



Europe's Missile Shield

NATO seeks Russian cooperation on Phased Adaptive Approach

by per Concordiam Staff

When NATO agreed in November 2010 to install a European-wide anti-ballistic missile shield, the Alliance welcomed Russian involvement in the creation of a defensive network of radar stations and interceptors meant to thwart nuclear-tipped missiles.

NATO's "Phased Adaptive Approach" – the gradual development of the missile shield in stages through 2020 – was calibrated to address Russian fears of NATO encroachment while giving the Alliance more time for anti-missile technology to advance. Although the NATO and Russian positions have yet to converge, frequent meetings between the Alliance and Russia through 2011 promise an era of wider cooperation as relations continue to reset between East and West.

Even as the USS Monterey, a U.S. Navy guided missile cruiser designed to track and intercept missiles, steamed into European waters in March 2011 to support the Phased Adaptive Approach, former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates flew to Moscow to meet

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The Kremlin had expressed wariness of the missile shield as recently as February 2011 during the 47th Munich Security Conference, when Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov objected to NATO's overtures as a "take it or leave it offer." A statement that appeared more conciliatory emerged from the Gates/Medvedev meeting, as reported by Russian News Agency RIA Novosti: "Russia is ready to tackle the common tasks aimed at protecting the continent from possible missile threats together with its partners while sticking to a range of principal conditions, including the existence of real guarantees that the countries' anti-missile potentials will not be aimed at each other."



The USS Monterey departs from Norfolk, Virginia, in March 2011 on a mission to provide the first-ever ballistic missile defense under the European Phased Adaptive Approach.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, left, and NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen arrive at the Lisbon NATO summit in November 2010. NATO invited Russia to cooperate in building a European ballistic missile defense.

The Phased Adaptive Approach

The Phased Adaptive Approach springs from NATO's 2009 decision to overhaul a 2007 plan that would have placed the bulk of the ballistic missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. Although the Alliance stressed that the previously envisioned ballistic missile defense, or BMD, was designed to engage potential threats from emerging nuclear powers, Russia expressed concern that the system could target its long-standing stockpile of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Russian leaders argued BMD would neutralize its status as a nuclear power, overturning the strategic balance that had reigned since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Phased Adaptive Approach that started in 2011 is using existing missile destruction technology tested successfully in the Pacific Ocean, including the SM-3 interceptor and ship-based radar. Ships equipped with these systems would likely deploy to the eastern Mediterranean to defend against regional missile threats. The USS Monterey's arrival was the first step.

"The first phase ... involves ships, because we have sea-based missile defense capabilities now, as well as forward-based radar that can provide information to those ships," senior U.S. Department of Defense official John Plumb announced in March 2011.

Phase 2, planned for 2015, would expand installation of interceptors to sites in southeastern Europe and broaden protection to include shooting down short- and medium-range missiles. In May 2011, Romania agreed to the placement of such a site. Phase 3, arriving in 2018, promises improved equipment to intercept intermediate-range missiles. Poland approved legislation in April 2011 ratifying that country's future installation of those interceptors. The US-Poland Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement entered into force on September 15, 2011. The final phase, scheduled for 2020, is expected to include technological upgrades capable of destroying intercontinental ballistic missiles.

NATO has sought to install land-based sensors as close as possible to emerging nuclear threats east of the Mediterranean. Turkey has yet to decide

Proposed Stages of NATO's Phased Adaptive Approach:

PHASE 1 (2011):

Deployment of existing radar and anti-missile interceptors aboard Alliance ships in the Mediterranean. SM-3 missiles would provide the coverage against very short-range "regional" missiles. NATO seeks a land-based location to station forward-looking radar. Turkey and southern Europe have been mentioned.

PHASE 2 (2015):

NATO would broaden protection by placing interceptor sites on land, while maintaining anti-missile weapons aboard ships for maximum maneuverability. Romania has agreed to host a land-based interceptor site. Increased capability would allow for the interception of short- and medium-range missiles.



An SM-3 is launched in October 2010 from the Japanese battleship Kirishima, part of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System. The SM-3 successfully intercepted a ballistic missile that had lifted off minutes before in Hawaii. NATO plans to use the sea-based Aegis to defend Europe against potential ballistic missile threats.

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whether it will accept such NATO early-warning radar, but the Balkans has been discussed as an alternative site for both radar and interceptors. Instead of placing most interceptors in Poland, as outlined in the previous BMD plan, ship-borne interceptors would provide greater flexibility and maneuverability. If stationed in the Black Sea, those ships would provide another avenue for cooperation with Russia, which maintains a Black Sea fleet.

"Starting in 2011, the phased, adaptive approach would systematically increase the defended area as the threat is expected to grow," the White House said in a 2009 statement. "In the 2018 timeframe, all of Europe could be protected by our collective missile defense architecture."

Healing differences

In preparation for NATO's Lisbon Summit in November 2010, Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen invited Russian leaders to Portugal to discuss collective missile defense. The summit marked the first time that NATO heads of state formally agreed to pool resources for BMD. The Alliance and Russia have yet to bridge all their differences, however. One of the biggest issues is whether NATO members would merge their efforts completely with a similar Russian anti-missile network or simply share information, and possibly technology, with the Russians.

In early 2011, Russia lobbied for a single system under joint NATO-Russian control, a proposal NATO declined to accept. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reiterated the point at the Munich Security Conference: "We will not accept any constraints on our missile defenses."

PHASE 3 (2018):

Improved technology would allow the expansion of Europe's anti-ballistic missile network to counter threats from intermediate-range missiles. Poland has agreed to host an interceptor site to protect northeastern Europe.

PHASE 4 (2020):

Further advances in interceptor capability would allow NATO to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles originating in the Middle East and aimed at the United States.

Source: U.S. departments of State and Defense

“We want to *protect all of Europe*, not just some of Europe...”

Meetings of the NATO-Russia Council, initiated in 2002 to help defuse tensions and broaden negotiating channels between the former rivals, have often been contentious when the topic switches to missile defense. Gates' March 2011 visit to Moscow helped break some of the ice around the issue. Ellen Tauscher, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, announced at the time that she viewed Russia as a “full-fledged participant in the European missile defense system,” RIA Novosti reported in March 2011.

“We want to protect all of Europe, not just some of Europe,” Tauscher said in the article. “We want our European allies and friends to buy into the European Phased Adaptive Approach; it is not something that we want to impose on them – that’s not what friends do.”

Tauscher's comment reinforced the missile defense consensus, including a proposed rapprochement with Russia, publicized at the Lisbon Summit: “We will continue to explore opportunities for missile defence co-operation with Russia in a spirit of reciprocity, maximum transparency and mutual confidence. We reaffirm the Alliance's readiness to invite Russia to explore jointly the potential for linking current and planned missile defence systems at an appropriate time in mutually beneficial ways.”

Negotiations to continue

The reality is sure to be messier than such proclamations suggest, international affairs experts say. Tensions increased briefly in February 2011 when Georgia dubbed the Phased Adaptive Approach “interesting,” though it did not formulate a concrete position regarding hosting land-based early warning

radar, a system earlier offered to Turkey. Russia has made no secret of its distaste for NATO expansion into Georgia, and the radar placement proposal raised suspicions among Russians that Georgia is forging closer links to the Alliance.

“Most Russian policymakers still feel alienated from the current European security architecture since many decisions are made by NATO that Russia opposes but cannot resist. For this and other reasons, it is still unclear whether this latest effort since the end of the Cold War to reorient the NATO-Russian relationship towards cooperation will succeed,” *Jane's Intelligence Review* said in a February 2011 article.

Missile defense is also linked to the fate of tactical nuclear weapons, the portable bombs of which Russia maintains a vast superiority relative to NATO. If a missile shield neutralizes a nation's ballistic missile potential, it arguably raises the profile of tactical nuclear weapons that can be delivered under the radar by artillery and aircraft. Or so the argument runs in Russia. The U.S. and Russia have vowed to discuss tactical nuclear weapons in future arms control negotiations, although the subject was excluded from the recently signed Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START II.

The *Guardian* summed up the thinking of many experts in an editorial in March 2011, a couple weeks after the USS Monterey sailed for Europe with its kit of anti-ballistic missile technology. “What is now clear is that further progress in transforming NATO, improving U.S.-NATO-Russia relations and nuclear threat reduction is dependent in large part on developing a cooperative approach to missile defence,” the newspaper wrote. □