

National Missile Defense:

TROUBLING IMPLICATIONS FOR NONPROLIFERATION

by Stephen LaMontagne



Council for a Livable World
Education Fund

NOVEMBER 2000

National Missile Defense:

TROUBLING IMPLICATIONS FOR NONPROLIFERATION

by Stephen LaMontagne

**Council for a Livable World
Education Fund**

NOVEMBER 2000

The author wishes to thank Oleg Bukharin, Lynn Erskine, Camille Grand, John Isaacs, Frank von Hippel, Alex Pikayev, Pavel Podvig, Celeste Wallander, and Jim Walsh for their insight and comments on various drafts of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although President Clinton wisely postponed a decision to deploy a controversial National Missile Defense (NMD), the issue is by no means settled. The Pentagon continues to develop the technology for anti-ballistic missile systems, and the next administration will be under intense pressure to accelerate the program. Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush has even proposed scrapping the current “limited” program in favor of a much more expansive anti-ballistic missile system. With the next intercept test of the current system now tentatively scheduled for early 2001, the missile defense debate will reemerge just as the new administration settles into office. The consequences of such a system for arms control and nonproliferation will once again have to be considered.

NMD threatens to elicit a series of international responses that could both aggravate the greatest existing threats to U.S. national security and shake the foundations of arms control. Russia and China, sensing their growing strategic vulnerability, may adjust their nuclear postures and deployments so that the threat of accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear-armed missiles increases. Growing asymmetry in nuclear capabilities could precipitate a new and dangerous wave of nuclear buildups in India and Pakistan. States previously amenable to working with the U.S. towards nuclear reductions and nonproliferation may instead grow increasingly uncooperative and unconcerned about treaty compliance.

Rather than remaining committed to the earliest possible deployment of an anti-ballistic missile system with little consideration of the proliferation consequences, the U.S. should abandon its deployment plans. Such a decision would contribute positively to global security by preserving the framework for further arms reductions and cooperation on nonproliferation.

NMD threatens to elicit a series of international responses that could both aggravate the greatest existing threats to U.S. national security and shake the foundations of arms control.

Implications of National Missile Defense for Nonproliferation

- ▶ Russia may maintain a larger strategic arsenal than it can adequately support given its ailing economy, thus increasing the risk of accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear ballistic missiles.
- ▶ China will likely accelerate its pursuit of a larger and more sophisticated strategic nuclear arsenal than that which it currently envisions.

- ▶ China may sell missile and nuclear weapon technology to other states and become less willing to cooperate on nonproliferation efforts.
- ▶ Perceived strategic vulnerability and rising domestic political pressure could push India to expand its nuclear and missile programs. Pakistan would reciprocate with a buildup of its own.
- ▶ North Korea may refuse to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and could become more determined to assist the weapons programs of other proliferating states.
- ▶ Arms buildups in South and East Asia, combined with distressing signs of U.S. unilateralism, could further weaken Japan's commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and push it closer to a decision to develop indigenous nuclear weapon capabilities.
- ▶ NMD will jeopardize the arms control regime and hinder the ability of the U.S. to control proliferation through international cooperation and coalition building.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE:

TROUBLING IMPLICATIONS FOR NONPROLIFERATION

History is turning on itself. Whereas the U.S. has traditionally rushed to mend tears in the carefully woven fabric of arms control and nonproliferation regimes, now it is threatening to shred them beyond repair. States such as Russia and China that have reputations as reluctant participants in arms control are now scrambling to discourage the U.S. from engineering its collapse. The underlying cause of this startling role reversal is the effort by the U.S. to develop and deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. The currently proposed missile defense scheme, a “limited” system designed to intercept in space a few dozen warheads launched from ‘states of concern’ such as North Korea, has already failed two out of three carefully scripted tests and provoked stiff international opposition, even from U.S. allies on whose cooperation an effective system depends. Although President Clinton wisely postponed a decision to deploy NMD, the next administration will likely be forced to render its own deployment decision in 2001.

NMD threatens to elicit a series of international responses that could both aggravate the greatest existing threats to U.S. national security and shake the foundations of arms control. Russia and China, sensing their growing strategic vulnerability, may adjust their nuclear postures and deployments in ways that increase the threat of accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear-armed missiles. Growing asymmetry in nuclear capabilities could precipitate a new wave of nuclear weapons buildups in India and Pakistan. States previously amenable to working with the U.S. towards nuclear reductions and nonproliferation may instead grow increasingly uncooperative and unconcerned about treaty compliance. This report summarizes the likely negative consequences of NMD for arms control and nonproliferation.

Although President Clinton wisely postponed a decision to deploy NMD, the next administration will likely be forced to render its own deployment decision in 2001.

Russia may maintain a larger strategic arsenal than it can adequately support given its ailing economy, thus increasing the risk of accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear ballistic missiles.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1972, prohibits the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems that would defend a

nation's entire territory against ballistic missile attack. The treaty's implicit assumption was that a missile defense capability would upset the strategic balance by stimulating an arms race between offensive and defensive forces. The state with missile defenses could theoretically launch a devastating first strike and then defend against a subsequent retaliatory strike. The other state, recognizing that its strategic arsenal could be severely crippled, would have an incentive either to launch a preemptive first strike or to build up its missile forces to a level that could overcome the opponent's defenses even after absorbing a first strike.

U.S. officials are trying to win Russian consent on modifications to the ABM treaty so that it would permit NMD. Russian President Vladimir Putin, however, opposes such modifications. Although Putin previously hinted at the possibility of altering the ABM treaty in exchange for bilateral reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals down to 1,500 warheads, he has since embarked on a fervent campaign to organize international opposition to NMD using the ABM treaty as a rallying point. Putin's visit to China in July 2000 produced a joint statement with Chinese President Jiang Zemin that touted the ABM treaty as "the cornerstone of global strategic stability and international security." The statement decried U.S. attempts to seek "unilateral military and security superiority" and cautioned that deciding to "amend the text of the ABM Treaty is tantamount to an act of undermining the ABM Treaty and will inevitably bring about a series of negative consequences."¹ These developments indicate growing Russian determination to preserve the current ABM treaty.

Putin's reluctance to alter the ABM treaty underscores the widespread Russian fear that NMD will undermine Russia's strategic deterrent, which is already crumbling under the weight of economic hardships. Currently, Russia possesses around 6,000 strategic warheads—2,300 of which are kept on hair-trigger alert, ready to launch at the U.S. at a moment's notice—and 776 deployed liquid and solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).² Officials in Russia's Strategic Rocket Force estimate that 70 percent of these ICBMs have aged beyond their intended service lives along with 85 percent of launch complexes and technical support facilities.³ Although rocket fuel supplies do not fulfill minimum needs and nuclear command and control infrastructure continues to erode, Russia allocates insufficient resources towards dismantling retired nuclear warheads and ICBMs. These conditions create the possibility of an accidental or unauthorized missile launch from Russia, as well as contribute to the "loose nukes" problem—the danger that insiders or terrorist groups might steal nuclear weapons or weapons-usable materials for their own use or for sale to potentially hostile entities. Nevertheless, the land-based ICBM force still receives dubious distinction as the healthiest component of Russia's nuclear triad, while submarine and bomber forces have languished due to budgetary neglect.

Given the limits imposed by harsh economic realities, the Russian Security Council decided in August 2000 to devote more budget resources to conventional forces while making deep cuts in nuclear forces down to around 1,500 warheads. Dr. Alexi G. Arbatov, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Duma's Committee on Defense, predicts that Russia's strategic arsenal could shrink even lower, to around 1,000 warheads by 2010.⁴ These reductions promise to place further strain on the already meager budget for the Strategic Rocket Force, which must scrape the bottom of the barrel for strategic weapons maintenance and procurement, let alone dismantling nuclear weapons and ICBMs.

The majority of Russia's ICBM force will consist of new Topol-M SS-27 missiles, first deployed in 1997 and currently being produced at the rate of 10-15 per year.⁵ The SS-27 is a solid-fueled, single-warhead missile system with both silo-based and mobile versions. Although only silo-based SS-27s have been deployed thus far, Russia is expected to rely chiefly on the mobile variety once it is developed.

Under the generous assumption that Russia doubles its yearly production of SS-27s, it could field as many as 320 such missiles by 2010. Around the same time, according to the Clinton administration's original plan, NMD would achieve Capability 3 (C-3), which calls for 250 missile interceptors at sites in Alaska and North Dakota. Assuming that C-3 is achieved, and that by 2010 the U.S. completes nuclear reductions down to 2,500 warheads—which the Pentagon states is the lowest level consistent with current U.S. security requirements—then the projected Russian ICBM force could theoretically be destroyed by a combination of a massive U.S. first strike and an effective NMD shield against the remaining missiles. In one simple theoretical scenario, the U.S. could launch 1,000 warhead counterforce assault on Russian ICBMs. If a mere 30 percent of those warheads destroy their targets (the Pentagon usually assumes a 50 percent success rate), Russia would have only 20 ICBMs left with which to retaliate. Bombers and submarine-launched ballistic missiles could provide additional retaliatory capability, but only if they receive substantial investments over the next decade. Russia would therefore perceive the credibility of its retaliatory strike capability to be seriously undermined.

... Russia's most likely response to NMD would be to maintain a strategic arsenal capable of overwhelming the proposed missile defense shield in a retaliatory strike.

Moreover, the situation described above represents an optimistic projection of Russian capabilities. In actuality, by 2010 Russia may possess only around 200 ICBMs while the U.S. could still have several thousand nuclear warheads if it refuses to proceed with reductions in its strategic arsenal. Furthermore, as some Russian officials fear, the "limited" missile defense concept envisioned by the Pentagon could serve as the foundation for an expanded system with the perceived capability to defend against much larger strikes. In such a case, Russia would consider its strategic deterrent to be even more vulnerable.

Despite the wisdom and necessity of downsizing its strategic nuclear arsenal to a safer and more manageable level, Russia's most likely response to NMD would be to maintain a strategic arsenal capable of overwhelming the proposed missile defense shield in a retaliatory strike. Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev cautioned in June 2000 that NMD "may narrow down the prospects for further nuclear disarmament... and may prompt the nuclear powers to reconsider their strategic weapons modernization plans."⁶ In Russia, nuclear warhead reductions and the removal of missiles from service would likely continue, but according to a revised plan with higher final target numbers.

One strategy by which Russia might restore what it considers to be an adequate deterrent force would be to extend the operational lifetimes of some of its older missiles such as the SS-18 and the SS-25. However, maintaining additional missiles without sufficient resources to ensure their security and reliability would compound the threat of an accidental or unauthorized missile launch from Russia — already the most frightening and potentially damaging threat to U.S. security.

A second option for Russia would be to equip its new Topol SS-27 ICBMs with multiple independent re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), which would allow at least three independently targetable warheads to be mounted on each missile. MIRVed missiles would be especially attractive to Russia because they are less expensive and more manageable than deploying and maintaining a large number of single-warhead missiles. Additionally, MIRVed missiles can more easily thwart missile defenses by overwhelming them with a simultaneous barrage of warheads.

Both of these options — deploying more missiles or MIRVing preexisting ones — would entail Russia's withdrawal from START II, which prohibits multiple-warhead ICBMs as well as heavy ICBMs such as the SS-18. President Putin has warned that if the U.S. abandons the ABM treaty, "we will have the chance and we will withdraw not only from the START II treaty, but from the whole system of treaties on the limitation and control of strategic and conventional weapons."⁷ Russia therefore links the survival of the ABM treaty to the health of arms control as a whole.

In January 2000 the U.S., rather than dissuading Russia from such responses to NMD, actually *encouraged* Russia to preserve its capability to overcome the proposed system. According to the "Talking Points for ABM Treaty Negotiations," U.S. officials advised their Russian counterparts to maintain enough nuclear warheads mounted on high-alert ICBMs to be able to "make an annihilating counterattack even under conditions of a surprise disarming first strike by the USA."⁸ In other words, the U.S. is seeking to preserve the threat from nuclear ICBMs that are currently pointed at the U.S. in order to deploy a costly and unproven system against nuclear ICBMs that do not— and may never— exist.

China will likely accelerate its pursuit of a larger and more sophisticated strategic nuclear arsenal than that which it currently envisions.

Despite U.S. assurances that NMD is intended only to counter limited missile threats from ‘states of concern,’ Chinese officials believe that NMD was also conceived with China in mind. This is not surprising given that the scope of the proposed system and the choice of Alaska as the site for the first 100 interceptors make NMD ideally suited to defend against ICBMs launched from mainland China. In addition, U.S. intelligence reports often speak of China in terms of the threat that it poses to the U.S. For instance, the conclusions of the 1998 Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, chaired by Donald H. Rumsfeld, highlight several areas of potential conflict that exist between China and the U.S. The unclassified version of the commission’s report adds, “China is modernizing its long range missiles and nuclear weapons in ways that will make it a more threatening power in the event of a crisis.”⁹ The commission’s conclusions, along with fears spurred by allegations of Chinese nuclear espionage, helped resurrect the national missile defense movement in the U.S. and fueled Congressional approval of the National Missile Defense Act of 1999. In view of these assessments of a potential Chinese threat to the U.S., there appears to be no way to make NMD look unthreatening to China.

Although China is in the process of slowly modernizing its nuclear and missile forces, NMD will likely affect the speed, character, and extent of such modernization.

Although China is in the process of slowly modernizing its nuclear and missile forces, NMD will likely affect the speed, character, and extent of such modernization. Currently, China’s strategic arsenal is believed to consist of around 20 liquid-fueled DongFeng 5 (DF-5) ICBMs, each capable of delivering a single nuclear warhead.¹⁰ These missiles are kept on a low state of readiness, with fuel and warheads stored separately, and serve what China believes are the principal functions of its strategic nuclear deterrent—to protect China against nuclear blackmail and provide the capability to mount a minimal but nonetheless devastating retaliatory nuclear strike. However, because the DF-5 is not mobile and requires several hours of launch preparations, China believes that NMD will provide the U.S. with a *de facto* capability to defend against China’s ICBM force. The U.S. could theoretically launch a quick strike to disable most—if not all—of China’s ICBMs and then rely on NMD to defend against any subsequent counterattack.

Faced with the possibility of a crippling strike from a power that it perceives as bent on hegemony, China’s likely response to NMD would be to accelerate the modernization of its nuclear and missile programs. A classified National Intelligence Estimate released in August 2000 confirms this assessment, reportedly predicting that China’s strategic arsenal could swell to ten times its present size as a response to NMD.¹¹ The next generation of Chinese ICBMs include the DF-31—the first of which could be deployed

in the near future— and the DF-41, which could be ready for deployment by 2010.¹² Both the DF-31 and DF-41 will be solid-fueled, mobile missile systems capable of reaching U.S. territory. China is also experimenting with a submarine-launched version of the DF-31, called the JuLang 2, that would be deployed on a new class of Chinese nuclear submarines. Russia could assist China's missile program by providing technology for countermeasures and mobile launchers. Arms sales already represent the bulk of the trade relationship between the two states, and a recently negotiated five year plan calls for \$4 billion in Russian arms sales and transfers to China each year from 2000-2004.¹³

Until the DF-31 and DF-41 become available, China could expand its force of DF-5 missiles as well as increase the operational readiness of those missiles by deploying them with fuel and nuclear warheads already loaded. Such a high state of alert, without accompanying improvements in nuclear command and control, would create an unacceptable risk of accidental or unauthorized Chinese missile launch. Another option for China would be to MIRV its ICBMs. A program to integrate the DF-5 with a MIRV capability was launched late in 1983 and, although current evidence suggests that no MIRVed missiles have yet been deployed, China might possess the capability to field a small force of such missiles within a relatively short period of time.¹⁴

China also believes that NMD will threaten its interests in Taiwan by enabling the U.S. to pursue a more aggressive policy in the region and affect its own resolution to the Taiwan question. Given that U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and proposals to include the island in a theater missile defense (TMD) of East Asia already strain Sino-U.S. relations, NMD might push China to deploy more short-range missiles along the Taiwan Strait. If the U.S. responds by making TMD technology available to Taiwan, China and Taiwan would be pushed closer to military confrontation, with the U.S. caught in the middle.

China may sell missile and nuclear weapon technology to other states and become less willing to cooperate on nonproliferation efforts.

China joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1984 and signed onto the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992. As part of a deal to end sanctions imposed after China and Pakistan engaged in missile technology transfers, China agreed to follow the guidelines for the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). In 1996 China signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and a year later agreed to stop its aid to Iran's nuclear program. However, recent allegations of Chinese assistance to Iran in developing its Shahab-3 missile and new evidence of aid to Pakistan's missile and nuclear weapons programs have fostered doubts about the extent of China's commitment to nonproliferation.

China's seemingly mixed intentions regarding the nonproliferation regime indicate a readiness to cooperate, but also a willingness to violate. Much will depend on U.S. actions on behalf of Taiwan and whether the U.S. fields an anti-ballistic missile system. As top Chinese arms control negotiator Sha Zukang stated in July 2000, "To say the least, our enthusiasm and participation in all of those [nonproliferation] regimes, particularly in cooperating with the United States... would be severely dampened."¹⁵ Moreover, a September 1999 National Intelligence Estimate concluded that both China and Russia would probably be willing to sell countermeasure and penetration aid technology designed to render NMD ineffective.¹⁶ North Korea and Iran—the principal states against which NMD would be arrayed—have received missile assistance from Russia and China in the past and would aggressively pursue countermeasure technology.

Perceived strategic vulnerability and rising domestic political pressure could push India to expand its nuclear and missile programs. Pakistan would reciprocate with a buildup of its own.

A strategic nuclear buildup in China, combined with concerns about the collapse of the ABM Treaty and the crumbling of the START process, would force India to reevaluate its own nuclear posture. As of 1998, India possessed enough plutonium to make 78 early-generation nuclear warheads.¹⁷ However, a majority of India's nuclear warheads are unassembled, and according to a 1998 estimate by Indian nuclear researcher G. Balachandran, fewer than 10 are ready to be put on missiles.¹⁸ India maintains an arsenal of approximately 75 short-range Prithvi missiles capable of reaching all of Pakistan and the Chinese border area, and has tested medium-range Agni I and II missiles capable of reaching deep into Chinese territory. An ICBM—the Surya—has been under development since 1994, but incorporates currently untested booster technology and remains a long way from deployment.¹⁹ Rather, India's missile program primarily addresses regional security concerns, particularly the rivalry with China. The two states fought a war in 1962 over a border dispute that remains unresolved.

India would view a Chinese buildup with considerable apprehension and feel pressured to respond with a buildup of its own, a move that would necessitate additional nuclear tests that would in turn halt progress on India's accession to the CTBT and a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT). Chinese assistance to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programs would further antagonize India, which has fought three wars with Pakistan since 1947—two over the disputed territory of Kashmir where violent skirmishes continue to break out on almost a daily basis.

Moreover, high-level Pakistani officials have said that they would not rule out using nuclear weapons in the event of another conflict. In a July 2000 visit to Berlin, Pakistan's Deputy

Foreign Minister Inam ul Haque warned, “There is no way Pakistan can hold out any assurance that it will not use any nuclear weapons if its existence is threatened.”²⁰ Pakistan will no doubt respond to an acceleration of India’s nuclear program by expending all resources necessary to keep pace with its rival. The world already witnessed an example of this competition when Pakistan responded to India’s 1998 nuclear tests with a series of its own.

India’s strategic incentives to expand its nuclear and missile efforts would likely be bolstered by internal doctrinal shifts and intense political pressure. Currently a group of nuclear moderates, led by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, dictate India’s nuclear doctrine, which favors a small, de-alerted arsenal, embraces a no-first-use policy, and supports eventual ratification of the CTBT and a FMCT. The more radical nuclear faction favors a large number of warheads, a force of ICBMs equipped with MIRVs, and disapproves of a FMCT.²¹ Although the moderates thus far have controlled the nuclear debate, outrage over U.S. unilateralism and open disregard for international treaties could contribute to a more hard-line nuclear stance in India.

North Korea may refuse to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and could become more determined to assist the weapons programs of other proliferating states.

In recent months North Korea has made several attempts to shed the “rogue state” reputation that forms the principal U.S. justification for NMD. In addition to attending an historic summit with South Korean President Kim Dae Jung that revived hope for reunification of the peninsula, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has pursued closer ties with the rest of his state’s Asian neighbors, including Russia and China. This flurry of diplomatic maneuvering culminated in North Korea’s induction into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in July 2000 as well as its official diplomatic recognition by Canada.

Although the U.S. views North Korea’s recent overtures with skepticism, they should not be regarded as completely disingenuous. Prospects for peace on the Korean peninsula are brighter than ever, and the opening of new diplomatic channels provides opportunities to encourage North Korean cooperation on nonproliferation. Pressing ahead with NMD may squander these opportunities and antagonize North Korea into resuming its missile program and sharing missile materials and technology with Pakistan and states in the Middle East. Any hint of North Korean flexibility or willingness to cooperate with the U.S. on nonproliferation would likely disappear.

The resumption of North Korean missile development and testing could reverse progress towards peace on the Korean peninsula. If long-range missile forces accumulate in the

North, South Korea will likely seek to acquire longer-range missiles capable of penetrating deep into North Korean territory. The U.S. has expressed a willingness to allow the South to develop such missiles, but recent improvements in peninsular relations have fostered a wait-and-see attitude among South Korean officials.²²

Arms buildups in South and East Asia, combined with distressing signs of U.S. unilateralism, could further weaken Japan's commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and push it closer to a decision to develop indigenous nuclear weapon capabilities.

As the chain reaction of buildups sweeps across South and East Asia, the view from Japan will be quite unsettling. North Korea, which fired a TaepoDong I missile over Japan in 1998 in a failed attempt to launch a satellite into orbit, will likely be working furiously on the longer-range TaepoDong II. China, India, and Pakistan may well be expanding their missile programs and improving the operational capabilities of their nuclear arsenals. The framework for nuclear reductions will have weakened under the weight of U.S. unilateralism.

The fallout from a U.S. decision to deploy NMD could push the NPT to its breaking point.

Inside Japan, NMD could further erode the political and psychological barriers to nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests combined with the U.S. Senate's defeat of the CTBT have already fostered Japanese perceptions of a waning U.S. commitment to upholding the nonproliferation and disarmament regime. When former Vice Defense Minister Shingo Nishimura was forced to resign in October 1999 after recommending that Japan develop long-range missiles and bombers as well as nuclear weapons, he was expressing the sentiments of a growing number of Japanese who believe that the U.S. military presence in East Asia will recede and that Japan must provide for its own security. Were the decision made to go nuclear, Japan's nuclear power industry and space launch technology are sophisticated enough to allow it to develop nuclear weapons and missile delivery capabilities very quickly.

NMD will jeopardize the arms control regime and hinder the ability of the U.S. to control proliferation through international cooperation and coalition building.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which entered into force in 1970 and has been ratified by 187 states, prohibits the five recognized nuclear states (U.S., Russia, China, United Kingdom, and France) from transferring nuclear weapons or technology relevant to such weapons to non-nuclear weapon states. The non-nuclear weapon states in turn agree not to pursue nuclear weapon capabilities and to allow regular inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition, Article VI of the NPT obligates the nuclear weapon states

to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” The state parties reaffirmed this promise at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference with a set of “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament” that also included the entry into force of treaties that would ban nuclear testing and the production of fissile materials. Despite the lack of progress toward these goals, the 2000 NPT Review Conference secured a new pledge by the recognized nuclear weapon states to mount an “unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.”

The fallout from a U.S. decision to deploy NMD could push the NPT to its breaking point. States with nuclear weapon capabilities, instead of working towards “total elimination of their nuclear arsenals,” may well implement programs to strengthen or expand their arsenals. Because nuclear modernization in states such as India might require explosive testing and production of additional fissile materials, the CTBT and progress towards a FMCT could be derailed. The principles agreed upon at the 1995 NPT review conference will instead represent a trail of broken promises, and the U.S. will have sent an unambiguous message to the rest of the world of its lack of commitment to and faith in arms control and nonproliferation. Rather than adhering to an unraveling regime, non-nuclear weapon states may decide that it is in their best interests to abandon the NPT.

CONCLUSION

National Missile Defense will not enhance U.S. national security. Rather, such a system will likely lead to a series of destabilizing international responses that, in the end, could actually increase the threat to U.S. national security. Russia might retain an unmanageable number of missiles on hair-trigger alert, while China may expand its nuclear forces in order to overcome its perceived strategic vulnerability. India and Pakistan could be pushed closer to nuclear confrontation. Fears about missile developments in ‘states of concern’ might become self-fulfilling prophecies. The spread of technology and materials relevant to nuclear weapons, missile delivery systems, and countermeasures may become more determined and less controllable. Other states will regard U.S. commitment to disarmament and nonproliferation with increasingly bitter cynicism, making coordinated and cooperative action towards these goals prohibitively difficult. The dangers inherent in such a post-NMD world are considerably more severe than the type of threats to U.S. national security that currently exist.

A decision on national missile defense must be governed by prudence and not paranoia. Rather than remaining committed to the earliest possible deployment of an anti-ballistic missile system with little consideration of the proliferation consequences, the U.S. should abandon its deployment plans. Such a decision, combined with skilled diplomacy, would alleviate the pressure on Russia to maintain an unwieldy strategic arsenal and might invite reciprocal gestures of restraint from China and North Korea concerning their nuclear and missile programs. The U.S. would furthermore demonstrate its sensitivity to the delicate security atmosphere in South and East Asia. Most importantly, the framework for nuclear reductions and nonproliferation would remain intact, and international confidence in U.S. leadership would be given a desperately needed boost.

NOTES

¹ “A Joint Statement of President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin and Secretary of the People’s Republic of China, Jiang Zimin, Concerning the Issues of Anti-Missile Defense,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, July 19, 2000, 7.

² Igor Khripunov, “Last Leg of the Triad,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 56 (July/August 2000), 58-9.

³ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁴ Dr. Alexi G. Arbatov, Deputy Chairman, Committee on Defense, Russian Federation Duma, “The Next Steps in Arms Control: A Russian Perspective,” Statement at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 9, 2000, <<http://www.ceip.org/programs/npp/roundtable050900.htm>>

⁵ William M. Arkin and Robert S. Norris, “Russian Nuclear Forces, 2000,” NRDC Nuclear Notebook, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 54 (July/August 2000), 70.

⁶ “Russia and India Worried by American ABM Plans,” *Itar-Tass*, June 29, 2000.

- ⁷ Stephen W. Young, "Pushing the Limits: The Decision on National Missile Defense," Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, Council for a Livable World Education Fund, July 2000, 23.
- ⁸ U.S. Draft Protocol to the ABM Treaty and Associated "Talking Points," *Arms Control Today* 30 (May 2000), 22.
- ⁹ Donald H. Rumsfeld et al, Executive Summary of the Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, July 15, 1998, <ftp://fedbbs.access.gpo.gov/gpo_bbs/cia/bmt.htm>
- ¹⁰ William M. Arkin and Robert S. Norris, "Chinese Nuclear Forces, 1999," NRDC Nuclear Notebook, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 55 (May/June 1999), 79.
- ¹¹ Steven Lee Meyers, "U.S. Missile Plan Could Reportedly Provoke China," *New York Times* August 10, 2000.
- ¹² William M. Arkin and Robert S. Norris, "Chinese Nuclear Forces, 1999," 80.
- ¹³ Dr. Stephen J. Blank, Statement to the House Arms Services Committee, Hearing on China's Military Capabilities, July 19, 2000, <<http://www.house.gov/hasc/testimony/106thcongress/00-07-19blank.html>>
- ¹⁴ Nuclear Forces Guide, Federation of American Scientists, <<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/icbm/df-5.htm>>
- ¹⁵ John Pomfret, "China Threatens Arms Control Collapse; Top Negotiator Says Missile Defense Puts Treaties at Risk," *Washington Post*, July 14, 2000.
- ¹⁶ Stephen W. Young, "Pushing the Limits," 15.
- ¹⁷ Nuclear Numbers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Nonproliferation Project, <<http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/NuclearNumbers/india.htm>>
- ¹⁸ Nuclear Forces Guide, Federation of American Scientists, <<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/india/nuke/index.html>>
- ¹⁹ Joseph Cirincione, "Indian Missile Deployments and the Reaction from China," Working Paper submitted to the Conference on the Nuclearization of South Asia: Problems and Solutions, UNESCO International School of Science for Peace, Como, Italy 20-23 May, 1999.
- ²⁰ Adam Tanner, "Pakistan to Consider Using Nukes If Attacked," Reuters News Service, July 20, 2000.
- ²¹ Gaurav Kampani, "How a U.S. National Missile Defense will Affect South Asia," Monterey Institute of International Studies, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, May 2000.
- ²² Doug Struck, "A Quandary for Seoul: Extend Missile Range?; U.S. Approved Plan, but South Korea Wavers," *International Herald Tribune*, June 26, 2000.

Council for a Livable World
Education Fund
110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 201
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 546-0795
www.clw.org