Europe and Missile Defense: Tactical Considerations, Fundamental Concerns

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In the few months since President George W. Bush's inauguration, administration officials and U.S. press reports have given the impression that European leaders have abandoned their oft-stated reservations about and objections to the U.S. development of missile defenses. The Europeans, it is claimed by administration spokesmen, are for the first time coming to understand the validity of the global missile threat and the fact that it affects Europe's soil as much, if not more, than America's. Moreover, it is suggested, President Bush's strong and clear commitment to missile defense—in contrast to President Bill Clinton's wishy-washy approach—has served as a "wake-up call" to Europe's leaders. According to the administration, not only have the Europeans become persuaded of the inevitability of an American deployment, but having now focused more seriously upon its benefits, they have also dropped most of their objections.

Some support for this claim of a turn-around in European thought can be found in the guarded statements some European leaders made during their first visits to President Bush. British Prime Minister Tony Blair, at the close of a two-day meeting at Camp David in late February, said he would "welcome a dialogue" on missile defense, and the accompanying joint U.S.-British communiqué noted the need to deter "new threats with a strategy that encompasses both offensive and defensive systems." When German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder visited the White House at the end of March, he chose to focus most of his discussion with the president on the Middle East, while indicating that he was reassured by Bush's promise of full consultations on missile defense. French President Jacques Chirac, an early and vocal skeptic of missile defense who consistently drew attention to the risk that abandoning the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty would spur an arms race, has toned down his rhetoric in recent months.

At the same time, in his meeting with Bush, Blair was careful to avoid a direct endorsement of missile defense. During a brief press conference in the Oval Office with Bush, Schroeder indicated that he still had a number of concerns regarding missile defense: What is the nature of the ballistic missile threat? Is a defense technologically feasible? Which nations would be covered by the shield? And although the French may have moderated their public opposition, Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine has stressed the American commitment to consult fully with the allies before moving ahead with missile defense.

The key question now is, are the European nations having an important change of heart, significantly reducing their past reservations about missile defense, or are they pulling their punches, having decided not to press their continued opposition at this time? The answer is complex and has a number of salient elements.

What European leaders have come to accept is that the new American president, being personally committed to missile defense and having placed it at the top of his defense policy platform during his election campaign, is now certain to proceed vigorously—for the Bush administration, the question is not "if" but "how and when." There is every expectation that the administration will propose the architecture of a missile defense plan before the end of the year, probably giving an early indication of its approach within the next months. In addition, many of the European allies have come to acknowledge that there is, in fact, a growing danger from missile proliferation and therefore
from weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, given Europe's geographic proximity to a number of "rogue" states, its vulnerability cannot be denied, even though until now European governments have been averse to talking about it too openly because of their reluctance to undertake their own missile defense programs. Finally, all European officials understand that ultimately the decision of the United States cannot but be a sovereign and national one, even though they would hope that considerations involving the Atlantic alliance as a whole be fully taken into account.

But the European leaders' recent desire to avoid confrontation with the Bush administration over missile defense is based primarily on tactical considerations and not on a significant shift in the fundamental concerns that they have about a shield. What the Europeans are saying now should not be taken as their final word on the issue.

**Tactical Considerations**

For the Europeans to respond to the Bush administration's plan for missile defense, there must first, of course, be the presentation of a plan that can be subjected to full and careful analysis in terms of their own interests. Therefore, any pronouncements emanating at this time from Europe are premature. Furthermore, the Europeans know well that the actual deployment of an American missile defense is still years away, probably a decade or more. In other words, it would certainly follow a first Bush administration. Since missile defense in one form or another has been the subject of controversy in the United States for more than 35 years, there is no telling what the policy of a future administration will be. Nor is it possible to foretell future technological developments, which will determine possible missile defense architectures.

In addition to these longer-term considerations, the present reluctance of the Europeans to avoid a confrontation with the new Bush administration is rooted in a number of more immediate, tactical concerns. Prime Minister Blair is facing an election, recently postponed from May to June because of the spread of foot-and-mouth disease. He does not want missile defense to become an election issue, nor does he want to open his government to domestic criticism for allowing a deterioration of the Anglo-American "special relationship," which is somewhat of a myth today but one that is still widely accepted in Britain. Conservative opposition leader William Hague has lambasted the Blair government for failing to wholeheartedly endorse the Bush missile defense approach. While British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has pointed out that there is no perception of danger in the United Kingdom that would warrant a missile defense and has spoken of the need to respect the ABM Treaty and not increase tensions with Russia through the deployment of missile defense, the Tory "shadow" defense minister, Iain Duncan Smith, has strongly criticized the Blair government for "mindlessly" opposing the idea from the sidelines rather than supporting the United States fully. In Whitehall, the Foreign Office is deeply skeptical of missile defense, but the Ministry of Defense wants to do what is necessary to avoid a row with the Americans.

Domestic political considerations have also played a role in Germany. Volker Ruehe, former Conservative Democratic Union (CDU) minister of defense, and Friedbert Pflueger, chair of the CDU National Committee for Foreign and Security Policies, have criticized the government for not understanding America's need for missile defense and have called for a supportive European policy. However, the dominant view among political elites, including Karl Lamers, foreign policy leader of the CDU Parliamentary Group, is still one of widespread skepticism. Schroeder clearly wishes to avoid opening a debate on nuclear weapons, given the searing and destructive nature of past German nuclear controversies over such issues as intermediate-range nuclear forces, which led to the collapse of Helmut Schmidt's coalition government in 1982 and 16 years out of power for the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Such a debate, close to the 2002 national election, could tear apart both the SPD-Green coalition and the SPD itself. Accordingly, Schroeder has tempered his past criticisms and recently spoken of the need for a NATO-wide approach to missile defense, noting that Germany has an economic interest in not being excluded from European participation in such an endeavor.

With neither London nor Berlin ready to go to battle with Washington at this time, French leaders are
momentarily lying low, observing that they are waiting for the explication of the American plan and the promised intensive consultations.

Beyond domestic political considerations, there are a number of other issues at stake in the transatlantic relationship that are of more immediate concern for the Europeans. During his meeting with Bush, Blair extracted a statement of support for a European rapid reaction force under the auspices of the European Union (EU), while muting his criticism of missile defense. Having been one of the two founders of this new military force, Blair was pleased that the many reservations of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and to a lesser extent Secretary of State Colin Powell, which were based on the fear of its duplicating NATO without adding new capabilities, had been overcome. As the Europeans seek to make progress toward a new European Security and Defense Identity, they must overcome the innate reservations that exist in Washington over a venture that many American officials fear would dilute the American influence in Europe. It is already clear that in the run-up to next year's Prague NATO summit, which will take up the further enlargement of NATO, there could well be strong differences between most European nations and the Bush administration over which countries to admit next into NATO and when. There is, for example, much less support in Europe for bringing one or more of the Baltic nations into NATO at this time than there appears to be within the Bush administration.

The U.S. troop level in Kosovo and Bosnia could also clearly become a major bone of contention, should the United States make unilateral withdrawals, as some Bush appointees proposed during the election campaign. And there are significant divergences between the majority of European governments and the Bush administration on other critical issues such as policy toward Russia, policy toward rogue states, the Kyoto convention, and trade matters. Given that the transatlantic highway will need to support an unusually large number of policy discussions and likely controversies over the next years, most of which have a far shorter time fuse than missile defense and are far more relevant to immediate European interests, there is currently little incentive for an early confrontation over missile defense.

The Europeans are clearly pulling their punches for a number of tactical reasons. But the fundamental divergences over missile defense have not disappeared. The Bush administration should take heed not to engage in the self-delusion that it has succeeded in persuading its allies to the cause of missile defense. Public debate in Europe on missile defense has not been widespread, and the issue is only now being given greater attention by the media and the political elite. Most of the discussion has taken place in the three states that have a community of commentators and experts on strategic affairs: Britain, France, and Germany. In these nations, the political elite and media are now giving missile defense more and more attention and, as noted previously, in two of these, there are the stirrings of partisan political debate over the issue.

The Europeans are interested in discussions with Washington aimed toward exploring the content of an allied missile defense, including the nature and level of direct European participation. They acknowledge the long-term dangers of missile proliferation. But there are a host of questions that remain to be answered and issues to be resolved. From the European perspective, the United States has yet to make a convincing, much less compelling, case for a missile defense that is technologically feasible and politically viable in the international context.

**Fundamental Concerns**

Even as European leaders have sought to avoid a confrontation with the United States, their questions and anxieties have increased since the election of President Bush and the certitude that missile defense will be vigorously pursued. This reflects major divergences on a number of critical dimensions of the issue.

**Threat Assessments and Strategic Cultures**

Most Europeans who examine the issue question the core of the American rationale for missile
defense, which is based on the assessment that there is a serious danger from a small number of rogue states that are developing, or could in time acquire, ballistic missiles and that these states are not susceptible to the deterrence which has worked effectively for the past decades. North Korea, Iran, and Iraq are commonly cited, although Libya could be added. Europeans argue that North Korea's motivations for devoting scarce resources to ballistic missiles are explainable to a significant extent as an attempt to gain bargaining leverage in its search for economic assistance and international legitimacy. Missile defense is seen as a disproportionate response to a "famine-ridden Asian backwater with a yearly GDP representing one month's worth of WalMart sales," in the opinion of French strategist Francois Heisbourg. When President Bush recently put the missile talks with Pyongyang on hold, ostensibly because of verification concerns, the alarmed European Union immediately filled the breach by announcing that it would send a high-level delegation to the Korean Peninsula for talks to include the missile issue. The right approach toward Iran, it is argued, is to encourage the reformist forces led by President Mohammad Khatami that are now striving to democratize the nation, rather than to treat it as an international pariah. And the best way to limit the missile program in Iraq is to keep Saddam Hussein's regime constrained through sanctions focused on his military programs.

Publics in Europe have yet to follow the missile defense issue very closely, with less than half in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy even having heard of it as of 2000, although this could change as the transatlantic debate proceeds. There is hardly any public sense of a ballistic missile threat either from North Korea or from Middle Eastern rogues—even though, as measured by trajectory distances, a threat from Iran or Iraq is more immediately relevant to Europe than to the United States. Indeed, polls indicate that the French public sees the two overriding foreign threats as Islamic fundamentalism and international terrorism. Sir Timothy Garden, former British assistant chief of air staff, notes, "In Europe we don't feel this sense of foreboding and threat which seems to underlie all discussions of NMD in the United States. We feel we are now safer than we can remember in anybody's lifetime. Having lived with the imminent possibility of ballistic missile attack for some 40 years, we now find it refreshing that we have to cast around on the off chance that we might find some small state somewhere that sometime might, for reasons that we can't understand, send missiles toward us."

Governments, however, have begun listening more seriously to Washington's arguments. In late 1999, the United States briefed European governments about its estimate of the coming ballistic missile threat, and this form of consultation is certain to be renewed and deepened as the Bush plan for missile defense is unveiled. European defense ministries, in particular, acknowledge a theoretical threat, although their timeline for its possible appearance is longer than that of the American intelligence community. But there remains the critical question of whether the planned American response to the threat will not be disproportionate to the threat itself. And what if, Europeans ask, North Korea is persuaded to end its program in return for economic benefits, Iran becomes a democratic and benign nation, and Saddam Hussein's regime comes to an end?

Underlying the varying American and European perspectives are differing strategic cultures. The dominant American way of making threat assessments is to focus on actual or prospective military capabilities, while the Europeans are far more likely to value the estimate of political intentions. Americans look for the military means that a rogue state might use in a crisis or in a situation ripe for blackmail, while Europeans pay more attention to the overall political context. Thus, in fashioning a response, Americans are more prone to use hardware and technological solutions, such as missile defense, while Europeans are more attracted to intellectual software to guide them toward a political solution. A report by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British House of Commons noted its concern that the "USA over-emphasizes the capability component of the threat equation, when it comes to assessing the extent of the threat it faces, and attaches too little importance to intention."

Another difference in strategic culture is due to contrasting acceptances of vulnerability. Europeans have had centuries of armed conflicts with their neighbors and numerous invasions of their soil. Consequently, their historical experience has taught them to live with vulnerability and uncertainty. Magical solutions, such as the Maginot Line, have been discredited. Historical realism reigns paramount. In contrast, American soil has been inviolate with the exception of the War of 1812. Although the now-popular term "homeland defense" implicitly suggests that absolute security is achievable, many Americans do not fully recognize that the United States has been vulnerable to
missile attack for decades. Technological optimism pervades society. A presidential initiative for a defensive shield of 50 states may therefore be politically attractive despite the costs and uncertainties involved.

**Arms Control and the ABM Treaty**

The Europeans fear that, should missile defense lead the United States to withdraw unilaterally from the ABM Treaty, the result would be a major breakdown in the structure of strategic arms control, which has been painstakingly built over almost four decades. Although not a party to the treaty themselves, the Europeans remain firmly of the view that it is the dominance of offensive weapons and the resulting deterrence that has kept the peace. They do not agree with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's characterization of the ABM Treaty as "ancient history." Rather, they see it as being the bedrock of the overall arms control regime for dealing with nuclear weapons, as much now as in past decades. President Bush's reported instruction to his principal aides to think beyond the constraints of the treaty in coming up with a missile defense plan and to design the system they think the United States needs regardless of the treaty's provisions is worrisome to those Europeans who are aware of it. And the movement of the United States away from supporting arms control agreements, such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or the Ottawa treaty on landmines, is viewed as a troubling departure from multilateral cooperation for international security.

An American agreement with Russia to modify the treaty so as to permit a limited missile defense would alleviate many of Europe's concerns. The Europeans would welcome a parallel understanding that led to deep reductions in Russian and American offensive forces—preferably even below proposed START III levels—through either a negotiated agreement or mutually agreed upon unilateral steps similar to the Bush-Gorbachev reciprocal declarations of 1991 concerning tactical nuclear weapons. This could lead to a new mix of offensive and defensive strategic capabilities that still preserved deterrence. But such measures, in the Europeans' view, should be in place before the United States proceeds with missile defense. One concern is that, in a rush to begin building an X-band radar in Alaska this year or next (in order to have a system completed by 2005 or 2006, when intelligence estimates say North Korea might have an ICBM), the United States may violate the treaty or, worse still, that the Bush administration might withdraw from it.

Should the United States move ahead unilaterally with missile defense without an agreement with Russia on revising the ABM Treaty, the Europeans fear that Moscow could respond by withdrawing from START II and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. This, some European experts believe, would reverse the trend of past decades and could lead to a renewal of the arms race. Europeans have also expressed concern about China, which has indicated that it would respond by greatly accelerating its strategic nuclear modernization program with the purpose of overcoming a limited American missile defense.

Ultimately, however, Europeans must focus primarily upon their continent and its security link to the United States. Many European strategists see the dangers of a strategic "decoupling" of the United States from Europe, should there ever come a time when the United States is "protected" from even a limited missile attack and Europe is left "naked." This could undermine the implicit nuclear guarantee and the broader security relationship that has been the keystone of the Atlantic alliance for the past half-century. Were circumstances to arise whereby, in a crisis with a power thought to have a missile capability, there was a need for joint action, the vulnerability of Europe compared to a secure United States might lead to conflicting interests and objectives, ultimately vitiating a collective response. With the United States protected, might not a vulnerable Europe be subject to blackmail by a rogue state? (Of course, the argument can be reversed: might the United States not be more likely to respond if it is safe behind its missile shield?) For such reasons, the Bush administration's rhetorical shift away from a national missile defense has been well received, as has the stated intention to work with the Europeans toward constructing an allied missile defense.

The French and British have special worries related to their own nuclear forces. Although the deployment of a limited Russian missile defense beyond the present Galosh interceptors in the Moscow region, might not significantly degrade their current capabilities, the abrogation of the ABM Treaty and any resulting additional Russian missile defenses could pose a new situation, leading Paris and London to conclude that they must seek an upgrade of their missile forces. An additional
dilemma for the British arises out of a likely American request for an upgrade or replacement of the critical early-warning radar facilities at Fylingdales and the joint satellite communications links at Menwith Hill. The Blair government has sought to avoid a public debate on these upgrades because they could violate the ABM Treaty, and ultimately these radar facilities could become the targets of a state seeking to overwhelm a U.S. missile defense. It is acknowledged in London, however, that whatever reservations the British may harbor about missile defense, it would be extremely awkward for London not to cooperate given the historically close collaboration with the United States in both intelligence and nuclear matters.

Similarly, in Denmark there are concerns about upgrading the Thule radar facilities in Greenland. The prime minister of Greenland's Homerule government has spoken of the absolute necessity of maintaining the ABM Treaty if permission is to be given to upgrade the radar for missile defense.

**Policy Toward Russia**

With the arrival of the Bush administration, there has been a growing divergence between Europe and the United States on how to deal with Vladimir Putin's Russia. This divergence has already impacted the missile defense question and could affect the way issues related to the ABM Treaty are resolved. The initial inclination of the new team has been to downgrade the status of Russia as a world power in American foreign policy and to reverse the policy of engagement in the Russian economy and society that characterized the Clinton years. Money for cooperative nuclear threat reduction activities in Russia is being reduced, and there is talk of enlarging NATO to include some former Soviet states. Moscow's suggestion of an early summit meeting was rebuffed, and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld criticized Russia as "an active proliferator" for providing dangerous technologies to rogue states such as Iran.

The European nations, on the other hand, have sought to build a more cooperative relationship with Moscow. They feel the need to engage Russia on issues ranging from the Balkans to trade to the ABM Treaty. For his part, President Putin has shifted Moscow's attention toward Europe and has sought to strengthen political and economic ties between Europe and Russia. He has engaged in a more active round of bilateral meetings with European leaders than did Boris Yeltsin and was invited to join a European summit meeting in Stockholm. Javier Solana, now secretary-general of the Council of the European Union and former secretary-general of NATO, recently observed that the European Union is rapidly shaping a profound strategic partnership with Russia. The Europeans have indicated to Moscow that they will not allow Russia to drive a wedge between them and the United States. But, with the exception of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, today's governments in Western Europe are led by parties of the center-left that have yet to feel totally comfortable with the new, more "realist" Republican administration. They particularly do not support what they see as evidence of a new American unilateralism, ranging from the rejection of the CTBT to possible troop withdrawals in the Balkans to the U.S. attitude toward the Kyoto Protocol. They want to see the retention of an engaged Western security relationship with Russia.

Accordingly, the Europeans will pay very close attention to how the Bush administration deals with Russia concerning the ABM Treaty. As indicated above, serious negotiations that led either to an amended treaty or to a new treaty that permitted a limited level of missile defense would be well received, probably with a sigh of relief. President Bush's full review of the U.S. nuclear posture now underway is seen as a much needed step. An agreement with Moscow that developed a new mix of a lower level of offensive strategic and limited defensive forces could be the best possible outcome—provided, of course, that the overarching principle of nuclear deterrence was maintained.

Significantly, therefore, some European analysts view Russia as a potential part of the solution to the missile defense conundrum rather than as a contributor to the problem. Russia's recent public recognition that there is indeed a threat from missile proliferation and weapons of mass destruction is seen as a positive step forward. (Interestingly, Russia's own list of rogue-equivalents includes North Korea, Iraq, and Iran.) They welcome President Putin's initiatives in opening dialogue with North Korea and Iran, cognizant of the need to balance the possible benefits that might ensue against the risks and reality of Russian military assistance to these two countries.

In Europe's eyes, potentially the most important Russian initiative was begun when then-Russian
Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev presented NATO Secretary-General George Robertson on February 20 with a plan for the joint development of a theater missile defense (TMD). Criticized as being long on generalities and short on specifics, such as technical parameters and cost estimates, Moscow's proposal nevertheless could become the first step toward the development of a cooperative effort between Europe and Russia in defending against rogue states. Reportedly based on the mobile S-300 and the soon-to-be-completed S-400 (similar to the U.S. Patriot), which are intended as air defense systems, such a defense would be more effective against enemy aircraft than missiles. But because it would use interceptors designed only to counter non-strategic ballistic missiles, the system proposed by the Russians would fall within the limits allowed by the ABM Treaty and the 1997 demarcation agreements.

Thus far, the plan has brought little response from the West, and Russia is due to provide further exposition at a meeting of the Russian-NATO Permanent Joint Council in Brussels. Although there are American suspicions that the proposal is little more than a Russian plan to split the European missile defense doubters from the American proponents, there is little to be lost in commencing a dialogue on missile defense with the Russians, and there could be some value. The risks are negligible since Lord Robertson, Chancellor Schroeder, and other European leaders have made it crystal clear that, whatever their doubts about missile defense, they will not allow their countries to be split from the United States.

**Opportunity Costs**

As the Europeans contemplate missile defense, including their own potential participation in an eventual U.S.-European project, they must also recognize the opportunity costs that would be involved. These opportunity costs are both economic and political. For the United States, a national missile defense could be considered affordable. Initial outlays of $3 billion to $6 billion per year and subsequent growth suggest the cost might reach $100 billion over a decade or more, an arguably manageable amount in an annual defense budget of close to $350 billion. Given the strategic priority that the Bush administration has accorded missile defense, it would find this justifiable.

But Europe has a different set of priorities. A European theater missile defense program that cost as little as 25 percent of the U.S. total would put a very large crimp in national defense budgets. More importantly, as Europe coalesces under the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), it has other foreign and security policy priorities. Under the Helsinki goals adopted in December 1999, the members of the European Union are committed to fielding a rapid reaction force of 60,000 soldiers by 2003. Such a force, in order to have effective power projection, will require support systems that are currently not available, such as intelligence satellites, advanced command and communications systems, and adequate air transport and sealift capacities. Already, Europe supplies four times as many troops in Bosnia and Kosovo as does the United States. The European Union has undertaken primary responsibility for the reconstruction of the Balkans through the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. And the costs of enlarging the EU to include new members from central and eastern Europe over the next 10-20 years will be sizeable.

As it is, both ESDP and the Stability Pact have credibility problems due to lack of adequate funding. The United States, for its part, is urging the Europeans to spend more on defense at a time when their defense budgets are declining. Washington is making its full support for ESDP implicitly contingent on the funding of new military capabilities rather than the duplication of the existing NATO force structure. Moreover, the Europeans are being pressed by the United States through NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative, originated by former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, to acquire the high-tech weaponry needed for the modern battlefield. In addition, the Europeans are struggling with the difficulties of maintaining the high standards of the state-sponsored societal benefits to which they have grown accustomed in such matters as health, education, and pensions. For all these reasons, Europe's present foreign and domestic concerns are more focused on the more immediate problems of Europe, including the Balkans, EU enlargement, and their own societies, than they are on the hypothetical threat of ballistic missiles from distant states that may not be so hostile to them.
Toward an Allied Missile Defense

In part to pre-empt and respond to European concerns, Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld have frequently promised that, in addition to protecting the 50 states, the Bush missile defense plan will be designed to defend America's friends and allies, as well as U.S. troops deployed overseas. How this sweeping commitment, which on its face extends to Asian as well as European allies, will actually be carried out is an intriguing and important question. In dropping the word "national" before "missile defense" this March, Rumsfeld declared that he no longer thought in terms of "national" or "theater" systems and that the purpose of creating a unified approach is to avoid "significant differentials in vulnerabilities" between the United States and its allies.

The concept of an "allied missile defense," a phrase first used in the Bush campaign, is not totally novel. NATO has been working on developing a theater missile defense for several years. In time, this effort could be melded with the new plan for the missile defense of the United States, thereby creating an allied missile defense.\(^5\)

This coming June, NATO's Consultation, Command and Communications Agency will award two contracts of $13.5 million each for feasibility studies to design a future theater missile defense system for the alliance. According to Robert Bell, NATO assistant secretary-general for defense support and a former defense and arms control official on Clinton's National Security Council, this should put the alliance in position to make a well-informed decision in 2004 on the development of a program and could lead to initial deployments by approximately 2010.\(^6\)

As presently envisioned, NATO's TMD project will be a multilayered extension of its air defense system with the anti-missile element having two components: a lower-range package including the U.S. Patriot Advanced Capability-3 with some European contributions; and a higher-range package including the U.S. Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), which is scheduled to be deployed in 2007. Such a plan would replace the ill-fated MEADS (Medium Extended Air Defense System) program, the major multinational NATO air defense endeavor of the past decade, which has faced multiple problems and delays.

This new theater missile defense, it is important to note, will not be designed to defend against intercontinental ballistic missiles and will therefore not contravene the ABM Treaty. Rather, it is primarily intended to provide NATO with the ability to protect a corps-size deployment of troops and some limited, close-in territory. It will, nevertheless, give NATO the ability to interdict short-range missiles, such as Scuds, aimed at targets such as cities and ports. There is, therefore, the possibility of an eventual melding of a high-tech missile defense system built for the United States, if and when achieved, with a considerably more limited theater missile defense system built for Europe (or Asia). Whether this constitutes something called an allied missile defense, sufficient to avoid a perception of "decoupling," is an open question.

An allied missile defense that includes a major European TMD component produces a gleam in the eye of European defense industries. Such a project would undoubtedly become the largest transatlantic weapons collaboration of all time. Four sets of major American and European defense contractors have already teamed together. Although the resulting technology transfers would be two-way, the Europeans would certainly benefit the most. This helps account for some of the recent European reticence in criticizing American missile defense plans (e.g., Schroeder's mention of the possible benefits for German industry). French industry has also shown interest, even though the Quai d'Orsay has little good to say about missile defense. And even the Russians have shown an interest in participating in NATO's TMD program, pointing out the opportunities that exist in their own European-wide TMD proposal for technological collaboration.

Of course, there are problems with a potential collaborative effort. European defense planners harbor doubts regarding the extent to which the United States is ultimately prepared for a large amount of high-level technology transfers. And although they concede that there may be a political case for involving Moscow, they doubt that the Russians would be able to bring much scientific knowledge to the table. Another major issue is money. Given the ever-tightening constraints on European defense budgets and the opportunity costs listed earlier, the governments are likely to insist that, if the Americans want allied missile defense, then they should pay for it or at least...
provide financial assistance. But such an approach is not likely to find favor in a Washington that will be searching for the means to pay for the expensive missile defense of the United States and that has—perhaps wishfully—convinced itself that Europe's interests in its own missile defense are self-evident.

**Narrowing the U.S.-European Gap**

The gap between Europe and the United States on missile defense remains wide. Unlike most of the great transatlantic security debates of the past, such as the controversies over the multilateral nuclear force in the 1960s, the neutron bomb in the 1970s, intermediate-range nuclear forces in the 1980s, and NATO enlargement in the 1990s—all instances in which the Europeans (like the Americans) were split among themselves—the Europeans in today's missile defense debate are generally unified. The fissures are much deeper on the American side.

With a few exceptions, those Europeans who are engaged with the issue have yet to be persuaded that the United States has made a compelling case for missile defense. As we have seen, their skepticism is based upon fundamental considerations, such as the seriousness of the threat, the opportunity costs in relation to other European foreign and security policy priorities, the future of the ABM Treaty and international arms control, and the impact on relations with Russia and China. To this must be added doubts about the technological feasibility of missile defenses and the financial cost of their participation in an allied missile defense project.

The Europeans are calibrating their positions and their diplomacy fully cognizant of the fact that missile defense is a long-term issue. The required technology is not likely to be ready and deployable for a decade. Who knows what U.S. policy will be in 2010? Will there still be rogue states and, if so, which? What will be the true nature of the threat? Although ballistic missile proliferation cannot be discounted—and the Europeans have increasingly acknowledged the problems it presents—they are fully aware that it is only one dimension of the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Still more than the United States, protected by two large oceans, the Europeans are vulnerable to surreptitious entry of biological, chemical, and nuclear materials through their porous borders. For the Europeans, therefore, missile defense is seen as nothing more than a particular solution to a relatively narrow problem.

In addition, European leaders are deeply reluctant to take steps that could open a debate within their own countries about nuclear weapons. The divisive and ugly history of such controversies in Europe, such as the Ban the Bomb unilateral disarmament campaign in the late 1950s in Britain and the Pershing-2 deployment issue in Germany in the early 1980s, is not forgotten. Public support for the British and French nuclear forces has fallen, as has European support for and interest in defense programs in general. The conviction held by many Americans, that if the nation can be protected, it must be, simply does not resonate equally in Europe. European publics know no more about missile defense than the American public knows about the European rapid reaction force.

The Bush administration has promised the European governments close and complete consultations. But what does this mean? Too often in the past close consultations have been more readily proclaimed than performed. The traditional pattern has been to fight the Washington policy wars to the point of exhaustion, after which the results are explained to the allies with the admonition that it would be too difficult to reopen any major issues.

Allied missile defense will require a new approach to consultations if it is to be realized. A true partnership is called for, involving early and extensive consultations. The allies should participate in the decision-making, not just in subsequent decision-sharing. This means involvement in decisions regarding the missile defense architecture to be selected. A multilayered architecture that relies on boost-phase interceptors, for example, would have direct implications for, and could well be integrated with, a European theater missile defense. Similarly, the Europeans should be closely consulted on any renewed American approach to Russia regarding the ABM Treaty and discussions with China and Asian allies. European objections will be reduced and confidence enhanced to the
extent that European governments are listened to at an early stage. For the United States to manage this complex endeavor successfully, it will have to accept a deeper level of openness and cooperation with its allies than ever before. An excellent place to start would be President Bush's visit to NATO in June.

NOTES

5. President Bill Clinton, at the close of a U.S.-EU summit in March 2000 in Lisbon, en route to Moscow for a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, did indicate that he was willing to share the planned limited defense shield with U.S. allies and other "civilized nations," but his administration never developed this thought much further.

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