

WebMemo



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Ballistic Missile Defense: The Heritage Foundation Recommendations

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Since President Obama took office, the White House has systematically undercut comprehensive missile defense and thereby placed the U.S. homeland at greater risk. On February 1, the Administration released its Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report. The report indicates that it will continue to pursue a less-than-robust effort to protect the American homeland against long-range missile strikes. As Iran has again launched a space rocket, which has much in common with long-range missiles, the U.S. is likely to be at greater risk in the future.

The following Heritage Foundation research outlines the threats associated with the Administration's current approach to missile defense while offering policy recommendations that would protect the U.S. and its allies from missiles tipped with nuclear weapons.

Moving Forward with Ballistic Missile Defense: A Memo to President-elect Obama

Special Report No. 26

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/sr0026.cfm>

In order to fulfill his fundamental commitment to protect and defend the people, territory, institutions, and infrastructure of the U.S. and its allies, President Obama will need to propose a defense program that includes a dedicated and robust ballistic missile defense enterprise. Such an enterprise should include the following elements:

- A commitment to spend between 2 percent and 3 percent of the defense budget on ballistic missile defense;
- A consistent program of development and testing;
- A layered missile defense concept;
- A plan to expand the role of the services in ballistic missile defense;
- The development and fielding of space-based elements;
- A program for cooperation with U.S. allies; and
- Recognition that ballistic missile defense has been the least developed component of the forces necessary to protect and defend the U.S. and its allies.

Successful Missile Defense Test Shows Technology Not “Unproven”

WebMemo No. 2161

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2161.cfm>

President Obama has stated that fielded missile defense systems technology must first be proven; the Missile Defense Agency's (MDA) ballistic missile

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2800.cfm

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defense test regime is meeting that challenge. The MDA's technology—kinetic-energy kill vehicles—is being used in an array of interceptors and has been tested on numerous occasions with a 75 percent success rate.

President Obama should acknowledge the continuing progress on kinetic-energy missile defense technology and continue to invest in and field the missile defense interceptors that incorporate this technology.

North Korea's Missile Gambit

WebMemo No. 2295

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/wm2295.cfm>

In order to send a clear message to Pyongyang, America's Asian allies, and the rest of the world that a nuclear North Korea will not be tolerated, the U.S. must take several steps, including emphasizing that North Korea's missile threat demonstrates the continuing need for the U.S., Japan, and South Korea to develop and deploy missile defense systems.

It is ironic that President Obama's Secretary of Defense has suggested using missile defenses that Obama would likely not have funded had he been in office during their development.

Moving Forward on Missile Defense

Special Report No. 58

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/sr0058.cfm>

Supporters of a robust missile defense need to take seven specific steps:

1. Try to restore overall funding to the missile defense program, including for additional interceptors in Alaska, California, and Europe;
2. Retain the Multiple Kill Vehicle program;
3. Preserve the Airborne Laser program;
4. Field a system to protect U.S. coastal areas from sea-launched shorter-range missiles;
5. Advance the Obama Administration's proposal for strengthened sea-based missile defenses by

moving funding and management authority for these systems from the MDA to the Navy;

6. Continue boost-phase missile defense programs by focusing on developing and fielding interceptors derived from modified air-to-air missiles; and
7. Refute the charge that space-based missile defense will "weaponize" space.

What Americans Need to Know About Missile Defense: We're Not There Yet

WebMemo No. 2512

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2512.cfm>

In 33 minutes or less, life as we know it in America could end. That is how long it would take for an enemy ballistic missile launched from the other side of the world to hit the U.S. In order to combat this threat, Americans need to understand what defenses the nation has and what it still needs. This memo provides several basic answers to questions about missile defense such as:

- Doesn't the U.S. already have all the missile defenses we need?
- Is the U.S. really at risk of missile attack?
- What missile defenses does the U.S. still need?
- Do missile defenses really work?
- Isn't the cost of missile defense prohibitive?
- Won't the U.S. start a new arms race by insisting on missile defenses?

Obama Missile Defense Proposal: Numbers Matter

WebMemo No. 2590

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/wm2590.cfm>

The U.S. missile defense program needs to catch up to the evolving rogue state missile threat. This requires:

- Improving missile defense technology that was severely hampered for roughly 30 years by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with the former Soviet Union; and

- Including a certain number of missile defense interceptors and supporting systems.

Alaska's Strategic Role in the Defense of the United States and the Vital Role of Missile Defense

Lecture No. 1133

The Honorable Mark Begich

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/hl1133.cfm>

Alaska is sixth among all states and territories in volume of personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and is a very important component in America's missile defense system, which overall is 90 percent accurate because of robust testing and better technology. In addition, energy independence is critical if we are to have more flexibility both in our national defense and in dealing with international affairs.

President Obama Must Not Surrender to Russia on Missile Defense

WebMemo No. 2603

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2603.cfm>

By abandoning the "third site" missile defense, the Obama Administration surrendered key American strategic influence and betrayed two of its closest friends in the region.

Obama Administration's New Missile Defense Plan Is a Losing Proposition

WebMemo No. 2620

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2620.cfm>

The Obama Administration's decision to renege on a long-standing agreement with America's allies and formally abandon the "third site" missile defense plan runs contrary to U.S. strategic interests and will undermine security commitments to America's allies. As a result, Congress should:

- Be very skeptical of the President's plan to abandon the third site and demand access to all updated intelligence; and

- Insist that the U.S. not give away one capability (long-range) at the expense of another (short- and medium-range).

White House Fact Sheet on Missile Defense Raises More Questions Than It Answers

WebMemo No. 2621

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2621.cfm>

On September 17, President Obama announced that the U.S. would not honor its commitment to field missile defense interceptors in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic. At the same time, he announced that the U.S. would pursue a new "phased, adaptive approach" for missile defense to provide protection to U.S. territory and America's friends and allies in Europe.

The White House accompanied the President's announcement with a fact sheet describing this alternative approach. The fact sheet makes assertions that, at a minimum, are difficult to validate.

Congress should not let the Obama Administration go unchallenged regarding this matter.

Two Plus Two Equals Five: The Obama Administration's Missile Defense Plans Do Not Add Up

WebMemo No. 2624

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/wm2624.cfm>

The Obama Administration's announced program for shifting to sea-based and SM-3 technology suffers from three serious flaws:

1. The Administration's "new" threat assessment is questionable;
2. The program makes no specific, sustained investment to exploit the full range of sea-based and SM-3 technology; and
3. The plan sets up a false choice between long- and short-range defenses in terms of sequencing when the U.S. needs to field defenses against both short-range and long-range missiles immediately.

Congress should be skeptical of the Administration's new plan and demand protection against all missile threats as soon as the technology permits.

Missile Defense and the Defense of Freedom

Lecture No. 1135

The Honorable Jim DeMint

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/BallisticMissileDefense/hl1135.cfm>

In any situation, the friend of freedom is the friend of the U.S., but the current Administration does not seem to abide by this rule or the moral and strategic clarity it demands. President Obama and his foreign policy team seem uninterested in the true nature of American leadership in the world, preferring to bargain away U.S. and European security to obtain Russian help with Iran.

Endangering America and Our Allies: Obama's Missile Defense Plans Don't Add Up

Fact Sheet No. 39

<http://www.heritage.org/Press/FactSheet/fs0039.cfm>

President Obama's decision to abandon plans for basing elements of the U.S. global missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic is entirely political—designed to appease Russia—but it will leave the U.S. more vulnerable to the threat of ballistic missile attack.

This fact sheet reviews the President's decision and proposes a better solution: fully fund missile defense.

Bomb or Surrender: Not America's Only Options Regarding Iran

WebMemo No. 2677

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Iran/wm2677.cfm>

A long-range strategy to counter the possible emergence of a nuclear Iran is in the national security interest of the U.S. According to press reports, the Obama Administration is working on such a “protect and defend” strategy. In order to uphold the nonproliferation regime, this protect-and-defend strategy must include offensive strike options, defensive systems—including ballistic missile defenses—and diplomatic initiatives. Specifically, the strategy should:

- Modernize strike weapons;
- Create a layered missile defense shield;
- Uphold the principle of non-proliferation; and
- Send the message that the U.S. and its allies are fully prepared to defend themselves and, if necessary, inflict severe damage on Iran.

It Is Not Too Late. It is not too late to correct the mistakes of the past year. By following the policy recommendations outlined above, the White House and Congress could reverse its current approach to missile defense and adopt a policy that protects America and its allies from nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.