



Missile Defense Briefing Report: No. 324

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AN ISRAELI MISSILE SHIELD FOR EGYPT AND JORDAN?

The chaos in Syria, coupled with Iran's ongoing quest for increasingly robust missile capabilities, could nudge at least two regional states closer to Israel. That, at least, is what a senior U.S. defense official has suggested. According to Brigadier General John Shapland, the chief U.S. defense attaché in Israel, both Egypt and Jordan—the two Arab countries which have full peace treaties with Israel—should be protected by Israel's formidable missile defense umbrella. Israeli officials have demurred, declining to comment whether the Arrow II ballistic missile interceptor and Iron Dome short-range rocket interceptor could already provide coverage for Arab neighbors. However, Yair Ramati, the head of the Israel Missile Defense Organization, did not rule out the possibility, stating an openness to regional cooperation on missile defense issues. (*Jerusalem Post*, March 10, 2014)

U.S. NMD: FUNDING, BUT LITTLE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The FY 2015 defense budget includes funding for the Ground Based Interceptor (GBI) system that protects the U.S. homeland from long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles. However, enhancements to the only missile defense system designed exclusively for defense of the U.S. have been delayed as Congress debates whether to fund upgrades to the current GBI kill vehicle or to delay improvements while designs for a new "Common Kill Vehicle" are developed. (*The Hill*, March 12, 2014)

A HEMISPHERIC CRUISE MISSILE THREAT

There has long been a spirited debate on Capitol Hill regarding long-range missiles threats from North Korea and possibly Iran. But lawmakers are waking up to a more immediate concern much closer to home. In recent Congressional testimony, Gen. Charles Jacoby, the head of U.S. Northern Command, stated that recent missile defense exercises have highlighted that the U.S. homeland is vulnerable to sea-launched cruise missiles from the Gulf of Mexico. This deficiency is particularly concerning given that several countries with cruise missile capabilities are active in the region, and Iran has signaled plans to deploy warships near the U.S. border. (*Global Security Newswire*, March 21, 2014)

RUSSIAN ADVENTURISM CHANGES EUROPE'S DEFENSE CALCULUS

Russia's recent actions in Crimea have forced NATO and the European Union to reevaluate a number of key defense priorities. Estonia, for example, is now looking to increase troop strength by two brigades by 2018. Similarly, the creation of a joint battle group featuring troops from Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine—previously tabled by the respective governments—is now again being considered. And movement toward missile defense on the Continent has accelerated; European defense concern MBDA is now in contention to produce a missile defense capability for Poland consisting of the Aster or the joint Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS). The Polish procurement process has been drastically accelerated due to Russia's Crimean adventure, and new plans call for a decision on missile defense basing and capabilities to be made in a few weeks.

Moscow, meanwhile, is exerting less and less influence over these plans. Russia has long voiced concerns over NATO's proposals to provide missile defense to Europe, typically with significant political effect. But after the seizure of Crimea, Pentagon officials have announced that U.S. dialogue with Russia on missile defense has been suspended and no new Russian proposals for missile defense limitations will be considered. (*Defense News*, March 23, 2014; RIA Novosti, April 3, 2014)

PENTAGON ATTEMPTS TO ASSURE ASIAN ALLIES

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has announced that the U.S. will increase the number of Aegis class missile-defense ships in the Pacific over the next three years. The announcement, made during Hagel's meeting with Japanese counterpart Itsunori Onodera in Tokyo, will see two additional Aegis destroyers deployed to Japan by 2017. The move is intended as a strategic response to North Korea, which has exhibited a "pattern of provocative and destabilizing actions" in the Asia-Pacific, Hagel has said. (Bloomberg, April 6, 2014)