

TRANSATLANTIC MISSILE DEFENSE

Edgar Buckley

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM
STRATEGIC ADVISORS GROUP

NATO Missile Defense: Is Europe Ready?

No wonder everyone looks forward to a positive decision on making territorial missile defense a NATO task at the upcoming Lisbon Summit. Allies will breathe a collective sigh of relief for two reasons. First, proliferation of missile technology has exposed Europe to real future risks and threats, which can only be countered defensively through early preparation and deployments. Second, absent such a decision, the United States' Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA) – to be deployed in Europe whatever the summit decides – is a fundamental challenge to NATO, detracting from its overall responsibility for collective defense and raising acutely uncomfortable issues, such as the prospect of U.S.-commanded defenses operating in parallel with Article 5 defense of NATO.

Europeans are more conservative in their defense policies than their transatlantic partners. It has taken them longer to appreciate the value of missile defense. This reflects past skepticism about the technical possibility of shooting down incoming missiles, worries about strategic stability and the implications for smaller European deterrents, reluctance to embrace new strategic thinking as technology advanced (“keeping ahold of nurse for fear of finding something worse”), and concerns about the costs involved.

So NATO has proceeded extremely cautiously in this domain until now. It took years of study before it established the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) program in 2005 to provide defense of deployed NATO forces. This program, comprising a common-funded NATO architecture and command and control system into which national contributions of sensors and effectors will be “plugged,” is planned to have two layers (upper and lower level), but so far only the lower level has been funded (and at the time of writing the contract to develop the necessary battle-management command and control system had still not been awarded, two years after its originally-planned date). Planned European contributions of sensors and

shooters are also behind schedule as a result of funding delays. Clearly, in contrast to the United States, European allies have so far not regarded missile defense (at least on land) as their most urgent need.

The United States' deployment of territorial defense capabilities to Europe forces the allies to comprehensively reassess their priorities as regards implementation of the current ALTBMD program and its planned extension to the upper level – both now need to be speeded up. And, if territorial

Transatlantic Missile Defense

In October 2010, the Atlantic Council hosted a conference on missile defense entitled “Transatlantic Missile Defense: Looking to Lisbon.” The conference featured senior U.S. policymakers and experts from across the transatlantic community in a conversation about the political, technical, and budgetary issues relating to transatlantic missile defense in the weeks before the November 2010 Lisbon NATO summit. These issue briefs, written by discussants at the conference, provide a European perspective to the transatlantic debate on the future of missile defense within the NATO Alliance.

These briefs and the recent conference continue the work of the Atlantic Council on transatlantic missile defense. Previous activities include a workshop on NATO-Russia missile defense cooperation in November 2010, a conference on the implications of the Obama administration's Phased Adaptive Approach missile defense policy in October 2009, as well as a conference on the Bush administration's ‘Third Site’ missile defense architecture in 2007.

The Atlantic Council's work on transatlantic missile defense is sponsored by Raytheon.

***Edgar Buckley** is a member of the Atlantic Council's Strategic Advisors Group and is a former NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defense Planning and Operations.*

NATO Missile Defense Elements

- Like ALTBMD, NATO missile defense is conceived as a plug-and-play system in which only the backbone architecture and command and control elements are commonly provided. Sensors and shooters are envisaged as national contributions.
- The U.S. Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA) is the most important of these national contributions, welcomed as such by NATO foreign ministers last year.
- The U.S. PAA will deploy the Aegis missile defense system, progressively upgraded, at sea and on land, together with other existing missiles, all linked to land-based radars and satellite early warning systems. On its own, it will provide an increasingly effective defense against short, medium, intermediate and eventually long-range ballistic missile threats, although it may not cover all NATO European territory.
- Europe's contribution should consist of:
 - Sea and land-based radars, which could be networked together with those planned by the United States to significantly increase system effectiveness.
 - Expanded ALTBMD Command and Control elements
 - Missiles deployed on European ships and on land
 - Satellite early warning
- These elements should both contribute to fill gaps in the coverage of the PAA and increase overall system performance by adding sensors and networking them.
- European and U.S. industry have experience of working together in the air and missile defense domain and are ready to expand their collaboration.

missile defense is to become a NATO task, they need to make important prior decisions on the following issues:

- Political and military command and control
- Integration of air and missile defense
- Involvement and participation of European allies
- Involvement of Russia
- Participation of transatlantic industry

Political and Military Control

For the allies to agree that territorial missile defense should become a NATO task, they will want to be assured that it will be appropriately structured and managed by NATO's political and military authorities. That means that decisions on its architecture, deployment, and command and control should be taken by the North Atlantic Council and delegated as appropriate to NATO Commanders.

Command and control includes deciding such questions as:

- What is the prioritization of assets or areas to be defended?
- What are the acceptable consequences (debris from engagement) and how might they be managed through planning?
- Who is the engagement authority and what are his rules and guidance?
- What are the links with national command arrangements?

The United States will also wish to ensure that its assets deployed in Europe can contribute where necessary to strengthen the defense of its own territory.

Appropriate technical and political arrangements need to be worked out to satisfy both these needs.

Integrated Air and Missile Defense

Another necessary condition for deploying missile defense in NATO is that whatever is deployed in Europe must form part of an integrated NATO air and missile defense system and not be separate. This is important in order to avoid costly, inefficient, and dangerous duplication. ALTBMD is already planned to be integrated with NATO's integrated air defense system (NATINADS). Territorial missile defense will need to follow the same path. Hence the insistence at the Strasbourg/Kehl summit last year that the options for territorial missile defense to be presented at Lisbon should be based on "a possible expanded role of the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) program beyond the protection of NATO deployed forces to include territorial missile defense."

Clearly, if the ALTBMD battle-management command and control system is to be expanded and linked to the U.S. PAA and the latter is to be deployed in Europe from 2011, NATO will need to accelerate its ALTBMD program to put the necessary links in place urgently.

Involving the Allies

It is hard to see how an important NATO task can be allowed to rest wholly on the contributions of one ally, even when that ally is the United States. There are strong political, financial, and technological arguments therefore in favor of burden-sharing. European allies could contribute sensors, seekers, and command and control elements (*see box 1*) but they will need to invest to do so.

The current defense funding crisis in Europe means that such investment will be very difficult in the short term. But, given the critical importance of maintaining a strong collective approach, the sums involved should be manageable, particularly if the European allies cooperate both among themselves and with North America, as well as share technology.

Involving Russia

The recent announcement that there will be a summit meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at Lisbon gives hope that Russia will eventually take up the offers made by President Obama and NATO to cooperate in deploying limited missile defense in Europe. If so, NATO could be the means of linking United States and Russian missile defense

in such a way as to reinforce security for all. Active Russian cooperation and engagement would be a further motivation for European allies to give this program the higher funding priority it deserves.

The Industrial Perspective

Another condition for European contribution to NATO missile defense is that its own industries must be appropriately involved, so that European as well as United States-based companies master the technology and have the opportunity to benefit from the investment. That indeed has been the pattern of NATO investment in theatre missile defense, where transatlantic industrial consortia have taken the lead at all stages, and the allies will want to see it repeated at the territorial level.

Transatlantic industry could be engaged to develop the expanded battle management command and control system, to develop and deploy additional sensors and network them, to develop compatible fire-control systems for European platforms, and to develop longer range European missiles. Transatlantic industry is ready to play its part.

Better Right than Fast

With European budgets under severe pressure and missile defense understandably given lower priority than operational spending in Afghanistan and other pressing modernizations, and with NATO's own decision-making process proceeding slowly and likely to become further snarled as a result of planned agency restructuring, the prospects for rapid implementation of a NATO program with full European participation are bleak.

For the United States, anxious to complete its global BMD system, such procrastination is frustrating, and the temptation to proceed unilaterally is understandably great. Yet the prize for getting this right is too important to ignore. With the Europeans on board and Russia appropriately linked in, territorial missile defense could transform European and global security.

The United States must therefore continue to show patience and be ready to further adapt its PAA. To succeed, it will need to move away from its existing approach and be ready to reconfigure its efforts to accommodate its allies and partners.

Conclusion

The Lisbon Summit could see the opening of a new chapter in European security cooperation in which cooperative deployment of limited territorial missile defense would be a central feature. The United States will need patience, alongside its customary determination, to achieve this goal.

The Europeans today are not completely ready to make the necessary investments quickly, being short of money and diverted by operational priorities. But they are ready to work with the United States and Russia if the conditions are right and the timescale is adjusted to allow them to do so.

November 2010

Conclusions of NATO's Group of Experts

- Under Madeleine Albright's chairmanship, the Group of Experts on a new Strategic Concept for NATO concluded in May 2010 that:
 - Defending against the threat of a possible ballistic missile attack had become, for NATO, an essential military mission and that the United States' decision to deploy its Phased Adaptive Approach "puts missile defense fully within a NATO context, with participation open to all allies and all allies to be protected."
 - The new U.S. Phased Adaptive Approach to ballistic missile defense provides an opportunity for the development of an effective NATO-wide strategy that would add to the defense of populations as well as forces.
 - A NATO missile defense system would enhance deterrence and transatlantic sharing of responsibility, reinforce the principle that security is indivisible, and allow for concrete security cooperation with Russia.
- The Group recommended:
 - NATO should recognize territorial missile defense as an essential mission of the Alliance.
 - To that end, NATO should agree to expand its Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense System to provide the core command and control capability of a NATO territorial missile defense system.

The Strategic Advisors Group

To tackle the tough issues facing NATO and the transatlantic community, the Atlantic Council created the Strategic Advisors Group (SAG). Co-chaired by Atlantic Council Chairman Senator Chuck Hagel and Airbus CEO Tom Enders, the SAG is comprised of North American and European preeminent defense experts. Founded in 2007 by then-Atlantic Council Chairman General James L. Jones, General Brent Scowcroft, and Fred Kempe, the SAG provides timely insights and analysis to policymakers and the public on strategic issues in the transatlantic security partnership through issuing policy briefs and reports, hosting strategy sessions for senior civilian and military officials and providing informal expert advice to decision-makers.

The SAG and its activities are generously sponsored by the Scowcroft Group, EADS North America, and Airbus.

The Atlantic Council's Board of Directors

CHAIRMAN

*Chuck Hagel

CHAIRMAN, INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Brent Scowcroft

PRESIDENT AND CEO

*Frederick Kempe

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

*Henry E. Catto

VICE CHAIRS

*Richard Edelman
*Brian C. McK. Henderson
*Franklin D. Kramer
*Richard L. Lawson
*Virginia A. Mulberger
*W. DeVier Pierson

TREASURERS

*Ronald M. Freeman
*John D. Macomber

SECRETARY

*Walter B. Slocombe

DIRECTORS

*Robert J. Abernethy
Timothy D. Adams
Carol C. Adelman
Michael A. Almond
Richard L. Armitage
*Michael Ansari
*David D. Aufhauser
Ralph Bahna
Nancy Kassebaum Baker
Donald K. Bandler
Lisa B. Barry
Thomas L. Blair
Susan M. Blaustein
*Julia Chang Bloch
Dan W. Burns
R. Nicholas Burns
*Richard R. Burt
Michael Calvey
*Daniel W. Christman
Wesley K. Clark
John Craddock
Tom Craren
*Ralph D. Crosby, Jr.

Thomas M. Culligan
Brian D. Dailey
Robert E. Diamond, Jr.
Paula Dobriansky
Markus Dohle
Lacey Neuhaus Dorn
Conrado Dornier
Eric S. Edelman
Thomas J. Edelman
Thomas J. Egan, Jr.
Stuart E. Eizenstat
Dan-Åke Enstedt
Julie Finley
Lawrence P. Fisher, II
Barbara Hackman Franklin
*Chas W. Freeman
Carlton W. Fulford
Jacques S. Gansler
*Robert Gelbard
Richard L. Gelfond
*Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr.
*Sherri W. Goodman
John A. Gordon
C. Boyden Gray
Marc Grossman
Stephen J. Hadley
Mikael Hagström
Ian Hague
Harry Harding
Rita E. Hauser
Annette Heuser
Marten H.A. van Heuven
Mary L. Howell
Benjamin Huberman
Linda Hudson
*Robert E. Hunter
Robert L. Hutchings
William Inglee
Wolfgang Ischinger
Robert Jeffrey
*A. Elizabeth Jones
George A. Joulwan
Zalmay Khalilzad
Francis J. Kelly
L. Kevin Kelly
Robert M. Kimmitt
*James V. Kimsey
*Roger Kirk
Henry A. Kissinger

Philip Lader
Muslim Lakhani
David Levy
Robert G. Liberatore
Henrik Liljegren
*Jan M. Lodal
Izzat Majeed
Wendy W. Makins
William E. Mayer
Barry R. McCaffrey
Eric D.K. Melby
Jack N. Merritt
Franklin C. Miller
*Judith A. Miller
Alexander V. Mirtchev
Obie Moore
*George E. Moose
Hilda Ochoa-Brillembourg
Philip A. Odeen
Ana Palacio
Torkel L. Patterson
William J. Perry
*Thomas R. Pickering
Andrew Prozes
Arnold L. Punaro
Kirk A. Radke
Joseph W. Ralston
Norman W. Ray
Teresa M. Ressel
Joseph E. Robert, Jr.
Jeffrey A. Rosen
Charles O. Rossotti
Stanley Roth
Michael L. Ryan
Marjorie M. Scardino
William O. Schmieder
John P. Schmitz
Jill A. Schuker
Kiron K. Skinner
Richard J.A. Steele
Philip Stephenson
*Paula Stern
John Studzinski
William H. Taft, IV
Peter J. Tanous
Peter Thomas
Paul Twomey
Henry G. Ulrich, III
Enzo Viscusi

Charles F. Wald
Jay Walker
Mark R. Warner
J. Robinson West
John C. Whitehead
David A. Wilson
Maciej Witucki
R. James Woolsey
Dov S. Zakheim
Anthony C. Zinni

HONORARY DIRECTORS

David C. Acheson
Madeleine K. Albright
James A. Baker, III
Harold Brown
Frank C. Carlucci, III
Warren Christopher
Colin L. Powell
Condoleezza Rice
Edward L. Rowny
James R. Schlesinger
George P. Shultz
John Warner
William H. Webster

LIFETIME DIRECTORS

Lucy Wilson Benson
Daniel J. Callahan, III
Kenneth W. Dam
Stanley Ebner
Robert F. Ellsworth
Geraldine S. Kunstadter
James P. McCarthy
Steven Muller
Stanley R. Resor
William Y. Smith
Helmut Sonnenfeldt
Ronald P. Verdicchio
Carl E. Vuono
Togo D. West, Jr.

** Members of the Executive Committee
List as of November 15, 2010*

The Atlantic Council of the United States is a non-partisan organization that promotes constructive U.S. leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the central role of the Atlantic community in meeting today's global challenges.

1101 15TH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20005 (202) 463-7226

WWW.ACUS.ORG