

MISSILE DEFENSE ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

“Protecting our way of life”

To: Members of the 111th Congress

From: Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance

Date: September 23, 2009

Re: “New Missile Defense Architecture”

Background

On September 17, 2009, President Barack Obama and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates unveiled a shift in missile defense policy abandoning the “Third Site” in Europe, outlining a “new missile defense architecture” for the protection of Europe primarily focusing on the development, evolution and deployment of the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3), which will be both sea- and land-based. These will protect our forward deployed troops, friends and allies in Europe from the Iranian short- and medium-range ballistic missile threat. The “new missile defense architecture” does not address or replace the protection from Iranian long-range ballistic missiles that the “Third Site” in Europe would have provided.

Findings

- This “new missile defense architecture” is a step forward and will better protect our forward deployed troops, friends and allies. It is a positive move towards a future global missile defense system that is adaptable, integrated, interoperable and will offer cost-sharing opportunities with our allies.
- The “new missile defense architecture” does not address or replace the protection of the U.S. Homeland from Iranian long-range ballistic missiles that the “Third Site” in Europe addressed until 2020 with a nonexistent, untested and unproven version of the SM-3.
- The “Third site” in Europe was positioned for long-range ballistic protection for the U.S. Homeland and two early warning missile defense radars in Thule, Greenland and Fylingdales, England as the current and future deployed Ground-Based Interceptors (GBI) in Alaska and California are dependent on these two fixed radars sites to protect the U.S. Homeland from long-range missiles from Iran.
- Due to the geographic distances from Alaska to the Southeastern and Eastern regions of the U.S. Homeland, a long-range ballistic missile attack from Iran would not yield the same protection and multiple-shot doctrine (Look-Shoot-Look) as the rest of the country now has with the current missile defense system, thus increasing the risk of success and lowering the confidence of the systems capability to defend the Eastern and Southeastern regions of our country.
- The proliferation of short- and medium-range missiles from Iran is the main driver for this “new missile defense architecture”. The placement of short- and medium-range Iranian missiles on sea-based platforms against the U.S. Homeland needs to be equally addressed as Iran has demonstrated this capability.

- Iran's successful launch of the Safir space launch vehicle that placed a satellite in orbit on February 2, 2009 and the Iranian 1,200 mile solid fueled two stage missile launched on May 20, 2009 coupled with their continued proliferation of short- and medium-range ballistic missile tests demonstrates their technical proficiency in developing an ICBM. It is of note that the former U.S.S.R took six months from its first successful satellite launch in 1958 to develop an ICBM that could reach the U.S. Homeland.
- As of yet, there has not been a credible solution or realistic alternative offered by the President or the Department of Defense to replace the protection of the U.S. Homeland and the radars in Greenland and England that the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic would of done, nor has there been a 'hedge' solution introduced against sea-based short- and medium-range missiles threats against the U.S. Homeland in the announced "new missile defense architecture."

Analysis

The White House announced that it is reshaping American missile defense policy with a stronger emphasis toward the short- and medium-range missile threat from Iran. This change entails abandoning plans to build ten Ground-Based Interceptors in Poland and a long-range radar system in the Czech Republic. Instead, President Obama proposed implementing a multi-phased plan to create a "new missile defense architecture." The first phase consists of deploying SM-3 Block 1A missiles, launched from Aegis ships, to Europe while pursuing options for land-based deployment of the same system, "Aegis Ashore". Under the final phase of the plan, the White House anticipates the deployment of SM-3 Block 2B to Europe by 2020 to have the capability to intercept long-range ballistic missiles – eleven years from now.

The previous plan to build GBIs in Europe aimed to protect our European allies, our troops deployed, and most importantly, our homeland. Because SM-3s are designed to intercept short- and medium-range missiles, the change from GBIs to SM-3s will provide insufficient coverage against long-range ballistic missile threats for our country and the two fixed radars in Greenland and England for the next eleven years. The new proposal covers the second and third priorities of our missile defense doctrine as outlined by Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Cartwright, protecting our allies and our troops, but it does not fulfill the first and most important priority, outlined in the plan for missile defense: "the defense of our homeland."

Under the plan, the SM-3 Block 2B missiles, the plan's solution to long-range missile threats, are not slated to deploy until 2020 if the technology is proven. Eleven years without missile protection for the East Coast is too long to put "at risk" the American public. While MDAA supports the President's vision for a "new missile defense architecture," we must call attention to the inadequate protection that the East Coast and Southeast will receive under this plan and the lack of a missile defense "hedge" for sea-based short- and medium-range missile threats to our Homeland. The United States invested tens of billions of dollars over the last seven years to produce defense against long-range, medium-range and short-range missile threats. From this labor and the tens of billions of tax dollars spent, the U.S. has created a technically capable and deployed answer to ballistic missile threats, but still needs a policy solution from the Obama administration to provide equal protection for the U.S. Homeland.