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MISSILE DEFENCE AND THE RENEWAL OF THE NORAD AGREEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Persian Gulf War, the United States has abandoned the Strategic Defense Initiative, also known as Star Wars, and has concentrated instead on defence against theatre ballistic missiles like the SCUDs used by Iraq. The deployment of missile defence systems in the late 1990s could have implications for Canada's roles in NORAD, NATO, and the United Nations. As the *1994 White Paper on Defence* states, the issue cannot be ignored because weapons of mass destruction, including missiles with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads "already or may soon threaten Canada's friends and allies in Europe and elsewhere, and Canada may want to retain the option of deploying forces to areas where they could face such weaponry" (p. 21).

Thus, according to the White Paper, Canada is trying to gain a better understanding of missile defence through research and consultation with like-minded countries. This paper briefly examines recent developments in missile defence and the issues with which Canada will have to deal in the coming years.

THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO MISSILE DEFENCE

Buoyed by the performance of its Patriot missiles during the Persian Gulf War, the United States decided soon after to develop effective theatre missile defence systems. Some critics challenged this decision in light of more critical analysis of the Patriot's effectiveness; however, the proliferation of small ballistic missile technology, the unstable nature of regimes in countries such as Iraq and Libya, and the ability of these countries to develop chemical, biological and nuclear warheads were cited to justify the proposed systems.

For the 1995-1996 fiscal year, the Clinton Administration's proposed defence budget included U.S. \$2.9 billion for missile defence research and development. Republican members of Congress advocate even more support for missile defence and made this a major commitment in their "Contract With America" platform during the 1994 legislative elections.

INTEREST IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE

European countries are also interested in missile defence because of the potential threat posed by rogue or unstable states in North Africa and the Middle East (for example, Libya and Iraq) which could develop missiles with enough range to reach European cities. As a result, major European countries have undertaken missile defence research, but still have to decide whether to rely on their own systems or participate in NATO systems with the U.S.

Meanwhile, Israel has been developing the Arrow missile for its own missile defence system while Japan is coming under increasing pressure to participate in missile defence research. Indeed, there is growing concern in the Pacific region with respect to the continuing development of new missiles by North Korea and China.

PROPOSED U.S. SYSTEMS

To meet the expected missile threat in the late 1990s and beyond, the U.S. has undertaken the development of three defence systems. The first is the Patriot Advanced Capability (third generation) or PAC-3, slated for deployment around 1998; this uses the new ERINT missile designed to destroy warheads as well as missiles. The other two elements are the U.S. Navy's Standard Block IVA missiles and the Theater High-Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system.

The U.S. also plans to decide by 1998 whether or not to develop one of three proposed systems using more advanced technology. One is a ship-launched system similar to THAAD. Under the second proposal, which involves a Boost-phase Interceptor (BPI), aircraft could use missiles or airborne laser (ABL) weapons to intercept missiles shortly after launching. The third option is the Medium Extended Range Air Defense System (MEADS) which would provide defence against aircraft and cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles. In view of the high costs, in early 1995 the U.S. reached an agreement with France, Germany and Italy to undertake joint development.

In early 1996, the U.S. Department of Defense modified its missile defence program slightly by increasing funding for the development of the PAC-3 system while significantly reducing the budget for the THAAD system. The U.S. appears to be concentrating on systems to deal with the threat posed by short-range missiles.

THE DEBATE ON THE EFFECTS ON THE ABM TREATY

In December 1995, the U.S. Congress called for the deployment of a National Missile Defence system by 2003 and in March 1996, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate Majority Leader introduced legislation to this effect, the *Defend America Act of 1996*. The strong support in the U.S. Congress for such a system is provoking more debate on the implications for the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty signed by the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The treaty limits defences against Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) to one national site, in order to preserve the stability of the mutual nuclear deterrence. Although the Cold War has ended, arms control advocates and others, including the Canadian government, want the ABM Treaty maintained, if only to consolidate peaceful U.S.-Russian relations.

There is growing concern that, while defence systems in a theatre of operations outside the U.S. or Russia would not necessarily affect the Treaty, the same systems deployed within these countries could give protection against ICBMs as well as theatre missiles. This could prompt both countries to stop reducing their ICBM arsenals. To pave the way for the deployment of a national system that would not undermine the ABM Treaty, the U.S. has tried to negotiate an understanding with Russia on the differences between theatre defence and anti-ICBM systems.

In July 1995, however, Russia rejected U.S. proposals to identify theatre missiles as those with a speed of 5 kilometers per second or less and with a range of 3,500 kilometres and interceptor missiles as those with a speed of 3 kilometres per second or less. Indeed, a clear distinction could prove elusive because in response to missile defence, some countries might develop theatre missiles with the even greater speed and range of ICBMs. If there was no clear distinction between theatre missiles and ICBMs, the debate on the effects on the ABM Treaty would likely become more heated.

CANADA'S POSITION

As a strong supporter of the efforts to limit the spread of missile technology as carried out by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) established by the G-7, Canada is well aware of the threat posed to the stability of many regions by the increasing number of ballistic missiles. The experience in the Persian Gulf War also leaves no doubt that our allies, as well as military forces in United Nations peacekeeping or other operations, may have to defend themselves against such missiles. However, while considering possible participation with its allies in theatre missile defence, Canada must carefully weigh the advantages of doing so with the disadvantages of becoming involved with national systems that could potentially undermine the ABM Treaty.

In its participation in NORAD over the years, while Canada has been mainly concerned with the detection of bombers and cruise missiles in North American airspace, it has seen the U.S. develop Defence Support Program (DSP) satellites and other sensors to detect ICBMs and other missiles. During the Persian Gulf War, these satellites provided information on SCUD launches to NORAD, which alerted the Patriot missile batteries in the Gulf area. Thus, NORAD could certainly play a role in currently planned U.S. theatre defence systems. Indeed, NORAD could make a major contribution to international stability and the monitoring of missile proliferation if it were to participate in a multilateral surveillance system involving NATO countries and even Russia.

However, the deployment by the U.S. of a national system without an arrangement to maintain the ABM Treaty and other arms control agreements, together with NORAD involvement, would present Canada with a difficult problem. Decisions concerning NORAD's and Canada's roles, if any, in theatre missile defence are still a few years away, but Canada will have to observe developments very carefully and make its concerns clear.

THE RENEWAL OF THE NORAD AGREEMENT

In discussions in 1995 and early 1996 with the U.S. on the renewal of the NORAD Agreement, Canada requested changes that would reflect the shift in NORAD's mission from conducting air defence to warning of aircraft and missile attack and that would ensure Canadian participation in the planning and operations of the aerospace defence of North America. On 11 March 1996, during the debate in the House of Commons on the renewal of the agreement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, stated that the revised agreement makes provision for a more formal mechanism for consultations between the two countries on developments such as missile defence systems which have implications for NORAD's missions.

On 25 March 1996, the government announced its decision to renew the NORAD Agreement. In a press conference, Mr. Axworthy stated that the ABM Treaty was still absolutely essential for international stability and claimed that the revised NORAD Agreement would give Canada a veto over the development of weapons systems that could have a negative effect on the treaty.

It remains to be seen, however, what impact the formal mechanism for consultations will have on the development of a national missile defence system in the U.S. Increased tensions with Russia or the development of threat from another country might prompt

the U.S. to accelerate the deployment of a national system or to ignore the ABM Treaty. The real test for Canada may take place in 2001, when the NORAD Agreement will again come up for renewal, only a few years before the possible deployment of a national system in the U.S.
