

U.S. Expands Global Missile Shield Into Middle East, Balkans

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Global Research, September 11, 2009

[Stop NATO](#) 11 September 2009

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Toward the latter half of last month, the Polish daily Gazeta Wyborcza, "citing officials and lobbyists in Washington," revealed that the Pentagon would reevaluate planned interceptor missile deployments in Poland and a complementary missile radar site in the Czech Republic and instead shift global missile shield plans to Israel, Turkey and the Balkans [1]

"Washington is now looking for alternative locations including in the Balkans, Israel and Turkey...." [2]

The news came a week after it was reported that at the annual Space and Missile Defense Conference hosted by the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency in Huntsville, Alabama the Chicago-based Boeing Company offered to construct a "47,500-pound interceptor that could be flown to NATO bases as needed on Boeing-built C-17 cargo planes," a "two-stage interceptor designed to be globally deployable within 24 hours...." [3]

This initiative, much as with the reports of plans to expand the American worldwide interceptor missile system to the Middle East and Southeastern Europe, has been presented as a way of alleviating Russian concerns over anti-missile components being deployed near its borders. But on the same day that Boeing announced the project for a rapid deployable missile launcher for NATO bases in Europe the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Tomas Pojar, was quoted as asserting that a "possible U.S. mobile anti-missile shield does not threaten the U.S. plans to build a radar base on Czech soil because the system is to be a combination of fixed and mobile elements." [4]

That is, what is being presented in both instances as substitutes for U.S. and NATO missile shield deployments in Eastern Europe may in fact be added to rather than replace plans for Poland and the Czech Republic.

On September 11 the new Czech envoy to NATO, Martin Povejsil, reiterated that Washington's plans to forge ahead with the missile system deployments in his nation and in Poland will proceed unhampered, stating "NATO still expects the U.S. system to be the core of its missile-defence structures that have been worked on." [5]

On the day after the Polish newspaper revealed that American interceptor missile system deployments could be extended to Israel, Turkey and the Balkans, U.S. State Department Spokesman P.J. Crowley said Washington's review of the missile defense strategy "is ongoing and has not reached completion yet.

"Similarly, "Missile Defense Agency [Director] Patrick O'Reilly also denied the

report of Polish newspapers. He supported the proposal to install SM-3 missile systems in Turkey and the Balkans.” [6]

The SM-3 – Standard Missile 3 – is a ship-based anti-ballistic missile used by the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System, and was used by the Pentagon to destroy an American satellite in orbit in February 2008 in what was seen by some observers, especially in Russia, as an experiment for future space warfare.

So the surfacing of reports that the U.S. may base missile shield facilities south and east of the Czech Republic and Poland is more likely indicative of yet another plan to expand the global system – already in place and being worked on in Alaska, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, Norway, Britain, Greenland and Israel -into areas previously off limits to such deployments and not necessarily an abandonment of American missile and troop deployments in Poland and a missile radar site in the Czech Republic.

In confirmation of this scenario, U.S. National Security Adviser and former U.S. European Command and NATO top military chief James Jones told Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski on September 1 “The United States is assuring Poland that it has not made a decision on where to deploy a European missile defense system but will keep Warsaw informed,” and pledged “the United States’ firm and unwavering commitment to Poland’s security and defense.” [7]

To demonstrate how close the Pentagon is to completing plans for an international interceptor missile system that can be used for blackmailing other nations into submission and laying the groundwork for a “winnable” war against major powers like Russia and China – by being able to neutralize missiles surviving a first strike and so an adversary’s ability to retaliate – the new head of the Missile Defense Agency, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Patrick O’Reilly, recently boasted that his agency’s missile interceptions have proven 86% successful and that “The Defense Department recently committed an additional \$900 million toward fielding the Army’s theater high-altitude-area defense mobile missile defense system. The agency has finished seven of eight required tests of the system.” O’Reilly added that he “expects to see it in the field next year.” [8]

The tests he referred to employed Aegis class warships equipped with SM-3s, meaning destroyers and cruisers that can be deployed to any part of the planet in conjunction with land-based and sea-based X-band radar (SBX). The Missile Defense Agency has on several occasions deployed a 28-story SBX to Adak, Alaska, at the western-most end of the Aleutian island chain in the Bering Sea off Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula.

The U.S. National Security Presidential Directive and Homeland Security Presidential Directive [9] of January 9, 2009 explicitly mentions using the Arctic Ocean for so-called missile defense purposes, which means against Russia’s northern territories, in conjunction with facilities in Alaska and Greenland.

Missile shield radar bases in Britain and Norway and projected missile deployments in Poland and an X-band radar site in the Czech Republic will cover Russia’s west, and comparable sites in Alaska and Japan will confront Russia (as well as China) to its east.

To date the only quadrant uncovered is Russia’s south.

And that is where proposed missile shield deployments in Turkey, Israel and the Balkans

come into play.

Last autumn the United States began the stationing of its Army Navy/Transportable Radar Surveillance (AN/TPY-2), formerly the Forward Based X-Band Transportable [FBX-T] Radar, to Israel. The AN/TPY-2 is part of the U.S. Army's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) interceptor missile system, one intermediate between the ground-based interceptor missiles planned for Poland and the recently developed PAC-3 Patriot theater missile defense, "one of the most comprehensive upgrade programs ever undertaken on an American weapon system." [10]

The AN/TPY-2 "operates in the X-band frequency, and is capable of tracking and identifying small objects at long distance and at very high altitude, including space" and is a "high-power, transportable X-Band radar...designed to detect, track and discriminate ballistic missile threats." [11]

The radar in Israel can be only the beginning of the development of the American anti-missile defense systems in the country, said a leading Russian analyst, Pavel Felgengauer, last September. [12]

In July of 2008 the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, and his Israeli counterpart Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi approved the deployment and it was later confirmed by Pentagon chief Robert Gates and Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, "marking the first permanent U.S. military presence on Israeli soil." [13]

A year ago September the U.S. Senate passed an amendment allocating \$89 million for the project. At the time Fox New reported that "About 120 American technicians and security guards will be stationed in Israel's southern Negev Desert to oversee the operation, the first time in the country's 60-year history that they've allowed a foreign military presence to be based here." [14]

An Iranian news story shortly thereafter characterized the purpose and importance of the deployment by saying "The...most plausible scenario is that the U.S. intends to add one more strategic military base to the hundreds it operates around the world to contain and intimidate independent countries like Iran, Syria, and Lebanon." [15]

Iran, Lebanon and Syria don't possess nuclear weapons or even long-range missiles that can deliver conventional warheads. Yet the Jerusalem Post wrote in November of 2008 that the X-band missile radar in Israel has a range of 4,300 kilometers (2,900 miles) and "is reported to be capable of tracking targets the size of a baseball from distances of close" to that range. The South Caucasus is only some 1,200 kilometers from Israel and the distance from Tel Aviv to Moscow is 2,641 kilometers. The U.S. missile radar in Israel, then, can monitor most of Southern and Western Russia.

American-Israeli missile radar and surveillance is being integrated with NATO-Israeli operations. A report of last December detailed: "Israel has reportedly provided NATO with intelligence on Iran amid US efforts to portray the country's military achievements as a threat.

"Israeli diplomats said Sunday that Israel has contributed to the formation of two intelligence reports prepared by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 'missile development' and 'the nuclear arms race in the Middle East.'" [16]

Before retiring as secretary general of NATO Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Israel this January and while there remarked that "Israel has been the first country to finalize with NATO, in October 2006, a very detailed individual cooperation program, which had been revised and upgraded last November." [17]

In the same month the Israeli newspaper Haaretz provided more details on the increased cooperation between NATO and Israel in reporting that the latter was assigning a warship for NATO's almost eight-year-old Operation Active Endeavor naval surveillance and interdiction operation in the Mediterranean.

"The request is another example of the increasing cooperation between Israel and NATO. Last week, Israeli Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi participated in a meeting of army heads at the organization's Brussels headquarters.

"[A] liaison officer from the Israeli Navy has also been stationed at the NATO base in Naples, Italy....NATO ships arrived for maneuvers and visits at the ports of Haifa in April 2008 and Eilat April and October 2007. AWACs early warning planes used by the organization landed at an Israel Air Force base in Lod a year ago." [18]

The September 7 edition of the Jerusalem Post in a feature called "IDF preparing for US missile systems" announced that the Pentagon and the Israeli Defense Forces are to conduct their regular joint Juniper Cobra military exercises next month and that this year's drills, "the most complex and extensive to date," will include "the newly-developed Arrow 2 as well as America's THAAD (Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense) and the ship-based Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System." [19]

The Arrow 2 is a theater anti-ballistic missile funded and produced in unison by the U.S. and Israel.

The Jerusalem Post article added that "The Defense Ministry is preparing for the possibility that the United States will decide to leave missile defense systems in Israel following a joint missile defense exercise the two countries will hold next month," and that "the possibility is strong...particularly in light of reports that the Pentagon was conducting a review of its European missile shield and was leaning towards deploying the systems in Turkey.

"According to various European news reports, Turkey, Israel and the Balkans are under evaluation as alternative sites for the systems....." [20]

The already existing American missile tracking facility is in the Negev Desert near Dimona where Israel is presumed to store its nuclear weapons.

Almost a year ago a major Russian news source reported that "Lt. Gen. Henry Obering, [then] director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), has said more than once that Turkey, Georgia and even Ukraine could be future locations for ballistic missile defense systems.

"[T]he Pentagon will most likely choose Turkey or, some Western analysts say, Israel or Japan." [21]

A Turkish report of March of 2008 had already indicated what the Pentagon was planning: "Last March Pentagon chief Robert Gates visited Turkey to hold consultations on missile

shield plans.

"A powerful, 'forward based' X-band radar station could go in southeastern Europe, possibly in Turkey, the Caucasus or the Caspian Sea region, Lt. Gen. Henry Obering, head of the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency, told a defense conference in Washington on Feb. 12." [22]

In May of 2008 a Russian newspaper revealed that "the United States may deploy a high-frequency X-band radar in Georgia." [23]

More recently, last November the Turkish daily Hurriyet wrote that "Israel and the United States have...declared their desire to establish a one-billion-dollar missile system in Turkey." [24]

The deployment of advanced missile tracking and interceptor missile facilities in Israel and Turkey along with others in the South Caucasus – the Gabala radar station in Azerbaijan, currently used by Russia but coveted by Washington, is another possible addition – would nearly complete the stationing of a missile shield ring around Russia.

The third site of the expansion of U.S. and NATO missile interception plans is the Balkans.

Russian political analyst Pyotr Iskenderov wrote on September 3 that a possible location for such a deployment could be in the international no man's land that is Kosovo.

"In spring of 2009, Albanian Prime-Minister Sali Berisha proposed to the US to locate an anti-missile system in his country if US-Polish talks failed. In Serbia Defense Minister Dragan Sutanovac, who is close to Serbian president Boris Tadic, made scandalous statements in favor of Serbia's entry to NATO. In this respect the location of a US military base in Serbia could be regarded as a compensation to Belgrade for losing Kosovo. This will also help to drive Russia away from Serbia." [25]

Iskenderov theorized that American missiles could be stationed in Camp Bondsteel, the largest overseas U.S. military installation built since the war in Vietnam. The author, in reference to the use of the base for so-called "extraordinary renditions," said "the main object of the military infrastructure of Kosovo will be the US base of Camp Bondsteel, which is subordinate neither to NATO, nor the UN nor the EU....Here we should recall an unsavory role of Kosovo in the scandal linked with the secret jails of the CIA in Europe.

"If earlier the US managed to hide one of their CIA secret prisons in Kosovo, then it won't be a problem to install radar and interceptor missiles in Camp Bondsteel." [26]

Early this month the U.S. guided-missile destroyer Stout arrived home after a mission in the Black Sea and visits to Georgia, Bulgaria and Romania. It also engaged in naval maneuvers with Israel and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean in August. Regarding the Black Sea operation, a local American newspaper wrote, "This was the ship's first deployment with the ballistic missile defense system- a technology designed to track and destroy missiles that can travel more than 600 miles...." [27]

The extension of American global missile shield designs into the Middle East and Southeastern Europe is an integral part of global geostrategic plans which were summarized concisely and penetratingly by a Bangladeshi writer last November:

“The current NMD [National Missile Defense] project involves using radars in Alaska and California in the US and at Fylingdales in the UK, and in Greenland. The latest plan of deploying a radar base in the Czech Republic is basically relocating the existing radar base at the Kwajalein Atoll [in the] Marshall Islands. Besides, the US plans to install 10 more interceptors in silos in Poland.

“Even after 1991, [the U.S.] did not go for closing down its military bases scattered around the world, but rather continued expanding the network in many strategic positions.

“In Eastern Europe it basically filled the vacuum created by the end of the Warsaw Pact.

“Moreover, Central Asia, a very crucial passageway in the global oil supply chain, also came under the purview of US dominance. These deliberate moves created lots of irritation among regional powers like Russia and China.

“Surely the proposed radar base in the Czech Republic and missile interceptors in Poland are not to protect the US from Iran or North Korea’s missiles but are to ensure the US plan to establish and exercise stringent control over the world using its prevailing 725 military bases.” [28]

Notes

- 1) Agence France-Presse, August 27, 2009
- 2) United Press International, August 27, 2009
- 3) Reuters, August 20, 2009
- 4) Czech News Agency, August 20, 2009
- 5) Czech News Agency, September 11, 2009
- 6) Azeri Press Agency, August 28, 2009
- 7) Associated Press, September 2, 2009
- 8) Chosun Ilbo, September 3, 2009
- 9) National Security Presidential Directive and Homeland Security Presidential Directive <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-66.htm>
- 10) Wikipedia
- 11) Global Security, September 3, 2009
- 12) Trend News Agency, September 13, 2008
- 13) Defense News, September 27, 2008
- 14) Fox News, November 10, 2008
- 15) Tehran Times, October 14, 2008’

- 16) Press TV, December 7, 2008
- 17) Haaretz, January 10, 2009
- 18) Haaretz, November 27, 2008
- 19) Jerusalem Post, September 7, 2009
- 20) Ibid
- 21) Russian Information Agency Novosti, September 12, 2008
- 22) Turkish Daily News, March 12, 2008
- 23) Nezavisimaya Gazeta, May 14, 2008
- 24) Hurriyet, November 22, 2008
- 25) Strategic Culture Foundation, September 4, 2009
- 26) Ibid
- 27) Virginian-Pilot, September 5, 2009
- 28) Sultan Mohammed Zakaria, Global hegemony and the victims Daily Star, November 1, 2008

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