Nuclear Threat Reduction CAMPAIGN

A program of Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and The Justice Project

INCREASING U.S./NATO-RUSSIA THEATER MISSILE DEFENSE COOPERATION

I. The Issue

Beginning in the early 1960s and continuing through the U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in June 2002, the issue of missile defense has complicated U.S.-Russian relations. While tensions remain over missile defense systems capable of shielding either the entire United States or Russia, both countries have a common interest in developing defenses against shorter-range "theater" ballistic missiles. The current U.S./European cooperation on the Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS), a system capable of defeating tactical missiles, might serve as a model for broader cooperation between the U.S./NATO and Russia in this area.

A key U.S. interest is to protect forces deployed abroad as well as allies such as South Korea and Japan against such threats. Russia is interested in protecting its homeland against threats from neighbors with ballistic missiles. Through theater-level missile defense (TMD) cooperation, the United States and Russia have the opportunity to take meaningful steps to ensure that the development of missile defenses do not complicate the U.S.-Russian relationship in other crucial areas—such as the war on terrorism and securing Russia's nuclear weapons and materials.[1]

One of the most obvious signs of greater U.S.-Russia cooperation on theater missile defenses emerged during the May 2002 U.S.-Russia summit. At that time, Presidents Bush and Putin agreed in the "Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation" to "implement a number of steps aimed at strengthening confidence and increasing transparency in the area of missile defense, including the exchange of information on missile defense programs and tests in this area, reciprocal visits to observe missile defense tests, and observation aimed at familiarization with missile defense systems."[2]

The Joint Declaration also stated that two countries agree to "study possible areas for missile defense cooperation, including the expansion of joint exercises related to missile defense, and the exploration of potential programs for the joint research and development of missile defense technologies, …bearing in mind the importance of the mutual protection of classified information and the safeguarding of intellectual property rights. The United States and Russia will, within the framework of the NATO-Russia Council, explore opportunities for intensified practical cooperation on missile defense for Europe."[3]

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On September 20, 2002, discussions building upon the Joint Declaration were held in Washington. At that time, the U.S.-Russia Consultative Group for Strategic Security, chaired by the U.S. and Russian foreign and defense ministers, discussed the means of implementing the vision for greater cooperation on missile defenses outlined in the Bush-Putin agreement. According to press reports, the two sides "touched on the problem of transparency and possible cooperation in the field of anti-missile defence."[4] Highlighting the challenges to achieving such cooperation, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that, among other topics, the two sides "examined the problems of transparency in cooperation in missile defense."[5]

The current spirit of cooperation that exists between the United States and Russia provides Congress with the opportunity to join President Bush in working to establish a more cooperative U.S.-Russia strategic relationship in the area of missile defense. As Ambassador James Goodby, a proponent of increased U.S./NATO-Russia missile defense cooperation, recently argued, unless the United States promotes "missile defenses as a truly cooperative international program" and "show[s] the vision and patience necessary to carry on this enterprise over several administrations if need be, …another chapter will be added the history of failed ideas."[6]

II. Recent Legislation

- The "Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003" (H.R. 4546, which became Public Law 107-314):
    - Authorized $7.6 billion for ballistic missile defense, but also included a provision (section 1010) that allows the President to allocate $814.3 million of those funds for activities to combat terrorism instead of missile defense. The President is required to inform Congress of his choice.
    - Authorized $932 million for Theater High-Altitude Defense (THAAD)
    - Authorized $507 million (85 Patriots) for the Patriot PAC-3 Procurement.

III. Obstacles

- Some in the United States and Russia might be reluctant to take steps that implement the vision laid out by Presidents Bush and Putin in May 2002 to greatly accelerate U.S.-Russia missile defense cooperation.

- In Russia, there are still suspicions in some quarters that U.S. missile defenses might be used against the Russian nuclear deterrent.

IV. Q & A

Q: Doesn't the U.S. risk giving away vital secrets if we collaborate very closely with Russia on missile defense?
A: The U.S. government and U.S. industry have extensive experience in international cooperative programs and have developed sophisticated and effective mechanisms to protect both classified information and proprietary technologies. Based on years of experience, the U.S. has been able to structure cooperative programs with NATO, Japan, Israel, Taiwan and many other countries, including China. Each is handled on a case-by-case basis with the level of technology released carefully managed to protect national security. In addition, U.S. companies are well equipped to protect

their proprietary information and intellectual property. U.S. defense firms often cooperate with other U.S. and international companies and compete with the same companies on other programs. They are well versed in building "Chinese walls" between programs to prevent leakage. Now that Russia is no longer an enemy but is becoming a partner with the United States, technological cooperation can be carefully modulated to reflect this new status. In the area of theater missile defense, this cooperation is likely to start with system architecture studies and analyses—just as was done with NATO, Japan and Israel—before proceeding to hardware cooperation. The normal processes of State Department licenses, securing an appropriate multi-agency Exception to National Disclosure Policy (ENDP), and appropriate industrial teaming agreements will allow transfers that do not harm U.S. security interests.

Q: Won't technology cooperation be a one-way street? Does Russia have anything to offer?
A: Russia has extensive technology to offer. For example, the U.S. Air Force is evaluating Russian ejection seats that seem to be superior to current U.S. designs in low-altitude ejections. Lockheed is using Russian liquid fuel rocket engine technology in its new space launch vehicles. The Short Takeoff Vertical Landing (STOVL) variant of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) uses Russian technology for its rear moveable exhaust nozzle. Also, Russian expertise in aeronautics and missile technology has been well regarded since the days of the Soviet Union. Overall, there is a wealth of technology and expertise in Russia that could be brought to bear on the theater missile defense.

Q: How do we ensure that Russia does not use its cooperation with the U.S./NATO as a means of defeating a U.S./NATO missile defense system?
A: First, the cooperation will be focused on defeating tactical or theater ballistic missiles. The physics and flight dynamics of these systems are very different from those of intercontinental ballistic missiles as are the technologies involved in intercept and destruction. Technologies to be transferred in any tactical or theater defense cooperation program can be limited to those not applicable to the more difficult ballistic missile defense missions. And, as noted above, there are well-developed and effective government and company mechanisms to control the level of technology transfer.

Q: Doesn't the U.S. risk propping up the Russian defense industry by engaging with it in collaboration on TMD?
A: The amount of resources going to Russian defense industry is, as in the U.S., a function of perceived threats and domestic politics. A new strategic relationship and cooperation with the U.S./NATO on TMD systems may well reduce threat perceptions. Further, any system eventually developed will not be able to be sold to third parties without U.S. approval. But what is important here is the building of a new relationship with Russia and hence increasing U.S. national security. TMD cooperation is a small but important step in that process.

V. Talking Points

- By cooperating in the development of theater missile defenses the United States/NATO and Russia could address collectively a key security concern.

- Collaborating with Russia on such a key U.S. defense priority will signal to the Russians that the United States is genuinely interested in deepening U.S.-Russia cooperation in the post-ABM treaty era.

- Russia can contribute considerably to NATO efforts to build better theater missile defenses. For instance, Russia inherited an enviable record of rocket, aeronautical, and space exploration achievement from the Soviet Union. Russia continues to be a major player in commercial space activities, as well as the International Space Station. This expertise will benefit U.S. and NATO efforts to build theater-level defenses.

- By contributing to peaceful employment for former Soviet scientists and engineers, NATO/United States will help reduce the likelihood that such expertise will be utilized by states that wish NATO/United States harm.

VI. Factoids

- N/A.

VII. Applicable Treaties, Legislation, and Other International Agreements

- Joint Declaration on the New Strategic Relationship Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, May 24, 2002, accessed at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020524-2.html.

- NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality—Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation, May 28, 2002, accessed at: http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/b020528e.htm.

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[1] Amb. James E. Goodby has explored such cooperation in a number of articles, among them: Anatoli S. Diakov and James E. Goodby, "Mending Nuclear Fences," *IEEE Spectrum*, March 2000, V37, Number 3, accessed at: http://www.armscontrol.ru/start/publications/spectrum.htm and James E. Goodby, "The Diplomacy of Ballistic Missile Defense," *BMD in Context: Diplomacy, Deterrence and Defense, The Report of the Working Group on Ballistic Missile Defense*, The Eisenhower Institute, accessed at: http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/programs/globalpartnerships/missiledefense/Goodby.pdf.

[2] The White House, "Text of the Joint Declaration by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin on the New Strategic Relationship Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation," May 24, 2002, accessed at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020524-2.html.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Russia, USA Agree to Strengthen Strategic Partnership," *ITAR-TASS*, (supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring), Sep. 21, 2002.

[5] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Transcript of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov's Press Conference at U.S. National Press Club on September 20, 2002."

[6] James E. Goodby, "The Diplomacy of Ballistic Missile Defense," *op. cit.*