defense to the Aegis program and to incorporate the new technologies that will emerge under this approach into the individual ships and across the fleet. As management authority shifts from the MDA to the Navy, the funds should also shift.

- **Continue to expand missile defense cooperation with Israel.**

Given the direct threats to Israel posed by ballistic missiles of its unquestioned enemies, including Hezbollah and Iran, U.S. missile defense cooperation with Israel needs to continue. The Obama Administration is right to continue cooperative efforts with Israel, including financial contributions, for the Arrow and David's Sling systems. What is missing is an extra layer of protection for Israel against all but the shortest-range missiles. This layer of space-based interceptors would provide a robust defense to the U.S. and its allies. The first step is for the U.S. and Israel to conduct a joint study on the advantages of deploying a layer of space-based interceptors to complement their surface-based interceptors. Congress should work with the Administration to ensure that these studies are conducted. Similar studies should be initiated with Canada under NORAD, U.S. allies in Europe, Japan, South Korea, and Australia.

- **Continue the MEADS program with Germany and Italy.**

The Army is wrong to oppose this program because of the need to fulfill U.S.-allied expeditionary force protection requirements against missiles and aircraft. The program should be sustained, but it may need to be transferred from the Army to the MDA. Such a transfer would be regrettable because the better approach is to continue shifting programs from the research-focused MDA to the more operations-focused services. If needed, Congress should accept the proposed transfer of authority, but the better approach is to encourage the Army to drop its opposition and to continue the program under its auspices.

## Conclusion

In 2009, the Obama Administration set back the missile defense program by cutting the funding for the program and by terminating or curtailing certain elements of it. It has repeated that approach in its proposal for FY 2011 and beyond. The question for Congress is whether the Obama Administration's BMDRR and proposed FY 2011 missile defense budget signal a permanent course change on missile defense or only a momentary pause before the Administration resumes its effort to weaken the missile defense program.

There may be no direct answer to this question because the Obama Administration may be divided internally on this matter. This makes it even more important for Congress to state unequivocally that it supports a robust missile defense program to protect the American people, U.S. forces in the field, and U.S. friends and allies. The United States needs to address the unique security challenges posed by the post-Cold War world, and a robust missile defense program is essential to meeting these challenges effectively. Congress can make sure the Obama Administration makes the right decision on missile defense.

—Baker Spring is F. M. Kirby Research Fellow in National Security Policy in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, a division of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies, at The Heritage Foundation.