

**General Eugene Habiger – Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 20, 2004.
Problems and Prospects of New Alaska Missile Interceptor Site**

General Habiger: Thanks Joe [Circincione], both to you and the Carnegie Foundation for hosting this event. I sit here with a little bit of apprehension because I saw in the audience a former professor of mine from the National War College, Prof. George Quester who is back at the University of Maryland, and he's the one, back in the early '80's that kind of ground some of this stuff into my brain, so I'm not looking forward to his critique afterwards. So be kind to me, George, afterwards.

Former Senator Nunn has said this best and I want to start out with this because it's very critical to what I'm going to say today, and that is national missile defense, global missile defense, is no longer a technology, it's a theology. And that really puts it into perspective, and in my view, it is 95% political in nature. Now having said that, let me give you a disclaimer; there's only one person in the universe who knows my true political bent, and that's my bride of 42 years, and we cancel each other's vote out every time we vote, so I have not political dog in this hunt. I speak out against this global missile defense because I think we're making a mistake, in terms of allocation of resources in the environment that we're in today.

Yes we've had programs in the past that have been political hot potatoes, back in the late '40's the great wars between the air force, the new air force and the navy; B-36 bombers versus aircraft carriers. There was the great battles, and that was between services, a little bit of politics, but between services primarily. And then during the '70's and early '80's, the B-1B bomber program, It went from the Ford-Nixon administration putting the program on, Carter coming in and turning it off, Reagan coming in and turning the program back on. And there were some inter-service rivalries there between the air force and the army, and I, unfortunately, took part in those rivalries.

But a system as Phil [Coyle] has described, is being deployed, that certainly doesn't have any credible capability, and I cannot recall any military system being deployed in such a manner. Military requirements, the process, is very structured. The threat drives the requirement. And as Joe pointed out earlier in his remarks, there is no threat to the United States today. And as I will hopefully point out, it's very doubtful whether that threat will evolve in the near term.

It is believed that the North Koreans began development of the Depodong 2 missile system in the early 1990's. This is the system that got everyone excited about deploying the missile defense system. Well, the missile that was developed during the early '90's has never been flight-tested. Never. The Depodong 1 had its last test flight in August of 1998. That was 6 years ago. The intercontinental version has never been flight-tested. And for the Depodong 2 to reach the western part of the United States would be some very optimistic operational objectives that would have to be made in the assumption. For example, what we project the capability of that system, is that the warhead would have to be no heavier than 300 kg, 300 Kg. Now, there's a big leap of faith between developing a nuclear device, a weapon that operates in a laboratory kind of environment, in a concrete tunnel, no G-loading, no vibration, no temperature extremes. That's fairly easy to do, but to miniaturize something that's going to go in the nose cone of an ICBM, is going to experience the kinds of things that I've just described, takes a lot of technology, it takes a lot of work, and it takes a lot of time. I would submit that the miniaturization of a nuclear warhead is probably the most significant challenge that any proliferant would have to face.

The first U.S. ICBM's, the warheads on those ICBM's, were in the 4,000-5,000 kg range. That's the best we could come up with when we first started deploying the THOR and that ATLAS's in the '50's. Only after 6-8 years, of very intensive engineering development and aggressive testing, did we get, here in the United States, right in the middle of the Cold War, get that 4-5 thousand kg warhead down to 1,000 kg. And so the leap of faith is the North Koreans would be able to go from a pristine laboratory kind of weapon to 300 kg, to offer a threat to the United States. And the North Koreans are not the worlds best when it comes to guidance systems. Some unclassified data that I recently saw from the CIA indicated that the ICBM ranges, the Depodong 2 missile, would have an accuracy of 40 km. Think about that. I

don't think many nations would even consider deploying a weapon with that accuracy. So, we have a threat that is based upon a system that has not been flight-tested and with severe challenges.

The cost. Since 1985, we, you and I as taxpayers, have funded a program that's cost us over \$90 billion for national missile defense; STAR WARS, national missile defense and global missile defense, \$90 billion. And the projections, now the Defense Missile Agency now has 2-year incremental building blocks, and they're estimating those 2-year increments to cost anywhere between \$6-\$8 billion, in increments. That's a lot of money. As Phil pointed out, we're approaching something called an initial defensive capability. In my entire military experience, I have never seen a weapons system deployed with something as 'squishy' if you will, as an initial defensive capability.

And the only significant military support has come from the organization that is responsible for the system, and that's the Missile Defense Agency. I have searched long and hard for statements of support out of service chiefs about deploying such a system. When I was commander and chief of our nuclear forces, my position was, I had a whole list of things that I'd rather spend 6-7 billion dollars a year on, rather than a missile defensive system. And as Phil pointed out, I want to foot stomp it one more time, we will be putting a system on alert that has not been flight-tested in nearly 2 years, and never with the actual interceptor that has been put in the ground up in Ft. Greely, Alaska. And in my view, that's atrocious. And against a threat, by the way, that's never been flight-tested. So the defense is going to be a system that's never been flight-tested, against a threat that's never been flight-tested. And then you apply what Phil gave you earlier and I think you can see where I'm coming from.

It appears our mindset is still Cold War think, and that's unfortunate, that we're potentially under the threat of attack from a cold war kind of threat. That's just not the case today. It's a whole new world out there, in which, in my view, the threat is going to be asymmetric in nature, not force-on-force. Not ICBM's against the United States.

And here's another point that I think we all need to refresh in our minds from time to time, and that is, when, lets assume the North Koreans launch a missile against the United States. With our surveillance systems, we will know within tens of seconds, within tens of meters, exactly where that missile came from. It's a system, it's a cold war relic, it's still operational, it will remain so for the foreseeable future, and it's called the defense support program. We have satellites in orbit that have very sophisticated sensors that can see the infrared signature of missiles in the boost phase. Very accurate, very sophisticated.

Well, the new world is, as I said, a world of asymmetric battles. We've graphically seen this in Iraq and a year ago I went to South Korea and gave a series of lectures at the behest of the state department to South Korean think tanks. And as you recall, September of last year, the South Koreans were petrified of the North Korean development of nuclear capability. And virtually every place I went, and think tanks in South Korea are government supported, they're good, they're sophisticated, but during the Q and A, the issue would come up, "is the united states ready to go take out the north Koreans nuclear capability with your bombers?" And I said, "No, we're not ready to do that." I said, "the thing you ought to be worried about is not nuclear force-on-force against the North Koreans, but this asymmetric threat." And I said, if I were the military advisor to President Kim in North Korea, my advice to him would be, continue giving lip service to your ICBM program, continue giving lip service to your nuclear program, but if you want to bring South Korea to its knees, lets go out and militarize some anthrax force, lets get a dump truck with anthrax spore and drive it around Seoul, Korea for 3-4 days, with these spores constantly being blown off. Ladies and gentlemen, 40% of the population of 44 million South Koreans, live within 60 km of Seoul.

So, very covertly, you could cause literally, millions and millions of people to go to hospitals with anthrax, and you'd bring the South Korean government, I think, down. You'd bring their economy down. And I said, in terms of getting the United States, if you want to kill people in the United States, don't worry about ICBM's. Why make that investment? It's a risky proposition. Why not just go ahead and lets build a nuclear device, put it in a conics container, and ship it to lower Manhattan, and set it off by remote control. You want to kill 2-3 million people? You can do that, and no one will ever know where it came from because you didn't have that postage stamp. The United States wouldn't know within tens of seconds,

within tens of meters, where this thing came from. Cruise missile technology would do the same thing. Remotely piloted vehicles launched off steamers off of either coast, could do the same thing. I'm afraid we're going down a path of self-deceit. It will be interesting to see what the administration does in the coming weeks, in terms of how they treat this initial defensive capability. The missile defense agency, and I'll quote a statement from their website, "the initial fielding is not the perfect system, but it will provide a necessary capability where none exists today." But I can guarantee you, when that capability is brought up, no one is going to say that we had zero and now we have 5% capability. And with the kind of capital investment we've made, I think that's wrong.

Two final thoughts for you; first, in today's environment, we, here in the United States, ought to be concerned about, not risk avoidance, but risk management. There are not enough resources for us to get into the risk avoidance mode. That's point number one, and point number two, I think we are going down a very, very dangerous path, when the politicians are dictating what military weapons systems are going to be deployed, without the support of the military establishment. That's a very, very dangerous path, and to me, that's one that we've not debated, that clearly needs to be debated. Thank you.

Q and A

Q: (Global Security News Wire) On your last comment, you said it's dangerous for the politicians to be deploying without the support of the military establishment. Are you saying this isn't supported, this potential deployment, by the military establishment?

A: No, I can't say that. I, perhaps, overstated my case. But I certainly haven't found any references from the service chiefs or the chairman, in support of the program.

Joe [Cirincione]: Let me push that and see if you have a comment on this. As far as I can see the missile defense effort is to coming from the joint chiefs, its not coming from the established services. As far as I know there isn't actually a military requirement for this system yet. You can correct me if I am wrong, Phil. The last time the Joint chiefs were asked for their recommendation on how we should proceed on missile defense was in 1993 when President Clinton asked them and they got back with a recommendation that we spend about \$2.8 billion on ballistic missile defense and of that \$2.3 billion should be spent on short-range ballistic missile defense. So as far as I can see, the services are worried about the short-range threat and we don't have still an effective defense mechanism to shoot down even short-range scuds and there's a need for that, there's a threat there. There is work that has to be done but there has always been very lukewarm support for substantial effort on national missile defense. The way I've seen it, it's always been let's do the research, see if we can get something but hasn't really gone much beyond that.

A: Let me comment on that. You bring up a good point and that is, The commanders in chiefs, which are no longer called CINCs, they are commanders, When I was a commander in chief, my position was, lets proceed very aggressive with theatre missile defense to protect our deployed forces and we'd done a lot of that with the Patriot advanced capability system and I think they are up to 3 now, the Aegis cruiser as I understand it, they are developing a program there. That's good stuff because as was pointed out earlier, that's where there is a military threat to our forces, is theatre bound as compared to the continental United States or even Alaska or Hawaii and you count them into the equation.

Q: (George Quester, University of Maryland): I find the case very persuasive that you are presenting. My question is, why would the Chinese or the soviets take any alarm because I assume they can read the documents as well as we can and I would find it a gross waste of money for the Chinese to try to augment their missile forces in light of what we have discussed here and the same for the soviets, the Russians.

Joe: General, you've had a lot of experience with your counterparts in Russia. What do you think? How would they look at this?

A: First of all there were some dire predictions early on when we backed away from the ABM treaty that the train would come off the tracks, that obviously has not happened. The Russians are not happy about our deployment. I've had some discussion with some fairly high-level Chinese leadership individuals and they see that with the system that we've trumped their capability with their 20 ICBMs. But an accidental launch from a Chinese ICBM would be very problematic because, without getting into a lot of detail, they don't sit the same kind of alert. In other words, there's be several tens of hours of preparation to get a

missile ready for launch as compared to the Russian and the U.S. model. The Chinese are somewhat concerned that, again without sounding as an alarmist, the Japanese may go down a path that would cause them great consternation later on. They are also concerned about reunification of North and South Korea and the potential there. So, there's a lot going out there George, but for me to try to look into my very opaque crystal ball and try to give you some sense would be very difficult.

Q: (Isaacs) if you were in charge of Stratcom today, on, or around, Oct. 1st, what would you do with this missile defense system that the missile defense agency would hand you?

A: it's an excellent question. In 1986, there was an act passed in congress called the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Very comprehensive in terms of the structure of the military, the jointness of the military. One of the things that a lot of people don't realize as part of that act, but I found out about it very quickly when I was nominated for my fourth star, was that, to be confirmed I had send a letter to the chairman of the armed services committee saying that if I disagreed with a military deployment or issue, that I was to, I'm talking about leadership, the white house, department of defense, that I would immediately call the chairman and ask for a hearing. And if I felt very strongly about it, I would resign my position, my commission. I feel very strongly about where we're going with this, and that would be an option that Gene Habiger would probably take, knowing what I know now. But I have not political dog in this hunt, remember that.

Q: How would you advise Kerry on national missile defense?

A: I would advise him to make the following statement; "The safety and security of the people of the United States of America are his number one priority. However, if President, I would only deploy a system that was credible and that worked." That would be my advice to him.