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## **Why Missile Defence (MD) doesn't make sense and is a bad idea**

### **SGR statement submitted as evidence to the House of Commons' Select Committee on Defence (08/01/03)**

#### **Waste of money**

The cost of MD for the US is likely to be as much as \$200bn (costs for the UK are as yet unclear) - this is not the best use of material or financial resources at a time when more pressing world problems are mounting. If a similar level of resources was devoted, for example, to combating world poverty, fighting disease, providing health care or environmental protection the effects upon world security in terms of removing the reasons for conflict would be far greater

#### **Poor value for money**

MD is very poor value for money - defence is much more costly than offense. Any attacker who is capable of sending long range missiles can easily afford to spend a little more on cheap countermeasures against MD. As it is, at least 2 MD anti missiles are planned for each attacking warhead or decoy. Thus even a full scale MD system could only defend against 50 or so missiles.

#### **Useless against much more credible (and cheaper) threats**

MD cannot defend against much more credible - and much much cheaper threats - ie non-missile threats or terrorist threats. For example a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon inside a plane masquerading as a passenger plane, a weapon in a boat offshore or in a busy port, a weapon constructed inside a city by parts smuggled in or stolen from within the target country.

#### **Doesn't actually stop nuclear missiles**

The results of an MD success would mean a rain of nuclear material either over the launch area or over the target country as the warhead burns up on re-entry into the atmosphere or over the launch area. Evacuation of such areas would be necessary in any case. MD would thus still leave widespread contamination of large areas.

#### **Destabilising**

Spending upon MD will in the long run further destabilise the already weak US economy and levels of debt undermining world economic and financial security. The US already owes more to the world banking system than most of the extremely poor heavily indebted countries put together. Yet the US has borrowed this money on an interest rate far lower and more favourable than these poor countries.

MD if implemented will pressure other major nuclear states such as China to spend more on anti ballistic missile countermeasures. Some analysts think that trying to pressurise China is one of the

underlying motivations for MD.

### **Undermines international treaties**

MD undermines the ballistic missile treaty, and some elements such as the space based laser undermine the ban on weapons in space. The ABM Treaty has already been dissolved as a result of the Bush Administration's insistence upon developing MD - the UK MoD (Ministry of Defence) argue that the that this has not had any negative effects as the ABM Treaty was no longer relevant in today's geopolitics. Undermining international treaties is regrettable as many of today's problems are global and require world-wide cooperation (for example to control greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol).

### **Undermines deterrence**

MD undermines deterrence. Whether or not one felt reassured by the idea that we are supposedly safer for all being able to obliterate each other's countries (as in the Cold War), the whole idea of MD is to undermine some smaller countries' ability to "deter". This is a double standard. It is saying that it is OK for some countries to have huge nuclear arsenals while it is not OK for some other countries to have even small amounts of destructive weapons. However it is certainly the case that having MD could make the threat of first nuclear use by the US against a small country much more credible. In this situation MD would increase the likelihood of nuclear use.

### **A dangerous distraction in a dangerous world**

MD draws attention away from the need for political solutions to urgent world problems and suggests that complex technical fixes can substitute for real political solutions to conflict - for example in Palestine, for the Kurdish peoples, in Burma, Indonesia and in many other urgent and serious examples. The idea of MD is to deny smaller countries (so called rogue states) the ability to protect their state interests by the same means. MD effectively significantly raises the stakes for entry to the exclusive "nuclear club".

### **Unlikely to work**

US has been trying to develop a missile defence system of some sort since the Second World War - each programme (including Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in the 80's) has either failed or been abandoned. Tests of the current technology 2001 onwards have been very patchy. Some tests have used targets with radar beacons to help the homing missile. In all cases only one target without electronic countermeasures has been used. The technology is nowhere near being able to deal with several incoming missiles at once in any reliable way.

## **Why *does* MD perhaps make sense for the Bush Administration?**

### **Jobs for the Bush's election financiers**

MD provides a market for expensive new military technology and new science providing jobs and rewarding key corporate supporters of President Bush's Presidential candidacy. MD thus has a very powerful political lobby and vested interest behind it.

### **Supports the necessary levels of fear to keep military spending high**

It creates a continuing threat and helps politically justify US military supremacy over a world with

only one remaining superpower.

## Why is MD a bad idea for America's Allies?

### Why Support a bad idea?

If one accepts the arguments that MD is flawed in its concept - then as an Ally of the US it would be better to tell the US Administration this rather than going along with their plans.

### MD cannot protect Europe

The difficulties in protecting the US through MD are even more extreme for European countries. The simple reason for this is that most European countries are much nearer or in the case of Turkey almost bordering some of the countries the US deem to be of concern such as Iran, Iraq and Libya

### Allies Europe with bad and dangerous foreign policy

By supporting the current US administration policy, Europe is making itself a target for anti US factions, which may increase the risk of terrorist attacks.

### Distorts European foreign policy towards US military supremacy and dominance

Europe, particularly with its pluralistic nature, should act as a block to ideas of US military and political dominance of the world and support more inclusive and democratic approaches based upon use of the United Nations.



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