

LECTURE

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The U.S. Missile Defense Program: An Opportunity for Canadian International Leadership

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Abstract

Security linkages between Canada and the United States have resulted in some of the most successful security cooperation in the history of the two nations. The Canadian government supports NATO's missile defense efforts. It therefore seems logical that it should wish to participate in U.S. long-range missile defense. Through such participation, Canada would gain the advantages of (1) defending its citizens and territory from a ballistic missile attack, (2) demonstrating its commitment to NATO's missile defense efforts, (3) having a voice in U.S. missile defense decisions, (4) increasing its security in an era of declining budgets, and (5) reducing its vulnerability to a ballistic missile attack.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the vitally important subject of the importance of ballistic missile defense in the current security environment and on the benefits of ballistic missile defense cooperation between Canada and the United States. I would like to concentrate on the key issues that, in my judgment, the Canadian government should consider with respect to its missile defense cooperation with the United States.

First, the threat of ballistic missiles is real and growing, and capabilities to significantly damage Canadian interests are proliferating throughout the world.

Second, the U.S. missile defense program has matured and advanced to the point where it can protect both U.S. and Canadian interests.

Third, there are significant benefits to be derived from Canadian participation in the U.S. missile defense program.

KEY POINTS

- The threat of ballistic missiles is real and growing, and capabilities to inflict significant damage on U.S. and Canadian interests are proliferating.
- The vulnerability of the U.S. and its allies to a ballistic missile attack is one of the reasons why other nations have pursued ballistic missile programs. These countries would have less of an incentive to bear the massive costs of their programs if their targeted victims had effective defenses in place.
- The U.S. missile defense program has matured and advanced to the point where it can protect both U.S. and Canadian interests.
- There are significant benefits to be derived from Canadian participation in the U.S. missile defense program.
- It is therefore in Canada's best interest to initiate discussions about its participation in the U.S. long-range missile defense program.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/hl1246>

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Ballistic Missile Threat Is Real and Growing

Today, brutal regimes in North Korea and Iran have developed or are close to acquiring ballistic missiles tipped with nuclear warheads. Through mutual cooperation, they continually advance their capabilities and transfer them to others who are hostile to our interests.

In March of 2014, General Charles H. Jacoby Jr., Commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command, warned that “tangible evidence of North Korean and Iranian ambitions confirms that a limited ballistic missile threat to the homeland has matured from a theoretical to a practical consideration.”¹ Proliferation of nuclear and missile technology has resulted in increasing threats from North Korea, Iran, and terrorist groups.

North Korea conducted three nuclear tests, in 2006, 2009, and 2013.² In 2013, the Defense Intelligence Agency assessed “with moderate confidence [that] the North currently has nuclear weapons capable of delivery by ballistic missiles.”³ Currently, North Korea possesses a diverse ballistic missile arsenal, including rail-based intercontinental-range ballistic missiles.⁴ It also threatened to use nuclear weapons against the United States last year.

Iran has repeatedly called for the destruction of America and calls it the Great Satan. In 2010, the Department of Defense estimated that Iran could

have the ballistic missile capability to hit the U.S. by 2015 and that “Iran’s nuclear program and its willingness to keep open the possibility of developing nuclear weapons is a central part of its deterrent strategy.”⁵

In June 2013, it was reported that “Iran claims to have developed five liquid-propellant ballistic missiles...and the solid-propellant Sejil missile.”⁶ Recently, an Iranian military official threatened U.S. naval forces, saying “their [U.S.] warships will be sunk with 5,000 crews and forces in combat against Iran and how they should find its hulk in the depths of the sea.”⁷

While likely exaggerated, these threats still signify the Iranian and North Korean intent to damage the United States.

One of the most attractive asymmetric options for an attack is to detonate a nuclear weapon at a high altitude. The resulting electromagnetic pulse (EMP) would damage Canadian and U.S. electrical grids. It would “have a high likelihood of damaging electrical power systems, electronics, and information systems upon which American society depends.”⁸ An EMP attack or a successful nuclear weapons attack could result in the deaths of millions of Americans and Canadians.⁹ The shock effect on our economies would be massive.

Russia and China, while not considered U.S. adversaries at this time, have extensive ballistic missile and nuclear weapons modernization programs of their own. Mark Schneider, Senior Analyst

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1. News release, “NORAD, USNORTHCOM Stand Ready to Defend Nation, Commander Says,” North American Aerospace Defense Command, March 13, 2014, <http://www.norad.mil/Newsroom/tabid/3170/Article/8294/norad-usnorthcom-stand-ready-to-defend-nation-commander-says.aspx> (accessed April 9, 2014).
 2. Ibid.
 3. Luis Martnez, “North Korea Can Put a Nuke on a Missile, U.S. Intelligence Agency Believes,” ABC News, April 11, 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/north-korea-put-nuke-missile-us-intelligence-agency/story?id=18935588> (accessed April 16, 2014).
 4. National Air and Space Intelligence Center, “Ballistic & Cruise Missile Threat,” July 2013, <http://www.afisr.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-130710-054.pdf> (accessed April 14, 2014).
 5. John J. Kruzal, “Report to Congress Outlines Iranian Threats,” U.S. Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service, April 20, 2010, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=58833> (accessed April 14, 2014).
 6. Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Iran: Missile,” updated July, 2013, <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/iran/delivery-systems/> (accessed April 9, 2014).
 7. Cheryl K. Chumley, “Iran Ratchets Threats: ‘U.S. ‘Can Sense...How Their Warships Will Be Sunk,’” *The Washington Times*, February 10, 2014, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/feb/10/iran-ratchets-threats-us-can-sense-how-their-warsh/> (accessed April 9, 2014).
 8. *Report of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack, Volume 1: Executive Report 2004*, http://www.empcommission.org/docs/empc_exec_rpt.pdf (accessed April 14, 2014).
 9. James Jay Carafano, Baker Spring, and Richard Weitz, “Before the Lights Go Out: A Survey of EMP Preparedness Reveals Significant Shortfalls,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2596, August 15, 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/08/before-the-lights-go-out-a-survey-of-emp-preparedness-reveals-significant-shortfalls> (accessed April 14, 2014).

at the National Institute for Public Policy and one of the foremost experts on Russia's military modernization, stated in 2011 that Russia is modernizing every leg of its strategic triad and has made about 15 nuclear targeting threats and preemptive nuclear attack threats since 2007.¹⁰ Richard D. Fisher, Jr., Senior Fellow, International Assessment and Strategy Center, stated that assessing the People's Liberation Army's future strategic nuclear capabilities is "one of the most vexing challenges to the security of the United States" because of China's opacity regarding its nuclear weapons plans.¹¹ Indeed, the security of our two nations is intertwined.

Please allow me now to address some of the most common misconceptions regarding U.S. missile defense programs. This is essential for an informed discussion regarding missile defense programs and their proper role in a nation's strategic posture.

U.S. Missile Defense Program Has Matured

In the past 13 years, a variety of U.S. missile defense programs have achieved operational status and have acquired a proven track record. The Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system, currently the bedrock of U.S. long-range missile defense, has achieved eight out of 16 intercepts to date. Currently, whether an interceptor achieved an intercept is the only metric by which to judge whether a system failed its test. Yet sometimes we learn more from a failed test than from a successful one. We need to judge whether a test advanced a ballistic missile technology. We should push the testing envelope and even increase the chances of failure during the test if it gets us to a better missile defense system faster.

The Aegis sea-based missile defense system has achieved 28 intercepts in 34 at-sea attempts. This system is the cornerstone of the European Phased Adaptive Approach, the NATO Alliance's plan to defend its territory and populations from a ballistic missile threat.

All U.S. missile defense interceptors are kinetic hit-to-kill interceptors. This means they use the sheer force of impact to destroy incoming missiles. There are no nuclear components to U.S. missile defense systems.

An electromagnetic pulse or a successful nuclear weapons attack could result in the deaths of millions of Americans and Canadians. The shock effect on our economies would be massive.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has adopted ballistic missile defense as a core Alliance competency. The 2010 Strategic Concept states that the Alliance will "develop the capability to defend our populations and territories against ballistic missile attack as a core element of our collective defence, which contributes to the indivisible security of the Alliance."¹² During the 2012 Chicago summit, NATO declared an interim operational capability to defend itself against ballistic missile attacks.

Recently, Poland and Romania have agreed to host Aegis Ashore missile defense sites. Turkey hosts an AN/TPY forward-deployed radar. Spain is currently hosting U.S. Aegis missile defense-capable ships. Germany and Denmark are considering upgrading their ships' missile defense role. The Dutch Navy is modifying ship radars to track ballistic missile targets. Spain, Norway, and the United Kingdom have also expressed interest in ship upgrades. Denmark and the United Kingdom host Upgraded Early Warning Radars.

While Canada endorses and supports NATO's missile defense policy, it does not participate in U.S. long-range missile defense. In 2004, Canada agreed to allow NORAD to share global missile surveillance and warning information with other commands respon-

10. Hearing, *Nuclear Weapons Modernization in Russia and China: Understanding Impacts to the United States*, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, October 14, 2011, http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/hearings-display?ContentRecord_id=798a4a17-2a63-45b7-ae79-4629c32dfdd7 (accessed April 14, 2014).

11. Ibid.

12. NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, November 20, 2010, http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat_Concept_web_en.pdf (accessed April 10, 2014).

sible for missile defense of North America. Currently, however, there is no legal framework or agreement that would allow U.S. long-range missile defense forces to intercept ballistic missiles headed for Canadian cities such as Ottawa, Toronto, or Quebec. Internationally, Canada is viewed as a major ally of the United States. Canada's vulnerability might be exploited by bad actors seeking to damage Western alliances.

Currently, there is no legal framework or agreement that would allow U.S. long-range missile defense forces to intercept ballistic missiles headed for Canadian cities such as Ottawa, Toronto, or Quebec.

Moreover, countries acquire weapons because they see it as being in their own interest. For almost four decades, under the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction, the United States believed it was in its interest to remain vulnerable to a ballistic missile attack. Yet the numbers of U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons soared. Ballistic missile defense programs are not destabilizing or causing ballistic missile buildups. Two major nuclear arms control agreements, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Moscow Treaty, were concluded while the United States pursued a very robust missile defense effort, including research and development and (in the latter case) deployment.

The vulnerability of the U.S. and its allies to a ballistic missile attack is one of the reasons why other nations have pursued ballistic missile programs. These countries would have less of an incentive to bear the massive costs and international condemnation associated with their programs if their targeted victims had effective defenses in place.

It is also worth noting that China and Russia are developing and advancing their own ballistic missile defense capabilities. Indeed, Russia is planning on spending \$55.3 billion on aerospace defense between now and 2020.¹³ While the U.S. missile defense pro-

gram is often mistakenly considered "destabilizing," there is no such outcry regarding Russian and Chinese missile defense programs.

Let me also add that U.S. missile defense interceptors are both sea-based and ground-based. We do conduct intercepts in space, except for very short ranges, but those intercepts happen only after a missile warhead is en route to its victims. The two are by no means morally equivalent.

Unlike its potential adversaries and competitors, the United States has not been developing space-based weapons. China has been developing advanced counter-space capabilities, including their 2007 test that generated the worst debris from an anti-satellite test in space history.¹⁴ The U.S. and other advanced nations rely heavily on space in conducting their military operations, which is why adversaries are developing capabilities to threaten U.S. dominance in that domain.

In short, space is already weaponized, and U.S. ballistic missile defense capabilities will not change that fact.

Advantages of Missile Defense Cooperation to Canada

Canada and the United States have decided to link their national security interests. These linkages have resulted in some of the most successful security cooperation in the history of our two nations.

Currently, the Canadian government supports NATO's missile defense efforts. It therefore seems logical that the Canadian government should wish to participate in U.S. long-range missile defense. Such participation would have at least five tangible benefits for Canada.

First, Canada would gain the advantage of defending its citizens and territory from a ballistic missile attack. What is more important for sovereignty than the government's ability to protect its citizens? Ballistic missile threats are advancing and becoming more sophisticated. U.S. adversaries already see Canada as a strong supporter of the United States.

Second, Canada would gain the advantage of demonstrating its commitment to NATO's missile defense efforts. It would set an excellent example to

13. RIA Novosti, "Russia Plans \$55.3Bln Expenditure on Aerospace Defense by 2020," February 28, 2014, <http://en.ria.ru/news/20140228/187971313/Russia-Plans-553Bln-Expenditure-On-Aerospace-Defense-by-2020.html> (accessed April 10, 2014).

14. Dean Cheng, "China's Space Program: A Growing Factor in U.S. Security Planning," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2594, August 16, 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/08/chinas-space-program-a-growing-factor-in-us-security-planning>.

allies seeking to make decisions on their own missile defense capabilities. It would send a message to adversaries that the Canadian government is serious about protecting its citizens from a ballistic missile threat.

In an era of declining budgets, it is only logical to integrate defenses. Missile defense is an excellent example of NATO's pooling and sharing concept. Even relatively small contributions can make a large difference for all NATO members.

Third, Canada would gain the advantage of having a voice in U.S. missile defense decisions. This could, for example, ensure that Canadian cities are at the top of the priority list for missile defense intercepts.

Fourth, Canada would gain the advantage of increased security while lowering the costs of doing so. In an era of declining budgets, it is only logical to integrate defenses. Missile defense is an excellent example of NATO's pooling and sharing concept. Even relatively small contributions can make a large difference for all NATO members.

Fifth, Canada would gain the advantage of reducing its vulnerability to a ballistic missile attack. This

vulnerability could be exploited by adversaries who possess ballistic missiles that can reach the Canadian homeland. While Iran and North Korea do not possess these capabilities yet, they want them and are willing to sacrifice significant amounts of resources, manpower, and reputation to obtain them. It is unlikely that they will stop pursuing their programs anytime soon.

I firmly believe it is in Canada's best interest to initiate discussions about its participation in the U.S. long-range missile defense program. The two governments will have to work out many technical, political, and financial issues. Initiating the discussion about these important issues would serve Canada's national interests.

I appreciate the committee's critical work on this issue and would urge the committee to include in its end-of-the-year report a positive endorsement of Canadian participation in the U.S. missile defense effort.

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