



For and Against



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AN OUTDATED RADAR

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The programme for the construction of the radar in the Czech Republic and the missile base in Poland is outdated. At least, that is what the authors of the remarkable two-hundred-page *Report of an Independent Working Group on Missile Defence, the Space Relationship and the 21st Century* have claimed. They have not been recruited from the opponents, but on the contrary from the ranks of the prominent defenders of the missile defence system at such prestigious workplaces as the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, the Heritage Foundation, High Frontier, the Claremont Institute or the George C. Marshall Institute. According to their conclusions, **the creation of the radar base in the Czech Republic is unnecessary.** In their opinion, a truly functioning project which would prevent a “cosmic Pearl Harbour” would have to contain three main components:

- **Space weapons systems**, especially those which have already been prepared at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s within the framework of the **Brilliant Pebbles** project;
- Modernised **naval systems**;
- Only **two land stations, both in the USA**, specifically in Alaska and California, but not in Europe.

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The system, whose components should also include the American military base in the Czech Republic, has been built from its inception as part of the US National Missile Defence (NMD), i.e. for the protection of the territory of the United States. However, the radar in the Czech Republic and the missiles in Poland are presented

nowadays as part of the defence of Europe. This is the case, for example, in the twelve-page brochure *Proposed U.S. Missile Defense Assets In Europe*. In it, North Korea no longer poses a threat, only Iran.

According to the arguments contained in this brochure, the bases in the Czech Republic and in Poland would serve only as back-ups in relation to the USA – the United States should be primarily protected by the base in Greenland. **The bases in the Czech Republic and Poland are apparently designated mainly for the protection of Europe.** Of course, even given this concept, the command of the entire global system (the US Ballistic Missile Defence System – BMDS) will remain in American hands (pages 5 and 6). It is necessary to add that illustration number 1 taken from this brochure does not look convincing – a missile destroyed above the Baltic is probably not aimed at Europe.

The topics which are now stirring the Czech political scene have been discussed in the USA – at least during the budget debates – for more than half a century. The missile development programme for these purposes began with a memorandum from first lieutenant Jacob W. Schaefer. In 1944, he contacted his army commanders with a proposal to develop and produce a radio controlled anti-aircraft missiles. One year later, Bell Laboratories and their production division, Western Electric, began working on this project – and this led to the creation of several generations of Nike missiles.

The development of the Nike Zeus, the first anti-ballistic missile, began in 1955, i.e. approximately two years before the release of the earth’s first satellite. This

system was deployed from 1965 onwards. Naturally, the generational predecessor of this missile, the Nike Hercules (which was admittedly still an anti-aircraft missile, but was also equipped with a nuclear warhead) was deployed abroad in Asia and Europe.

The plans for the advance of the radars abroad, which were supposed to constitute part of the USA air defence, date from 1946 – this involved a belt of radars along the 50th parallel from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the so-called Pinetree Line. The project quickly became outdated and it was replaced by the **DEW Line**. This stretches from Alaska, through Canada, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and on to Iceland. When the project was activated in 1957, it contained 63 radar stations.

The **Safeguard Program** became the hit of the limited protection against intercontinental ballistic missiles at the end of the 1960s. The rapid development of the anti-ballistic systems was inhibited by the **Treaty between the USA and the USSR on the limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems (ABM Treaty) concluded in 1972**. A period of the disassembling of excess antiballistic stations ensued due to the condition that both participating states would only have two anti-missile stations (one around the capital city and the second around one of the intercontinental ballistic missile bases). The amendment to the **ABM Treaty** from 1974 reduced the number of these stations to one and the United States kept the defence of its missile base (the Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota).¹

The **Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI)** became a new impulse for the development of the antiballistic system known as “star wars”. Ronald Reagan officially announced this programme in March 1983 and it was supposed to secure the protection of the United States against Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles.

There were several new ideas in SDI, which still resound in today’s discussions. Firstly, this project presupposed the **transfer of the most important components of the anti-missile protection into space**, which meant that **the defence project acquired the features of a global system**. A new idea also involved the planned use of **lasers on satellites** to destroy enemy missiles. It was expected that **new missile interceptors starting from land bases** would be deployed. A further planned new feature was to be the **land and space-based monitoring and guidance systems**. The project was not realised and President Bill Clinton withdrew from the global antiballistic defence programme, but the development and testing of some of the components continued.

The NMD programme under discussion today is a direct descendant of SDI. Its current form has grown from **National Security Directive 23 issued by President George W. Bush** in December 2002. It is associated with

the **withdrawal** from the **ABM Treaty** by the USA. In its original form, the NMD was supposed to be a small variant of the SDI, because the official goal is **protection against limited missile capabilities, i.e. of rogue states**. The first generation of NMD contains **monitoring systems in space and land and sea radar plus missile bases**. The NMD is officially oriented towards **the destruction of enemy missiles using kinetic energy**.

Table no. 1: The expenditure of the USA on anti-missile defence in billions of dollars

Fiscal year	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95
President's proposal	1,8	3,7	4,8	5,2	4,5	4,6	4,5	5,2	5,4	3,8	3,2
Approved	1,4	2,8	3,2	3,6	3,7	4,0	2,9	4,1	3,8	2,8	2,8

Fiscal year	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Pproposal	2,9	2,8	2,6	3,6	3,3	4,5	8,3	6,7	7,7	9,2	7,8	9,3
Approved	3,4	3,7	3,8	3,5	3,6	4,8	7,8	7,4	7,7	9,0	7,8	9,4

Source: [Missile Defense Agency](#)

Both global anti-missile defence projects (SDI and NMD) are characterised by the fact **it is relatively easy to describe the original model which was to be realised, but not the final form of the system**: in both cases, the new projects began to grow from previous projects. If no fundamental political decisions are taken, the **current phase of the global deployment of the American NMD system will be only the beginning of the constantly proliferating research, development and deployment of new anti-missile systems**.

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The first technical criticism arose as early as during the period of the introduction of the Nike Zeus missiles – Robert McNamara, the Minister of Defence in the Kennedy administration, pointed out that the antiballistic missiles were not capable of differentiating between missiles carrying a nuclear warhead and dummy missiles. Two levels of criticism of the anti-missile defence have gradually taken shape in the USA: **one line of criticism points to the impossibility of the anti-missile defence, while the second criticises its technical obsolescence**.

The **summary of the arguments on the ineffectiveness of SDI** which was compiled by the authors of the article *The President's Choice: Star Wars or Arms Control* published in winter 1984/1985 by the prominent American magazine, Foreign Affairs, continues to be inspirational. **The best-known American criticism of the current NMD project came in July 2003 from the American Physical Society**. It pointed out that in order to destroy the missiles in the first phase of flight from Iran or the DPRK, it would be necessary to have at least 1600 cosmic interceptors at a price of 57 to 224 billion for

¹ See BERHOW, Mark A.: *US Strategic and Defensive Missile Systems 1950-2004*. Oxford and New York: Osprey Publishing, 2005.

a single solid fuel missile; in the case of one liquid fuel missile, this would require 700 interceptors at a price of 27 to 78 billion dollars.

Some critics note that the **NMD is a defence against a non-existing threat, which does not perceive the threats realistically**. An example may be the warning that **it is easier for the owner of one or several nuclear warheads – whether this involves terrorists or a “rogue state” – to transport them to a harbour in the United States by ship, rather than by using an intercontinental missile**. In the context of the protection against terrorist attack, some authors state that, if the defence was perfect, no **drugs would be smuggled** into the USA. The NMD programme in its current form **does not secure protection against medium and short range missiles fired from ships**.

The critics of the current NMD programme in *Report of an Independent Working Group on Missile Defence, the Space Relationship and the 21st Century* have pointed to other aspects. According to them, the basis of a functioning anti-missile defence system should be the **one thousand killer satellites** which were developed within the framework of the Brilliant Pebbles programme at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. These satellites weighing 1.4 and 2.6 kg and with the size of “a traditional South Carolina watermelon” should have their own defensive system and **the ability to destroy enemy intercontinental missiles in all three flight phases**. The satellites should be launched by 2010.

The construction of a land-based anti-missile defence system means stagnating with outdated ideas. As the authors of the cited report state, “only space-based defenses inherently have this global capability and permanence”. At prices dating from 2005, the Brilliant Pebbles programme would cost 16.4 billion dollars (10-11 and 113). In a critique of this report for the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Theresa Hitchens points out that the system was originally supposed to have 100 thousand and later seven thousand satellites (page 77).

The existing **parts of the anti-missile defence system in the seas and oceans, i.e. Aegis and Standard Missiles, should be improved**. As well as the tasks associated with the defence against intercontinental ballistic missiles, this sub-system **should secure defence against medium and short range missiles fired from ships**. However, according to this report, the anti-missile systems on ships, like the land bases, should only have a regional or local significance. The US land bases “should not be expanded beyond current deployment sites in Alaska and California” (114). That is to say, **no radar in the Czech Republic**.

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The primary task of every politico-military strategy is the identification of the adversary and the selection of means which can be used against it. According to the authors of the *Report of an Independent Working Group*

on Missile Defence, the Space Relationship and the 21st Century, the NMD should have a **global range and protect the USA, its armed forces abroad and its coalition allies from all azimuths**. The current propaganda considers the parts of the NMD system which are to be located in the Czech Republic and Poland to constitute protection against missiles from Iran – and not from Russia. But:

- **Iran does not have any missiles which could reach the United States;**
- **The aim of already deployed missiles and the functions of the radars can be changed.**

Experience to date has shown that **it is possible to change the political orientation of the system and its technical parts** as soon as the first generation of the NMD system is deployed. The same applies to the radar. It is possible to make the network denser, including its range and functions. And as soon as a potential opponent perfects his weapons, it will also be necessary to carry out an upgrade of the NMD system. **If the NMD system is to function, the financing thereof will know no bounds**. As table number 1 shows, according to the official *Missile Defense Agency*, the USA has spent 107 billion dollars on anti-missile defence since 1985. In its *budget proposal* (page 17), this agency expects that the maintenance of the anti-missile system will cost approximately 1 billion each year up to 2013, while any development of the system would cost an additional 6 to 7 billion dollars annually.

The search for the opponent which the NMD system should confront began in January 1995. At that time, the 104th Congress of the USA, which was dominated by Republicans in both houses, was in session. In 1997, this congress established the **Committee to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States**. Its *report from 1998* found the threats to be in Russia and China. At the same time, however, it reached the conclusion that the threat posed by a number of unfriendly developing states was broader, more mature and evolving more rapidly than has been reported in estimates and reports by the Intelligence Community and that the United States “might well have little or no warning before operational deployment” of missiles capable of targeting the territory of the USA. **The Committee stated that Iran and Northern Korea will represent a missile threat for the United States over the next five years and Iraq during the next ten**. The boss of the Committee was Donald Rumsfeld, later the Minister of Defence of the USA in the administration of George Bush junior.

The argumentation from the Rumsfeld Committee’s report became the basis for the justification of NMD. Officially, NMD is to become the United States’ defence against the unforeseeable actions of “rogue states”. But according to the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, which American President George Bush signed in September 2002 and then again in a modified version in 2006, the problem is viewed more widely. This doctrine presents the **orientation towards preventa-**

tive war “against such emerging threats before they are fully formed”. This doctrine **has replaced the thesis of the balance of fear with the idea of preemptive strikes** – and this no longer only pertains to rogue states.

The debated radar in Brdy is supposed to form part of a system which **stretches from Alaska, through Japan and Australia to Europe and Greenland – it surrounds the core of the Eurasian continent**. The cited *Report of an Independent Working Group on Missile Defence, the Space Relationship and the 21st Century* connects the threat from so-called rogue states with the threat from the “strategic competitors, Russia and China” (page 112). And as **Theresa Hitchens** points out, one of the authors of this report is Keith Payne, the President of the National Institute for Public Policy, one of the “architect of the current Bush administration’s doctrine advocating the preemptive use of nuclear weapons” (page 76).

Nowadays, the now classic expression of the hidden logic of the NMD system is contained in an article by Keir Lieber and Daryl Press called *The Rise of US Nuclear Primacy*, which was published in the prestigious American Foreign Affairs magazine in 2006. According to the authors, the US arsenal after the end of the Cold War was “significantly enhancing its strategic nuclear capabilities”, while the Russian arsenal went into decline. They emphasise that the modernisation of the US nuclear weapons was not targeted against “rogue states” or terrorists. The USA’s contemporary and future nuclear strength is capable of a “disarm the long-range nuclear arsenals of Russia or China with a nuclear first strike”. **The authors claim that they have calculated that an US surprise attack could destroy the Russian and Chinese nuclear arsenals and that any remaining elements would be intercepted by the new anti-missile defence** (pages 42-54). The authors also published a more detailed reasoning for their conclusions in article *The End of MAD?* in the magazine International Security in the same year.

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If we accept the following theses as the starting **axiom** when justifying the need for the USA’s anti-missile defence, i.e.:

- that Iran and the DPRK could have intercontinental ballistic missiles in the future and
- Russian and Chinese missiles could be used against the USA,

then the arguments of the authors of the *Report of an Independent Working Group on Missile Defence, the Space Relationship and the 21st Century* would appear to be strictly logical: **the construction of land stations in Europe is an outdated idea of anti-missile defence**. However, in itself this axiom is a highly disputable ideological preconception.

This does not only involve the fact that the expectations of the Rumsfeld Committee have not come to fruition. The basic problem is more general: how to handle potential threats?

The entire NMD project is based on the assumption that **only unrivalled military superiority can secure the United States security and hegemony**. Superiority has thus been understood as **the need to secure US military might which would be bigger than any coalition of states**. It is for this reason that the US military budget is so huge – as is shown in table number 2.

Table no. 2: The states with the largest military budgets in 2006 (in billions of dollars, constant 2005 prices)

state	expenditure	Per capita expenditure	share (%) of world expenditure
USA	528.7	1,756	46
Great Britain	59.2	990	5
France	53.1	875	5
Chine	[49.5]	[37]	[4]
Japan	43.7	341	4
subtotal of five	734.2		63
Germany	37.0	447	3
Russia	[347]	[244]	[3]
Italy	29.9	514	3
Saudi Arabia	29.0	1,152	3
India	23.9	21.0	2
subtotal of ten	888.7		77
Whole world	1,158	177	100

Source: [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI](#)

The belief that political problems have simple military-technological solutions is deeply rooted in American political culture. The idea is that the development of modern weapons will secure superiority and thus also the option of enforcing the required actions of other people and states. This has often been the case. But it did not work on the battlefields of Indochina in the 1970s and it is not working in Iraq. **Most political problems have a political solution – the disputes between the USA and the DPRK and Iran can be more easily resolved by means of direct talks with Pyongyang and Teheran than by the threat of force**.

It is significant that the Brazilian programme for the use of nuclear energy, which is similar to that in Iran, has not given rise to any international disputes. This is clearly because the **problem is not the programme itself, but the politics of Iran – or the perception thereof in the West**. As has been pointed out by the excellent American specialist Wolfgang Panofsky in his article *Nuclear Insecurity*, “only a broad international approach that does not discriminate between ‘good states’ and ‘bad states’ can secure each state’s ‘inalienable right’ to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes without increasing the risk of the proliferation” (page 116).

The security and exceptional status of the USA in the current world can be secured more easily by means of diplomatic, economic and cultural tools than military

strength. The situation after the occupation of Iraq shows that not even a historically exceptionally strong power such as the United States can resolve the question of security alone. The huge might of the United States and the other powers may jointly lead to the more successful stabilisation of the exceptional position of the USA than the solution offered by gross military might.

The greatest problem of NMD, and therefore also of the planned US military bases in the Czech Republic and Poland is the **rejection of the idea of arms controls and disarming**. From the moment when George Bush denounced the [ABM Treaty](#) in 2001, it began to be clear that Washington was betting on unilateral politics and a new arms race. The [ABM Treaty](#) made the ambitions of the superpowers clear and increased the mutual trust among them. **These arms control treaties could have served as the basis for disarmament treaties.**

NMD represents an attempt to **change the balance of forces**. The majority of those in favour of this project do not refute this fact – they merely think that the power superiority of the USA already exists and that the project simply endeavours to improve and increase the existing superiority. Of course, the commenced armament programmes of Russia and China show that Nixon's words said in 1972 on the eve of the signing of the [ABM Treaty](#) as to the fact that efforts to achieve superiority invoke an instant reaction still apply in the 21st century.

Given that **soldiers understand the improved defence of the USA as the precondition for a safe attack by US armed forces**, it is natural that other states perceive the continuation of the NMD programme as a threat to them. Moreover, **US National Missile Defence**

is part of a wider political concept, which when realised will lead to the moving of US military bases ever closer to the Russian and Chinese border – something which reduces the credibility of the declaration as to the fact that US National Missile Defence is not oriented towards this country.

Russia and China have commenced the modernisation of their armed forces and they are looking for new allies. Moscow has suspended its participation in the [Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe](#) and is talking of withdrawing from a “relic of the Cold War”, from the [Treaty on the Elimination of Medium and Short Range Missiles](#). **The result of Washington's unilateral policy with an emphasis on military force has been the worsening of the USA's position.** It is especially for this reason that the planned radar in Brdy is outdated: the NMD project does not conform to the security requirements at the beginning of the 21st century.

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So far, the only demonstrable result of the US National Missile Defence project has been the weakening of mutual trust between the powers and the subsequent return to the arms race. And so, **at a time when mankind should be concentrating on the elimination of hunger in the world and facing up to the climatic changes in the atmosphere, it is arming in space.**

The threat of intercontinental ballistic missiles fired from Iran or the North Korea is certainly remote and possibly fictitious. The breach in the balance of power and the relations between some countries is both real and current.



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