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Missile Defense Priorities: The View From Congress Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ)

Speech before the American Foreign Policy Council's
conference on "Missile Defenses and American Security"

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In a couple of weeks, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of President Reagan's speech inaugurating the missile defense program, which initiated a new era not just in our national defense policy but in the way that we philosophically approached the defense of the United States. Back then, he said, "I have become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence." He therefore proposed a defense against ballistic missiles to complement our policy of nuclear deterrence, which made particular sense in the case of an unintentional launch of such devastating weapons. And, of course, we now know that the inauguration of the missile defense concept was the beginning of the end of the Soviet empire.

Over the last 25 years, missile defense has had a lot of ups and downs. It frequently fell prey to the "study now, deploy never" or "study forever, deploy never" mantras that prevented it from being fully developed and deployed, particularly during the Clinton years. We finally, however, got to the point in 2006 that, when the North Koreans tested their "Taepodong 2" missile—the famous July 4th firecracker—which was followed by their detonation of a nuclear device in October of that year, we had in place an operational capability to be able to deal with that threat, had it really been pointed at us.

Over the years, we have gotten to a point where we can take some assurance from the fact that we now have an operational capability, and the groundwork for a much more robust global system: 24 ground based interceptors in California and Alaska; 17 Aegis ballistic missile defense warships capable of long range surveillance and tracking (10 of which are capable of missile intercepts); 21 Standard Missile 3 interceptors for the Aegis warships; an upgraded Cobra Dane radar; two upgraded early warning radars; a transportable X-band radar; a command and control battle management and communications capability that is unmatched, and; a sea-based X-band radar. And we recently confirmed the flexibility of this capability in the successful shoot-down of our malfunctioning satellite using a modified SM-3 missile from the USS Lake Erie.

But there is a lot more that needs to be done to develop a truly global system. Of course, a good example of the multinational defense capability is our cooperation with the Japanese. And we are within weeks of concluding agreements with the Czech Republic and Poland for the radar and ground based interceptor sites there.

We have these capabilities for what purpose? Because the world remains a very dangerous place. That is something that we have to constantly review, because here on Capitol Hill we have not persuaded those on the other side of the aisle of the nature of this threat sufficient to move forward with the program in the robust way that most of us would like.

Just four quick comments about the threat. One has to start with Iran, because it is the most fluid of the situations. The latest IAEA report confirms that the Iranian missile threat is real and growing. Of course, as you know, there's very little reason to create a long range missile to carry a conventional warhead. General Oßering was recently in Europe reminding the Europeans that within two to three years, Iranian missiles will be able to reach their capitals. And the annual threat assessment of the Director of National Intelligence sheds light on Iran's motives. He said, "Iran is also enhancing its ability to project its military power, primarily ballistic missiles and naval power, with the ultimate goal of dominating the Gulf region and deterring potential adversaries."

Second, North Korea. Our intelligence agencies remain confident that North Korea has nuclear weapons and continues to enhance its uranium enrichment capability. They assess that North Korea is nearly self sufficient in developing and producing ballistic missiles, which they are willing to provide to existing and likely new customers. As you know, some of these missiles are capable of reaching U.S. territory. North Korea's proliferation, its reported support for terrorist groups, and its capabilities are reasons that I remain very seriously concerned about the prospects for the Six Party Talks that are going on now.

Third, Russia. Some would say we should put Russia first, since it is the only nation in the world literally capable of incinerating the United States. And it is ever the bully, increasingly uncooperative in global affairs, especially when it comes to countries like Iran. It also has been developing new, highly capable missile technologies. The best example was last year's series of publicized missile launches, including that of the new multiple warhead ICBM, the RS 24, which is designed specifically to evade U.S. missile defense systems.

Finally, China. Many of you have read the 2008 edition of the Pentagon's annual report to Congress on the military power of the People's Republic of China. I am surprised that it didn't get more attention, particularly in light of the arms control community's fear and loathing of everything nuclear. For example, the report noted that the Chinese military has problems communicating with its increasingly mobile forces, including a limited capacity to communicate with submarines at sea. The report states that the People's Liberation Army has "no experience in managing a nuclear missile submarine fleet that performs strategic patrols." What's more, there is a finding that the Chinese Second Artillery Corps, its strategic nuclear missile forces, have what has been called a "control issue"—that's a nice euphemism—with mobile missile launchers, including "scenarios in which missile batteries lose communication links with higher echelons in other situations that would require commanders to choose alternative launch locations." This report raises very serious questions about the potential for an accidental or an unauthorized launch from a nation with a growing array of weapons, of ballistic missiles, and an ambitious program to modernize its nuclear weapons program.

Now, some try to minimize this threat by saying that the Chinese are only focusing on Taiwan. First of all, I would hope that that would be of concern to us; we can't exactly ignore a threat to one of our allies. But, second, it is clear that the Chinese ballistic missile program is focused on much more than Taiwan. China is developing, for example, the JL 2 missile, which will have a range of 7,200 kilometers—24 times what is needed to reach the other side of Taiwan—as well as the CSS 4 and DF 31A missiles, both of which can reach all of the United States of America. Why aren't we hearing more about this, especially in view of our Defense Department's concerns about the control issues with respect to the Chinese military?

Notwithstanding the nature of this threat, we have a problem that is at least as large here at home: a lack of understanding and commitment on the part of our political decision makers to meet this growing threat. Let us turn to the individual who the polls say is most likely to be the next commander in chief. This leading Democrat has gone from statements such as "I don't agree with a missile defense system" to promising that he would save billions in wasteful defense spending by cutting missile defense research by as much as \$10 billion. He is proposing to cut \$10 billion out of a budget that wasn't even \$10 billion this year. This is not just ill-informed speech making. It is very dangerous policy. It is dangerous for a candidate to be speaking this way given the fact that the words of all of these candidates are closely monitored and considered by our potential enemies.

But he is not the only one. Look to my colleagues in the House. A hearing recently called by a subcommittee of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee questioned why we should even build a missile defense system. The chairman said, "we are annually spending billions more on missile defense than the entire budget of FEMA, 20 times more than for public diplomacy, and 30 times more than for the Peace Corps." Is this how we should measure defense spending? It boggles the mind.

And then there's the canard that I mentioned earlier: that missile defense systems should not have been deployed until testing has been completed. This is the position of the majority party in the United States Congress, including the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. And it has real consequences in the way that the defense budgets are put together each year and the defense authorization bill is put together.

Of course, had this logic prevailed, we would not have had the capability of dealing with the North Korea missile launch in July of 2006. We wouldn't be where we are today. But that attitude is going to continue, and it is going to continue to bedevil all of our missile defense programs.

There is something else that we should have learned from the Chinese anti-satellite test in January of 2007. Some in Congress, many in Congress on the other side, believe that there is an artificial barrier between missile defense and space. This is the so-called "weaponizing space" argument. But the two concepts are inseparable. They are not viewed as separate by an intercontinental ballistic missile traveling through space to reach a target. That is, clearly, a weapon in space. And, yet, when I tried to restore just \$10 million for a study of the so-called space test bed last year, colleagues raised this issue as if we were trying to start World War IV.

This was a study requested by General Obering to evaluate the potential use of an additional layer of missile defense, one that may potentially provide the best way to deal with the boost phase option, as well as additional protection to our national security space systems. One would have thought that that study would have been wholeheartedly embraced, especially after the Chinese test and especially since the United States is so absolutely dependent, both in its military requirements and its economy, on utilizing space. But we were accused of trying to weaponize space, as if it weren't already weaponized. And I was asked why, if I was so concerned about the Chinese ASAT test, I was trying to provide additional funding for a study of additional missile defense concepts. Of course, the reason is that the ability of the Chinese to use a new sophisticated ICBM to destroy a satellite indicated some degree of capability with respect to their ballistic missile weapons.

By the way, it was a weapon that traveled through space to hit its target then. And our own recent experience in using one of our systems to destroy a satellite that didn't work would classify as the same weaponization of space, if that is the issue. One gets the impression from the hyperbolic reactions of arms control advocates and their congressional patrons that it was a close call for them whether to risk the terrestrial impact of our satellite with its hazardous fuel than coincidentally confirming a new U.S. military capability.

Well, space security and missile defense call for the same solutions: an understanding of the threat, a way to track the threat, and a means to defend against the threat. I highlight this little bit of history simply because it reveals a lot about the shortcomings of Congress, the way that we approach these issues here, the way we have been thinking about missile defense, and it portends a difficult fight in the years ahead.

There are tangible results to this lack of appreciation here on Capitol Hill that have diminished our capability. Let me just identify a couple. During last year's authorization and appropriation process, the Democrat majority reduced funding for modifications to Patriot missiles that would enhance the force. They cut \$100 million from the space tracking surveillance satellite (STSS), system, which is critical for sensing and tracking ballistic missiles as well as providing space situational awareness. And they cut \$169 million from other sensor programs. Missile defense suffered about \$450 million in cuts, on top of the half a billion that was reduced from the '07 levels in the '08 budget of the President. Space systems, meanwhile, were cut by about half a billion dollars from the President's request, which clearly it is not a sign that we took the Chinese ASAT test very seriously.

But it is proof that elections have consequences. If we are concerned about what might happen over the course of the next four years, consider the fact that it is not likely, at least for the next two years, that control of the Congress is going to change, and that there is a significant prospect that the next commander in chief will be the person who said we should eliminate \$10 billion from our \$10 billion missile defense program.

Where do we go from here? In some sense, we have been here before. It takes me back to the days before the Rumsfeld Commission report in 1998. During the Clinton administration, we faced these same arguments. And, slowly but surely, the program was put on the shelf. We were not able to advance it very far, but we always kept alive at least basic research that enabled us to break out a little bit when the Bush administration was elected. But Secretary Rumsfeld's report was important because it confirmed the fact that there were potential threats out there. It made the point that you never know what you don't know, and by the time you might find out it is too late to start to build a missile defense capability. And it promoted the concept of continuing research while at the same time developing an operational capability. You didn't have to do them serially; you could do them together.

All of this is to explain that the "see no evil" mindset that has taken hold here on Capitol Hill, the idea that we should be spending as much on the Peace Corps as we do on missile defense, is a very real problem. And it is up to us to do something about it. It is an attitude that we have got to challenge every single day. There also are very specific things that we should be promoting to bolster our missile defense program. We have got to complete the new radar and missile components in Europe. We should have the goal of assuring that every Aegis destroyer and cruiser be integrated into our missile defense sensor network and equipped with interceptors over the course of the next three or four years. We should begin the long overdue study that I mentioned before, the space test bed study. And we should begin seriously debating a space based layer to our missile defense system, which most of us believe would be the most efficacious way of dealing with a intercontinental ballistic missile in its boost phase.

At the conclusion of President Reagan's speech 25 years ago, he asked a simple question: "Isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war?" Given the unreliability of treaties to accomplish that goal, President Reagan's motto of peace through strength is the answer to the question. And that means the best possible missile defense system that we can deploy.

Will we build on the investments and progress of the last 25 years with the energy and the sense of purpose and the resources that we need to counter the threats we face? Or will we hold back on our nation's missile defense capability, preventing it from being all that it can be? You all know the answer. Let's mobilize and get into the fight.

The Case For European Missile Defense

Mr. Peter Brookes

Speech before the American Foreign Policy Council's
conference on "Missile Defenses and American Security"

March 10, 2008

After seemingly endless rounds of talks with their Polish and Czech counterparts about fielding missile defense systems in Europe, the United States may have made some progress in recent weeks. Of course, the devil is in the details in any final agreement. But with Iran continuing to enrich uranium and moving forward with its efforts to develop a space launch vehicle, the possibility of loose nukes in Pakistan, and the spate of ballistic missile tests by Russia, China, and Iran, among others, over the past year, progress toward deployment is undoubtedly good news. Concluding a deal this year will serve to bolster transatlantic security, and to protect the United States and Europe from the growing threat of long range ballistic missiles and the unconventional payloads they may carry.

But this deal will not go unopposed. Public opinion in Poland and the Czech Republic is shaky. Member countries are not fully on board. And the Russians will continue their vociferous opposition, including under the reign of new Russian president Dmitri Medvedev.

The Kremlin has not been shy about expressing its opinion that a European missile defense system would be a serious threat to Russian interests. Indeed, days before the Washington Warsaw deal in principle was announced by Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski a month or so ago, almost as if his government was anticipating a breakthrough in the talks, a top Russian general said, "Russia may restructure its military presence in the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad," which borders both Poland and Lithuania, in response to missile defense plans for eastern Europe. This and other threats by the Russians, which may or may not be hollow, are sure to rattle nerves in the region. In fact, they already have.

Despite the Kremlin's growling, the Bush administration sees the deployment of a missile defense system in Poland and in Czech Republic, also known as the "third site," as critical to blunting the growing worldwide ballistic missile threat, protecting the homeland and defending its European allies. But it is a race against the clock.

The recent U.S. national intelligence estimate (NIE) on the supposedly dormant state of Iran's nuclear weapons program notwithstanding, the American intelligence community believes Iran could have an intercontinental missile capability by the year 2015. Now, that is in the next decade, but it really isn't that far away. At the same time, there has been some walking back on the NIE based on recent congressional testimony by the DNI, so it is not clear what we really know at this point. These estimates on missiles or nukes, of course, do not take into account the possibility of a Manhattan Project like effort by Iran, which could decrease the time needed to reach initial operating capability for either the missile or the nuclear program. Nor do these dates take into account outside assistance, such as from North Korea, which might accelerate either or both programs.

This represents a problem. According to the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency, if the green light were given today by all concerned to break ground on the eastern European missile defense sites, the earliest the system could be fully operational would be about 2013.

Indeed, the ballistic missile and nuclear proliferation trend in general is not positive. Ten years ago there were only six nuclear weapon states. Today there are nine. Twenty five years ago, nine countries had ballistic missiles. Today, twenty-seven do. Concerns about Iran's programs only exacerbate this trend, especially in the Arab Middle East, where countries are seeking to balance Iran's rise.

Of course, none of these arguments are likely to convince the Russians of the need for missile defenses in Eastern Europe. But all of this political jousting over missile defense is having an effect on the security debate in Europe, especially in Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as within NATO.

In Poland, domestic public opinion is not entirely convinced about the need for missile defense. The Poles question the threat emanating from Iran, and do not want to be dragged into a dust-up between Washington and Teheran, should that come about. Not surprisingly, the Polish national security establishment, worried about taking a ration of Russian wrath without appropriate compensation, wants to extract all it can from the United States for the placement of ten interceptors on Polish soil. Although positive about closer defense ties with Washington and, by extension, NATO, Warsaw has not been subtle about wanting deal sweeteners in exchange for hosting the missiles. The Poles have expressed interest in the PAC III and THAAD systems, defense modernization assistance, and more intelligence sharing, among other issues. Poland is already the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in Europe, but it has lingering concerns about the commitment of the NATO alliance to its defense, should Russia want to play rough. This is not surprising, considering the Polish experience with its British and French allies in a run-up to World War II.

The X-band midcourse radar to be located in the in Czech Republic's Brdy military district, west of Prague, is not without controversy either. While the ruling government supports the missile defense radar, concerns exist among the Czech people, especially about the system's environmental and health effects. Czech opposition parties are calling for a national referendum on the issue and for the European Union and NATO to play a larger role in European missile defense plans.

NATO has generally considered talks among Washington, Warsaw, and Prague to be bilateral issues and has chosen not to interfere. In general, it has expressed support for missile defense in Europe, especially against short and medium range missiles. NATO's Secretary General stated after the November North Atlantic Council meeting that "there is absolutely a shared threat perception between the allies. Allies all agree that there is a threat from ballistic missiles." While there will be no shortage of issues to discuss, such as Afghanistan and Kosovo, the NATO summit in Bucharest this spring therefore could be a key meeting for missile defense as well. But while NATO is actively studying short and medium range missile defense programs for Europe, France, and Germany have expressed concern about the deployment of assets "in theater" that are not controlled by NATO.

The European parliament has also asked for a say on missile defense. Europeans fear that missile defense will provoke Moscow on other thorny issues, such as Europe's energy security or the question of Kosovo's independence from Serbia, which the Kremlin opposes, and on future NATO expansion into its "near abroad."

Meanwhile, the Russian anxiety about the eastern European missile shield is more likely about the placement of a system in what it perceives as its old stomping grounds, rather than any real strategic concerns. The supposed threat from missile defense could also provide a convenient excuse for the \$200 billion Russian defense buildup that is now taking place following years of abject neglect of the once-mighty Red Army.

Not even taking into account the sea- and air legs of its strategic nuclear triad, the Kremlin should realize that the currently configured system in Eastern Europe could not deal with a massive Russian nuclear assault on the United States. Yet it is likely the Kremlin will try to leverage public sentiment in Eastern Europe and NATO countries to get impressionable democratically elected governments to back down on missile defense. Moscow will also try to make missile defense a wedge issue to divide Europe, undermine NATO, and weaken transatlantic relations, all while carving out a sphere of political and military influence for itself.

Worst of all, Russia might deepen its nuclear cooperation with Iran beyond building and fueling Iran's Bushehr reactor as a bargaining chip against missile defense. It appears that the Russians will do all they can to prevent the deployment of missile defense in Eastern Europe, maybe all of Europe. And although hope may spring eternal, it is unlikely an increasingly confident Kremlin is going to change its position, no matter how transparent the U.S. is about missile defense.

In recent years, the United States decided that leaving itself deliberately vulnerable to any weapons system or state, as it did during the Cold War, was foolish. Rightfully so; deliberate vulnerability can lead to perceptions of weakness, inviting provocation or aggression from another nation or transnational actor. In addition, being perceived as weak and vulnerable can lead a potential adversary to use threats, intimidation, blackmail, or coercion to achieve its objectives.

In a day when North Korea is a nuclear weapons state and Iran is still very likely on the path to becoming one, the chance that these weapons will be used against peaceful nations is a troubling but very real possibility. Every state has an undeniable right to self-defense. And it only makes sense that all reasonable, necessary steps are taken to protect one's national security. It is even more logical as the capabilities emerge to do so, as witnessed by nearly thirty successful missile defense tests to date by the United States alone. As these tests have shown, hitting a bullet with a bullet in the atmosphere or even in space is, in fact, possible.

But even though rogue states like North Korea and Iran are good examples of the need for missile defense today, developing and deploying such capabilities is not about the missile or weapons of mass destruction threat from a single country, or even several. Rather, missile defense is about protection from these weapons no matter where the threat comes from, now or in the future.

There are other advantages to fielding a missile defense system in Europe for the United States, too. Hosting a transatlantic missile defense system will deepen and further unify the security relationship between European NATO members, especially Poland and the Czech Republic and the United States, enhancing our mutual security against external threats from ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. And, despite the range of concerns about missile defense, it should be emphasized that missile defense is a defensive, not offensive, weapon. Indeed, the dominant design of the missile defense interceptor warhead does not even contain an explosive charge. Rather, traveling at fifteen thousand miles per hour, it destroys the enemy missile by sheer force of collision.

Therefore, the idea that missile defense is an offensive system, as many have suggested, is patently false. In a way, missile defense is like an umbrella: it is only needed if it rains. This means that missile defense threatens no one. It only undermines the capability of one country to threaten or attack another with its ballistic missiles. The idea that the deployment of missile defense in Europe will provoke an attack against Poland and Czech Republic or any country that hosts them, including the United Kingdom or Denmark, which have missile defense radars, is a canard meant to encourage passivity. Defensive systems do not provoke attack. It is vulnerability or weakness that invites attack, not resolve and strength.

The United States and others have made it clear to Russia that missile defense does not threaten Russian security. Talks have emphasized that missile defense is part of an expanding effort in Europe to counter the growing ballistic missile threat, wherever it may come from. Of course, Russia should not expect to have a veto over American or European security, nor should that right be surrendered by the United States or Europe. Indeed, Moscow will be better to turn with its protests towards Teheran and Pyongyang, capitals that are driving the need for missile defense because of their growing offensive capabilities.

Mutually assured destruction or massive retaliation should not be the only strategic policy options we have. Missile defenses will improve America's security and that of Europe against the growing challenge of ballistic missiles and their unconventional payloads. It is high time the Americans, the Poles, and the Czechs strike a final deal for deployment, enhancing both transatlantic ties and our common security.