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**Ballistic Missile Defense  
Requirement for the World's Hegemon**

By /par COL Robert A. Rowlette, Jr.

**15 March 2002**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Ballistic Missile Defense Requirement for the World's Hegemon**

By /par COL Robert A. Rowlette, Jr.

During the Cold War, the offensive capability residing in the U.S. and Soviet NUCLEAR arsenals worked within the doctrine of mutual assured destruction (MAD) to deter nuclear holocaust, but the Cold War is over. The Soviet Union and the United States agreed to forego the development of ballistic missile defense in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. This treaty protected the doctrine of MAD by intentionally maintaining the vulnerability of both nations to attack by inter-continental ballistic missiles. The United States has intentionally maintained this vulnerability to ballistic missile attack in the face of a rapidly growing threat even though the threat from Russian missiles is greatly diminished perhaps eliminated. It is time to abandon the outdated public policy of intentional vulnerability to ballistic missile attack. The United States and the West won the Cold War. The United States should not continue to fight the last war. It is time to develop a new strategy rather than cling to MAD doctrine.

The United States finds itself in a very unique time and place in history. Like Britain and Rome before it, the United States is the primary military and economic force on the globe today. The United States military has been instrumental in building the American hegemon and it must retain its global primacy to protect American hegemony. However, the continued policy of intentional vulnerability has created an opportunity for potential adversaries and they are rapidly developing and fielding advanced missile delivery systems to exploit this weakness. These threats are directed against the United States whether the systems would target American forces deployed abroad or the American homeland. Continuing a policy of vulnerability will only serve to weaken American military primacy and ultimately will cost America its hegemonic status. The United States must develop and field a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system in order to maintain its military primacy and its position as the world's hegemon.

# **Ballistic Missile Defense Requirement for the World's Hegemon**

**by**

**COL Robert A. Rowlette, Jr.**

Does the United States of America really need a ballistic missile defense system? If so, why? The U.S. nuclear arsenal has deterred the Soviet Union from using its inter-continental ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads for nearly 50 years. Ultimately, the United States and the West prevailed over the Soviet Union in the Cold War. The U.S. led coalition won the Gulf War in a 100-hour ground campaign and in the words of General Norman Swarzkopf 'reduced the fourth largest military in the world to the second largest in Iraq'. The U.S. economy is number one in the world. The U.S. Defense Department's annual budget exceeds that of the next 10-15 nations combined.<sup>1</sup> So the question remains, does the United States really need a ballistic missile defense system? It is submitted that a valid requirement does in fact exist. Consider the following scenario.

China, a nation armed with nuclear weapons and ballistic missile delivery systems, in an effort to expand its regional and world influence initiates an extensive military operation in North-East Asia. The United States' vital national interests are threatened, and the U.S. responds militarily. The overwhelming conventional superiority of the United States military quickly overcomes the Chinese military adventurism and threatens to diminish China's world and even regional power and influence. The United

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<sup>1</sup> Owen, John M. (IV). "Transnational Liberalism and U.S. Primacy." International Security. Vol. 26, No. 3. (Winter 2001/2002): p.130.

States, concerned that China might respond with nuclear weapons against the U.S. homeland, decides to eliminate the threat by conventional means. Before the U.S. operation is completed the military establishment in China orders a missile launch to prevent the loss of the strategic asset. Only one missile escapes destruction by the special-forces direct action team. This missile is targeted for Washington, DC. An Aegis-Class cruiser in the Potomac River fires a dozen or more missiles at the inbound ICBM and successfully destroys it seconds before it would have detonated. The proverbial magic bullet, a skin-to-skin kill with an ICBM inbound at 14,000 knots. This scenario plays out in the final climatic chapters of Tom Clancy's novel "the Bear and the Dragon".<sup>2</sup> A fictional novel that is only too plausible, with a single exception: the United States military could not successfully destroy the Chinese ICBM, because the U.S. has no ballistic missile defense system. As Lieutenant General Ronald T. Kadish, Director Missile Defense Agency, stated during congressional testimony on 27 February 2002, America would be unable to defeat a single "enemy ballistic missile today, even if the United States knew its target, its time of launch and the kind of missile."<sup>3</sup>

Many in Congress remain skeptics regarding missile defense, and other critics don't see the need for such a system. However, this paper argues that a Ballistic Missile Defense system should be a national imperative. **The United States must develop and field a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system in order to maintain its military primacy and its position as the world's hegemon.** The increasing threat posed by ballistic missile delivery systems will negate the conventional arms advantage currently held by the United States and threaten her vital interests if unchecked by a defensive

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<sup>2</sup> Clancy, Tom. The Bear and the Dragon. G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York. 2000. pp. 975-1011.

<sup>3</sup> Sorrells, Niels C. "Missile Defense Plans Greeted by Vocal Democratic Opposition". Congressional Quarterly. 27 February 2002.

system. As Colin Powell stated in testimony before Congress: “ No one thinking soundly, logically, would construct a strategic framework with offense only. Not the New York Giants, not America.”<sup>4</sup>

It is important to note that this paper will carefully avoid using the term of ‘National Missile Defense’ that would describe a defensive system designed to protect only the sovereign territory of the United States. The term BMD (as it is being used by the Department of Defense today) includes not only defense of homeland but also the ability to extend defensive coverage to points and regions around the world in accordance with national security interests.<sup>5</sup> This paper will first discuss the nature of the American Hegemon and primacy. Attention will then be directed to the threat posed by ballistic missile delivery systems moving from the general threat to more specific regional threats to the U.S. and her interests. This study will conclude with a discussion of the value of a BMD system that will be a natural outgrowth of the preceding discussions.

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<sup>4</sup> Mufson, Steven. “Powell Vows Activism in Foreign Relations Nominee Backs Missile Defense Research. World Tibet Network News. 19 January 2001. p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Spencer, Jack. “Moving Forward on Missile Defense.” The Heritage Foundation. 20 July 2001. p. 1. And Spring, Baker. “Defending America from Missile Attack.” p. 2. The U.S. Congress approved and President Clinton signed the National Missile Defense Act on 22 July 1999 that authorized the deployment of “a national defense system as soon as possible.” And Spencer, Jack. “Moving Forward on Missile Defense.” p. 1. Secretary Rumsfeld said recently tests were meant to “demonstrate that ballistic missile defense is no longer a problem of invention, but rather a challenge of engineering.”

**THE NATURE OF AMERICAN PRIMACY AND THE AMERICAN  
HEGEMON**

**The United States remains the world's most powerful force for peace prosperity and the universal values of democracy and freedom. Our nation's central challenge – and our responsibility – is to sustain that role by seizing the opportunities of this new global era for our own people and people around the world.<sup>6</sup>**

A National Security Strategy for a New Century, December 1999.

**- Definitions**

Hegemony can be defined as a preponderant influence or authority especially of one nation over others.<sup>7</sup> Primacy is defined as the state of being first in importance, order, or rank or preminent.<sup>8</sup> There is little debate regarding the general condition of American hegemony. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War left the United States as the world's sole superpower with a hegemonic position in all the elements of national power.<sup>9</sup> Mastanduno points out that,

**Even without precise measurement, to focus on a range of power attributes leads to the conclusion that the United States is now in a category by itself. Only the United States currently excels in military power and preparedness, economic and technological capacity, size of population and territory, resource endowment, political stability, and 'soft power attributes such as ideology. All other would be- great powers are limited or lopsided in one critical way or another.<sup>10</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> United States of America, The White House. A National Security Strategy for a New Century. Washington, DC. December 1999. p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Merriam-Webster. G. & C. Merriam, Springfield. 1979. p. 526.

<sup>8</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. pp. 906 & 899.

<sup>9</sup> Pfaff, William. "The Question of Hegemony." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 80, No. 1. (January / February 2001): p. 221. Many scholars and authors present the general assertion that the United States occupies a hegemonic position. See Coulson, Haass, Krauthammer; Mastanduno and Owen noted in bibliography.

<sup>10</sup> Mastanduno, Michael. "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grad Strategy After the Cold War." *International Security*. Vol. 21, No. 4. (Spring 1997): p.54. Credit also to COL Carla Coulson for her research on the topic of Unipolarity and the American Hegemon.

## **- Nature of the American Hegemon and the National Security Strategy of the U.S.**

Of paramount concern in this study is not the definition or reality of American hegemony or primacy but rather the nature of U.S. primacy and hegemony. In particular, of primary interest is how America translates its hegemonic position into policy and action. The primary source document for U.S. security policy is the United States National Security Strategy (NSS) that is generally published annually. This document defines the nation's security interests and the methodology to be used in meeting those interests in the face of internal and external threats. Given that the U.S. is in a position of primacy or has hegemonic power this explicit statement of U.S. strategic policy is the best source (but not only) for describing the nature of American primacy / hegemony. Also of significant value in describing the nature of the American hegemon are the National Military Strategy and the recently completed Quadrennial Defense Review that will serve as a key source for developing the next National Security Strategy. Taken together, these documents describe the when, where, what, and how of American security policy.

The current U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) defines vital national security interests as: “those of broad, overriding importance to the survival, safety and vitality of our nation.”<sup>11</sup> The NSS also clearly states that the American government will do whatever is necessary to defend its vital national interests to include the use of military force unilaterally and decisively if necessary. The specified vital national interests are:

- 1) the physical security of our territories and that our allies**
- 2) the safety of our citizens**
- 3) the economic well-being our society**

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<sup>11</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. p. 4.



#### 4) **the protection of critical infrastructure**<sup>12</sup>

At first blush, all but the first vital interest seems to have a domestic focus, but the United States also sees economic vitality and prosperity as a vital national interest. Preserving the economic well being of the nation will necessitate global engagement.

Contrary to the commonly held view, America is not isolationist. America has a policy of global engagement to further its vital national interests, and going further the United States has concluded that as a matter of national security America “must lead abroad if we are to be secure at home”<sup>13</sup> As is the case for most western nations, the security and prosperity of the United States and her citizens are inextricably linked to that of the global community. American longstanding commitments to friends and allies and willingness to commit blood and fortune overseas have proven vital in sustaining America’s economy. Like Britain during its hegemonic peak, the U.S. must have free access to world markets, the global economy, and essential commodities including crude oil and natural gas to guarantee the prosperity and quality of life of her people and to sustain its hegemonic position.<sup>14</sup> American interests are served by: deterring aggression, free and open markets, financial stability, the promotion of democratic principles and values, and retaining its position in the family of nations.<sup>15</sup> Many scholars believe that if the United States does not retain its hegemonic position its economic prosperity will be

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<sup>12</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Krauthammer, Charles. “The Unipolar Moment.” Foreign Affairs. Vol. 70, No. 1. (1990/1991): p. 27. and A National Security Strategy for a New Century. pp. 2-25.

<sup>15</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. p.2.

seriously impacted.<sup>16</sup> “Maintenance of American hegemony is in the U.S. national interest.”<sup>17</sup>

### **- Unilateral Action**

As we have seen in the recent statements of President Bush and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, the United States is willing to act alone in its national interests. This is not a new development by a new administration but rather a long-standing U.S. national security strategy position. President Clinton’s 1999 National Security Strategy stated: “America must be willing to act alone when our interests demand it, but we should also support the institutions and arrangements through which other countries help us bear the burdens of leadership.”<sup>18</sup> This is not an idle policy ‘threat’. America has demonstrated a willingness to go it alone if necessary. The U.S. intervened militarily in Grenada and Panama to reduce threats to America’s vital interests in the Caribbean. The Reagan administration struck Libya in response to terrorist attacks on U.S. interests. The Clinton Administration acted similarly in striking the Sudan and terrorist training camps in Afghanistan following attacks on U.S. embassies in Africa by al Qaeda. The quick U.S. intervention in August 1990 “intervention that stopped Iraq from perhaps taking control of the Arabian Peninsula”<sup>19</sup> was also arguably unilateral. Charles Krauthammer seems to support the premise that America can and will act unilaterally when he states, “America’s preeminence is based on the fact that it is the only country with the military, diplomatic, political and economic assets to be a decisive player in any conflict in

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<sup>16</sup> Krauthammer. p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Coulson, Carla. The Multilateral Hegemon. Canadian Forces College. National Securities Studies Course 3. March 2001. p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. p.3.

<sup>19</sup> Coulson. p.6.

whatever part of the world it chooses to involve itself.”<sup>20</sup> However, being a ‘decisive player’ does not imply that the U.S. must or will only act alone. In fact, unilateral action is not the preferred solution for U.S. engagement.<sup>21</sup>

### **- Role of Multi-Lateral Action**

Many if not most of the United States’ security interests can best be met multilaterally. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt indicated his strong belief that America could not remain isolated in the world,

**We have learned that we cannot live alone at peace. We have learned that our well being is dependent on the well being of other nations far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community.**<sup>22</sup>

The U.S. has developed a network of regional and global organizations that have proven to be invaluable in attaining the nations security objectives. Formal mutual defense treaty organizations such as NATO, SEATO, ANZUS, bilateral defense treaties with Japan and South Korea have all been critical to American national security. Less formal ad-hoc coalitions as in the Persian Gulf crisis and the ongoing action in Afghanistan have also been exploited when common objectives can be satisfied. The U.S. commitment to the United Nations and other international organizations has also been critical to security.<sup>23</sup>

As Richard N. Haass states in his article for *Foreign Affairs*,

**On its own the United States can do little to promote order. Too many of today’s challenges...cannot be solved by one nation alone, either because cooperation is necessary to combat the problem, resources are limited or both. The benefits of multilateralism**

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<sup>20</sup> Krauthammer. p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Coulson. pp. 1-38.

<sup>22</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. pp. 1-14.

**outweigh its tendency to dilute American goals. In addition to distributing the burden of promoting order, multilateralism can restrain the impulses of others, reduce opposition to U.S. actions, and increase the chances of policy success.<sup>24</sup>**

### **- Role of the U.S. Military**

U.S. engagement abroad exposes the U.S. to many threats to its national security interests.<sup>25</sup> As Hans Morhgenthau stated, “A foreign policy, to be successful, must be commensurate with the power to carry it out.”<sup>26</sup> While there are many elements of national power such as economic, diplomatic, and cultural to name but a few, a preeminent military force has been extremely important in furthering U.S. interests. As a result, the U.S. will likely seek to maintain a position of military primacy to continue to further its national security interests.<sup>27</sup>

The United States military is a key force in shaping the global security environment. The recently completed Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report identified four policy objectives necessary to ensure the protection of U.S. vital interests:

- 1) Assuring friends and allies;**
- 2) Dissuading future military competition;**
- 3) Deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests; and**
- 4) If deterrence fails, decisively defeating any adversary.<sup>28</sup>**

The United States maintains her overseas military presence to reassure its friends and allies that America is committed to their defense, and to the protection of America’s vital national interests. This forward presence also acts to balance power in regions

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<sup>24</sup> Haass, Richard N. “What to Do with American Primacy.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 78 No. 5, (September / October 1999): p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> Joffe, Josef. “How America Does It.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 76, No. 5 (September / October 1997): p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Jockel, Joseph and Sokolsky, Joel. “Lloyd Axworthy’s Legacy.” *International Journal*. (Winter 2000-2001): p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> New Scientist. Editorial. “Not Just Star Wars.” 2 June 2001.

<sup>28</sup> United States of America, Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, DC, 30 September 2001. p.11.

where the United States has vital interests and as a result acts as a stabilizing force through deterrence.<sup>29</sup> The character of American policy also acts to reassure its friends and allies. By engaging in multilateral action, as opposed to simply unilateral, U.S. behavior reassures its friends and allies that their concerns will be heard and accommodated.<sup>30</sup> It does in fact make a “difference whether the rest of the world faces a huge, but placid, elephant, or a carnivorous Tyrannosaurus Rex.”<sup>31</sup> Rather than acting to encourage competition, the benevolent hegemon will attract many other medium and lesser powers rather than be exposed to developing regional threats.<sup>32</sup> The appearance may be ‘If you can’t fight’em, join’em’ but the reason that nations join up is that the hegemon has become indispensable to the joiner’s national security.<sup>33</sup> If the U.S. can be effective at being indispensable to its friends and allies it will also be effective at prolonging its primacy.

Through its planning and execution of force development and operations the United States will try to frustrate the efforts of potential adversaries at counterbalancing U.S. military dominance.<sup>34</sup> By quickly identifying potential vulnerabilities within the current force, the U.S. can initiate directed research and development programs to reduce or overcome these vulnerabilities before an adversary can exploit them. If properly considered and maintained, the military power advantage currently held by the U.S. over other major powers and potential adversaries is too great to be overcome without a long

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<sup>29</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p.11.

<sup>30</sup> Mastanduno. p. 59.

<sup>31</sup> Joffe, Josef. “Who’s Afraid of Mr. Big?” The National Interest. Summer 2000: p. 46.

<sup>32</sup> Joffe, Josef. “How America Does It.” p. 1-15.

<sup>33</sup> Wohlforth, William C. “The Stability of the Unipolar World.” International Security. Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999): p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p.12.

and sustained effort.<sup>35</sup> By maintaining its technological, tactical, and operational dominance the United States may dissuade a potential competitor or adversary from engaging in a costly and pointless military competition, and as result protecting its position of military primacy.<sup>36</sup>

The maintenance of military dominance across the entire spectrum of combat is crucial to deterring threats and coercion against American interests. Forward deployed forces and combat equipment are not only essential in assuring allies of our commitment to collective security but they are also essential in deterring potential adversaries from acting counter to U.S. vital national interests.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the American military must be able to rapidly deploy overwhelming combat power to any region in the world where her vital interests are threatened. This commitment to a combat ready rapidly deployable military that is designed to deter, but, if necessary, decisively defeat any enemy in which their vital military interests are threatened.<sup>38</sup> The maintenance of a dominant military that can be quickly projected worldwide acts as a stabilizing force globally, and generally acts to restrain large-scale conflict. The resultant global stability and security serves to enhance global economic vitality to the benefit of the U.S., its friends and allies.<sup>39</sup> This capability not only deters conflict and reassures friends and allies it also makes coalition relationships with the United States more attractive.<sup>40</sup> As such, the U.S. military must be able to meet any existing or future threat and must remain technologically superior to any potential adversary to retain “dominance in an uncertain world.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Wohlforth. p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> Wohlforth. p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p.12.

<sup>38</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p.14.

<sup>39</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p.1.

<sup>40</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. pp. 20-2.

<sup>41</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. pp. 24-5.

The general capability to hold key elements of an adversary's military at imminent risk of destruction also acts to deter enemy action. Offensive systems that can strike over great distances with exacting precision obviously hold the enemy's key resources at risk, but defensive systems can provide a similar result. By providing a defensive system capability to counter any strategic or operational resource available to an adversary the U.S. military may also hold that system at risk of loss.<sup>42</sup> Of course, potential American adversaries may act to counter the advantages of American military power whether it be forward or strategically deployed into the theater / region.

While not stated as a policy objective, the QDR does clearly state that the primary role of the United States military is the defense of the American homeland.<sup>43</sup> This self-defense requirement should not come as a surprise. The primary purpose of any state is the protection of its sovereignty and citizens from "potential threats to its security and possible means by which those threats might be eliminated, contained, or rebuffed."<sup>44</sup> The report notes that many potential adversaries are well aware of the U.S. conventional military dominance and its ability to project combat power. In response they are focusing on U.S. vulnerabilities. In particular, potential American adversaries have noted the "relative vulnerability of the U.S. homeland" to attack especially by asymmetric means including attack by ballistic missiles.<sup>45</sup> In support of its primary mission, the U.S. Department of Defense must maintain and/or develop the necessary capabilities to defend

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<sup>42</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. pp. 25-6.

<sup>43</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. pp. 14-8.

<sup>44</sup> Freedman, Lawrence. "Grand Strategy in the Twenty-First Century." Defence Studies. Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2001): p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. pp. 14-8.

the territorial integrity, the safety and security of its citizens, and protect key domestic infrastructure from any external threats.<sup>46</sup>

Contributing to the defense of the U.S. is its relative geographic isolation. As Wohlforth states, “the United States possesses...its four truest allies: Canada, Mexico, the Atlantic, and the Pacific.”<sup>47</sup> This relative isolation complicates power projection that adds cost to the defense budget since strategic power projection is necessary. However, it makes the U.S. hegemon less threatening to friends, allies, and potential adversaries.<sup>48</sup> An added benefit to the U.S. of its geography is the diminished threat from direct attack that permits the U.S. to have a more outwardly focused foreign policy and to extend its period of hegemony.<sup>49</sup> The United States must do all it can to maintain this ‘geographic isolation’ from the potential adversaries and the associated threats to prolong its period of hegemony. In summary, U.S. hegemony depends on the maintenance of strategic depth and distance from potential adversaries while simultaneously fostering close security arrangements with friends and allies. It will also require that the U.S. maintain its military superiority.

Having completed a study of the nature of the American hegemon, this paper will next examine the nature of the threat to the U.S. hegemon posed by ballistic missiles. Beginning with a general discussion of the ballistic missile threat and the study will finish with a more detailed discussion of the specific regional threats to the American hegemon and its vital interests.

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<sup>46</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. pp. 14-8.

<sup>47</sup> Wohlforth. p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Owen. p. 118. And Joffe, Josef. “How America Does It.” pp. 6-9.

<sup>49</sup> Wohlforth. p. 24.



## **THREATS TO U.S. MILITARY PRIMACY AND HEGEMONY**

**Our nation also needs to confront the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants and rogue nations intent on developing weapons of mass destruction. To protect our own people, our allies and friends, we must develop and we must deploy effective missile defenses.<sup>50</sup>**

President George W. Bush  
State of the Union Address January 2002

### **- The Developing Ballistic Missile Threat**

Before the late 80's, the only real ballistic missile threat to the United States resided in the former Soviet Union. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had settled into a nuclear stalemate where deterrence through mutual assured destruction (MAD) was the norm. The two countries co-signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty that greatly restricted the development, testing and deployment of defensive Anti-Ballistic Missile systems. The purpose of this treaty was to perpetuate the vulnerability of the U.S. and Russia to attack by ballistic missiles. This vulnerability was absolutely essential to give effect to the overwhelming nuclear deterrent offered in the MAD doctrine. However as U.S. / Russia relations have thawed the threat posed by Russian ICBMs has been greatly reduced, if not wholly eliminated.

The public policy decision to persist in the outdated MAD doctrine and strict adherence to the ABM treaty has perpetuated U.S. vulnerability to attack by ballistic missiles. Many nations have accepted the U.S. invitation to exploit its intentional ballistic missile vulnerability and are rapidly developing an enhanced ballistic missile capability.

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<sup>50</sup> Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies. The Heritage Foundation. "Missile Defense: The Case Gets Stronger." 2002. p. 1.

Even though the threat has increased, the United States cannot destroy even one ballistic missile targeted against the United States and has only the most rudimentary defense against theater ballistic missiles.<sup>51</sup> President William J. Clinton highlighted the nature of the threat in presidential Executive Order No. 12938 dated 14 November 1994:

**I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, find that the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons ('weapons of mass destruction') and of the means of delivering such weapons, constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and hereby declare national emergency to deal with that threat.<sup>52</sup>**

In December 1998. President Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, told the North Atlantic Council that the threat from ballistic missile attack (with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) warhead) was as great as the threat from the "Warsaw Pact was two decades ago.<sup>53</sup> Senator William Cohen during his Senate confirmation hearings as Secretary of Defense told the committee that the combination of ballistic missiles and WMD represented the greatest threat to American national security that would be seen for many years.<sup>54</sup>

In 1999 the United States government formed a Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States chaired by the current U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The commission concluded that the threat posed by ballistic missiles (outside those in the former Soviet Union) to the United States was real and growing rapidly. They did not merely threaten U.S. forces that were forward deployed

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<sup>51</sup> Spring, Baker. "Defending America from Missile Attack." The Heritage Foundation. Undated. p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Spencer, Jack. "The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook." The Heritage Foundation. 2000. p. ix.

<sup>53</sup> Spencer, Jack. "The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook." p. ix.

<sup>54</sup> Spencer, Jack. "The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook." p. ix.

but “friends and allies’ and the United States itself.<sup>55</sup> In a separate report in 1999 the National Intelligence Council concluded that:

- 1) **North Korea, Iran and Iraq each may test intercontinental ballistic missiles within the next 15 years;**
- 2) **North Korea probably can deliver a lightweight payload to the United States today;**
- 3) **Extensive testing is not necessary for Third World ballistic missile development; and**
- 4) **Space launch vehicles can support an ICBM program.<sup>56</sup>**

NATO also noted the threat posed to member states by ballistic missiles on “NATO’s periphery” in its April 1999, Washington Summit.<sup>57</sup> Ballistic missiles and their payloads may represent a real and present danger to the United States but they also pose an immediate threat to world and regional security.

### **- The Threat of Ballistic Missiles and Weapons of Mass Destruction**

There is a strong correlation between states with WMD programs and states with ballistic missile programs. In fact, it seems that states pursuing weapons of mass destruction believe that ballistic missiles are the “delivery system of choice”.<sup>58</sup> This is not a surprising development given the relative inability of any state (including the U.S.) to defend against ballistic missiles. The marriage of WMD to ballistic missiles was a

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<sup>55</sup> United States of America, The Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat t

natural outgrowth, and it appears that all nations currently pursuing ballistic missile programs have plans to arm them with chemical or biological weapons, at a minimum.<sup>59</sup> As we saw during the Gulf War, the SCUD missiles fired by Iraq at the coalition had an insignificant impact to military operations using conventional warheads. The same could be said of the German V-1 and V-2 programs during WWII. In both cases however, the weapons did have an overwhelming political / asymmetric value. In the case of Iraq, they had the potential to divide the coalition and caused the diversion of military resources from the ongoing air campaign to targeting the ballistic missiles themselves. In the case of the German systems, the impact was primarily on British morale and again resulted in the diversion of resources to address a militarily insignificant system. If ballistic missiles are married with WMD, both their military and political value is increased dramatically. The ballistic missile systems being fielded by many Third World countries lack the accuracy<sup>60</sup> necessary to be of any military value when armed simply with conventional explosive warheads. However, armed with WMD warheads, they will be capable of doing great harm to the United States, its friends and allies in the very near future.<sup>61</sup>

### **- Proliferation of the Ballistic Missile Threat**

The rapid proliferation of ballistic missile technology may be a natural development, since the U.S.'s only 'Achilles heel' may be the lack of an effective ballistic missile defense.<sup>62</sup> Jack Spencer of the Heritage Foundation writes that,

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<sup>59</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary. p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary. p.1.

<sup>61</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary. p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Spencer, Jack. "The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook." p. ix.

“Proliferation (of ballistic missiles) is no less a threat than possession because having the knowledge, components, and systems to deploy weapons of mass destruction gives even rogue leaders a reason to be belligerent.”<sup>63</sup> Many nations have supported the proliferation of ballistic missile technology including Russia, North Korea, and China.<sup>64</sup> The People’s Republic of China has been particularly instrumental in the proliferation of missile technology. It has provided direct technical assistance to Iran, Pakistan, Libya<sup>66</sup>, and North Korea. It provided complete CSS-2 missile systems to Saudi Arabia in 1987. The PRC has even “stolen U.S. missile technology and exploited it for the PRC’s own ballistic missile applications.”<sup>67</sup> The Rumsfeld report noted that the PRC’s active role in missile proliferation was a direct threat to the U.S.<sup>68</sup> It went on to suggest that even nation’s with rudimentary missile programs might, with foreign assistance, be able to develop ICBM in as little as five years.<sup>69</sup> The pursuit and employment of such long-range systems is clearly intended to dissuade states with international reach from local engagement.

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<sup>63</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” pp. 73-5.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph, Robert G. and Reichart, John F. Deterrence and Defense in a Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Environment. Center for Counterproliferation Research, National Defense University. Washington. 1999. p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> Feder, Don. “Beijing’s Missile Menace.” The Washington Times. 31 January 2002 Edition 2. Section A16. Feder’s article indicates PRC complicity in the support of Libyan missile programs.

<sup>67</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” pp.77-8. Facts related to the PRC involvement in the proliferation of missile technology was originally taken from the Cox Committee report on U.S. National Security and Commercial Concerns with the People’s Republic of China, 25 May 1999.

<sup>68</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” p. 74. Originally taken from *Report of the Commission to assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States* (The Rumsfeld Commission Report.)

<sup>69</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” pp. 73-5. Originally taken from *Report of the Commission to assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States* (The Rumsfeld Commission Report.)

## **- Nature of the Threat to American Hegemony**

The ballistic missile threat, oft times armed with WMD warheads, is clearly growing. These systems dramatically increase the power of their owners and in turn increasingly complicate and destabilize the world security environment.<sup>70</sup> The acquisition of ballistic missile systems especially when “armed with WMD will enable countries to do three things that they otherwise might not be able to do: deter, constrain, and harm the United States”<sup>71</sup> which essentially would threaten the foundations of American primacy.

## **- Deterring and Constraining American Intervention**

Not all nations desire to have the U.S. engaged internationally, particularly if it adversely impacts regional dynamics counter to their vital interests. Some nations may be seeking to become a regional hegemon and will not sit by idly and let the U.S. impose ‘peace and stability’ on a region. The U.S. has invested in its ability to project power around the world in pursuit of its national interests and in defense of its friends and allies.<sup>72</sup> Nations aspiring to dominate the region will thus try to limit the capability of the U.S. to deploy vastly superior conventional forces into the theater.<sup>73</sup> These potential adversaries of America understand the conventional superiority held by the U.S. Armed Forces, and believe that ballistic missiles would enable them to dramatically increase the cost to America for intervening regionally and hopefully deter America from pursuing

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<sup>70</sup> Krauthammer, p. 30.

<sup>71</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” p. 84. Originally presented in the National Intelligence Council’s 1999 National Intelligence Estimate on Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States Through 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report, pp. 13-6 & 25-7.

<sup>73</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary, p. 21.

regional interests / objectives.<sup>74</sup> Such systems provide a potential adversary with the capability to limit or deny entry to the American military by targeting ports, airfields, and staging areas,<sup>75</sup> and potentially making the U.S. capability to rapidly “project military power overseas” difficult or impossible.<sup>76</sup> The extended ranges of ballistic missile systems also greatly complicates forced entry into a theater as adversaries can use the strategic depth afforded within their own state to move long range delivery systems deep within their territory.<sup>77</sup> Finally, these systems will degrade U.S. tactical and operational advantages by forcing the U.S. military to divert resources to minimize the effect of ballistic missile systems through both active and passive measures.<sup>78</sup>

Ballistic missile systems are a threat and a real deterrence to American involvement abroad. They threaten both multi-lateral and uni-lateral intervention. In addition to representing an all to real threat to the forward deployed forces of the U.S., they are an immediate threat to our friends and allies and challenge the development of U.S. led coalitions.

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<sup>74</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” p. 84. Originally presented in the National Intelligence Council’s 1999 National Intelligence Estimate on Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States Through 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary. p. 3. see also Joseph and Reichart p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 31.

<sup>77</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 31.

<sup>78</sup> Joseph and Reichart. p. 14.

## - Direct Threat of Harm

While only China and Russia currently have the delivery systems and WMD warheads to cause serious damage to the American homeland, many nations will have delivery systems capable of inflicting grievous injury to the U.S. in the very near future.<sup>79</sup> The proliferation of ballistic missiles and WMD coupled with a greater inclination by some regimes to use these lethal systems has increased the likelihood of use against American interests.<sup>80</sup>

As the ranges of ballistic missile systems increase, potential American adversaries will progressively pose regional threats possibly to U.S. friends, allies, and eventually to America itself.<sup>81</sup> Given the absence of an effective BMD, the capability to target the cities of friends and allies will, at a minimum, complicate the formation of coalitions and partnerships. Such asymmetric methods have been tried before. During the Gulf War, Iraq used SCUD missiles to attack the “fragile political nature”<sup>82</sup> of the U.S. led coalition by targeting Israel.

The ever-increasing capability of nations to deploy long-range delivery systems will soon effectively deny the United States the geographic isolation afforded by broad oceans and friendly neighbors.<sup>83</sup> A ballistic missile capability to engage the American

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<sup>79</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” p. 84. Originally presented in the National Intelligence Council’s 1999 National Intelligence Estimate on Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States Through 2015. see also Joseph and Reichart.

<sup>80</sup> Spencer, Jack. “The Ballistic Missile Threat Handbook.” p. 84. Originally presented in the National Intelligence Council’s 1999 National Intelligence Estimate on Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States Through 2015.

<sup>81</sup> Center for Counterproliferation Research. The NBC Threat in 2025: Concepts and Strategies for Adversarial Use of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons. National Defense University. February 1997. Revised and reprinted September 2001. p. ii.

<sup>82</sup> The NBC Threat in 2025: Concepts and Strategies for Adversarial Use of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons. p. iii.

<sup>83</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 3.



Homeland directly “would hold hostage U.S. cities to deter U.S. involvement.”<sup>84</sup> A Chinese government official raised just such a threat in 1995 when he said: “China could take military action against Taiwan without U.S. interference because American leaders ‘care more about Los Angeles than they do Taiwan’.”<sup>85</sup> Such a capability would not only threaten the safety and security of the nation and its people but it could also threaten public and political support internally thereby deterring action by America.<sup>86</sup> An intercontinental delivery system could also be used to “retaliate or punish” the U.S. for its involvement or victory over an aspiring regional power.<sup>87</sup> “Consider Muammar Qadhafi’s chilling words to his followers after the U.S. military had responded to his terrorist bombing of a Berlin discotheque in 1986: ‘If we had possessed a deterrent – missiles that could reach New York – we would have hit at the same moment’.”<sup>88</sup> Traditionally, the United States has sought to dissuade potential adversaries from first use of WMD with the threat of nuclear retaliation, but emerging nations and rogue leaders may conclude “that the asymmetry of interests will favor them over the United States.”<sup>89</sup> Potential adversaries are thus seeking to increase the potential costs of involvement by

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<sup>84</sup> The NBC Threat in 2025: Concepts and Strategies for Adversarial Use of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons. p. ii.

<sup>85</sup> Anderson, James H. and Spring, Baker. “Missile Defense – Ending America’s Vulnerability.” The Heritage Foundation. 2000. p. 6. Originally cited from Patrick E. Tyler, “As China Threatens Taiwan, It Makes Sure U.S. Listens,” The New York Times, January 24, 1997, p. A3.

<sup>86</sup> Joseph and Reichart. p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> Joseph and Reichart. p. 9

<sup>88</sup> Spring, Baker. “Talking Points: Terrorist Attack on America Confirms the Growing Need for Missile Defense.” The Heritage Foundation. 20 September 2001. p. 2. originally taken from a speech at the Higher Institute for Applied Social Studies at the Great al-Faith University, Libya, 18 April, 1990, Tripoli Television Service( translated in FBIS Daily Report: Near East & South Asia, FBIS-NES-90-078, 23 April, 1990, p. 8.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph and Reichart. p. 8.

the U.S., its friends, and allies beyond the anticipated benefits and thus deter their action.<sup>90</sup>

The Rumsfeld Commission noted that many nations have recognized the value of ballistic missiles and stated that: “Whether short- or long-range, a successfully launched ballistic missile has a high probability of delivering its payload to its target compared to other means of delivery...powers therefore view ballistic missiles as highly effective deterrent weapons and as effective means of coercing or intimidating adversaries, including the United States.”<sup>91</sup> Potential adversaries have correctly identified the ballistic missile vulnerability of the United States and are moving quickly to exploit it.<sup>92</sup> The existence of the vulnerability to a ballistic missile threat was not of great concern to the United States without the presence of a real threat. The rapidly developing ballistic missile threat and nexus between the threat to the American hegemon and its vulnerability to ballistic missile attack are the impetus for the development of a ballistic missile defense system to prevent the “degradation of its vital elements of national power.”<sup>93</sup>

### **VALUE OF BMD IN MAINTAINING AMERICAN PRIMACY**

**Today’s international system is built not around a balance of power but around American hegemony. The international financial institutions were fashioned by Americans and serve American interests. The international security structures are chiefly a collection of American-led alliances.... Since today’s relatively benevolent international circumstances are the product of our hegemonic**

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<sup>90</sup> The NBC Threat in 2025: Concepts and Strategies for Adversarial Use of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons. p. 21.

<sup>91</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary. p. 3.

<sup>92</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 61.

<sup>93</sup> Barlett, Henry C.; Holman, Paul (Jr.); and Somes, Timothy E. Chapter 2 – “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning.” Strategy and Force Planning 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. p. 27-28.

**influence, any lessening of that influence will allow others to play a larger part in shaping the world to suit their needs... American hegemony, then must be maintained, just as it was actively obtained... the United States does not pursue a narrow, selfish definition of its national interest but generally finds its interests in a benevolent international order.**

William Kristol and Robert Kagan, *The National Interest*, Spring 2000.

The United States must move forward with the research, development and operational employment of a ballistic missile defense system to maintain its hegemonic position. BMD will ensure that the U.S. will maintain its military primacy. As I discussed earlier this is and will continue to be essential in protecting America's vital national security interests. I will discuss in turn the role of BMD in its self-defense, global engagement, value in reassuring allies, dissuading arms build up, deterring confrontation / aggression, value in reducing dependence upon nuclear weapons, and finally upon decisively defeating potential adversaries.

#### **- Physical Security and Self-Defense**

The United States must be able to provide an effective defense against attack against ballistic missile attack to retain its hegemonic position. As presented earlier the safety and security of the homeland is the primary mission of the government and the Armed Forces.<sup>94</sup> If vulnerable to a ballistic missile attack the United States might be coerced or deterred from acting in its own vital national interests. Which would certainly result in a diminished stature but could also threaten the economic vitality of the world's largest economy. The relative safety of the American homeland afforded by geography is no longer guaranteed given the increasing threat of ballistic missiles (ICBM). A

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<sup>94</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 30.

defensive system capable of defeating such threats will isolate from the long-range threat of potential adversaries and provide the insulation the U.S. needs to execute foreign policy in accordance with its national interests.

Deterrence works both ways. The capability to hold the U.S. and its population at risk with even a small number of weapons has the potential to deter (or coerce) the U.S. from pursuing its vital national interests. The United States must be able to deny a potential adversary such an advantage either by deterrence or a counterbalancing defensive capability (BMD) thereby shifting the military and political cost burden to the adversary.<sup>95</sup>

### **- Global Engagement**

The United States must remain engaged in key regions such like the Mediterranean, Middle East, Taiwan Straits, and Japan/Korea to protect its economy and retain its stature. Part of the burden of being the hegemon is to work with the international community in humanitarian crisis including: famine, genocide, arms control and refugee crisis to name only a few. The support of the United States has been critical to the success of many such missions, and as a result, the international community often seeks the aid and assistance of America in such humanitarian efforts.<sup>96</sup> Humanitarian interventions may not always encounter permissive environments as demonstrated by cases such as Bosnia, Iraq, and Somalia. The capability of the United States to project a BMD into a far theater to protect a humanitarian intervention may serve to encourage international support in difficult threat environments.

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<sup>95</sup> The NBC Threat in 2025: Concepts and Strategies for Adversarial Use of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons. p. ii.

<sup>96</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century. pp.30-32.

## **- Reassure Allies**

As previously discussed the United States may act alone in support of its vital national interests but the preferred methodology seems to multi-lateral action. The U.S. system of bi-lateral and multi-lateral mutual defense treaties has served to limit the development of a counterforce to the American hegemon. These treaties have also demonstrated a U.S. commitment to the security of its friends and allies<sup>97</sup> and have made the U.S. indispensable to its friends and allies. The addition of BMD to the U.S. power portfolio will only strengthen this proposition. Ballistic missiles already threaten many U.S. security partners<sup>98</sup> and this threat will only increase. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review explicitly states that DOD will pursue new deterrent tools such as BMD and will extend any developed missile defense umbrella to allies and friends<sup>99</sup> Nye suggests that by extending ballistic missile protection to our friends and allies the U.S. will be able to increase its influence and stature with them.<sup>100</sup> As Joffe says: “Do good for others in order to do well for yourself, is the proper maxim for an unchallenged No. 1. Great powers remain great if they promote their own interests by serving those of others.”<sup>101</sup>

## **- Dissuade Potential Adversaries**

An effective BMD system will act to restrain military competition and thereby insure that America will retain its hegemonic position. It is an imprudent policy for the

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<sup>97</sup> Holmes, Kim R. “U.S.-Japan Cooperation and Ballistic Missile Defense, The Heritage Foundation (originally Published in the Asahi Shinbun). 28 August 2001. p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> Holmes. p. 1. See also Transnational Liberalism and U.S. Primacy, by John M. Owen, IV. p. 119. Japan not only supports the U.S. ballistic missile defense program but also is collaborating with the U.S in developing a theater missile defense to defend the Japanese homeland.

<sup>99</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 25.

<sup>100</sup> Nye, Joseph S. (Jr.). “Soft Power.” Foreign Affairs. No. 80 (Fall 1990): p. 157.

<sup>101</sup> Joffe, Josef. “How America Does It.” p. 15.

potential adversaries of the United States to pursue an expensive ballistic missile system program if they know or believe that the U.S. could engage and destroy them throughout their trajectory. The Strategic Defense Initiative proved the viability of this concept. By many accounts (including Soviet officials) SDI was instrumental in the downfall of the Soviet Union as it engaged the United States in an arms race that was beyond its economic means.<sup>102</sup> The mere belief that the United States was pursuing employment of BMD shield might persuade a potential adversary from pursuing a ballistic missile program rather than face the fate of the former Soviet Union, and as Joffe notes: “The name of the game is balance not conquest....Tipping the scales is cheaper than providing the full weight of countervailing power.”<sup>103</sup>

Mutual defense guarantees and technology control regimes have, so far, acted to control the proliferation of WMD. Many of the United States’ friends and allies that could have acquired nuclear weapons and ballistic missile delivery systems have refrained from doing so because of mutual defense arrangements with the U.S.<sup>104</sup> The increasing regional threat posed by ballistic missiles and WMD could prompt these and other countries to develop and deploy their own systems in response absent a defense to the ballistic missile threat. A fully deployed BMD could reduce the pressure on friendly nations to engage in regional arms races. The promise of a U.S. or joint defense against Chinese and North Korean missiles (and U.S. mutual defense treaties) has acted to persuade Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea from pursuing missile technology and WMD.

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<sup>102</sup> Kurtus, Ron. “The Strategic Defense Initiative.” School-for-Champions.Com. 2 May 1999. p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> Joffe, Josef. “How America Does It.” p. 18.

<sup>104</sup> Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, Executive Summary. p. 8.

Some have argued that rather than dissuading an arms race BMD would be provocative, and that the U.S. should forego BMD in the name of arms control as was done with the ABM Treaty with the Soviet Union. Their belief being that the defensive capability of a fully functional BMD would prompt ballistic missile capable states (PRC in particular) to accelerate its buildup WMD and delivery systems so that they might overwhelm the U.S. defenses. First, the ABM treaty is not a sound example. The number of warheads in the Soviet and U.S arsenals grew dramatically post ABM. Second, a policy of guaranteed vulnerability would not likely limit the development of ballistic missiles and WMD; one should expect quite the opposite.<sup>105</sup>

#### **- Deter and Coerce**

The goal of any military should be to deter or coerce an enemy to comply with their will without engaging in armed combat. As Sun Tzu says: “to subdue the enemy’s army without fighting is the acme of skill”.<sup>106</sup> Of course nothing deters like power, and the ability to ‘kick the living daylights out of an enemy’ is a significant deterrent. To deter a potential adversary the United States must have the capability (or at a minimum be perceived as having) to do greater damage to the enemy than any anticipated gain resulting from confronting the hegemon.<sup>107</sup> This includes not just an offensive capability to decisively defeat the enemy but also the capability to protect your own forces and to “prosecute effective” and decisive operations regardless of the threat environment.<sup>108</sup>

The 2001 QDR identified BMD as new and important tool in deterring potential

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<sup>105</sup> Spencer, Jack. “Rolling the Diplomatic Dice.” The Heritage Foundation. 20 December 2001. pp. 1-2.

<sup>106</sup> Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War*. Translation and Introduction Samuel B. Griffith. Forward B.H. Liddell Hart. Oxford University Press: New York. 1963. p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Joseph and Reichart. p. 9.

<sup>108</sup> Joseph and Reichart. p. 9.

adversaries that will have the added benefit of “greater protection to friends and allies.”<sup>109</sup>

The Chinese in particular have noted that BMD might just tip the scales even further in America’s favor. As result, China has objected to America’s withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and pursuit of BMD “to suppress a quantum leap in what is seen as already excessive American power.”<sup>110</sup> In effect, “A deployed global defense system strengthens deterrence by reducing the likelihood that a missile launched toward U.S. territory, U.S. troops overseas, or regions of vital U.S. interests would succeed. The likelihood of limited success should deter adversaries from considering launching a strike in the first place.”<sup>111</sup>

In order to maintain its conventional military superiority the United States must retain a significant edge in military technology. Bartlett, et al, have argued that the United States’ “technology dominated approach” to force planning has been very successful in deterring and ending conflict.<sup>112</sup> Maintaining a clear and decisive edge in military technology also aids in the formation and maintenance of coalitions by “shortening conflicts, saving lives and reducing casualties.”<sup>113</sup>

The asymmetric value of deploying such a system should not be underestimated either. As discussed earlier, the mere threat of deploying such a system contributed mightily to the economic and political downfall of the Soviet Union. Even if the fielding of BMD prompted the PRC or others to grow their missile arsenals this might have a positive effect. If potential adversaries siphon funds to ballistic missile systems in an

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<sup>109</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review Report. p. 25.

<sup>110</sup> Joffe, Josef. “Who’s Afraid of Mr. Big?” p. 46. Joffe suggests that such a layered BMD might inhibit (deter) Chinese efforts to militarily re-unite Taiwan with the PRC.

<sup>111</sup> Spring, Baker. “Defending America from Missile Attack.” p. 4.

<sup>112</sup> Barlett, Henry C.; Holman, Paul (Jr.); and Some, Timothy E. Chapter 2 – “The Art of Strategy and Force Planning.” Strategy and Force Planning 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. pp. 30-1.

<sup>113</sup> Barlett, Holman, and Some. p. 30.



attempt to counter BMD, it would only serve to preserve the U.S. conventional technological advantage. Additionally, while these ballistic missile states would be investing in ballistic missile systems the U.S. would be fielding a system capable defeating and marginalizing their expensive investments value of ballistic missiles.

#### - Reduced Reliance Upon Nuclear Deterrent

The United States has longed used the threat of devastating nuclear response to deter the use of NBC/WMD. Iraq was successfully deterred by the threat of nuclear destruction from using WMD against coalition forces in the Gulf War, but the threat of nuclear retaliation may not always deter the use of WMD and ballistic missiles.<sup>114</sup> Irrational actors may use such weapons to retaliate or punish attackers.<sup>115</sup> Adversaries might use such weapons regardless of the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons if they believed that their survival was at stake, or they might simply lack the necessary control of their weapons to prevent their use<sup>116</sup>. To retain maximum response flexibility the United States must have more than an offensive capability to overcome the threat.<sup>117</sup>

To be an effective deterrent, a response must be credible. To be credible, the threat of nuclear response must be relatively proportionate to the enemy's first-use attack. A nuclear response may not be credible if the enemy's first use does not directly threaten U.S. population centers or if the enemy restricts its use of WMD to operational (military) targets. Using nuclear weapons to inflict heavy damage on a regimes civilian population may not be the appropriate response to a limited WMD attack on U.S. or coalition

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<sup>114</sup> Joseph and Reichart. pp. 17-24.

<sup>115</sup> The NBC Threat in 2025: Concepts and Strategies for Adversarial Use of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons. p. i.

<sup>116</sup> Spring, Baker. "Defending America from Missile Attack." p. 4.

<sup>117</sup> Joseph and Reichart. pp. 17-24.

forces.<sup>118</sup> A nuclear response might also escalate the conflict and result in ballistic missile or an asymmetric WMD attack on U.S. cities. Nuclear weapons have not been used in anger for over 50 years. In reality they have been “virtually neutralized as an offensive weapon” and this also works to obviate their value as a deterrent.<sup>119</sup> A rogue nation might (rightly) deduct that the U.S. would not use nuclear weapons unless its very survival were at stake. In addition, the mere threat of a nuclear response might jeopardize a fragile political U.S. led coalition. BMD would provide the U.S. with the full range of options in response to a WMD / ballistic missile attack; defense thru nuclear retaliation<sup>120</sup> with the added benefit of reducing American “reliance on nuclear weapons as deterrent.”<sup>121</sup> Of course, it may be impossible to deter some state or non-state actors, and in these cases the only option is an effective defense.

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the safety and security of its friends and allies were threatened, even in the face of a significant ballistic missile threat.<sup>122</sup> NATO in its Washington Summit also noted the growing threat of WMD and their means of delivery, and highlighted the importance of a defensive capability to counter the threat.<sup>123</sup> As discussed earlier, reassuring friends, allies, and coalition partners by extending BMD to them either during operations or strategically (as was done for Israel during the Gulf War) can also support the overall effort to decisively defeat an opponent.<sup>124</sup>

### CONCLUSION

**There is a rough rule-of-thumb that no enemy vehicle of attack must be permitted to have ‘a free ride.’ The enemy should not be relieved of uncertainty with respect to any avenue of attack which is feasible for him to use.<sup>125</sup>**

**Bernard Brodie**

The United States has intentionally maintained a vulnerability to ballistic missile attack in the face of a rapidly growing threat. It is time to abandon this outdated public policy. During the Cold War, the offensive capability residing in the U.S. and Soviet arsenals worked within the MAD doctrine to guarantee the peace, but the Cold War is over. The United States and the West won and it is time to develop a new strategy rather than cling to MAD doctrine.

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<sup>122</sup> Haass. p. 39. see also QDR particularly p. 43.

<sup>123</sup> NATO, “An Alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” The Reader’s Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington, April 1999: pp. 10-12

<sup>124</sup> Haass. p. 39.

<sup>125</sup> Myers, G.E. (LTC). “The Strategic Defense Initiative in the Military Context.” Airpower.Maxwell.AF.Mil. Undated. p. 1.

The United States is the world's sole superpower (or hyperpower). It is only natural that the United States would seek to maintain its hegemonic position by maintaining a clear military superiority over any potential adversary. By maintaining its position of primacy America not only serves the vital national interests of the United States but it may also arguably serve the interests of the much of the world community.

The central challenge to the U.S. no longer solely resides in the Soviet Union (Russia). It now resides in regional or potential regional powers. Most if not all of these nations are aggressively pursuing ballistic missile technology in an effort to exploit American weakness. The ballistic missile threat is growing around the world in regions of critical importance to the United States. Nations like Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and China to name a few are developing ballistic missile technology in an effort to exploit an American weakness and limit U.S. response options. The United States must move quickly to overcome its vulnerability to ballistic missiles by developing and fielding a layered ballistic missile defense system to protect it, its forward deployed forces, friends and allies. Without such a defensive umbrella America will be vulnerable to attack, and it could be deterred from action by any nation with a ballistic missile capability. In effect, it will have conceded its hegemonic position.

The only logical strategy is to abandon the ABM Treaty and to build a defensive capability to counter the ballistic missile threat.

**Ballistic Missile Defense  
Requirement for the World's Hegemon**

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