

**THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**European Views of
National Missile Defense**

POLICY PAPER
SEPTEMBER 2000

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THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL

OF THE UNITED STATES

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European Views of National Missile Defense

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FOREWORD

The revival in the late 1990s of intense political discussion in the United States about the near-term deployment of a national missile defense (NMD) system found the European NATO allies generally unprepared, and reluctant, to confront the strategic developments to which the U.S. debate was responding. The speed with which a broad political consensus developed in the United States about the spread of ballistic missile capabilities in Asia and the Middle East and the implications of this development compounded this unpreparedness. When the Clinton administration started a process of intense discussion of these questions and proposed U.S. responses with its allies in late 1999, it accordingly confronted allied governments which had not been thinking about many of the broad strategic issues involved in the missile defense problem for several years and were at best generally skeptical, and in many cases negative, about the stated U.S. intention to move towards deployment of a limited NMD system in the middle of the first decade of the new century. What is more, this problem, the ramifications of which touch many of the most sensitive strategic and security questions facing the allies, rapidly shaped up as one that could lead to a serious transatlantic disagreement, with incalculable consequences for the future of the Alliance as a whole.

In this situation, the Atlantic Council decided that it would be timely to send to European capitals a team of respected leaders and experts involved in the missile defense debate in the United States. Their purpose was to engage a wide range of European leaders and experts both inside and outside governments, in intensive dialogue about the issues presented by the missile defense question and to prepare for broad public distribution a report on their discussions and on the state of European thinking as they observed it. This policy paper is the result of this initiative, which took place in mid-July.

The team's discussions were rich and serious and the report suggests considerable evolution in European attitudes during the past months. As a result, the team's recommendations propose an agenda for continuing dialogue with the allies, in both official and nongovernmental channels, in the coming months as U.S. policy is reviewed by a new administration and a new Congress. While such a dialogue may not lead to consensus on all the issues involved, it can certainly, if well conducted, greatly improve mutual understanding and reduce the political consequences of whatever differences of view may persist. Meanwhile, the Council hopes that this report will serve to inform and enlighten debate in this country about European views on this important subject. The Atlantic Council hopes to be able to play a leading part in developing such a dialogue along the lines of the recommendations in the report. The views expressed in this report reflect the consensus of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Atlantic Council.

The members of the team would like to express their special thanks to four organizations in Europe which arranged invaluable meetings as part of their project – the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, the Atlantik Brücke and the Aspen Institute Berlin in Germany; the Centre Français sur les Etats-Unis in France; and the Centre for European Reform in London.

Christopher J. Makins
President, The Atlantic Council of the United States

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction

A delegation under the auspices of the Atlantic Council of the United States visited Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris from 10 to 14 July 2000 for discussions with government officials and nongovernmental experts about the proposed deployment of missile defenses of U.S. national territory. The purpose of the trip was to engage a range of European leaders in in-depth discussions of a broad range of issues associated with missile defense. This report reflects the visitors' assessment of what they heard and the conclusions they drew in terms of U.S. policy and relations with the European allies.

II. The International Context

European attitudes on an issue such as missile defense are naturally formed in the context of many other important international and domestic issues. This broader context is vital to the assessment of the results of conversations such as those which the team held. At least five aspects of this broader context are of particular importance and are briefly surveyed in the report, namely: the end of the Cold War; the priority of the project of European integration; European anxieties about U.S. foreign policy; European views of Asia; the European approach to security.

III. Assessment of European Views on Missile Defense

This section summarizes the principal ideas that emerged from the conversations held in Europe by the Atlantic Council team. This assessment is prefaced by a summary of a set of basic attitudes that have shaped European responses to the U.S. NMD debate and then addresses European views of the ballistic missile threat, Russian and Chinese views of U.S. national missile defense, changing notions of deterrence, and strategic responses to the spread of ballistic missile capabilities. It concludes with an analysis of the dynamics, and differences, in European views.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Atlantic Council team's principal conclusions from its meetings in Europe can be summarized as follows:

- There has been a considerable change in European official and expert thinking on the many aspects of the missile defense issue over the last several months. There is still a wide gap in perception across the Atlantic of both the extent and timing of the threat from new and emerging ballistic missile capabilities and in the judgment of the appropriate strategic and policy responses to those capabilities. But the dynamic is towards a narrowing of that gap and towards a greater similarity of views on all the major issues involved.
- Given the likelihood that a new U.S. administration will wish to conduct its own strategic review of the programmatic and policy aspects of the NMD program and broader policy on proliferation and relations with Russia and China in early 2001, there is a strong case for a major effort to broaden and deepen the current consultations with the European allies. While such consultations may well not succeed in closing all the gaps in perception and policy judgment, some greater identity of views is likely to emerge and the effort in itself will reduce the damage to the Alliance from a U.S. decision to proceed with NMD deployment. By contrast, allowing two different approaches to deterrence and the proliferation issue to persist without such an effort will surely undermine allied cohesion and the management of future crises and conflict operations.
- A similar argument applies to initiating a dialogue on these issues with Russia and China. Such dialogues are seen in Europe as an essential element of any U.S. policy to move toward NMD deployment, even if the achievement of agreement in such dialogues is an even more remote prospect than that of persuading European governments of the wisdom of such a deployment.

The report accordingly proposes an agenda for US-European engagement in early 2001. (A similar agenda needs to be pursued with our Asian friends and allies.)

A Broader Agenda. The agenda needs to be broadened beyond the current issues of threat assessment and deployment modes to include not only the strategic implications of a shift to defending territory against ballistic missiles and the identification of ways to mitigate any adverse effects, but also the ways in which missile defenses can complement other measures to combat and roll back the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The full agenda needs to include:

i. Exchanging intelligence evidence on the nature, extent, and timing of ballistic missile threats not only to the territory of the United States but also to the national territories of our European allies. This should be the basis for a policy

discussion of the strategic implications of such threats for stability and protection of European interests.

ii. *Assessing the various alternatives for defending European territory* against ballistic missiles (such as land-based or sea-based, boost-phase or mid-course, singly or in combination, and the role of space assets). Each should be examined from the standpoint of: effectiveness against threats from various sources; cost to deploy and operate (and how these costs might be shared between the United States and Europe); ability to exploit for territorial defense existing defense assets and systems designed to defend deployed military forces against ballistic missile threats (so-called TMD); the politico-military effects of deployment; and domestic political effects. This discussion will at some stage need to be broadened to include cruise missile threats as well.

iii. *Evaluating the effectiveness of current efforts against proliferation* of ballistic missiles as part of a broader re-examination of the effectiveness of current efforts against proliferation generally. This should include: assessing the ability of current efforts to cope with both the effects of the proliferation that has already occurred and with the future proliferation that may occur; identifying additional measures that should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the effort; finding strategies that could help roll back proliferation that has already occurred; and developing strategies to bring Russia, China, and other proliferating or potentially proliferating states into the effort.

iv. *Reviewing current deterrence doctrine* in light of the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new threats to the United States and Europe. This should include: prospects for moving beyond deterrence by threat of retaliation to a more cooperative, non-adversarial strategic relationship with Russia; implications for the ABM Treaty and existing agreements regarding strategic nuclear weapons; prospects for developing a more effective strategy for deterring further acquisition and potential use of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them by various countries of concern; and the possible contribution of ballistic missile defenses to such a strategy.

v. *Reviewing the role of arms control* in relations with Russia in the post-Cold War world and in dealing with the new security threats to the United States and Europe. This should include addressing the following questions: would relations with Russia be improved by reducing the number and threatening character of nuclear (and other military) forces through greater reliance on unilateral measures, rather than formal arms control negotiations and agreements?; what would be the continuing role, if any, of existing treaties, especially the ABM Treaty?; how effective are global legal regimes in preventing, discouraging, or detecting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them?; what continuing role would they have and how might they be strengthened to play that role better?

A Deeper Agenda. The process of consultations needs to be deepened to reflect the variety of players that can contribute to working this robust agenda, while recognizing that not all these items can or should be worked by the same people or

in the same form. The agenda needs to be worked in creative ways that will foster convergence of U.S. and European views.

i. NATO's consultations need to be expanded to cover the full range of this agenda. At some point all five agenda items need to be addressed in the Alliance. Preparatory work on a number of them could usefully be assigned to specific NATO institutions. This process should be initiated immediately.

ii. The NATO effort needs to be underpinned by active bilateral discussions with key allies. A NATO process can reach a successful outcome on these issues only with active U.S. leadership and intensive consultations with key allies that parallel the NATO discussions.

iii. A 'Track 1 ½' process needs to be initiated. Opinion leaders and national security analysts outside government need to be engaged now on this broadened agenda. Not only can they contribute to developing the 'intellectual capital' for dealing with the issues, but they also need to prepare themselves so that they can play their appropriate role when the public debate on these issues begins in earnest. One or two U.S. organizations might team up with European counterparts to sponsor a program of informal exchanges and conferences. Initiation of this process should also not await the outcome of the U.S. Presidential election.

iv. The post-election internal U.S. government review needs to be open to U.S. allies. The new U.S. President will almost certainly initiate a review of the U.S. ballistic missile defense effort shortly after his election. This review will most likely cover issues of system architecture, how to proceed with Russia and China, the role of U.S. allies, and other crucial issues. The new administration should consult with and solicit input from U.S. friends and allies in parallel with its internal study. This approach should both improve the quality of the U.S. review and help narrow the differences between the United States and its allies even before the U.S. results are reached and announced.

The Consultative Process. U.S. allies will need to make a major effort to prepare themselves on the issues if they are to take full advantage of the opportunities for consultation outlined above. The allies should not use these consultations simply to argue against the U.S. effort or to obstruct its progress. Allied views are much more nuanced than is generally understood in the United States and are in a state of flux. The consultation process suggested here would afford European allies and friends an opportunity to dispel any overly simplistic characterization of their views, to demonstrate a commitment to constructive engagement, and to contribute positively to defining and addressing the critical, and difficult, strategic issues.

European Views on National Missile Defense

A Report By

**Stephen Cambone
Ivo Daalder
Stephen J. Hadley
Christopher J. Makins**

I. Introduction

Under the auspices of the Atlantic Council of the United States, a delegation visited Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris from 10 to 14 July 2000 for discussions of the issues raised by the proposed deployment of missile defenses of U.S. national territory. The delegation was composed of Stephen Cambone of the Institute for National Security Studies at the National Defense University, Stephen Hadley, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy and an attorney with Shea & Gardner, and Christopher J. Makins, president of the Atlantic Council.¹ In all the cities except Brussels the team met with senior government officials from the foreign and defense ministries and the offices of the head of government (and, in Paris, that of the president of the Republic), as well as with a cross section of nongovernmental and political leaders, experts and journalists. In Brussels, the team met with members of the NATO International Staff and with the Permanent or Deputy Permanent Representatives of Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway.

The purpose of the trip was to engage a range of European leaders in in-depth discussion of a broad range of issues associated with missile defense. The issues discussed included:

- the changing nature of the ballistic missile threat to European countries and the United States;
- different strategic and policy responses to this threat and to the prospects of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them against the United States and Europe;

¹ Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution had intended to participate in the trip, but was prevented from doing so at the last minute by unavoidable personal circumstances. He did however participate in the pre-trip briefings and has contributed to, and associates himself with, this report.

- the future of arms limitation agreements and their potential role in this connection;
- the consequences of the deployment of missile defenses on national territory in either the United States or Europe, with special concern for the implications for relations with Russia and China.
- the consequences for U.S. and European security of failing to deploy missile defenses.

In each of the team's meetings a standard introduction and set of questions was used to focus the discussion and to ensure that the same issues were addressed from the point of view of each country represented by the interlocutors. This report reflects the visitors' assessment of what they heard and the conclusions they drew in terms of U.S. policy and relations with the European allies, against the background of the authors' longstanding involvement in transatlantic discussions of this and related issues.

II. The International Context

European attitudes on an issue such as missile defense are naturally formed in the context of many other important international and domestic issues. This broader context is vital to the assessment of the results of conversations such as those which the team held. At least five aspects of this broader context are of particular importance in connection with missile defense.

The End of the Cold War. The disappearance of the Soviet threat to Europe and the consequent development of a general sense of enhanced security is an essential element of the current situation in Europe as in the United States. It colors attitudes towards the kind of major new development in defense policy represented, at least in many European eyes, by a decision to deploy missile defenses of national territory, as well as to the budgetary effort needed to accomplish it. Throughout at least the countries formerly known as 'Western' Europe public, and therefore political, opinion is still oriented more towards realizing a peace dividend than towards underwriting a new and more strenuous defense effort. And there is relatively little popular desire to hear tell of, or believe in, new threats. In effect, the uniform message of the team's European interlocutors was that the ballistic missile threat to either Europe or the United States is not a matter of public awareness or concern.

The Priority of the Project of European Integration. The relaunching of the project of European integration at the end of the 1980s and the momentum that the project acquired throughout the 1990s, including its extension to security and defense policy after the Treaty of Amsterdam, is a critical factor influencing the evolution of European attitudes. As a consequence of this, the key countries accord priority for governmental policy to the continuation and success of this project and relegate to a lower level of priority many other issues that might affect it. For their different reasons, the British, French and German governments all see the further development of a European security and defense policy (ESDP) as a high priority at

present in terms of both policy and the allocation of resources available for defense. This has been clear from the debates within the European Union and the Alliance on the relationship between ESDP and the Alliance, but it also directly affects allied consideration of the question of missile defense. Some Europeans go as far as to see the United States and Europe as having been engaged in a dialogue of the deaf — with the U.S. government talking about NMD and the European allies about ESDP and neither really hearing the other. As will be discussed, this characterization, if it was ever accurate, is accurate no longer.

European Anxieties about U.S. Policy. A related element of the transatlantic scene in the late 1990s was the growth of European concern about the overall direction of U.S. foreign policy. In its most tabloid form, this concern has revolved around terms such as “hyperpower,” “unilateralism” and even “isolationism” in the United States. But in a more sober form it reflects a sense that U.S. engagement in European and wider international affairs is no longer so broadly supported in the United States, notably in the Congress, as in the past and that the United States can no longer be relied upon to the same extent to take the lead in responding to contingencies that may seem important to European governments. Disagreements on the handling of Balkans issues throughout the 1990s were the principal source of this view and were directly responsible for one of the most notable events at the end of the decade — the St. Malo agreement between France and Britain on a new effort to promote a European defense policy.

This is not the place to analyze this phenomenon in detail. Suffice it to say that this decline of European confidence in the consistency and reliability of U.S. policy (matched, it is only fair to note, by a corresponding loss of confidence in certain U.S. policy circles in the reliability and constancy of European governments’ support for the cohesion of the Alliance) has had important effects on the way in which the U.S. national missile defense project was initially received, and is still viewed, by many Europeans.

European Views of Asia. U.S. policymakers have long lamented the reluctance of European governments to accept a greater degree of strategic responsibility for developments in Asia. By contrast with the intense engagement of U.S. power and attention in Asian security matters, European governments have been seen, to a large extent correctly, as concerned primarily with commercial interests in Asia and only marginally with the evolution of security there. This attitude has changed somewhat in recent times and European spokespersons rightly point to European support for the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) as a good example of Europe shouldering greater responsibility in Asia. Nevertheless, it remains true that few Europeans see themselves or their security as directly affected by events in Asia and such matters as the emergence of a ballistic missile capability in North Korea are not perceived as engaging European interests directly. Nor, for that matter, is the engagement of the United States in the future of cross-Straits relations between China and Taiwan matched by comparable interest or concern in Europe.

The European Approach to Security. Europeans like to contrast their approach to security to that of Americans. They speak of the extent to which European countries have been accustomed by their historical experience and their geography to a high degree of insecurity and compare this with the fact that until the emergence of a Soviet nuclear threat to the U.S. mainland it had been well over a century since Americans had to worry about a serious external threat to their homeland. As a consequence, Europeans tend to see the U.S. fascination with missile defense since the late 1950s as evidence of a belief in the possibility of achieving absolute security, an idea long since abandoned by European countries (though the experience of the Maginot Line might suggest that this European view of the inevitability of a high degree of insecurity is more recent than is often implied). In the contemporary world, some Europeans likewise contrast the experience of European integration, in which the member states of the European Union have undertaken a progressive pooling of sovereignty, with the continuing strong attachment of the United States to its position as a sovereign actor on the international scene.

Against this background, Europeans often contrast their emphasis on ‘soft’ approaches to security, involving economic and diplomatic tools and policies, with a characteristically U.S. preoccupation with the ‘hard’ military and technological means of protecting their security. This, some believe, is the true lesson of the century of European wars that ended in the 1940s, to be replaced by the emergence, arising from progressive European integration on the model proposed by Jean Monnet, of a situation in which war among the principal European states is believed to have become inconceivable. It would be a mistake to exaggerate the influence of such differing approaches, which can all too easily become dialectical devices as much as real policy and attitudinal differences. But it would be equally wrong to ignore them, not least because they are so often used by Europeans in discussion of issues such as missile defense and the different value placed on it by Europeans and Americans.

III. Assessment of European Views on Missile Defense

This section will summarize and synthesize the principal ideas that emerged from the conversations held in Europe in mid-July by the Atlantic Council team, supplemented by the team members’ understandings gathered in recent months and years in extensive discussions with Europeans on these issues. This assessment will be prefaced by a summary of a set of basic attitudes that have shaped European responses to the U.S. NMD debate and to the recent intensive consultations that the U.S. government has held with its allies about NMD. Current European thinking will then be assessed under the headings of the ballistic missile threat, Russian and Chinese views of U.S. national missile defense, changing notions of deterrence, strategic responses to the spread of ballistic missile capabilities, and the dynamics, and differences, in European views.

Some Basic European Attitudes Towards the U.S. Missile Defense Debate. As the U.S. debate about missile defense regained strength in the late 1990s, most Europeans were, in the words of a senior British official, “suffering

from a severe case of *ostrichitis*.” When finally the subject could no longer be avoided, those Europeans who engaged with the subject tended to share one or more of the following basic attitudes towards it:

- The U.S. government acted unilaterally by presenting its allies (and others) with essentially a *fait accompli* on NMD, without real concern for allied reactions. The very term ‘rogue state’ that has been the foundation for the U.S. characterization of the new ballistic missile threat is evidence of an arrogance that is dismissive of other countries’ real strategic concerns. (The term has, of course, since been officially retired, at least by the U.S. government.)
- NMD is a technological response to what is essentially a political and diplomatic problem and, characteristically, the United States has opted for a technological rather than a political or diplomatic solution.
- The United States is in search of 100 percent security, an ideal that Europeans long ago realized to be unattainable (as noted earlier).
- Underneath everything else, the U.S. drive for NMD is motivated by pressure from the U.S. defense industry and a desire, abetted by the U.S. political leadership, to maintain a technological lead over the rest of the world. When it is pointed out that in fact U.S. industry has not been especially active in lobbying for NMD, many Europeans (particularly on the political left) seem surprised and somewhat disbelieving.
- The United States is locked into an outdated model of international relations in which military power is the decisive element. By contrast, Europe has evolved a new model, of which the European Union is the manifestation, that privileges other forms of power more consonant with the new globalized world.
- The U.S. NMD program is a strategically and financially disproportionate response to an admittedly changing strategic situation.

These attitudes, though still widespread, are by no means immutable, as the recent consultations within the Alliance and the following assessment both demonstrate. But they help to explain the challenge U.S. NMD proponents still face in dealing with NMD within the Alliance.

The Evolving Ballistic Missile Threat. The team’s discussions in Europe provided ample evidence that among officials and outside experts, although not in the public consciousness, there is a clear recognition that the spread of ballistic missile technology to countries such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan has created a new strategic situation with which the allies must deal. Most European (and especially French) experts are quick to point out, however, that there is not yet a direct threat to the U.S. homeland from these new missile-owning states and that the threat, notably from the greater Middle East and North Africa, may well affect Europe before it affects the United States. (Some recall that a European country has already had its territory, though not its homeland, attacked by a missile from Libya.) Moreover, European experts note that the threat emanates from a relatively small and well-known number of countries which have specific regional motivations for their ballistic missile programs.

It follows that while the U.S. and European assessments of the ballistic missile threat remain different, this difference is not always dramatic. Of the major European countries, the British assessment remains the closest to that of the United States. In France there is a recognition at the highest levels of government that the rate of development of the missile threat has been underestimated in the past, notably because of an assumption that third countries would aim to achieve U.S. or European technical standards in their missile programs. French defense experts now accept that such a threat will emerge “within some reasonable time frame.” Even in Germany, the existence of an evolving ballistic missile threat is accepted by military and intelligence experts, although some senior government officials still characterize it as a “problem” rather than a “threat.” Moreover, several European experts remain convinced that there is a considerable technological gap between the capability to build missiles with a range of 1,000-2,000 km and those with a range of 10,000 km and that while the former capability may be acquired quite quickly, the latter is more time consuming and much harder to acquire.

Perhaps the most pervasive differences in threat perception across the Atlantic derive from a different weighting of technological capabilities as opposed to political intentions. Europeans are in general still uneasy with the way in which, following the 1998 report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States chaired by Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. assessments have tended to emphasize the timing of the acquisition of technological capabilities (and particularly when they *could* be acquired, rather than when it is likely they *will* be acquired) and to reflect almost no assessment of the existence or likelihood of political intent to threaten the United States.

Thus, many European experts would agree that it is necessary to understand why a poor country like North Korea would devote such a significant level of resources to a long range ballistic missile program. But most would argue that this is more related to acquiring bargaining leverage linked to its economic development and international recognition than to any serious intention to present a military threat to the United States or Europe. Detailed discussions with Europeans about other countries known to be acquiring ballistic missile capabilities reveal a general European tendency to emphasize the regional dynamics and instabilities to which those capabilities are, in European assessments, primarily intended to respond, rather than any belief that they would be useful, or indeed actually used, to threaten either the United States homeland or European territory.

So, too, the missile capabilities of Pakistan and India are seen by many Europeans as being primarily related to the situation in South Asia and between India and China, rather than as a threat to the United States or Europe. (This does not mean that they are taken lightly: some European specialists are acutely concerned about the dynamics of the Kashmir dispute in the coming years and its potential to trigger the use of nuclear weapons.)

Iran is accepted as a more ambiguous case. European experts tend to discount Iran as a 'threat' and to believe that European countries' diplomatic and economic engagement with it will ensure that it does not become one. But not all are so sanguine and further evidence of Iranian development of weapons of mass destruction (for example confirmation of an Iranian nuclear weapons capability) would certainly be a cause for reassessment.

Partly as a consequence of this different view of intentions, even Europeans who accept the reality of an emerging threat to the United States disagree with U.S. assessments on the timing of its actual emergence. Typically, even the more pessimistic European experts think that it is likely to be 8-10 years at the earliest before such a threat becomes a reality. They therefore have difficulty accepting the current U.S. administration's emphasis on developing some NMD response by 2005.

Two other aspects of European threat assessments are important. First, there is a tendency to argue that other means of delivery of a weapon of mass destruction would be much simpler and cheaper for most of the countries in question. This argument, once a feature of almost all transatlantic discussions, appears to be somewhat more muted now, perhaps as a result of the growing recognition that the substantial efforts by these countries to acquire ballistic missiles — particularly missiles of longer range than is directly relevant to regional conflicts — do require some explanation. The second is the emphasis placed on recent political developments between the two Korean states and between Iran and the West, as already noted. These are argued to show that the imminence of a serious intention, and perhaps even of a real capability, to threaten the United States on the part of those two countries is further away than some U.S. threat assessments have suggested and may even, in the eyes of many European officials, recede still further, especially if the United States and Europe would pursue what these officials consider sound policy responses.

Finally, there has been a growing recognition in Europe that technology transfer among many of the countries with significant ballistic programs is important and is a major contributory factor to the more rapid evolution of the threat than had earlier been supposed. Some European experts even argue that the problem ultimately comes down to a concern about North Korea and its Russian-derived missile technology, which has been exported so widely. The implication is that if the North Korean problem could be resolved, the concern about missile proliferation would be significantly alleviated.

The Atlantic Council team pointed out the need to see third country ballistic missile capabilities in a more operational and contextual fashion. What would be the impact of the existence of such capabilities in countries involved in unfolding crises around the world, and how might they affect U.S. and European decisions on responses? In a historical case, would European actions in the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 have been influenced by the existence of an Iraqi capability to strike European capitals with ballistic missiles? The importance of this type of question is better accepted in some

European circles than others. Probably the least willingness to accept it is in Germany, whereas in Britain and France, both of which committed forces to the Gulf War and other regional contingencies, its significance is clearly accepted. The conclusions drawn from the analysis are varied, however. Some accept that the implicit blackmail by small ballistic missile states would be easier to resist if the United States and European countries had limited ballistic missile defenses of their territories. Others, notably in France, are inclined to argue that the classical deterrent threat of massive retaliation, if not preemption, would suffice to deter a small country from actually implementing such a suicidal threat and that therefore missile defenses are not a necessary element of the response to this concern. This remains the view of the French government.

Nevertheless, even many knowledgeable Europeans have difficulty in accepting the practical implications of ballistic missile threats on the continuing, and special, U.S. role as the security guarantor of its allies not only in Europe, but also in the Middle East and Asia. To the extent that these implications are accepted, they are seen primarily as a justification for the United States acquiring the capability to defend its projection forces in overseas theaters. It is less obvious to Europeans why defense of U.S. territory is deemed to be essential by some Americans if the United States is to continue to play this role.

The blackmail argument is, however, gradually making its mark in Europeans' struggle with this question: how would Europeans react in a crisis in which the United States could defend its national territory against missile attack and European countries could not? The salience of this question is especially well understood in countries like Britain and Denmark in which the current U.S. NMD program would require the siting of related facilities and which, consequently, are especially sensitive to becoming targets themselves. European officials see the U.S. government as having been slow to respond to the implications of this point and failing to appreciate the difficulty for Europeans of having to rely solely on a retaliatory threat as a deterrent when the United States, for its part, would at least arguably have shown a lack of confidence in such a deterrent by deploying NMD.

A final point on the assessment of threats is that European publics, as has already been mentioned, have essentially no awareness of the existence of such threats or of the missile defense issue more broadly. Although there has been increasing discussion of the issue in the media in some countries (for example the Netherlands and Britain), this has not yet engaged a broad public. Public opinion is likely to become a factor at some point, however. The most likely trigger will be the decisions of the British and Danish governments on the provision of support for the upgrading of radars in Yorkshire and Greenland. Whether at that time the public sees the greater threat as being that from other countries' ballistic missiles or from the existence of the U.S. radar sites will depend a lot on the context in which it is set. Some Europeans the team met warned against the danger that U.S. NMD will become known as 'killer missiles' and as the lineal descendants of 'Star Wars,' which could confer on missile defense the kind of fatal notoriety the enhanced radiation weapon

(or 'neutron bomb') acquired in the late 1970s. The explosion of Internet use in Europe could dramatically accelerate the spread of such a harmful characterization in mass opinion and cause it to become the dominant public view. By contrast, one British expert pointed to the possibility that the headlines could read 'Mad mullahs threaten Britain,' which could have a precisely opposite effect. The former seems the more likely outcome, however. Were it to materialize, it could blow apart the delicate consensus on defense policy established by the Blair government since taking office and would also present serious challenges to the left-of-center governments in France and Germany, in particular.

In short, the substantial U.S. government effort made since late 1999 to consult the European allies about the evolution of the ballistic missile threat and the spread of ballistic missile capabilities has resulted in a greater and more sophisticated appreciation by European governments and experts on these issues. However many European officials still do not think they have enough hard information or intelligence to form a definitive judgment about the threat and U.S. assessments of it. (Some noted that the Russians have been trying to score a point out of this by telling Europeans that "The United States is keeping you ignorant.") These officials would like to see the consultative process continue and deepen in the belief that this could lead to European and U.S. assessments coming closer together.

As of now, there is significant agreement between U.S. and European analysts on the U.S. assessment of the current and potential ballistic missile *capabilities* of the key states of concern (although there is still disagreement on how fast those potential capabilities will be realized). But this analysis is seen as relatively unimportant in the absence of an assessment of *intentions*. As a consequence, U.S. concerns about the emergence of significant new threats to U.S. national territory are seen as anywhere from somewhat to considerably overstated. Until there is a real prospect of a ballistic missile threat to European countries from a state that Europeans see as potentially harboring ill designs on them in a crisis, their inclination will be to argue that intentions are more important than capabilities and that to base policy responses too heavily on the latter risks undesirable and unnecessary strategic consequences. European views on this latter point will be discussed further below under the heading of strategic responses.

Russia and U.S. National Missile Defense. The question of Russia's reaction to a U.S. NMD deployment is one of the principal anxieties of all the European governments and experts consulted by the Atlantic Council team and, after the threat, is the subject that they are the most keen to discuss. Predictably, there is a range of opinion both within and among the different countries. In general, of the countries consulted by the team, Germany is the most nervous about Russian reactions to a U.S. decision to deploy missile defenses and some of Germany's allies are concerned that the Germans will be too easily swayed by Russian arguments. Britain, which under Tony Blair's leadership has tried to stake out something of a special relationship with President Putin, seems quite confident that it can help work the Russian angle in a way that will foster a U.S.-Russian agreement on the

modification of the ABM Treaty. Franco-Russian relations are currently dominated by the Chechnya problem and France has accordingly been less engaged with the Russians on the NMD issue recently, although that is unlikely to remain true for long.

All the European countries have been paying considerable attention to developments in Russian policy, including the joint statement on missile defense by Presidents Clinton and Putin on June 4, 2000, and the subsequent proposals made by Mr. Putin for NATO-Russia cooperation on theater missile defense. The fact that both the U.S.-Russian statement and the Putin proposals implicitly accept the existence of a new ballistic missile threat and the principle of active defenses as a means to deal with it has been widely noted in Europe, even though in consultations with NATO some Russian representatives have sought to play down this point. As to the Putin proposals, following discussions with the Russians both bilaterally and in the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, the allies have generally concluded that there is little substance to them, especially on such points as the Russian reference to a boost-phase system, although they see the Russian proposals as a clever move aimed at a flaw in the current U.S. position which does not emphasize the potential for cooperative approaches. Nor do Europeans generally believe that the Russians have much to contribute to a collaborative effort to develop a theater missile defense system or that the Russians would be able to afford to buy it even if it were developed. At the same time, many Europeans, and especially Germans, view Russian pressures on them to dissociate themselves from the U.S. NMD policy as heavy-handed attempts to drive wedges between the allies reminiscent of the Soviet period. Nevertheless, some experts, especially in Germany, think the Russians have read and played European opinion on NMD much better than the United States.

All this notwithstanding, most Europeans in and out of government believe that the United States must make every effort to come to an agreement with Russia on modifications to the ABM Treaty that will legitimize any U.S. NMD program. Few expect that the Russians will be willing to make a deal with the Clinton administration, although several European governments have pointed out to them the advantages they could get by doing so. Opinions are split on whether the Russians will be willing to make a deal with a new U.S. administration:

- Many Europeans believe that the Russians know they are not the target of a U.S. NMD deployment and that they will make a deal at the eleventh hour and after demanding — and, Europeans fear, perhaps exacting — a high price. They believe that economic pressures and the Russian desire to continue to be seen on a strategic par with the United States will eventually convince them that they are better off with an agreement. But they believe the bargaining will be hard and that Russia will insist on a satisfactory START III agreement and the transfer of some missile defense technology as the conditions of any agreement, while very likely threatening serious consequences in terms of less support for the nonproliferation regime, possible withdrawal from arms control agreements, and complicating U.S. relations with China, Iran and the Caucasus if the United

States will not agree. This view was quite widely expressed to the Atlantic Council team in Britain, but is also found in France and other allied countries.

- On the other side are those, notably in Germany, who have become convinced that the Russians will in the end not feel able to make an agreement because it would free the United States to deploy a new generation of defense technology that Russia will never be able to match, thus making plain that Russia is not the strategic equal of the United States. Some also note that, whatever happens, there is a danger that the NMD issue will drive Mr. Putin into an even greater reliance on his military/security power base. These conclusions are, of course, precisely those that the Russians, with their goal of strengthening opposition to a U.S. NMD deployment, would want their interlocutors to have drawn.

There is also a division of opinion concerning the connection in Russian eyes between arms limitation agreements on offensive forces and ballistic missile defenses. There are those in Europe who believe that the prospect of a U.S. NMD deployment could induce the Russians to seek a relaxation of the START ban on MIRVed land-based missiles. This would enable them to maintain what they would consider an adequate force to ensure their retaliatory capability against the United States, since they would otherwise not be able to afford enough single-RV missiles to ensure this outcome. This approach would mean that the Russians would seek U.S. agreement to the MIRVing of the Topol-M missile now under development. Others argue that if the United States were to offer a lower limit (of say 1,000-1,500) on U.S. offensive forces (i.e., well below the 2,500 warheads that the Department of Defense has hitherto argued to be the lowest acceptable number) and also to take measures to remove weapons from alert status, Russian concerns about limited U.S. missile defenses could be reduced without relaxation of the MIRVed ICBM ban. An extreme view, put to the Atlantic Council team in Germany, was that the Russian military leadership would like to see Russia withdraw from the restrictions of START II, while placing the blame for its collapse on the United States, an argument that some think could seem quite persuasive to German opinion. But there is little consensus on these matters — perhaps not surprisingly, given that these are questions that do not currently engage the serious attention of European publics or even most European policymakers.

Beyond the virtual unanimity of European experts that the new U.S. administration should engage the Russians in a serious negotiation on the modification of the ABM Treaty, there is a widespread view that the proposal by the Clinton administration for successive amendments of the ABM Treaty to permit successive phases of U.S. NMD deployments is a mistake. Not only does it lend credence to the Russian fear that the United States is merely trying to work progressively towards a large NMD system that could threaten the Russian retaliatory capability, but it also detracts from any sense that the goal is to work out a new and more stable strategic relationship. The Russians, many Europeans believe, need to feel that an agreement to modify the ABM Treaty will bring them some respite from this issue. Moreover, some European

governments have been responsive to authoritative Russian statements that the future of the ABM Treaty is too serious a matter to be treated in piecemeal fashion.

Finally, there is a widespread European opinion that the United States and the allies must be careful not to overload the agenda of issues for negotiation with Russia. The West, it is argued, has underestimated the extent of Russian alienation from the West, especially after the Kosovo campaign. To expect them to swallow modification of the ABM Treaty at the same time as further NATO enlargement and pressure concerning Chechnya may be to expect too much. It could force the Russians into a position in which they believe they have to pull back from the West and rely on their own strength and even, perhaps, push them into a closer alliance with China than might otherwise develop (a point the Russians have themselves raised in talks with some allied governments).

There is much less consensus on when and how the United States could reasonably conclude that agreement with Russia on amending the ABM Treaty was not attainable and accordingly proceed with NMD deployment after withdrawing from the Treaty. While most European experts were prepared to concede that a good faith U.S. effort to find agreement that could be shown to have failed should make it easier for Europeans to swallow the demise of the ABM Treaty, few were prepared to go so far as to say that they would approve of NMD deployments in that situation. Nor, conversely, were they prepared to accept that an agreement with Russia on ABM Treaty amendments would automatically mean that European governments would accept that the potential adverse effects of such deployments had been adequately mitigated, although an agreement with Russia would go a long way in this direction. In this connection, most turned next to the question of China.

China and U.S. National Missile Defense. European governments and experts have realized that the impact of U.S. NMD deployments on China is a critical issue. At several of the Atlantic Council team's meetings in Europe, respected experts asserted that the true motivation for the U.S. wish to deploy missile defenses lies in a concern with China's changing international role. While some European comments gave the impression that this point was raised largely for debating purposes, recognizing that the China issue is one of the weakest links in the logic of U.S. proponents of NMD, others offered a coherent and informed strategic rationale for worrying about China's reaction and that NMD deployment could trigger a new arms race in Asia.

The starting point for the European argument was the fact that even a 100-interceptor U.S. system would at the least significantly reduce the current Chinese ICBM threat to the United States. As a result, those few Europeans who had recently discussed the subject with the Chinese were impressed by the strength of the Chinese conviction that U.S. NMD deployment was aimed against China and found the Chinese much more passionate on the subject than the Russians. These European experts believed that the Chinese would feel compelled to modernize and expand their forces beyond what they might otherwise do, with knock-on effects on

India and Pakistan and perhaps on Chinese willingness to cooperate in international anti-proliferation regimes. There was little disposition to accept that the Chinese might have independent reasons for wishing to modernize and expand their ICBM forces; or that a new and stable U.S.-China strategic relationship, and therefore balance of deterrence, quite similar to the present one (or even better from the Chinese point of view, given the vulnerability to preemption of their current liquid-fueled missiles) might emerge without inordinate increases in Chinese ICBM levels.

Not unexpectedly, few Europeans seemed to have given much thought to the way in which the cross-Straits relationship affects this matter. Those who had done so recognized that the Chinese were even more opposed to the defense of Taiwan against shorter-range missile attack by a TMD system than to U.S. NMD. Few were aware of (or at least had paid much heed to) past Chinese statements to the effect that they intended their nuclear threat to the United States to neutralize U.S. intervention in support of Taiwan should China decide to attempt to retake Taiwan by force. When this issue was raised, there was little European disposition to contest the force of the point or to argue that the United States should simply leave China free to play the nuclear card in a cross-Straits crisis. But equally it had little real resonance, doubtless because of the remoteness of this matter from the center of European strategic preoccupations.

Defense and Deterrence in the Post-Cold War Era. European officials and experts typically raise a concern about altering the structure of deterrence painstakingly developed over the post-World War II period as one reason why the United States should not proceed with national missile defenses. Not surprisingly this argument was raised repeatedly to the Atlantic Council team. As one French expert suggested, NMD sometimes seems to stand for 'No More Deterrence.' In short, Europeans continue to believe that the mutual vulnerability of the United States and Russia to one another's nuclear missiles and the threat of nuclear retaliation against any state that threatens or, still more, executes a nuclear, chemical or biological attack against the United States remain 'cornerstones of strategic stability' in the post-Cold War situation. The British and French have a particular interest in this question because of the existence of their own nuclear forces, the ability of which to threaten high value targets in Russia, and by extension other missile-owning countries that might threaten them in the future, remains the core of their strategic rationale.

In response to this argument the Council team pointed out that:

- The Russia-U.S. strategic balance has been frozen at Cold War levels by arms limitation agreements during a period in which the two countries have ceased to believe in, or worry about, a nuclear attack by the other. Why should this Cold War artifact be perpetuated when there is a possibility of moving to a better and even more stable situation in the future?
- The nature of deterrent relationships with small third country missile and WMD capabilities has not been well established. At the least it is not obvious that

- relying on a threat of nuclear retaliation against such capabilities would seem credible, or indeed morally acceptable, to U.S. leaders in the future. Some of the very same people who argue for maintaining the existing strategy of mutually assured vulnerability might be the first to argue that even the threat — much less the actual use — of nuclear weapons in response to a limited WMD threat or attack was not morally justified or proportionate.
- A limited anti-missile defense of U.S. territory, far from being inconsistent with the creation of a stable deterrent posture against third countries, might strengthen the credibility of a retaliatory threat by removing the prospect of, or at least partially insuring against, a cheap shot at the United States. Moreover, such a defense would not alter the mutual vulnerability of the large nuclear powers to one another that is the foundation of the traditional view of nuclear deterrence. In both these senses, defenses should be seen not as an alternative to deterrence, but as an additional element to strengthen deterrence.

None of these arguments comes naturally to the majority of European officials and experts in the field. But if made, all three arguments are accepted as plausible and, at least, as requiring a response. Several European experts readily admit that the whole field of deterrence theory has been neglected since the latter part of the Cold War and recognize that it would be timely to reopen these issues in the new strategic context. This is not to say that they would be quick to accept the proposition that limited missile defenses would complement and strengthen the U.S. or European capacity to create strategic stability. Some, notably in France, still assert that missile defenses must be either non-existent or complete — limited defenses would add nothing to deterrence. Much more reflection and discussion would be required to bring this debate to a consensus conclusion. But there is a willingness in many European quarters to look again at these questions and to reexamine the psychological and operational dimensions of deterrence in a world of multiple states with arsenals of long range missiles of varying sizes and political grievances of different kinds.

One other point on this subject that was frequently raised was the U.S. practice, now officially discontinued by the U.S. administration, of referring to the prospective small missile-owning states as ‘rogues.’ Many Europeans see this terminology as not only pejorative, but as indicating a U.S. reluctance to examine the specific reasons for which each such state had taken the step of acquiring a ballistic missile capability. The fact that the U.S. government has abandoned this terminology has made it easier to persuade many Europeans to consider the issues the United States is raising on their merits.

Strategic Responses to New Ballistic Missile Threats. A consistent theme of European thinking about the new ballistic missile threats is that the policy responses to them should cover a full range of economic, political and diplomatic measures in addition to possible military responses. Europeans in general like to set the missile defense question into the context of broad anti-proliferation policy and many emphasize the importance of engagement rather than isolation of countries of

concern. While this tendency was strongest in Berlin and least prominent in London among the countries consulted by the Atlantic Council team, it was present everywhere. However, when asked the question, which was a staple of the team's discussions, what policies the United States and its allies should be adopting along these lines that they have not been implementing for some time, few if any ideas were offered. Nor was there a ready willingness to accept the proposition that the policies that had failed to prevent the spread of missile technology that had already occurred might not be the most appropriate policies to deal with the consequences of that spread up to now or the further spread that might be expected. Once this argument was presented, however, its validity was generally recognized.

The ABM Treaty in particular and the broader nuclear arms control regime in general remain central to European concerns. NMD, as one French expert put it, could also stand for 'No More Disarmament.' Many Europeans fear that NMD deployment would stop the trend of the last decades towards more cooperative solutions to international security problems. As one senior German official put it, the arms control regime represents international agreement that an unlimited arms race is intolerable. This is an achievement that should not be endangered. The U.S. NMD program challenged the ABM Treaty, but the underlying problem was not considered by the United States as one to which there might be an arms control, rather than a technological or military, solution. This concern for the impact of NMD on arms control agreements extends quite far. Many Europeans fear in particular that it could destabilize the INF Treaty (as the Russians have directly suggested) and the agreement on conventional forces in Europe (CFE).

When discussing measures to deal with proliferation, many Europeans' first recourse was to the broad international regimes and arms limitation fora that have accumulated over time. There is still much discussion about the importance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (and dismay at the U.S. Senate's refusal to consent to its ratification), as well as emphasis on the importance of enforcing (and if possible expanding) the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, negotiating a fissile material cut-off agreement and, in general, getting the Conference on Disarmament back in business. And several of the Europeans the team met pointed to an inconsistency in some U.S. thinking which expressed skepticism and lack of confidence in multilateral arms control regimes as the foundation of an effective anti-proliferation regime, but appeared to want greater international cooperation in fighting the proliferation of missiles and WMD.

Most of the experts consulted were less than keen to accept more limited and targeted multilateral or collective approaches as alternatives to traditional multilateral arms control regimes. The team's suggestions included an enhanced Missile Technology Control Regime (MCTR) and enhanced intelligence cooperation designed to frustrate the acquisition of sensitive technology by countries of proliferation concern. But a few officials and policymakers recognized that measures of this kind probably offer more hope of success than broad international regimes and say that they would be willing to try them. Some emphasized the importance of closer

cooperation among intelligence and security services to enforce export controls and inhibit proliferation in other ways. Others believe that new international rules could be devised concerning the development and deployment of ballistic missiles.

On the question of dealing with states that have already acquired missile technology, few new ideas emerged. In specific cases, such as Iran, many Europeans believe that an improvement in both the internal political situation and in external relations is to be expected. There is considerable confidence in states such as Germany and France that are attempting to engage the Khatami government that they will be successful over time in moderating Iran's international behavior and heading off a ballistic missile or WMD threat. But this is not a unanimous opinion. The team encountered a number of officials and experts who foresee the possibility not only that Iran might simultaneously pursue political reform and its WMD and missile programs, but also that the rivalries in the Gulf could indeed lead to a future situation in which an Iranian missile threat to either Europe or the United States would cast a shadow over European or U.S. policy options in a crisis.

Another subject discussed in several meetings by the team was the growing debate in the United States about the most desirable NMD architecture and the question whether there were some architectures, for example sea-based and/or boost-phase systems, that would be easier for European governments to accept than the currently proposed fixed land-based system. In general, European reactions to this question were that it would be easier to accept systems that were more easily presented as intended primarily for the defense of deployed forces and therefore blurred the TMD/NMD distinction, even if they also had a capability to defend the U.S. (or European) homeland. In this sense, sea-based systems would be preferable from a European point of view, although this would depend to some extent on where they were deployed. However, they are not seen as unambiguously better. In some European defense circles there is concern that sea-based boost-phase systems, assuming that they could be configured to provide the appropriate coverage, would so shorten the decision-cycle time for their use in a crisis that they could create real strategic instability. Finally, there remains a suspicion in many European minds that the ultimate direction of U.S. policy will be towards large-scale, space-based systems, about which they remain deeply concerned, not least because of the capability they would have to attack many space-based platforms.

Other responses to the question of different architectural choices focused on different theaters of concern.

The question of the missile defense of Europe is obviously closest to European concerns. On this, there is a growing recognition that the agreed NATO TMD program, while explicitly stated to be intended for the protection of troops, would in fact provide some level of defense of national territories and that this could in theory be expanded. However, there is considerable skepticism as to whether the program will be fully funded on the current schedule. While some countries, including the Netherlands and perhaps Germany, might well maintain their funding commitments,

others were less likely to do so. However, since the funding profile is significantly back-loaded, this would probably not become an obstacle to its continuation until the middle of the decade.

Secondly, there is a growing recognition by many governments, though less in Germany than in other countries consulted, that as ballistic missile capabilities in the hands of third countries spread towards the end of the decade the case for a more robust missile defense capability of Europe will become more compelling. This is also seen as an opportunity by the European defense industry. But the budgetary constraints in all the European countries are so stringent in the coming years that governments will not wish to be confronted with this requirement any time soon. Moreover, there is a strong awareness that the deployment of a capable system would almost certainly require a degree of industrial and technological cooperation across the Atlantic that has not hitherto been achievable. There is considerable doubt that the United States, notwithstanding the latest Defense Technology and Security Initiative, is really prepared for this.

The team also encountered some experts, notably in France, who recognize that a progressive deployment of missile defenses both of European territory, with extensive involvement of European industry, and, on a limited scale, of U.S. territory may gradually come to be seen as an appropriate response to the changing strategic situation. This is by no means yet a topic of official discussion, let alone real policy debate, in France or elsewhere, and is not seen even by those who raise the subject as something that requires action on the time scale currently envisaged for an initial U.S. NMD deployment. But it is the kind of idea that is making its way into discussion outside government circles and could well be strengthened as awareness of the changing ballistic missile threat grows in the political and elite consciousness.

The question of including Russia within the scope of a collaborative transatlantic missile defense effort is very much on European minds. Most European experts recognize that Russia has historically been supportive of the idea of defending the Russian homeland against any form of attack and that Russians understand that Russian territory is well within the range arcs of the new ballistic missile threats. The idea of building on the Putin proposals by offering to include Russia in a transatlantic approach to missile defense has a lot of appeal to many Europeans, as might be expected from the earlier discussion of how Europeans generally view Russian policy. But there is great skepticism as to whether the cost and technological implications of this idea would prove acceptable to the United States. None of the European experts consulted believed that the Russians would be able to pay for any significant missile defense capability or would be able to bring significant technological resources of their own to the table.

The Dynamics, and Differences, In European Views. Many times during the Atlantic Council team's conversations in Europe, both Europeans and Americans lamented that the effort to generate a serious transatlantic dialogue on these questions in 1991-2 was abandoned after a brief overture and not resumed until it

appeared to Europeans, rightly or wrongly, as though the U.S. NMD decision had essentially been taken. This is not to say that Europeans are unwilling to take a share of the blame for this situation. As one knowledgeable French expert put it, the European attitude towards the changing strategic situation in the 1990s was “don’t wake us up.”

Now that the consultative process has been engaged, however, European officials, political leaders and experts have started to confront the issues raised by the United States. There is widespread appreciation for the engagement of the U.S. administration in the consultation process since late 1999, even though it is seen as having a fair way yet to go. Somewhat to our surprise, given the level of interest in NMD at least among Republicans in Congress, one prominent European parliamentarian said that Congressional leaders have regrettably not shown interest in dialogue with their European counterparts on this issue in parallel with the intergovernmental discussions. Such a dialogue could be an important component of transatlantic discussions on the subject. Predictably, the reactions of different countries have not been identical.

- Germany remains the least inclined of the major countries to engage the strategic and other issues involved in the NMD debate. Several factors — the German, preoccupation with their own defense reform and budget debate, Germany’s political culture which, while evolving in response to ethnic conflicts, remains rather anti-militaristic, its particular sensitivity to Russian views, and the composition of the current German government — combine to limit the speed, if not the scope, of new thinking about these issues. A senior German official made plain that the time scale of the ballistic missile threat as seen in Germany is well over the horizon of the current political leadership. Even German military officials seem reluctant to acknowledge the new threats for fear that they might be expected to do something about them and spend money the defense ministry does not have and sees little early prospect of getting. In addition, the tension between current U.S. and French positions pulls the Germans in two directions, never a comfortable position. By the same token, if there is a diminution of the current gap in assessment and policy prescription between the United States and France, the German position is likely to follow along in the same direction, although the acute political pressures on the defense budget and the special German sensitivity to their relations with Russia may diminish the speed and extent of their movement.
- France is now confronting the major issues associated with the U.S. pursuit of NMD. This is a significant shift from the situation of only a short time ago. There is no certainty that the outcome of this examination of the issues will mirror that of the U.S. government: indeed the more likely outcome is that the French will hew to their current policy lines for quite some time to come, especially as there is no sign that there is any advantage, political, military, industrial or diplomatic, for them to change their view on these issues any time soon. Nevertheless, there are significant indications of new thinking both within

the French administration and in some influential political circles and the broad question of controlling proliferation is a priority concern for President Chirac. It is therefore all the more important from the U.S. vantage point to continue the dialogue with the French and to press on the fundamental strategic issues involved in adapting Cold War deterrence theory to a new situation. Moreover, there is some sign that French industry sees advantage for itself in the development of missile defenses at least for the European theater. Even though the results of this new thinking are still not much in evidence in official circles, which will not go beyond discussion of the need for protection of French projection forces, there may well be some shift in French views over time. Finally, France of course remains particularly concerned about the viability of its own strategic nuclear forces. While not always an explicit topic of discussion, this issue is clearly decisive in French thinking about the future evolution of U.S. NMD and the reactions it may provoke.

- Britain is in a difficult position with respect to these issues. The British are tightly stretched diplomatically between their disposition, especially in the military and intelligence establishments, to go along with the United States in matters of this kind and the interests of the Blair government in staying on the right side of the French in order to perpetuate the British leadership position in European defense matters. In addition, Mr. Blair's position as a champion of doing business with Mr. Putin could put his government in a difficult situation as U.S. policy towards Russia evolves. British domestic politics also enter the picture, as already mentioned.² The British government would find it acutely awkward to have to respond to a request for approval of the upgrade, still less the replacement, of the Fylingdales radar before the next general election (currently expected in the spring or fall of 2001) and before an agreement had been reached with Russia on the amendment of the ABM Treaty. These political complications make it harder for Britain to make a distinctive contribution to a U.S.-European consultative process on the key strategic issues. Nevertheless, the British will, if only for tactical reasons, not be publicly critical of U.S. moves towards NMD deployment. And both in the Ministry of Defense and among the Prime Minister's advisers there are those who are quite well disposed towards the case for missile defense, at least as long as the chosen systems have the capability to provide protection for British and European territory. Finally, Britain too has concerns about its own strategic nuclear forces. There is little doubt that the British will expect the United States to guarantee assistance in ensuring the viability of the Trident force should it be compromised by developments consequent upon a U.S. NMD deployment.

² Shortly after the team's visit the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee issued a report that pointed directly at the divisions in Whitehall on this subject and reflected a generally negative assessment of the consequences of the United States proceeding with an NMD program. The report recommended that the British government should "encourage the U.S.A. to seek other ways of reducing the threats it perceives."

- Among other European countries, there is an encouragingly high level of recognition and understanding of the issues involved as a result of the intense NATO consultations of recent months. Although smaller countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway do not diverge greatly from broadly held European perceptions of the issues (such as the importance of engaging the Russians and preserving the ABM Treaty if possible) and, like the larger countries, cannot easily deal with any greater demands for defense spending than they are currently facing, their voices can be influential in the debate and they should continue to be engaged actively in consultations by the United States.

One last important aspect of European views should be noted. There is a general recognition that the decision to proceed with a program to protect U.S. territory against ballistic missile attack is a sovereign decision for the United States to take. European governments believe that their interests will be affected by this decision and that it may, depending on when and how it is taken, have adverse effects on Alliance relations. But few Europeans see this as an issue that will break the Alliance, however much it may affect their view of the wisdom of U.S. policy making. They make clear that they are not saying that the United States should remain vulnerable to ballistic missile attack as the price of Alliance cohesion and they acknowledge that the final decision on whether to deploy NMD is rightly a U.S. national decision. They do want to be consulted, however, and have their views seriously considered.

By the same token, whatever change may have been brought about in European thinking has materialized primarily as a result of the pressure for change from the United States. European governments' views of deterrence will change slowly, if at all, without continued pressure of this kind. Their interest lies in predictability and stability in the strategic picture so that they can devote their political efforts to their difficult domestic challenges and to the demands of the European integration project, including the European Defense and Security Policy. Interestingly enough, the missile defense question has not yet become a matter of serious contention between conservative and progressive parties in the major European countries.

The logic of this situation for any new U.S. administration is therefore clear enough: in conducting a strategic review such as generally characterizes the early months of a new administration, there is both a need and an opportunity to build on the progress that has undoubtedly been made in recent months in creating a serious transatlantic dialogue on the new strategic realities. Specific recommendations on this point can be found in the final section of this report.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Atlantic Council team's principal conclusions from its meetings in Europe can be summarized as follows:

- There has been a considerable change in the European official and expert thinking on the many aspects of the missile defense issue over the last several months. This change is primarily the result of the substantial time and effort that the administration has invested in consultation with allied governments during that period. There is still a wide gap in perception of both the extent and timing of the threat from new and emerging ballistic missile capabilities and in the judgment of the appropriate strategic and policy responses to those capabilities. But the dynamic is towards a narrowing of that gap and towards a greater similarity of views on all the major issues involved.
- Given the likelihood that a new U.S. administration will wish to conduct its own strategic review of the programmatic and policy aspects of the NMD program and broader policy on proliferation and relations with Russia and China in early 2001, there is a strong case for a major effort to broaden and deepen the current consultations with the European allies. While such consultations may well not succeed in closing all the gaps in perception and policy judgment, some greater identity of views is likely to emerge and the effort in itself will reduce the damage to the Alliance from a U.S. decision to proceed with NMD deployment. By contrast, allowing two different approaches to deterrence and the proliferation issue to persist without such an effort will surely undermine allied cohesion and the management of future crises and conflict operations.
- A similar argument applies to initiating a dialogue on these issues with Russia and China. Such dialogues are seen in Europe as an essential element of any U.S. policy to move toward NMD deployment, even if the achievement of agreement in such dialogues is a more remote prospect than that of persuading European governments of the wisdom of such a deployment.

The judgment that U.S.-European consultations on ballistic missile defense need to be both broadened and deepened, taken with the substance of the conversations by the Atlantic Council team in Europe, suggests the form of an agenda for U.S.-European engagement in early 2001. (A similar agenda needs to be pursued with our Asian friends and allies.) This agenda is described in detail in the remainder of this report.

A Broader Agenda. The agenda needs to be broadened beyond the current issues of threat assessment and deployment modes to include not only the strategic implications of a shift to defending territory against ballistic missiles and the identification of ways to mitigate any adverse effects, but also the ways in which missile defenses can complement other measures to combat and roll back the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The full agenda needs to include:

i. Exchanging intelligence evidence on the nature, extent, and timing of ballistic missile threats not only to the territory of the United States but also to the national territories of our European allies. This should be the basis for a policy discussion of the strategic implications of such threats for stability and protection of European interests.

ii. Assessing the various alternatives for defending European territory against ballistic missiles (such as land-based or sea-based, boost-phase or mid-course, singly or in combination, and the role of space assets). Each should be examined from the standpoint of: effectiveness against threats from various sources; cost to deploy and operate (and how these costs might be shared between the U.S. and Europe); ability to exploit for territorial defense existing defense assets and systems designed to defend deployed military forces against ballistic missile threats (so-called TMD); politico-military effects of deployment (including impact on existing deterrence doctrine, other non-proliferation efforts, the behavior of both supplying and acquiring states, and relations with Russia); and domestic political effects. This discussion will at some stage need to be broadened to include cruise missile threats as well.

iii. Evaluating the effectiveness of current efforts against proliferation of ballistic missiles (as part of a broader re-examination of the effectiveness of current efforts against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them). This should include: assessing the ability of current efforts to cope with both the effects of the proliferation that has already occurred and the future proliferation that may occur; identifying additional measures that should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the effort; finding strategies that could help roll back proliferation that has already occurred; and developing strategies to bring Russia, China, and other proliferating or potentially proliferating states into the effort.

iv. Reviewing current deterrence doctrine in light of the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new threats to the United States and Europe. This should include: prospects for moving beyond deterrence by threat of retaliation to a more cooperative, non-adversarial strategic relationship with Russia (what such a relationship might look like, how to transition to it, and how Russia might be persuaded to accept it); implications for the ABM Treaty and existing agreements regarding strategic nuclear weapons; prospects for developing a more effective strategy for deterring further acquisition and potential use of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them by various countries of concern; and the possible contribution of ballistic missile defenses to such a strategy.

v. Reviewing the role of arms control in relations with Russia in the post-Cold War world and in dealing with the new security threats to the United States and Europe. This should include addressing the following questions: would relations with Russia be improved by reducing the number and threatening character of nuclear (and other military) forces through greater reliance on unilateral measures, rather than formal arms control negotiations and agreements?; what would be the continuing role, if any, of existing treaties, especially the ABM Treaty?; how effective are global legal regimes in preventing, discouraging, or detecting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them?; what continuing role would they have and how might they be strengthened to play that role better?

A Deeper Agenda. The process of consultations needs to be deepened to reflect the variety of players (both in and out of government) that can contribute to working this robust agenda, while recognizing that not all these items can or should be worked by the same people or in the same form. The agenda needs to be worked in creative ways that will foster convergence of U.S. and European views.

i. NATO's consultations need to be expanded to cover the full range of this agenda. At some point all five agenda items need to be addressed in the Alliance. Preparatory work on a number of them could usefully be assigned to specific NATO institutions, for example:

- The Senior Defense Group on Proliferation (the "DGP") has already been dealing with intelligence issues and the results of its work has been incorporated by the Military Committee into NATO's intelligence assessment (MC 161).
- The Senior Political Military Group (the "SGP") could take up evaluating the effectiveness of current efforts against proliferation and the role of global legal regimes.
- The NATO Council needs to be actively engaged in the effort both in an oversight role and by conducting its own discussions, particularly of the more conceptual and political agenda items (such as deterrence doctrine and developing a new strategic relationship with Russia).

Hopefully the Clinton Administration has already initiated (or will soon initiate) consideration between now and the end of the year of at least some of these issues, so that valuable time is not lost.

ii. The NATO effort needs to be underpinned by active bilateral discussions with key allies. A NATO process can reach a successful outcome on these issues only with active U.S. leadership and intensive consultations with key allies that parallel the NATO discussions. These discussions should include at a minimum France, Germany, Italy, and the UK. It would also be useful to add Turkey, because of its proximity to potential threats, and Denmark (and perhaps Norway), because of existing radar systems on its territory that could have a role in ballistic missile defense.

iii. A 'Track 1 ½' process needs to be initiated. Opinion leaders and national security analysts outside government need to be engaged now on this broadened agenda. Not only can they contribute to developing the 'intellectual capital' for dealing with the issues, but they also need to prepare themselves so that they can play their appropriate role when the public debate on these issues begins in earnest. All of the items on the agenda could be addressed in this forum at an unclassified level. One or two U.S. organizations might team up with 3 or 4 European counterparts (one in each of the major capitals) to sponsor a program of informal exchanges and conferences. Government officials could attend and thus have their own thinking informed by the discussion. Initiation of this process should also not await the outcome of the U.S. Presidential election.

iv. The post-election internal U.S. government review needs to be open to U.S. allies. The new U.S. President will almost certainly initiate a fairly comprehensive review of the U.S. ballistic missile defense effort shortly after his election. This review will most likely cover issues of system architecture, how to

proceed with Russia and China, the role of U.S. allies, and other crucial issues. Rather than taking the usual approach of completing an internal U.S. review in secret and then announcing the results to its allies, the new Administration should adopt a more innovative and transparent approach. It should consult with and solicit input from U.S. friends and allies in parallel with its internal study. This approach should both improve the quality of the U.S. review and help narrow the differences between the United States and its allies even before the U.S. results are reached and announced.

The Consultative Process. U.S. allies will need to make a major effort to prepare themselves on the issues if they are to take full advantage of the opportunities for consultation outlined above. The allies should not use these consultations simply to argue against the U.S. effort or to obstruct its progress. U.S. allies have somewhat unwittingly become a pawn in the internal U.S. political debate — invoked by critics as one of the principal arguments for not pursuing missile defenses and therefore alienating the supporters of missile defense by what is presented as unalterable allied opposition to defenses. In fact, Allied views are much more nuanced and are in a state of flux. The consultation process suggested here would afford European allies and friends an opportunity to dispel any overly simplistic characterization of their views, to demonstrate a commitment to constructive engagement, and to contribute positively to defining and addressing the critical, and difficult, strategic issues.

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