

Missile defense to be a reality

US developing system to eliminate nuclear threats

By Jonathan Daugbjerg
THE BATTALION

With North Korea now defiantly restarting its nuclear program, the Bush Administration is reaffirming its position that National Missile Defense is not only necessary, but should be the highest priority.

In December 2001, President George W. Bush announced the United States withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which removed limitations on the development and implementation of a missile defense shield. The administration stated the treaty was outdated and the withdrawal was necessary to allow the United States to deploy a limited missile shield to defend against an attack from "rogue nations" such as North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

North Korea is currently testing its Taepo-Dong II missile, which U.S. intelligence believes will have the capability of delivering a nuclear payload to Alaska, Hawaii, or the Western Continental United States. The move to deploy a missile shield has drawn much controversy and several scientific organizations, world governments, and even the Pentagon are debating the feasibility of such defenses.

According to the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, there are three different areas of research for ballistic missile defense. The Boost Defense segment involves research in destroying missiles during their initial launch phase. Midcourse Segment research targets missiles in mid-flight, and the Terminal Defense segment focuses on developing systems to intercept missiles during the final plunge toward their targets. The limited missile shield proposed by the Bush Administration focuses primarily on mid-course and terminal missile interception methods.

Midcourse missile interception will utilize a ground-based interceptor weapon consisting of an exoatmospheric kill vehicle (EKV) launched by a fixed, land-based booster rocket. In the event of an enemy nuclear missile launch, the booster rocket would launch its EKV payload, which would track the incoming missile using sophisticated ground-based sensors and its own long-range infrared sensor. The on-board sensor would have the task of discriminating between potential decoys

and the intended target and then maneuvering the kill vehicle using small rockets to demolish both objects in a high-speed collision. According to the Missile Defense Agency, the Navy has successfully tested a sea-based mid-course system that utilizes existing Aegis cruisers and destroyers equipped with missile defense computers and equipment. The Missile Defense Agency said in a release that the continued development of the Aegis system, ground-based systems, and planned missile tracking satellite systems will provide a complete midcourse layer of defense.

The Terminal Defense Segment focuses on the destruction of missiles in their final stage of flight. These systems are designed to protect U.S. and Allied forces and population centers from short and medium range missile attack. Terminal Defense includes the upgrade of several developing and existing missile systems, including Theater High Altitude Area Defense, the joint U.S.-Israeli Arrow system, and the Patriot PAC-3, which is an improved version of the interceptor missile system deployed during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

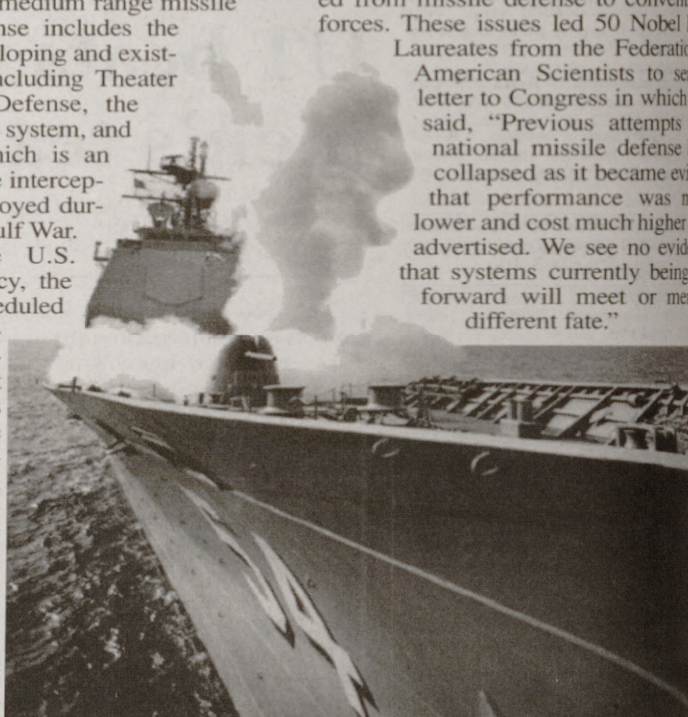
According to the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, the THADD system is scheduled for flight testing beginning in 2004, and training battalions will test the Patriot PAC-3 this year. Israel declared the Arrow system operational in October 2000, and is touting their confidence in its capabilities should Iraq decide to strike again in any renewed Gulf conflict.

The National Missile Defense system has not been without critics. The primary issue with missile defense is its less-than-perfect success rate. According to the Center for Defense Information, the EKV missed the target or failed to separate from

its booster three out of eight times since interception testing of the latest kill vehicle design began in October 1999. Many of the test failures have been blamed on quality control issues during kill vehicle manufacturing or use of old Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles as temporary boosters until new delivery systems are tested.

Continued testing of the missile defense system also carries a larger price tag. The Bush Administration has stated it will ask more than \$8 Billion for research and development for this year and the overall price may now well exceed \$100 billion.

Some at the Pentagon refer to the project as the "thing that ate the defense budget," and would like to see funding directed from missile defense to conventional forces. These issues led 50 Nobel Peace Laureates from the Federation of American Scientists to send a letter to Congress in which they said, "Previous attempts at a national missile defense have collapsed as it became evident that performance was much lower and cost much higher than advertised. We see no evidence that systems currently being pursued forward will meet or merit a different fate."



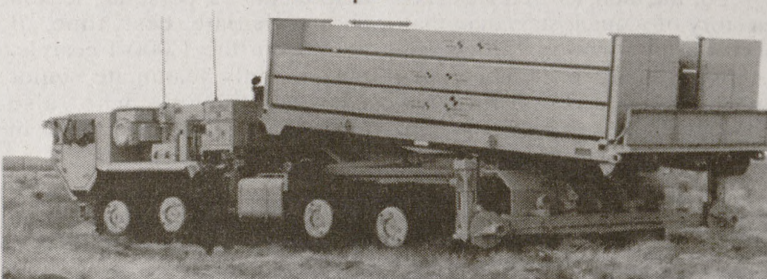
Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense

- Will destroy short to medium range ballistic missiles
- Aegis fleets will work as support to ground-based missile systems

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Theater High Altitude Area Defense System

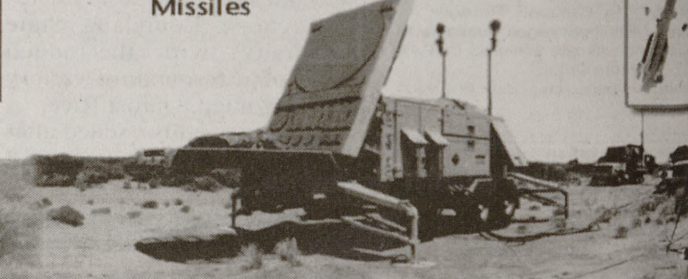
- Platform: Landbased
- Range: Short and medium missiles
- Only system designed to intercept targets inside and outside the atmosphere



Photos and Information Courtesy of www.ACQ.OSA.mil

PATRIOT Advanced Capability-3

- Platform: Builds on previous PATRIOT technology
- Purpose: Protects against traditional missiles, aircraft, as well as Theater Ballistic Missiles



Digital media negotiations successful

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leading trade associations for the music and technology industries, which have been at loggerheads over consumers downloading songs on the Internet, have negotiated a compromise they contend will protect copyrights on movies and music without new government

involvement. Lobbyists for some of the nation's largest technology companies will argue under the new agreement against efforts in Congress to amend U.S. laws to broaden the rights of consumers, explicitly permitting viewers to make backup copies of DVDs for personal use or copy music

onto handheld listening devices. These companies, including Microsoft Corp., IBM, Intel Corp. and Dell Computer Corp., also will announce support for aggressive enforcement of laws against all forms of digital media piracy. In exchange, the Recording Industry Association of America

will argue against government requirements to build locking controls into future generations of entertainment devices to make it more difficult for consumers to share media. Technology companies have complained about the controls, saying that they are too expensive and complex.

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