

Dr. Theodore Postol: BMD Threatens Russia

In 2007, the George W. Bush Administration turned down Russian President Vladimir Putin's offer of co-operation on a radar system to protect against missile threats—as a substitute for Bush's planned deployment of a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system in Poland and the Czech Republic, which Russia saw as a strategic threat. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) claimed that Bush's plan was no threat to Russia, because the BMD system was too limited in scope.

President Putin and Russian Chief of Staff Gen. Col. Yuri Baluyevsky strongly disagreed, and promised an “asymmetric response” if the U.S. BMD deployment in Europe went ahead. It turns out, a top U.S. official also disagrees.

As Marsha Freeman reported in *EIR*, Sept. 14, 2007, Dr. Theodore Postol of MIT, a nuclear engineer and former scientific advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations, in an Aug. 28 briefing, declared that the proposed U.S. BMD system *is* a threat to Russia, and also proposed alternatives. What's at stake, he stated, is a "policy confrontation with Russia, if Russian complaints are technically legitimate."

Dr. Postol took apart a briefing given in Europe in March by the director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, who had attempted to assure "allies and friends" that the new system would not be a threat to Russia. But the presentation used numbers that are incorrect, for the speed of the Russian ICBMs and of the interceptors, and the relative distances involved, Postol said. Using the correct numbers, it is clear that, minutes after a Russian ICBM launch, the missile could be intercepted by a Polish-based missile. "The bottom line" he said, is that a "two-stage interceptor placed in Poland, could take on all [Russian] ICBMs [stationed] east of the Ural Mountains, launched toward the East Coast of the United States."

Freeman explained that the Russians are concerned that these BMD systems would be used to suppress Russia's retaliatory capability following a U.S. attack, hitting Russian second-strike missiles in their boost phase.

Dr. Postol expressed serious concerns about the effectiveness of the U.S. interceptor system. "It is not clear this thing is going to work," he said. For that reason, "the current system is not a threat at all, but could be perceived as the leading edge of a more advanced system." The speaker quoted from Presidential National Security Directive 23, of Dec. 6, 2002, which stated that the U.S. would begin to deploy missile defenses "as a starting point for fielding improved and expanded missile defenses later."

This, he said, "would indicate to the Russians that the current defense deployment in Europe is only the *leading edge* of a much larger and more capable future deployment."



Dr. Ted Postol on Russian TV, May 20, 2010.

The Same Thing Under Obama

Since Freeman's report appeared, Dr. Postol has continued to educate the public on the twofold danger: alarming our NATO allies with a system that does not work as promised, and alarming Russia with a system that is a potential threat to its national security.

In a May 2010 [article](#) for the Arms Control Association, "A Flawed and Dangerous U.S. Missile Defense Plan," co-authored with George N. Lewis, Postol warned that the Obama Administration, while changing some features of the Bush BMD policy, has replaced it with a "new vision" that is "nothing more than a fiction and . . . could well lead to a foreign policy disaster."

"The United States could damage its relations with allies and friends by pushing on them false and unreliable solutions to real security problems. It will antagonize Russia and China with massive defense deployments that have the appearance of being designed to be flexibly adaptable to deal with Russian and Chinese strategic forces."

The authors concluded: "This new missile defense program could then lead to the usual results: gigantically expensive systems that have little real capability but create uncertainties that cause other states to react in ways that are not in the security interest of the United States."

Such as nuclear war?