



## **Conference Report**

### **“Ballistic Missile Defense - US Plans and European Responses”**

Held at the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations  
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and

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## **Introduction**

A US decision to deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) system could have significant consequences for the United States' European partners and for transatlantic relations. As the US debate about the future of missile defenses has intensified over the last two years, many of America's closest allies in Europe have expressed concern about the impact of NMD on relations with Russia and China, on European security, and on future non-proliferation and arms control efforts. At the same time, there is a growing recognition in European policy circles of the desire of many American leaders to protect the United States from ballistic missile threats and to equalize the political effects of ballistic missile proliferation during times of crisis.

Although the public transatlantic dispute over missile defenses has subsided since President Bill Clinton's September 2000 decision against authorization of NMD deployment, the issue is unlikely to go away any time soon. Although quietly welcomed in many European capitals, Clinton's deferment of a deployment decision to his successor could prove a temporary lull in the transatlantic struggle over the desirability and feasibility of developing and deploying defensive systems. President-elect George W. Bush has already indicated that his administration will place high priority on the fielding of defenses against ballistic missile attacks, although the system architecture, scope and timing of deployment remain unresolved at this writing.

It is critical that US deliberations on the timing, scope, and potential risks of NMD deployment be informed by an adequate understanding of European concerns and interests and of the potential implications of a decision to deploy NMD for political relations with our allies. By the same token, it is crucial that Europeans better appreciate US concerns about emerging ballistic missile threats and the role of missile defenses in US foreign and security policy. In the absence of extensive discussion of these issues, a US decision to deploy NMD could raise doubts about American reliability and leadership and undermine the partnerships that have become critical to the achievement of vital US foreign policy and national security goals, including its non-proliferation objectives.

To encourage more consultation and reasoned exchange between legislators, government officials, and policy experts from the United States and Europe, the Henry L. Stimson Center and the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations (*Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Auswaertige Politik*, DGAP) hosted a symposium May 8 to 9, 2000 entitled, "Ballistic Missile Defense - US Plans and European Responses." The meeting explored the implications of a US decision to deploy a National Missile Defense system on transatlantic relations, European security, and alliance cooperation. Conference participants included German parliamentarians, senior government officials from Germany, France and the United Kingdom, and respected non-governmental experts from the United States and key European countries. The Stimson Center is grateful to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for their support of American participation in the conference and to the German

Marshall Fund for its support of the DGAP and of European participants in the meeting. The symposium was held at the headquarters of the DGAP in Berlin.

*Cathleen Fisher*  
*Senior Associate*

## **Rapporteur's Report**

***David K. Brannegan***

The Henry L. Stimson Center and the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations (Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Auswaertige Politik, DGAP) co-organized a conference on "Ballistic Missile Defense - US Plans and European Responses," from May 8 to 9, 2000 at the DGAP headquarters in Berlin, Germany. The conference explored the implications of a US decision to deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) system on transatlantic relations, European security, and alliance cooperation. Participants included German parliamentarians, senior government officials, and respected non-governmental experts and from the United States and Europe.

In their introductory remarks, Dr. Joachim Krause, Deputy Director of the DGAP Research Institute, and Michael Krepon, President of the Henry L. Stimson Center, both acknowledged the need for greater attention to the issue of Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) in the transatlantic relationship. Dr. Krause noted that the debate about ballistic missile defenses has created new fissures in the policymaking communities on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in transatlantic relations more generally. An exchange of perspectives and arguments across ideological and geographical divides, both agreed, was important to sort through the complex issues associated with Ballistic Missile Defense.

The conference was divided into six panels.

## **Panel I: US Perspectives and Policies Towards Ballistic Missile Defense - Threats and Responses**

### **PRESENTATION**

Amb. Avis Bohlen, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, US Department of State, began her remarks by describing US concerns about the threat that North Korea, Iran, and Iraq pose both to their neighbors and to regional stability. Although the three countries are stockpiling missiles in the tens rather than the thousands, and their missiles are arguably minimally reliable, accurate, and destructive, the three states harbor regional ambitions that must be taken into account in any threat assessment. The aim of these countries is not to threaten the territorial integrity of the United States but rather to block the US from intervening in regional crises. The evolving security landscape means that the BMD issue going to remain politically salient for some time.

Amb. Bohlen stressed that the Clinton administration has proposed a *limited* NMD, not the more extensive system planned under the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Further, President Clinton's pending decision on NMD deployment will be based on careful consideration of four criteria: threat assessment, technical feasibility, cost, and foreign policy implications. This final criterion comprises multiple factors, including the impact of NMD on arms control, relations with allies, relations with Russia and China, and non-proliferation goals.

The United States wants to preserve the ABM Treaty as the foundation of deterrence and much has already been done to engage the Russians in pursuit of this goal. Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State, US Department of State, and John Holum, Senior Advisor for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, US Department of State, have had numerous talks with the Russians, with the multiple aims of clarifying US goals, continuing the START III process, and securing small modifications to the ABM Treaty. Although there has been no breakthrough in discussions with the Russians, progress has been made toward a consensus regarding the emerging missile threat. Careful consideration must also be give to China, Amb. Bohlen noted.

Additionally, the United States has also held extensive consultations with its European allies to address their concerns. She noted that the NMD architecture proposed by the Clinton administration is too limited to lead to any de-coupling of the United States from Europe. Amb. Bohlen acknowledged that the current exchanges are only the beginning of a long discussion between the United States and its European allies.

In conclusion, Amb. Bohlen reiterated that NMD is not the end of deterrence, which will continue to play a central role in US security policy. But in the future, limited defenses will compliment deterrence, non-proliferation treaties and regimes, and diplomacy to ensure the national security of the United States.



## **COMMENTARY AND DISCUSSION**

The first commentator began by expressing his appreciation of the steps taken by the US Government to explain its perspectives on BMD to European government officials, members of the security community, and the general public. He then turned to important changes in the international system since the 1970's that must be taken into consideration in any discussion of missile defenses. Relations between Russia and the West have changed from antagonism to cooperation, while knowledge and know-how of weapons of mass destruction as well as delivery systems have diffused widely. In the changing strategic environment, interest is being re-focused on defensive capabilities. Individual nations not only define vulnerability differently; they are also willing to accept varying degrees of vulnerability. The United States, for example, appears to be searching for absolute security in the new international environment while Germany and other European nations are willing to accept more risk.

The second commentator began by stressing the commonalities between US and European assessments of the capabilities and intentions of states of proliferation concern and the timeline for emerging threats. The central question concerns the price that will have to be paid for NMD, however. Although the ABM Treaty will not be necessary forever, it still serves an important function. A new arms race is not in anyone's interest, and all alternatives to NMD have not yet been exhausted. He applauded the Clinton administration for engaging the Russians in extensive discussions and suggested that greater use be made of diplomatic channels to countries of proliferation concern. If "mutual assured destruction" (MAD) can no longer provide the basis for strategic stability, then a step-by-step approach will have to be found to achieve a safe transition.

The discussion focused on four issues: (i) the influence of US domestic politics on an NMD decision; (ii) the potential Russian reaction to US deployment of a national missile defense; (iii) US assessments of the threat and its urgency; and (iv) the effect of a deployment decision on the ABM Treaty.

Several participants expressed concern about the potential impact of domestic political developments in the United States on an NMD decision. A number of Europeans noted with concern certain comments by influential members of Congress that the ABM Treaty was null and void following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Others pointed to the lack of consensus within the US strategic community and imminent change of US administration, which caused them to question both the feasibility and wisdom of a decision in summer 2000 on NMD deployment. Other participants countered that there is a broad consensus on deployment of NMD in principle; the differences involve questions of scope and timing.

There was much speculation on whether Russia could accept deployment of a limited NMD system. One participant argued that the Russians would prefer that an NMD decision either be (i) defeated completely or (ii) postponed until the next administration takes office. Others suggested

that the Russians will want to preserve the ABM Treaty and therefore, will compromise with the United States. If faced with the choice between US deployment of a limited NMD coupled with an amended ABM Treaty, or deployment of an unlimited NMD and abolition of the ABM Treaty, Russia would undoubtedly opt for the former.

There was noticeable disagreement among participants over threat assessments. Some participants acknowledged that a new threat is emerging on the international scene, but others questioned the US interpretation of recent developments, especially in North Korea.

Finally, there was much discussion about the future of the ABM Treaty. A number of participants argued that the treaty's basic strategic bargain would remain intact, even if the accord is amended. In this view, NMD is not incompatible with the continued existence of the ABM Treaty. Other participants expressed fear of an endless cycle of ABM modifications and skepticism that the US would ever be content with limited changes to the ABM Treaty.

## **Panel II: European Perspectives on Ballistic Missile Defense**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

The first speaker, Uta Zapf, Member of the German Bundestag (SPD) and Head of the Subcommittee on Disarmament and Arms Control, suggested that a common security approach, based on shared interests, cooperation, and treaties, is preferable to a renewed arms race. Ms. Zapf then turned to the main European reservations about a US decision to deploy BMD. The first of these concerns technological capabilities. BMD seems uncertain of living up to the promises of its proponents, especially as regards the systems' ability to deal with decoys and other countermeasures. Second, the costs of BMD will be considerable and must be weighed against the costs of alternative measures while appropriate to the size of the threat. The sizeable investments of time, money, effort, and brainpower in BMD, she suggested, might be better used for cooperative risk reduction initiatives. Third, cooperation on arms control between the United States, the European allies, and Russia would be disrupted if the United States decided to deploy BMD. Europeans are very skeptical of Russia's willingness to accept changes to the ABM Treaty, both because of the deteriorating relationship between Russia and the West and because of Russia's sensitivity to its declining international status. Fourth, an NMD decision might prompt China and Russia to forge a strategic alliance, in which they would seek to collectively stockpile nuclear weapons. In conclusion, Ms. Zapf questioned whether NMD would increase US security or intensify its vulnerability. She cautioned against a hasty NMD decision.

The second speaker, Thérèse Delpeche, Director of Strategic Affairs, Atomic Energy Commission (France), predicted that a US decision on NMD would have far-reaching implications for international, transatlantic, and intra-European relations. Specifically:

- (i) ***International Relations:*** An NMD decision would signal a shift toward unilateralism by the United States. Further, relations with Russia and China would be greatly affected, and deployment of NMD could have numerous unintended consequences in other regions of the world. Lastly, a decision to deploy NMD would propel the world toward a defense-dominated security paradigm.
- (ii) ***Transatlantic Relations:*** Many Europeans feel that they are being held hostage to the domestic US debate, yet they cannot stand idly by while a decision is made that could force the Europeans to undertake major changes in their respective defense and foreign policies.
- (iii) ***Intra-European Relations:*** A US decision to deploy NMD would exacerbate differences between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states in Europe. If the United States were to deploy national missile defenses, she predicted, the United Kingdom would gain increased importance and strategic value because of its dual role in providing a link between the Russians and Americans and a bridge between the Europeans and the Americans.

Ms. Delpeche went on to argue that many Europeans agree with the US assessment of the ballistic threat as dynamic and unstable. They realize further that the current regime is ineffective

in stopping the proliferation of missile capabilities but urge the US to take a more nuanced view of the emerging threat. The task is no longer point defense, but defense of an entire nation. Additionally, the global context of the threat has changed from a bipolar confrontation to a multipolar environment, yet no one truly understands what this means.

Europeans also have many questions about the technological aspects of NMD. Ms. Delpeche argued that there was not enough technological information to make a sound NMD decision. She also questioned whether tests, no matter how sophisticated, would ever be able to accurately reflect real world conditions of war. If the United States is going to deploy NMD, it should deploy a system that works.

US plans for NMD also pose many challenges for transatlantic cooperation. It is unclear whether deployment of NMD would lead to coupling or decoupling of US and European security, but Europeans fear both extremes. It is also uncertain whether NMD will strengthen or weaken deterrence or, as some contend, that countries of proliferation concern are undeterrable. Finally, Europeans believe that the ABM Treaty has great symbolic value, but fear that the American commitment to arms control as a security tool is weakening.

Finally, she noted, the timing of a US decision on NMD is of concern. Technology, rather than policy, appears to be driving the NMD debate. With critical elections pending in Taiwan, Russia, and the United States, the political climate is not conducive to a decision on NMD. Although the Europeans cannot ask the United States to remain vulnerable in perpetuity, they can ask why the US feels itself to be so vulnerable at a time of unprecedented American power, and whether US policymakers have taken into account the political implications of an NMD decision and will be responsive to the concerns of its allies. Ms. Delpeche concluded by stating that if the US were to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, Europe would be the first, and most critical, victim.

The third speaker, Terence Taylor, Assistant Director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, began by observing that there is much less debate in Europe than in the US on NMD, which may contribute to misunderstandings. On the one hand, US threat perceptions matter and must be better understood in Europe. At the same time, the US must realize that Europeans have faced multiple missile threats for some time, but have lacked the capacity to counter them effectively.

Mr. Taylor then turned to the role of treaties in foreign policy and international relations more generally. In practice, security -- not treaties-- is the first-rank priority of nations. Treaties are often prisoners of time and must be relevant to the concerns of the day if they are to remain relevant and useful. Consequently, amendments must sometimes be made to adapt treaties to new circumstances. Further, treaties represent convergent interests; when divergent interests emerge, issues must be dealt with outside of the treaty.

The fourth speaker, Dr. Andreas Schockenhoff, Member of the German Bundestag (CDU/CSU), stressed that the German Government needs to play an active role as the US discussion of NMD progresses. The German position on NMD, he suggested, should be based on a broad analysis of the threat and contribute to the creation of a common European policy under the auspices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Europe should participate actively in planning related to NMD, encourage a cooperative approach to defenses, and intensify its engagement with Russia. The speaker concluded by stating that the proliferation regime is in crisis and that the ABM Treaty must be preserved.

## **DISCUSSION**

The discussion focused on the impact of NMD on political relations with Russia and the European role in BMD. Some participants argued that the US has been too “soft” on the Russians; others observed that Russia has not been given any “bargaining chips” with which to negotiate the NMD/ABM transition. A number of participants questioned what role, if any, Europeans could play in BMD. Many concluded that prospects for European Theater Missile Defense (TMD) are quite dim, as the Europeans have been spending less and less on defense since the end of the Cold War. In addition, there was broad consensus that a common European position on BMD is not possible at this time.

## **Panel III: Theater Ballistic Missile Defense: Programmes, Problems and Perspectives From a European View**

### **PRESENTATION**

Dr. Karl-Heinz Allgaier, Director of Air Defense Concepts at DASA, described Europe's capabilities for deploying BMD, which, he concluded, are quite modest because of technological and financial constraints. Europe is consequently very reliant upon the US for BMD development. Although a common space-based early warning system might be in the interest of the Europeans, there is little political consensus among European governments on the need for BMD and consequently no joint requirements have been defined.

### **COMMENTARY AND DISCUSSION**

The first commentator sought to place the BMD debate within a broader international security context. Nuclear weapons, he asserted, continue to be a unique source of power and influence in the international system and consequently proliferation is likely to be an unstoppable trend. In many regions, countries of proliferation concern desire protection against western intervention and therefore seek to acquire ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. The BMD debate, at its core, concerns the freedom of the US to intervene versus the ability of regional powers to deter such intervention. Effective crisis diplomacy, however, requires the west to retain the ability to intervene. Preserving the United States' intervention capability will require the maintenance of an effective nuclear deterrent, protection for the homeland, and protection against missile attacks in the theater of operations.

The second commentator focused his remarks on the US debate on defenses. He observed that there is a broad political consensus in the United States in support of defenses, but the consensus is riddled with qualifications. There are important exceptions to the consensus and questions as to its stability. Further, the current rationale for defenses, which focuses on regional contingencies, implies fairly modest BMD requirements, but a consensus in favor of limited defenses may not be politically sustainable, particularly in the US Congress. Finally, considerable disagreement exists over *how* and *when* defenses should be deployed.

At present, there are three dominant schools of thought on NMD. The first believes that cooperative transition to a mixed offense/defense system is critical and that the US should be willing to make concessions and take the time necessary to secure the cooperation of other states. This school supports deployment of a modest (Phase I) system. The second school of thought argues that cooperative transition is desirable, but difficult to achieve and may limit the United States' future options. The third school of thought is based on the belief that a cooperative transition is undesirable. In this view, the ABM Treaty is obsolete and BMD requirements are so

important that the United States should do whatever is necessary to ensure the successful deployment of defensive systems. These three distinct ideologies also share two important commonalities, however. First, all three schools place great emphasis on how effective the NMD system will have to be in the future, not on how effective the system currently is. Second, the thinking of all three schools could be changed by the outcome of the upcoming US presidential election in November 2000.

Turning to the implications for Europe, the speaker noted that technical problems with the system or an impasse between the United States and Russia might lead to prolonged inaction and drift. While Europeans might fear US activism, they might be no less displeased with a prolonged strategic stalemate. Under these circumstances, a regionally based Boost Phase Defense system might be a preferable alternative.

The discussion focused on two issues: (i) the US consensus on BMD and factors that might alter the US consensus; and (ii) the possibilities for transatlantic cooperation on ballistic missile defenses.

The current US debate was the topic of extensive discussion. A number of participants commented on the factors that might produce a change in the US consensus, including abrogation of the ABM Treaty, the change in administration in January 2001, a shift in the leadership of the House of Representatives, or a significant change in the threat environment. Others raised questions about the stability and breadth of the current consensus. One participant suggested that a consensus on NMD exists only in the Washington strategic community, but not among the American public. Another countered that the Congressional forces advocating deployment of a more extensive defensive system are more passionate and motivated than opponents or even moderate supporters of NMD, as reflected in the 97 to 3 Senate vote in March 1999 in favor of the national missile defenses and in the criticism voiced by many proponents that the administration is pursuing NMD “too little, too late, and too reluctantly.” Others expressed concern over the fact that a consensus on the timing of deployment has emerged in the absence of careful analysis of *how* NMD should evolve further.

Discussion also addressed the relationship between theater and national missile defenses and the possibility for US-European cooperation on BMD. Several participants agreed that the United States would be unwilling to share information on early response systems. Additionally, the harmonization of programs was deemed to be very difficult and therefore unrealistic. Participants agreed that the lack of a common European position on BMD would discourage transatlantic cooperation on defenses.

## **Panel IV: The Feasibility, Testing, and Costs of TMD and NMD**

### **PRESENTATION**

Dr. George Lewis, Associate Director of the Security Studies Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, offered an assessment of the operational effectiveness of the NMD architecture proposed by the Clinton administration, noting that the architecture could change under a new US administration. Although the technical requirements for the current system are classified, Dr. Lewis speculated that a workable NMD system would need to possess an effectiveness rate of 99 percent against small attacks (approximately five missiles). Only this high level of effectiveness would have the desired deterrent effect in a crisis situation.

Dr. Lewis then offered an assessment of the “operational effectiveness” of the proposed NMD system, based on the conclusions of a study completed by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (*Countermeasures: A Technical Evaluation of the Operational Effectiveness of the Planned US Missile Defense System*). “Operational effectiveness” connotes the effectiveness of a system in real-world conditions, which in turn is a function of the steps that adversaries might take to counter the defensive system, including the development and use of countermeasures. In reality, he argued, the US will not be able to achieve a 99 percent effectiveness rate and, worse still, US leaders will not be aware of this fact. To be effective, the US must be able to defeat *all* countermeasures, but it is impossible to predict the form and character of such countermeasures and adversaries will go to great lengths to defeat the system now being planned.

The UCS/MIT study examined three types of widely known countermeasures: sub-munitions, decoys, and shrouding. According to the study, the system now planned would not be effective against these common countermeasures. The single-layer nature of the proposed system would make it very vulnerable. Moreover, countries will be able to design countermeasures aimed specifically at overcoming the US system. Furthermore, the NMD system now under development has never been subjected to a realistic test and, according to the proposed testing schedule, will not be tested under realistic conditions prior to its deployment. The United States, Dr. Lewis stated, would need at least until 2005 to be minimally prepared to deploy an effective NMD system.

### **DISCUSSION**

The discussion focused primarily on the technological feasibility and financial impact of NMD deployment. Some participants expressed skepticism over the pessimistic assessment of operational effectiveness presented by Dr. Lewis. A number of discussants questioned whether



countries of proliferation concern would possess the ability to develop countermeasures capable of overcoming US technological expertise. Other participants argued that as long as countries of concern *believe* that NMD works, then missile defenses will serve their purpose. Others countered that the uncertainties and contingencies mentioned are real factors that cast doubt upon the wisdom of NMD deployment. On the issue of cost, European participants largely agreed that if the US wanted to deploy an NMD system, it would find the money.

## **Panel V: The Political Implications of US BMD-Deployments: The Consequences for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation**

### **PRESENTATION**

The first speaker, Rüdiger Reyels, Deputy Commissioner for Arms Control and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Arms Control, outlined two possible scenarios for deployment of NMD. In the first scenario, the US would deploy limited NMD with an amended ABM Treaty. In the second scenario, the US would deploy a comprehensive NMD and scrap the ABM Treaty. The central question in the NMD debate therefore concerns the choice between the preservation or destruction of the ABM treaty, which is viewed by other nations as a mainstay of international stability. Abrogation of the treaty might halt the process of strategic arms reductions, lead to the retention of multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), or even spark a strategic nuclear arms race, which in turn might lead to the complete breakdown of bilateral and multilateral arms control treaties. In contrast, an amended ABM Treaty that allowed for deployment of limited NMD and was coupled with further reductions in strategic arms, confidence-building measures (CBMs), and limits on tactical nuclear weapons, would be acceptable to the Europeans. This scenario would preserve the existing network of arms control treaties and agreements.

The second speaker, Michael Krepon, President of the Henry L. Stimson Center, argued that a limited NMD is likely to be deployed for many reasons. First, nuclear deterrence entails significant risks; many in the United States therefore believe it rational that the US should increase its defensive capabilities. Second, the United States and other countries are already moving to develop and deploy TMD in East Asia, Northeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf. The deployment of TMD to protect US forces abroad, however, will strengthen political pressure to deploy NMD to protect US citizens at home. Third, old explanations as to why BMD systems are undesirable are no longer persuasive to many Americans in the post-Cold War era. Mutually assured destruction is difficult to explain and to justify in today's international system, since it requires nations to be defenseless to ballistic missile attack in order to be effective. Finally, he asserted, approximately half of the Republican caucus in the US Senate is opposed to treaties and an estimated 90 percent of Senate Republicans support NMD. He concluded that the arms control treaty regime is in great difficulty. Supporters of NMD have a clear and persuasive message; opponents do not. The old "defenses are bad" mantra is no longer convincing. A new conceptualization of arms control is urgently needed. Arms control has evolved little since its introduction in the 1960s and 1970s. The notion of "cooperative threat reduction," comprising the Nunn-Lugar program, lab-to-lab exchanges, and the nuclear cities initiative, provides a useful starting point for a reconceptualization of arms control. The new concept should include lower force numbers, a reduction in the alert status of nuclear forces, and limited insurance policies in the form of missile defenses. Limited NMD should be seen as part of cooperative threat reduction.

The third speaker, Mr. Jack Mendelsohn, Vice President and Executive Director of the Lawyers Alliance for World Security, prefaced his remarks by stressing that arms control is not simply agreements on force levels, but rather a complex of cooperative approaches to improving security, comprising agreements on transparency, limits on force modernization, cooperative threat reduction, international enforcement mechanisms, control of special materials, export controls, and other cooperative approaches.

The NMD debate has several dimensions, Mr. Mendelsohn noted. On the surface, there are differences over the nature of the threat, the appropriate response to that threat, and the effectiveness of missile defenses. On another level, however, the NMD debate is a political struggle between two contending views on how to achieve security. At issue is whether the US should provide for its own defense independently or through cooperative solutions. At present, political trends favor those who think the US should provide for its own defense independently and seek to shake off treaty constraints. This is the fundamental issue in the NMD debate.

A decision to deploy NMD would have a profound impact on this cooperative approach to security. First, the US would face a less predictable international environment and could suffer a loss of authority on arms control and nonproliferation issues. International cooperation on nuclear risk reduction consequently could decline, and other states might refuse to reduce their nuclear forces or even undertake to increase their retaliatory forces or to deploy force multipliers. Finally, NMD deployment might prompt states to persist with or initiate high-risk operational practices. The key issue, Mr. Mendelsohn concluded, is whether a decision to deploy NMD would result in a net increase in the security of the United States.

## **DISCUSSION**

The discussion focused on a possible “reconceptualization” of arms control and US unilateralism. The call for a new conceptualization for arms control sparked much discussion. One participant pointed out that, although the conditions that gave rise to mutually assured destruction (MAD) have changed, policies and actions continue to reflect the MAD framework. Within that framework, NMD is destabilizing. A reconceptualization of ideas and thinking may be necessary, but it is not proceeding at the same pace as progress toward an NMD deployment decision. Another participant noted that there are new threats and new risks in the international arena today, but wondered whether the next president of the United States would be willing to risk a fundamental change in the United States’ approach to security. Another speaker praised the concept of cooperative threat reduction but noted that it is not enough for the US alone to start thinking differently; rather, its allies and even enemies would also need to embrace this reconceptualization. Some European participants expressed concern about US unilateralism. One discussant reminded the US that the abrogation of treaties is inconsistent with credible leadership and arms reduction initiatives.

## **Panel VI: The Political Implications of US BMD-Deployments: Consequences for NATO, for the Political Relations with Russia with China**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Dr. Joachim Krause, Deputy Director of the DGAP's Research Institute, considered the consequences of cooperative deployment of NMD and, alternatively, of a unilateral US decision to deploy NMD on political relations with NATO, Russia, and China. A unilateral decision to deploy NMD would likely be met with much criticism in France and Germany, he noted, while Russia's reaction is likely to depend on whether foreign policy is being driven by strategic concerns or domestic politics. The Duma's failure to ratify START II, for example, was an unwise decision from a strategic point of view, but reflected domestic political pressures. For China, the situation is more complicated because of its size and increasing weight in international affairs, but there are similar questions about what motivates and drives Chinese foreign policy.

The second speaker, Dr. Cathleen Fisher, Senior Associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center, observed that domestic political developments in the United States could lead US policymakers to make major decisions about NMD without due consideration of the implications of deployment for political relations with the United States' allies, and for US relations with Russia and China. For the US and Russia, NMD deployment would raise fundamental issues about their strategic relationship, including the future role of nuclear weapons in each country's respective defense policy, the relationship between defenses and deterrence, and the risks and possible benefits of a defense-dominated security paradigm. A US decision at this juncture also could have a profound effect on the already strained relations between the US and China, which views the NMD decision as an attempt by the United States to build a defensive shield that could allow it to intervene without risk in a conflict over Taiwan. Finally, NMD deployment could undermine transatlantic cooperation, sparking a fundamental debate about alliance strategy and European security, and about the utility of unilateral versus multilateral approaches to security.

The third speaker, Dr. Steven Miller, Director of the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, began by noting that the US debate must consider two key questions: (i) What is the definition of "limited" NMD?; and (ii) What are the implications of NMD deployment for the ABM Treaty?

"Limited" NMD, Miller noted, means different things to different people:

- (i) Absolute limits on defenses, in other words, no deployment of NMD;
- (ii) Limited NMD, as defined by President Clinton, entailing finite deployments of missile defenses, a negotiated transition, and careful consideration of Russian sensitivities;
- (iii) multiple sites, and more advanced sensors deployed at a faster rate than currently envisioned;

- (iv) Unlimited NMD, a policy supported by some in the US Senate. "Less-limited" NMD, a position embraced by Republican presidential candidate Governor G.W. Bush and entailing larger numbers of interceptors,

Positions on the scope of NMD, in turn, have different implications for the ABM Treaty. The first option – no NMD – would preserve the ABM Treaty. The second option – a limited, Phase I system – would imply modest revisions to the treaty, while a “less limited” system could require larger revisions or, alternatively, “violation without abrogation” or a reinterpretation of the treaty without withdrawal. Advocates of an unlimited NMD system would have the US abrogate the ABM Treaty or argue that the accord has already lapsed with the demise of the Soviet Union. The implications of NMD deployment for the ABM Treaty are thus contingent on the path chosen. Only the first option is unproblematic for the ABM Treaty, however, while the second through fourth options involve increasing challenges. We are currently faced with the benign end of the spectrum.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Miller stated that we are entering a world of defenses, with deployment of TMD a certainty and NMD deployment probable in five to ten years. The deployment of missile defenses will complicate our political relations with all states, friend and foe. Although the costs of this program are front-loaded, the benefits will only become apparent in time or perhaps not at all. The fundamental question, Dr. Miller concluded, is the effect of missile defenses on national and international security.

## **DISCUSSION**

The discussion revolved around the sequencing of the US NMD decision. One participant argued that NMD debate has in fact taken place, and that the US should go ahead with a decision in favor of NMD. Others cautioned strongly against undue haste in the making of a decision that clearly would have wide-reaching and profound consequences.