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The United States, Russia, And Missile Defense: Why They Do Not Agree On Approach, Policy, And Implications

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THE UNITED STATES, RUSSIA, AND MISSILE DEFENSE: WHY THEY DO NOT AGREE ON APPROACH, POLICY, AND IMPLICATIONS

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

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In Partial Fulfillment

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By

Nathaniel Green

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ABSTRACT

Missile defense has long played a key role in the national defense posture of the United States, despite longstanding objections from the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. To gain insights into why these objections continue, this thesis looks at three key factors: threat assessments, geopolitics, and technology (to include specific capabilities) and the impact they have on the decision-making calculus of both the United States and Russia regarding missile defense. It is believed that geopolitical considerations, stemming from the Cold War and the different values, culture, background, and experiences between the United States and Russia, are key to understanding this issue. Based on all three factors, this thesis offers implications of these factors for policy. These policy implications include, among others, the need for better understanding of Russian geopolitical views when forming missile defense policy, a suggestion to reorient the Missile Defense Agency towards research and development, and the potential need for new approaches to U.S. diplomacy with Russia.

KEYWORDS: United States, Russia, missile defense, North Korea, Iran, geopolitics

This abstract is approved as to form and content

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INTRODUCTION

U.S. missile defense creates tension with Russia mainly because Russia's foreign policy outlook, especially its geopolitical outlook, continues to be driven by the Cold War. This statement derives from a study of the U.S.-Russian missile defense divide, which examined three areas of U.S.-Russian relations: threat assessments, technical capacities, and geopolitics. Threats and technical issues, while informative, do not explain the missile defense divide, whereas geopolitics can explain this divide in a number of ways. This paper aims to demonstrate this conclusion regarding the influence of geopolitical differences between the countries, as well as determine some its implications for the United States.

Geopolitics in the context of this paper means not only geography (i.e., concepts of global vs. regional power) and its effect on international relations, but also how values, culture, and ideology influence the relations between countries of varying degrees of international strength. This paper will use "missile defense" as shorthand for ballistic missile defense (BMD), unless otherwise noted, rather than to include missile-based anti-aircraft systems or cruise missile defenses.

Although geopolitics drives the missile defense debate, other elements are important as well. United States missile defense policy might be better served by recognizing the drivers in any number of ways, potentially to include:

1. Take seriously the nuclear threat from North Korea and Iran, understanding that Russia does not face the same threat.

2. Refocus U.S. efforts and investment in technology and research and development, both generally and in missile defense capabilities.

3. Understand the Russian geopolitical view that the bipolar world of the Cold War remains a legitimate global political structure, and understand how different value systems also inform these different views of geopolitics.

Russia consistently states opposition to U.S. missile defenses, so there is clearly a conflict between the two countries regarding such defenses. In 2011, then-president Dmitry Medvedev suggested in a lengthy statement that Russia "will be prepared [to implement], as appropriate… measures to counter the European component of the US missile defense."[1] The U.S. Defense Department has noted, "Russia has expressed concerns that U.S. missile defense systems, particularly Phases 3 and 4 of the EPAA [European Phased Adaptive Approach], could undermine strategic stability."[2] Other similar statements will be presented elsewhere throughout the paper.

Each of the factors of threats, technology, and geopolitics was based on a handful of facts and assumptions. Threats perceptions and assessments were examined based on the idea that different threat assessments will produce different responses and capabilities to meet those threats. The decision in this paper to examine geopolitical elements to find explanations for missile defense disagreement arose out of U.S. justification for withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. The withdrawal was largely based on the prominence of new threats, but it also was the result of the geopolitical shift after the end of the Cold War whereupon the Soviet Union no longer existed and United States and Russia were no longer considered adversaries. Lastly, the idea that there might be a relationship between technological advancement of a country and its trust in technical solutions led to the

[1] Kremlin. "Statement by the President on the situation that has developed around NATO missile defense system in Europe." November 23, 2011. Google Translation. http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/13637.
[2] Department of Defense, "U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense," State.gov, May 3, 2012. http://photos.state.gov/libraries/russia/231771/PDFs/U_S_%20Ballistic%20Missile%20Defense%20Briefing%20ENG.pdf.

investigation of technology, and an investigation of the missile defense capabilities themselves, to try to find additional insight into the U.S.-Russia divide on missile defense. Summarized immediately below are some of the key findings resulting from the examinations each of these three factors.

It is clear from statements by U.S. policy makers that North Korea and Iran, other rogue states, and non-state actors, are not merely imagined threats. If this justification of the pursuit of missile defense was just U.S. posturing towards Russia, it would not also arise in public testimonies intended for domestic consumption. Meanwhile, Russia's position that neither North Korea nor Iran are threats may have a cynical element, especially regarding Iran, where connections through arms sales and such between the two nations are clearer. Nevertheless, it is probably true that Iran is less likely to attack Russia than the United States, so rogue threats provide Russia with less or no reason to develop missile defenses relative to the United States.

An investigation of technology reveals the depths of the United States' advantage over Russia. The United States has more possibilities for technological advancement across many fields. The precision required in hit-to-kill missile defenses is one demonstration of the kind of technologies that Russia is not equally capable of developing.

The geopolitical situation as the United States and Russia see it, and how that feeds into views on missile defense, is so complex that it alone could potentially be the basis for a dissertation. It involves multiple elements: whether the world is bipolar or multipolar (the United States and Russia do not agree on this, and so their views of missile defense differ); which value systems are going to be adopted by given countries

(this was more dramatic during the Cold War, but leftover tensions remain); the nature of the end of the Cold War (was it good because western values won out, the obvious example found in democratic rule and political freedom in Central and Eastern Europe, or was it a "geopolitical disaster" because ethnic Russians were no longer part of their own country); and others. There seems to be basic disagreement, though not explicitly stated, on every underlying issue, so it is no surprise then that missile defense produces explicit disagreements as well.

The United States and Russia do not agree on missile defense for these reasons, with geopolitics at the fore. Before these three issues—threats, technology, and geopolitics—are reviewed, it is useful to explore the history of missile defense from the Cold War to the present day. Such an exploration sets a framework in which one might better understand the current politics of missile defense.

HISTORY OF MISSILE DEFENSE IN THE UNITED STATES[3]

It is important to understand how U.S. thinking about missile defense changed over the years in order to understand why Russia might oppose U.S. missile defense efforts. This chapter will not attempt to do the reverse, to examine changes in Russian missile defense thinking. What this chapter aims to do is demonstrate the evolution of missile defense in the United States and what this evolution has meant for both the United States and Russia. Later chapters will examine more precisely which post-Cold War changes have led to the U.S.-Russia divide on missile defense.

The history of missile defense in the United States indicates that the U.S. will maintain a role in global politics into the future as its missile defense systems are deployed around the world, from the U.S. to NATO to East Asia, despite Russian opposition to it. There was no direct line that led to this point. Rather, the United States has gradually moved from rejecting missile defenses to deploying them. As discussed in more detail below, the U.S. policy makers came to largely reject missile defense between 1945 and 1972. This led to the 1972 ABM Treaty, which had the effect of institutionalizing this rejection. The 1983 Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) represented a turning point. The United States could not yet deploy large-scale missile defenses, but began to develop them, and missile defense was trending towards wider acceptance in the United States. The United States withdrew from the treaty in 2001, which led to several missile defense deployments.

[3] This section of the thesis has been adapted from a paper written for DSS 632.

Further elaboration on this time period is necessary to demonstrate how this evolution proceeded. In short, opinions of missile defense in the United States have gradually shifted from rejection to acceptance, and a shift in the opposite direction is increasingly unlikely. Because of this, missile defense is likely to remain a key component of U.S.-Russia relations.

1945-1972: Mutual Assured Destruction Leads to the Rejection of BMD

Active defenses against missile threats have been part of the international security dialogue since Nazi Germany employed the V2 rocket in the closing months of World War II. The V2 is significant because it was the first ballistic missile used in combat, although it was deployed far too late to have an impact on the outcome of World War II. The V2 was not a nuclear weapon, of course, but ballistic missiles became an important mechanism for the potential delivery of nuclear weapons during the 1950's.

The idea of anti-ballistic missiles entered into prominence in the same decade. Yet by the 1960's, it was clear that the United States would not pursue them with any real vigor. Instead of protecting Americans, or deterring attack via such protection, the U.S. focused on deterrence in other forms. One reason for this was the development of the theory of assured destruction, later known as Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), which was essentially devised by John F. Kennedy's (later Lyndon B. Johnson's) Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. McNamara calculated what percentage of industry and population he believed needed to be held at risk to avoid nuclear war.[4] Because MAD came to be essentially based on the idea that both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would be

[4] Keith B. Payne, *The Great American Gamble: Deterrence Theory and Practice from the Cold War to the Twenty-First Century*, (National Institute Press, Fairfax, VA, 2008), 96-108.

deterred from a first strike by the threat of devastation in the retaliatory strike, protection of citizens was in a sense a "threat"—threatening to make nuclear war winnable and survivable for one side. Thus, protection of citizens was anathema to MAD, and the U.S. pushed to control missile defenses.[5] Instead, the United States focused on offensive capabilities.

U.S. policy makers believed the Soviets had the same motivations as the Americans. However, even as most U.S. officials rejected missile defenses prior to 1983, the Russians appeared to believe in their effectiveness. Henry S. Rowen, an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the George H. W. Bush administration noted, "To our dismay, [the U.S.S.R.] built a missile defense system for Moscow. Although they came to see that it was not sensible to add more nuclear forces, they never accepted that it was a good thing to be vulnerable. In short, they rejected MAD as policy."[6] Whereas the United States quickly gave up on even very limited missile defense after the signing of the ABM Treaty, the Soviet Union maintained its missile defense site for the protection of Moscow.

1972: ABM Treaty

By limiting missile defense deployments, one might suggest that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) was a logical extension of Mutual Assured Destruction, at least in some American thinking.

Article I of the ABM Treaty reads as follows:

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[5] Payne, 149-204.
[6] Henry D. Sokolski, ed., "Getting MAD: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice," November 2004. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub585.pdf.

1. Each Party undertakes to limit anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems and to adopt other measures in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty.

2. Each Party undertakes not to deploy ABM systems for a defense of the territory of its country and not to provide a base for such a defense, and not to deploy ABM systems for defense of an individual region except as provided for in Article III of this Treaty.[7]

Article III is the provision that allows for protection of each nation's capital city and ICBM launchers, which was intentionally a very limited allowance. The U.S. would have been vulnerable to missile attack from the USSR with or without the ABM Treaty. However, the treaty in effect left the entire population vulnerable, rather than protect some portion of the population in the case of a large-scale conflict. Other means were intended to prevent a conflict of that scale in the first place. Fortunately, deterrence appears to have worked—or rather, not to have failed—but the consequences of the treaty could have been dire had unexpected events led to nuclear exchanges.

1972-83: From the ABM Treaty to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

The Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations made aborted attempts at missile defenses allowed by the ABM Treaty, but missile defense remained problematic in the general attitude of government officials. After negotiating the ABM Treaty, the Nixon administration tried to establish a site for protection of its ICBM's allowed by the treaty. This site, known as Safeguard, became operational on October 1, 1975 (under President Ford). On October 2, 1975, Congress voted to deactivate it, and the program officially

[7] Department of State, "Treaty Between The United States Of America And The Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics On The Limitation Of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems," accessed November 28, 2016. http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/abm/abm2.html.

ended five months later.[8] Then, under President Carter, there were no major missile defense undertakings. Instead, Presidential Directive 59 from 1980, the key document on nuclear strategy from the Carter administration, focused on theories such as "limited nuclear options" and continued to at least implicitly reject missile defense.[9]

In effect, for about a decade after the ratification of the ABM Treaty, the treaty was the largest influence on U.S. missile defense thinking. This influence prevented large-scale rethinking of missile defense until Ronald Reagan took office.

1983: Strategic Defense Initiative

Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was in many ways the beginning of the end of the ABM Treaty, although the treaty would be in effect for another 18 years. In his announcement of the program, Reagan asked rhetorically, "What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?"[10] The question reflects the ultimate stated goal of the program, although it was (and is) not one that could be achieved quickly. Indeed, U.S. missile defense to date has achieved nothing of the sort. However, if complete insurance against a Soviet- or Russian-scale attack could truly be reached, it would allow the U.S. not to worry about either a first strike or retaliation. One

[8] Federation of American Scientists, "Safeguard," last modified December 26, 1998 http://fas.org/spp/starwars/program/safeguard.htm.
[9] "Subject: M-B-B Luncheon Item: Targeting," Carter Presidential Library, accessed November 28, 2016. http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/pddirectives/pd59.pdf.
[10] "Primary Resources: National Security and SDI," Public Broadcasting System, accessed November 28, 2016. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/reagan-security/.

can see the Soviet (and Russian) concern over the possibility of this idea becoming reality and rendering their strategic missile force obsolete.

Despite this concern on the Soviet side, critics often couched their rejection of SDI in terms of the technological infeasibility of developing an impenetrable system. That was not the only criticism, however. The famed scientist Carl Sagan was a notable opponent, and argued that SDI "can be overwhelmed, can be outfoxed, can be underflown, is ruinously expensive, violates solemn treaties, and is likely to start a nuclear war."[11] The first three of these criticisms are technological in nature. The others are all reflections of other common (which is not to say correct) arguments against missile defense—cost (also reflected in the 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review, which will be discussed below), legality under the ABM treaty (which President Clinton would cite in 2000), and its destabilization within the MAD framework. The Sagan quote is thus an encapsulation of all the arguments against missile defense, and SDI specifically as well, making it relevant today. SDI nonetheless reoriented the missile defense conversation, even if opposition remained.

SDI had set the groundwork to eventually change the U.S.-Russian missile defense paradigm. As Benjamin Lambeth and Kevin Lewis of the RAND Corporation noted in 1988, "SDI threatens to shift a major part of the arms competition away from areas in which the U.S.S.R. holds clear advantages toward one in which the United States might gain leverage from its greatest strengths."[12] This may well have happened as the Soviet Union collapsed within a few years after the article was written. SDI was by no

[11] Antonie K. Churg, et. al., "From Star Wars (SDI) to The Alternatives," 1987, 2. http://www.scfs-la.org/mempubs/plotkin/SDI-SCFSjust.pdf.
[12] Benjamin Lambeth and Kevin Lewis, "The Kremlin and SDI," *Foreign Affairs* 66 (1988), 758. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/43073/benjamin-s-lambeth-and-kevin-lewis/the-kremlin-and-sdi.

means the only factor in the collapse: Economics, glasnost, perestroika and others played roles to varying effects. However, SDI was at the very least a source of concern for the Soviets.[13] The concern also permeates into the modern Russian approach to U.S. missile defense endeavors.

1983-2001: SDI Eventually Leads to U.S. Withdrawal from ABM Treaty

Although the ABM Treaty remained in effect, preventing deployment, many developments in missile defense technology occurred in the years following the announcement of SDI. "Brilliant Pebbles" was one such technology. However, it was canceled under the first Bush administration, well before the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. It has never been reconsidered. The program is nonetheless often discussed as an example of the technological progress spurred by the Strategic Defense Initiative. In 2009, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA) stated that "By 1992, [Brilliant Pebbles] had developed a cheap, effective means of destroying enemy ballistic missiles in all modes of flight."[14] The same document also claimed that, despite its technological promise, Brilliant Pebbles was not pursued due to politics, namely ideas such as the "weaponization of space."[15] The types of claims criticized in the IFPA piece can be seen in Sagan's rejection of SDI.

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[13] S.F. Akhromeyev and G. M. Korniyenko, *Glazami mar-shala i diplomata*, (Moscow, 1991), as cited in: Pavel Podvig, "Did Star Wars Help End the Cold War? Soviet Response to the SDI Program," RussianForces.org, March 17, 2013. Gorbachev's direct appeal to Reagan in Reykjavik 1986 that SDI end might be considered another indication of Soviet concern with the program.
[14] Independent Working Group, *Independent Working Group on Missile Defense, the Space Relationship, & the Twenty-First Century* (Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Cambridge, MA, 2009), vi, accessed November 28, 2016. http://www.ifpa.org/pdf/IWG2009.pdf.
[15] Ibid.

Missile defense remained controversial after the SDI announcement. The main importance of the period after 1983, however, is that its technological developments led to the modern U.S. missile defense framework, which would not have been possible otherwise.

2001: Unilateral U.S. Withdrawal from ABM Treaty

Despite strong Russian opposition, the George W. Bush administration withdrew the United States unilaterally and legally from the ABM Treaty in 2001. Withdrawal set the stage for the deployment of modern American missile defenses to protect the U.S. homeland and overseas military presence.

The Clinton administration had considered deployment, but President Clinton decided in September 2000 not to pursue deployment of missile defenses. Clinton argued instead that "it would be far better to move forward in the context of the ABM Treaty."[16] President Clinton explicitly left the door open for the next administration to make a different decision. President Bush then announced withdrawal from the treaty after less than a year in office. Although Clinton did speak positively of missile defenses in his 2000 remarks, his decision not to deploy them, whereas the Bush administration did, speaks to the partisan division on missile defense that had arisen following Reagan's 1983 SDI announcement and continued since that point. However, the acceptance of missile defense represented by the 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review report, published as it was during a Democratic administration, indicates that partisan disagreement over even the idea of missile defense has largely subsided. This makes it

[16] ArmsControl.org, "Remarks by President Bill Clinton On National Missile Defense," September 1, 2000, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_09/clintonnmd.

only more likely that Russia will continue to have to deal with U.S. missile defense into the future.

Even as Russia acknowledged the United States' right within the treaty to withdraw from it, Russia's overall reaction was negative. Vladimir Putin's remarks immediately following the December 2001 U.S. announcement of its pending withdrawal included the statement that "Russia was guided above all by the aim of preserving and strengthening the international legal foundation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons. The ABM Treaty is one of the supporting elements of the legal system in this field."[17] The implication of this comment was that missile defense encourages proliferation. The U.S. pursuit of missile defense, especially in light of U.S. counter-proliferation policy positions and programs, suggests that it does no such thing. In fact, there are arguments for the opposite case. Peppi DeBiaso wrote in 2006 that missile defense actually dissuades "potential adversaries from undertaking military programs and operations that could threaten U.S. interests or those of our allies and friends."[18]

The resulting difference of viewpoint borders on irreconcilable. If it truly is irreconcilable, one possible conclusion for the United States would be to move forward regardless of the Russian view.This progress regardless of the Russian opinion is, in fact, what has effectively occurred. Following its withdrawal from the treaty, the United States deployed the ground-based interceptors in California and Alaska, and began or continued to develop other systems as well. Without the withdrawal, the United States would have

[17] "Pres. Putin's Response to US ABM Withdrawal," *Russian Life*, December 14, 2001. http://www.russianlife.com/blog/putin-abm-withdrawal/.
[18] Peppi DeBiaso, "Proliferation, Missile Defense and the Conduct of Modern War," *Comparative Strategy* 25 (2006): 163.

remained unable to deploy that system and others. Instead, the U.S. has made progress on development and deployment.

The Current State of U.S. Missile Defenses

The February 2010 *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report* (BMDR) remains the most comprehensive summary of current U.S. missile defense policy. The first of the six "policy priorities" in the BMDR is protecting the homeland of the United States.[19] It states, "The United States is currently protected against limited ICBM attacks." The key word is "limited;" the document also specifically reiterates that the threat is from North Korea and Iran, not Russia. Given that there are fewer than 50 ground-based interceptors to defend the homeland, Russia could overwhelm the system with its hundreds of nuclear warheads deployed on ICBM's.[20] The second U.S. priority is defending against regional missile threats, and multiple systems exist to this end. As with the ground-based interceptors, however, the protection provided by these systems is limited, in the sense that the interceptor systems are not intended to handle large numbers of ballistic missiles.

The remaining missile defense priorities outlined in the 2010 BMDR are testing, fiscal sustainability, flexibility, and expanded international efforts on missile defense. The aforementioned diversity of systems used for regional defense reflects the priority placed on flexibility. The need for fiscal sustainability is present in every defense

[19] Department of Defense, "Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report," Defense.gov, February 2010, http://archive.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf.
[20] Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Russian nuclear forces, 2015," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 71 (2015), 84. Kristensen and Norris state that "Russia deploys an estimated 311 ICBMs that can carry approximately 1,050 warheads."

endeavor, not just missile defense, although it has been especially pertinent to the missile defense debate since the 1980's.

In addition to its multiple successful missile defense programs, the United States has attempted its share of BMD programs that have been difficult to implement. In 2015, the *Los Angeles Times* cataloged various issues with the Airborne Laser, Kinetic Energy Interceptor, Multiple Kill Vehicle, and the Sea-Based X-band Radar.[21] The difficulties faced in the development and deployment of these capabilities speak to the importance of testing, fiscal sustainability, and flexibility. These programs are a reminder of the effort and money that goes into BMD. It behooves the United States to ensure that programs are adequately tested and funded. This is especially true if these programs continue to affect relations with Russia.

Missile defenses originating in either design or production in the United States also perform a key role in U.S. defense partnerships. According to the Arms Control Association, the United States is playing a key role in NATO missile defenses as well as part of the "European Phased Adaptive Approach" (EPAA).[22] Separate missile defense systems and components are currently present in countries as varied as Romania, Turkey, and Japan. The first two host parts of the NATO system. Missile defense in Japan is one representation of U.S. commitment to East Asia. One nation that has not accepted U.S. BMD is South Korea, although they accept the potential utility of missile defense.[23] Moreover, as the 2010 BMDR states, the advancement of missile defense internationally

[21] David Willman, "The Pentagon's $10-billion bet gone bad," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 2015. http://graphics.latimes.com/missile-defense/.
[22] Arms Control Association, "The European Phased Adaptive Approach at a Glance," armscontrol.org, May 2013. http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Phasedadaptiveapproach.
[23] Korea Herald, "Korea will not join U.S. missile defense system," last modified October 16, 2013. http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131016000903&mod=skb.

is a key policy priority of the United States. It is apparent that this priority is being treated as such, and is leading to ever-increasing acceptance of missile defense overseas. Once again, this development could continue to affect relations with Russia.

The commitment the United States has made to missile defense by this point is substantial, suggesting that it will remain a fixture of American defense policy for some time. However, its limitations are apparent in their size and scope. Nevertheless, missile defenses do provide greater protection than ever before, and missile defense continues to be an issue between the United States and Russia.

Missile Defense in Current U.S.-Russia Relations

Russia continues to strongly and absolutely reject U.S. missile defense policy and deployments. As recently as December 2014, Putin stated that U.S. "[ABM] constitutes a threat not only to the security of Russia, but to the whole world, in view of the possible destabilization of the strategic balance of powers. I believe this is dangerous for the US itself, as it creates a dangerous illusion of invulnerability."[24] Of course, nowhere in U.S. policy documents is it stated or suggested that the U.S. is invulnerable from missile attack. If anything, Putin here objects to Reagan's rhetoric over thirty years ago, when Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative: the concept of a defense against any missile attack from any nation. However, it is clear that the "missile shield" as such does not exist. Equally importantly, the U.S. government is under no illusions that it does exist. A reading of the 2010 BMDR would indicate this latter point.

[24] "Putin: Talking to Russia from position of strength is meaningless," RT.com, December 4, 2014. http://rt.com/news/211383-putin-russia-deterrence-policy/.

Nonetheless, Russia remains adamant in its opposition, which has wide-ranging effects. Perhaps most notably, the George W. Bush administration's plan for a missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland was canceled by the Obama administration, a decision often linked to the infamous "reset" of relations between the countries. A 2009 *New York Times* op-ed by Mark Brzezinski noted that "backing away from the system's implementation is interpreted broadly as a diminution of the strategic relationship" between the U.S., Czech Republic, and Poland.[25] The effects of missile defense on U.S.-Russian relations affects U.S. foreign relations with other countries as well. The need for a balancing act between U.S. interests, the interest of U.S. allies, and U.S. relations with Russia is apparent. In the context of missile defense, these issues only came to the forefront when the U.S. withdrew from the ABM Treaty.

The Future of Missile Defense

Missile defense is likely to remain a mainstay of the U.S. defense posture. Russia will always contest deployment of additional systems as technology improves, however, which is but one situation the U.S. must address going forward.

If one follows the history, there is a clear trend in U.S. defense circles towards an ever-increasing role for missile defenses in the past forty years; although it has not been a smooth one, no dramatic shift is in sight. U.S. opposition to missile defense peaked in 1972 with the ABM Treaty, which was negotiated by a Republican administration based on the assured destruction theory formulated during a Democratic administration. The Safeguard program under the ABM Treaty, though quickly abandoned, indicated that

[25] Mark Brzezinski, "Now, 'Reset' With the Poles and Czechs," *New York Times*, September 21, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/22/opinion/22iht-edbrzezinksi.html.

there was nonetheless no absolute rejection of missile defenses. However, no administration expressed a desire to pursue homeland missile defenses until the 1983 Strategic Defense Initiative, when Reagan's became the first American administration to publicly express desire for a missile defense system that would protect citizens. This desire would become accepted rather readily by Republicans. Democratic officials accepted it less readily, but late in his administration, President Clinton spoke highly of the concept, even as he decided not to work towards deployment missile defenses. And while it was George W. Bush who withdrew the United States from the ABM Treaty, the Obama Administration continues to pursue missile defenses, albeit with modifications to policy. This trend is the key point about missile defense from 1972-2001 from the U.S. perspective.

That said, Russian resistance indicates that they are unlikely to change course any time soon. Putin has continued to refer to ABM in speeches as a destabilizing force, well after the ABM Treaty has gone out of force. Overall, missile defense remains relevant not only in its deployment as a key aspect of the U.S. defense posture, but also as a point of contention in relations between the countries.

The historical background of missile defense demonstrates how this issue came to be a major point of contention in U.S.-Russian relations. However, this background does not fully explain why missile defense remains so controversial between the two countries, or what the greater implications of this argument for broader U.S. policy might be. To reach conclusions on those matters requires inspection of factors that might inform different approaches in the present, beyond just the historical factors. Three of these factors are examined in detail below, namely:

- the post-Cold War security environment

- technological concerns, of which the specific missile defense capabilities are a part

- and Russia's own thinking, which includes geopolitical implications. This final factor is perhaps the most important.

NORTH KOREA, IRAN, AND MISSILE DEFENSE

This chapter aims to examine the very different ways in which the United States and Russia have perceived North Korea and Iran as missile threats since the Cold War ended. While the threat perceptions are quite different, it turns out that they alone do not explain U.S.-Russian tension over missile defense.

Perhaps the most important factor in a country's decision to develop and deploy missile defense, or any capability for that matter, is its threat assessments. When countries assess threats differently, as the United States and Russia often do, significant disagreements in other aspects of global politics can result. Missile defense is one area of such disagreement.

It is important to keep in mind that different actors may be a larger threat to some states than to others. When one country's officials see "a threat," they do not mean a generic threat to every country, but specifically to their country and allies. Therefore, different assessments in different countries do not mean that one is objectively incorrect. This is especially important regarding Iran.

North Korea

U.S. Assessment. United States assessment of North Korea as a threat, as reflected in the National Security Strategy (NSS) documents, dates back to before the latter country's nuclear weapons testing in 2006. The first NSS, from 1987, focused on the threat North Korea posed to America's allies to the south: "North Korea still has armed forces that far exceed those of the South in quantity, are newly strengthened by

additional Soviet weapons, and are in the hands of a government whose aggressive demeanor and tendency to act unexpectedly is well known."[26] By 1995, the Clinton White House spoke of reaching the "agreed framework with North Korea that halted, and will eventually eliminate, its dangerous nuclear program."[27] The 2002 National Security Strategy noted that "In the past decade North Korea has become the world's principal purveyor of ballistic missiles, and has tested increasingly capable missiles while developing its own WMD arsenal."[28]

The 2010 National Security Strategy indicated a modest shift of emphasis by noting that, "The United States will pursue the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" but phrasing it in terms of "the responsibility of all nations," adding that, "If North Korea eliminates its nuclear program…they will be able to proceed on a path to greater political and economic integration with the international community."[29] Missing from this particular document was any statement on the actual threat posed by North Korea. The 2015 NSS seemed to correct for this, stating that "North Korean provocation and tensions in the East and South China Seas are reminders of the risks of escalation" and noting the "profound risks posed by North Korean weapons development and proliferation."[30]

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[26] "National Security Strategy of the United States," Defense.gov, January 1987. http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/nss/nss1987.pdf.
[27] "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," Defense.gov, February 1995. http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/nss/nss1995.pdf.
[28] "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," State.gov, September 2002. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf.
[29] "National Security Strategy," WhiteHouse.gov, May 2010, 23. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.
[30] "National Security Strategy," WhiteHouse.gov, February 2015, 10-11. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

As demonstrated throughout each National Security Strategy, the White House has long taken the North Korean threat seriously. This assessment is not a recent development, and predates U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.

Unsurprisingly, the North Korean threat has also been apparent in U.S. discussions about missile defense. At a U.S. Army symposium on November 13, 1996, General Lester Lyles noted North Korea's 1993 test of the No Dong missile and stated that:

> Among Third World nations hostile to the U.S., North Korea has the most advanced long-range ballistic missile program. One of its missiles in development, the Taepo Dong 2, is assessed to have a range of over 4,000 kilometers. With future improvements to a 6,000 kilometer range, this missile would be able to strike portions of Alaska and the far western portions of the Hawaiian Island chain (more than a thousand kilometers west of Honolulu). Regardless of how remote the territory potentially threatened, we cannot take lightly the emerging ballistic missile capability of a rogue nation to threaten any part of the United States.[31]

By 1996, key elements of the U.S. approach to the North Korean threat were already evident. First, North Korea has long been considered one of the largest threats in its class—in Lyles' terms, "Third World nations hostile to the U.S." North Korea might even be considered the largest rogue state threat to the United States since the end of the Cold War when it comes to missile threats.

By the time of this testimony, the most likely threat from North Korea was thought to be an attack on population centers. As imagined by Lyles in 1996, only one population center at a time might be threatened, but as any threat develops its potential scope increases. Lyles' was the first public statement from the Missile Defense Agency about the missile threat posed by North Korea, and in the time since, the assessment of

[31] Missile Defense Agency, "Role of Missile Defense in U.S. National Security Strategy," November 13, 1996, 2. http://www.mda.mil/global/documents/pdf/ps_lyles1.pdf.

this missile threat has continued to evolve in the United States. The Intelligence Community continues to assess that "North Korea has also expanded the size and sophistication of its ballistic missile forces—from close-range ballistic missiles to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)—and continues to conduct test launches."[32] North Korean actions and tests in 2016 only further demonstrate the possibility of the growth of this threat into the future.

Russian Assessment. By 2015 Russia and North Korea seemed to be growing closer ties. In 2015, *The Guardian* cited North Korean state media in reporting that "the two countries had agreed to make 2015 a 'year of friendship' to mark the 70th anniversary of 'Korea's liberation and the victory in the great Patriotic War in Russia' – references to the defeats of Japan and Nazi Germany in 1945."[33] If Russia views North Korea as a threat to any significant agree, it did not stop these declarations from occurring.

Russia has indicated discomfort with nuclear tests by North Korea, however. In 2013, Russia condemned the North Korean test as "incompatible with the international co-existence criteria [which] doubtlessly deserves condemnation," although certain non-governmental experts were quoted as stating the actual threat was minimal.[34] However, there was a clear indication from the Russian government that the January 2016 nuclear test by North Korea did represent a threat. Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the

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[32] Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community," DNI.gov, February 9, 2016. https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/SASC_Unclassified_2016_ATA_SFR_FINAL.pdf.
[33] Justin McCurry, "North Korea and Russia forge 'year of friendship' pariah alliance," *The Guardian*, March 12, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/12/russia-and-north-korea-forge-year-of-friendship-pariah-alliance.
[34] Igor Rozin, "Russia condemns North Korea's new nuclear test," *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, February 12, 2013. http://rbth.com/international/2013/02/12/russia_condemns_north_koreas_another_nuclear_test_22765.html.

international affairs committee in the upper house of the Kremlin, stated that "The distance from Pyongyang to Vladivostok is less than 700 kilometres. And any activity of the DPRK in this direction directly affects national security of our country."[35] Here we see Russia indicate concern for the potential threat to its cities from North Korea—the imagination to anticipate and, if necessary, react to such a threat is present not just in the United States. Rarely, however, will one hear these concerns from Putin; more often, such concern comes from officials like Kosachev.

It is unclear how Russia truly views the North Korean threat given the supposed "year of friendship" in the context of Russia's reaction to North Korean tests. It is evident, however, that while Russia is concerned with North Korea, there are mitigating factors.

Iran

As with North Korea, the United States and Russia find themselves in disagreement over the Iran threat and its missile threat specifically. The United States has consistently assessed Iran as a significant threat, in the future if not at the time of the assessment, whereas Russia's friendlier ties with Iran results in a lesser to non-existent threat assessment.

U.S. Assessment. The unclassified elements of the DOD's 2012 "Annual Report on Military Power of Iran" speak to their ballistic missile program more so than subsequent reports. The report notes that:

[35] Olga Gertcyk, "Russia condemns North Korea's 'nuclear bomb test', a 'threat to national security,'" *Siberian Times*, January 6, 2016. http://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/n0545-russia-condemns-north-koreas-nuclear-bomb-test-a-threat-to-national-security/.

> Iran continues to develop ballistic missiles that can range regional adversaries, Israel, and Eastern Europe…Iran has boosted the lethality and effectiveness of existing systems…Iran may be technically capable of flight-testing an intercontinental ballistic missile by 2015…Since 2008, Iran has launched multistage space launch vehicles that could serve as a test bed for developing long-range ballistic missile technologies.[36]

However, by 2015, forecasts had been pushed back, and Admiral William Gortney stated that "we assess Iran will not be able to deploy an operational ICBM until later this decade at the earliest," meaning that, "operationally, we are ahead of the threat today, but to remain out in front of 2020 adversaries we need to continue investments which improve our existing capabilities."[37] Despite the change in forecast, it is evident that U.S. policy makers in the Department of Defense continue to take the threat seriously: the temporal assessment has changed, not the assessed desire of Iran to obtain nuclear technology. Gortney's argument to continue development of capabilities could also be framed as a continuation of the United States' belief in its technological abilities, a theme that will be more broadly addressed in the later section on technology and capabilities.

The most recent National Security Strategy mentions Iran about a dozen times, but the threat is assumed for the most part. This NSS instead emphasizes international norms. It notes "an unprecedented international sanctions regime to hold Iran responsible for failing to meet its international obligations, while pursuing a diplomatic effort that has already stopped the progress of Iran's nuclear program."[38] The emphasis on international relations would appear to indicate a geopolitical concern. However, because the issues

[36] Department of Defense, "Annual Report on Military Power of Iran," April 2012. https://fas.org/man/eprint/dod-iran.pdf.
[37] Government Publishing Office, "Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for Missile Defense Programs," GPO.gov, March 19, 2015, 113. https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg94227/pdf/CHRG-114hhrg94227.pdf.
[38] "National Security Strategy," WhiteHouse.gov, February 2015, 1.

cited by this National Security Strategy pertain to avoiding a nuclear Iran, everything about Iran as a U.S. national security issue is tied to that threat.

The effect of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ("Iran deal") on the Iranian threat must be considered but remains to be seen. The White House fact sheet on the deal notes that "Iran's breakout timeline – the time that it would take for Iran to acquire enough fissile material for one weapon – is currently assessed to be 2 to 3 months. That timeline will be extended to at least one year, for a duration of at least ten years, under this framework."[39] If this prediction were to bear out, it could also conceivably decrease the urgency in developing countering capabilities. A year after the deal, President Obama repeated the statement that "Iran's breakout time has been extended from two to three months to about a year."[40]

Russian Assessment. In 2008, Bulent Aras and Fatih Ozbay noted that "Russian-Iranian relations under Putin's rule resulted in close ties, and Iran supported Russian positions in regional and international issues," although they stop short of calling the relationship an alliance.[41] While this particular question is more of a geopolitical concern, it does help to explain why Russia does not view Iran as a significant threat. However, even the United States assesses that Iran has less advanced nuclear and missile programs than North Korea. It is perhaps unsurprising that Russia seems even less concerned with Iran than North Korea.

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[39] White House, "Parameters for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program," April 2, 2015.
[40] White House, "Statement by the President on the One Year Anniversary of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," July 14, 2016.
[41] Bulent Aras and Fatih Ozbay, "The limits of the Russian-Iranian strategic alliance: its history and geopolitics, and the nuclear issue," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 20 (2008): Page. DOI: 10.1080/10163270802006321.

In 2015, a Russian envoy to the UN "questioned US and European claims that Iran's recent missile test violated UN resolutions, saying the test-launch should not be treated as a 'sensational' issue."[42] This reaction alone highlights differences between Russia and much of the western world regarding Iran. Russia's willingness to accept Iranian missile tests indicates how negligible they view any Iranian missile threat. In fact, in 2007, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had been quoted as saying from Tehran that "we perceive no threat from Iran."[43] Given that he was speaking in Tehran, it would have been far more newsworthy had he said the opposite. Nevertheless, it is another sign that the Russian perception of an Iran threat is minimal to non-existent relative to that of the United States.

A threat to whom, however? It is certainly conceivable that Iran would threaten the United States or its allies, but not Russia and its allies. Indeed, author Angela Stent notes that during the George W. Bush administration, "Most Russian officials believed that they could handle the Iranians. They also figured that Iran was more of a problem for the United States than for Russia."[44] This would certainly seem to indicate an underlying acknowledgement by Russian officials at the time that Iran was a threat to the United States.

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[42] Agence France Presse, "Russia questions US claims over Iran missile test," October 22, 2015. http://news.yahoo.com/russia-questions-us-claims-over-iran-missile-test-151330486.html.
[43] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Russia). "Transcript of Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference of Foreign Ministers from Caspian States, Teheran, June 20, 2007." http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/370080.
[44] Angela Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russia Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 72.

What North Korea and Iran Mean for Missile Defense

In the United States. It is clear the impact of U.S. analysis of North Korean and Iranian threats relative to those posed by Russia has had on missile defense systems in the United States. The current systems offer a decent chance of succeeding in parrying a few missiles, but not a large salvo. Even further capability development would not offer sufficient protection against a large-scale attack for some time, given the gap in numbers between U.S. interceptors and Russian warheads.

The current U.S. architecture for homeland defense clearly reflects the threat from North Korea, with the ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California, and not, for instance, in North Dakota or Ohio. Interceptor sites in these latter locations would provide less time to react and hence a smaller margin for error.

Meanwhile, the push for defenses in Europe reflects the possibility of an Iranian threat. The fact that one architecture has been in place for a decade, while the other is being gradually implemented, is another indication of where the United States views the current stage of each country's development.

Meanwhile, any threat from Russia does not appear to have entered much into the American missile defense calculus. This appearance again stems from the inability of current capabilities to forestall a nuclear attack of the fullest scale that one could imagine coming from Russia. From the 1983 SDI announcement into the 1990's, missile defense was imagined as eventually reaching that point. As things stand now, however, current capabilities are no different than those one could conceive of being developed were Russia an ally of the United States, or even a neutral state.

In Russia. The influence of Russian threat perceptions on their missile defense thinking is less clear. Their emphasis on the protection of Moscow does give one indication of how threats inform their posture. This continued emphasis, unchanged from the Cold War era, suggests that Russia views the key missile threat it faces to be the same as it faced during the Cold War (i.e., the United States, rather than rogue states).

Russia does not consider Iran a threat, neither to Russia itself nor in the abstract. However, it could be argued that the Russian stance on U.S./NATO missile defense ignores one possibility: even if Iran is of no threat to Russia, it can still be a potential threat to the United States and its allies. It is interesting that Russia would decry the Iranian threat for the purposes of arguing against U.S. missile defenses in Europe despite the belief among their officials, at least during the later portions of the Bush 43 administration, that Iran posed some sort of threat. Either Iran is a real threat worth defending against, or it is more of a "problem" that the United States must deal with for geopolitical or other reasons besides threat assessments. Neither possibility inherently precludes the necessity of U.S. missile defenses, but Russia nonetheless argues that U.S. missile defense is unnecessary. As in the previous paragraph, the most sensible conclusion is that Cold War threat perceptions continue to impact Russian attitudes towards missile defense.

A Superficial Explanation

One might determine based on the evidence that this divide over missile defense between the United States and Russia is simply driven by different threat assessments. However, this does not appear to be the case. It is apparent that North Korea can pose

some threat to both the United States and Russia, and yet only the United States has responded by developing missile defenses to combat the threat. Additionally, since the potential of an attack from North Korea is apparent, Russia perhaps ought not blame the United States for trying to protect itself. In the case of Iran, different threat assessments probably are somewhat more explanatory. Nonetheless, it seems difficult to argue that disagreement over rogue state threats is also the reason for missile defense disagreement.

There are many other possible explanations for this contentiousness, only a couple of which will be explored below. Given that different threat assessments will lead to different capabilities, it makes sense to look into said capabilities, as well as their technological underpinnings.

THE TECHNICAL QUESTION

If differences in threat perceptions alone do not explain why the United States and Russia are so divided on missile defense, technical matters might. This subject can be broken down into specific technologies/capabilities, as well as general issues such as the technological advantage of one country over another. In that vein, this chapter has two parts. In the first, the technical issues underlying Russia's reaction to missile defense in Europe will be examined: both the "third site" in Poland and the Czech Republic as proposed by the Bush Administration and the Obama-proposed European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). The second part looks at general technological issues that have contributed to the missile defense arguments between the United States and Russia.

Technical Matters Regarding U.S. Missile Defense in Europe[45]

Many authors who examine the technical threat posed to Russia by U.S. missile defenses in Europe conclude that the threat is minimal. In 2012, Dean Wilkening, then a physicist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, concluded that "mutual

[45] While this section is limited to an exploration of the U.S. missile defense system, Russia does have its own missile defenses. Russia's most important missile defense capability is its A-135 system for the protection of Moscow. It has been operational only since 1995, but is a successor to the A-35 system deployed after the ABM Treaty. In a direct comparison of American and Russian missile defense capabilities, the United States would appear to have the technical advantage. By 2004, one account claimed that the A-135 had already "long been regarded by experts as moribund and dependent upon a less and less reliable and truncated system of early-warning stations."[46] Russia does continue to upgrade its missile defense capabilities as a successor to the A-135 has been in planning. In April 2016, Russia Today (RT) reported the approaching deployment of the S-500 interceptor, an upgrade over the current S-300, as part of the A-135 system.[47] Presumably, the S-500 could also become part of the A-235. Nevertheless, these are upgrades to existing infrastructure, suggesting that Russia views its current core structure as sufficient.

[46] Jonathan Marcus, "Russia tests anti-missile system," BBC.co.uk, November 29, 2004. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4052847.stm.

[47] "Russian S-500 Prometheus ballistic missile defense to be deployed in 2016." RT.com, April 15, 2016. https://www.rt.com/news/339757-s-500-prometheus-air-defense/.

suspicion and domestic politics rather than technical realities [are] the driving forces behind the missile-defence debate."[48] According to Wilkening, Russia's concerns with the third site were: that "it could intercept Russian ICBM's," that the United States might increase the initial number of interceptors, that the interceptors at the site "could be converted into an offensive ballistic missile," and that the Czech radar "could observe Russian ICBM trajectories."[49] Bilyana Lilly, author of *Russian Foreign Policy toward Missile Defense*, states that, "The reasons for Russia's highly defensive attitude toward BMD went beyond an assessment of technical capabilities."[50] Referring specifically to the Bush 43 administration's proposed Poland-Czech Republic site, Alexei Arbatov, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, wrote for the Carnegie Endowment's Moscow Center that, "From a military-technical perspective, the number and technical characteristics of the interceptors to be deployed in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic would have had little impact on Russia's nuclear deterrent capability."[51]

Such conclusions were not universal. One diametrically opposed conclusion comes from George Lewis and Theodore Postol, who wrote for the Arms Control Association in 2007 that, "The Russians are deeply upset and suspicious of what appears to be a lack of candor, understanding and realism with regard to U.S. plans for missile defenses. U.S. political leaders relentlessly deny basic technical facts that show that the current U.S. missile defense might well affect Russia."[52] The use of "might well affect

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[48] Dean Wilkening, "Does Missile Defence in Europe Threaten Russia?" *Survival* 54 (2012): 50.
[49] Wilkening, 32.
[50] Bilyana Lilly, *Russian Foreign Policy toward Missile Defense: Actors, Motivations, and Influence* (London: Lexington Books, 2014), 365.
[51] Alexei Arbatov, "The Fifth Missile Defense Crisis," *Carnegie Moscow Center Briefing* 11 (2009): 2-3. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/ArbatovBriefing_crisis_Eng.pdf.
[52] George N. Lewis and Theodore A. Postol, "European Missile Defense: The Technological Basis of Russian Concerns," *ArmsControl.org*. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_10/LewisPostol.

Russia" as opposed to "will affect Russia" is significant, however. Whatever the reality, the perception is important to understand why missile defense might be so controversial.

According to Wilkening, the "technical effectiveness" of BMD relies on the: 1) size of the area that can be protected, 2) probability of successfully destroying warheads, 3) survivability, 4) and that the system is "large enough relative to the threats it is designed to defeat."[53] Wilkening's fourth and final point is the main technical reason why U.S. missile defense in Europe is unlikely to threaten Russia. As Wilkening states:

> Russia's current (and likely future) strategic missile force is so large that it could easily saturate any European missile defence, especially the ten interceptors of the original Third Site proposal. This might not be the case for scenarios involving future deployment of hundreds of GBI and SM-3 Block IIA/IIB interceptors, especially one in which a US counterforce first strike destroys a large fraction of the Russian missile force. But this Cold War scenario is anachronistic in the current political climate and, moreover, it is not at all clear that US counterforce options would be effective against the future Russian Strategic Rocket Force or, if so, that Russia could not easily redress the situation by increasing the alert rate of its missile forces.[54]

The gist here is indeed that proposed U.S. missile defenses in Europe are simply too small to counter Russia. The ten interceptors under the Bush plan certainly suggest this conclusion as well.

However, Wilkening does mention potential future concerns for Russia. This is a theme that is present in the writing of Arbatov as well as well. Nevertheless, Wilkening dismisses such concerns as a "Cold War scenario [which] is anachronistic in the current political climate," before also dismissing the technical viability of such concerns as well.

Wilkening's dismissal of the same becomes only stronger when he writes on the EPAA:

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[53] Wilkening, 33.
[54] Wilkening, 34.

> …BMD interceptors with speeds below approximately 5.0km/sec launched from sites in or around Europe cannot intercept Russian ICBMs or SLBMs without violating the laws of physics. In those cases where some missile trajectories might be intercepted, cross-targeting of ICBMs or lofting ICBM or SLBM trajectories readily negates this capability. Moscow's concern with phases III and IV of the European Phased Adaptive Approach BMD architecture, therefore, lacks technical merit, unless the SM-3 Block IIB interceptor has a maximum speed greater than approximately 5.0km/sec.[55]

Wilkening's line about the laws of physics is particularly striking in its certainty. It is the very nature of trajectories and geographic positioning that make the inability of missile defense sites in Europe to counter Russia apparent, rather than some argument about potentialities.

Regarding potential upgrades, however, Wilkening stated that, "If all goes well...the United States will have the capability to track Russian ICBMs shortly after lift-off by around 2020," but he follows with graphics "indicating that it is physically impossible for a 5.0km/sec SM-3-like interceptor launched from Poland to intercept any Russian ICBM heading on a minimum-energy trajectory to the United States."[56] As alarming as the first part might be to a Russian, the second part is unlikely to be reassuring.

However, even Russia's concerns about what U.S. missile defense can potentially become seem to be objectively misguided. Based on solely Wilkening's work, the conclusion must be that U.S. missile defense in Europe is of minimal if any threat to Russia, whether speaking of the Bush plan or the Obama one.

Ironically, Wilkening indicates that while missile defense in Europe is of little technical threat to Russia's nuclear forces, that certain other U.S. missile defense systems

[55] Wilkening, 49.
[56] Wilkening, 40-41.

can be: “The worst locations for SM-3 interceptors, from the Russian point of view, are sites off the coast of the United States,” and “the hypothetical ability to defend the United States against a limited Russian ICBM attack already exists” at Fort Greely, Alaska.[57] This seems to suggest that it is the very presence of U.S. missile defense in Europe, rather than what it can do from Europe, that so disturbs Russia. The implications of this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Other work besides Wilkening’s must be considered. Arbatov writes that:

> From a military-technical perspective, the number and technical characteristics of the interceptors to be deployed in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic would have had little impact on Russia’s nuclear deterrent capability. Most of Russia’s ICBMs are based a lot farther northeast than the range of the planned U.S. military facility on Polish territory (and this is even truer of the Russian Northern Fleet’s sea-based missiles). According to the laws of ballistics, their trajectories are plotted across the Arctic Circle. The curvature of the Earth’s surface would have made it impossible for the radar in the Czech Republic to track test launches from the Plesetsk space launch range and Russia’s northern seas, and in any case the radar would have added little to the existing radar in Norway. The American GBI interceptors that were to have been deployed in Poland are not technically capable of intercepting ICBMs during the boost phase of their trajectory. Studies carried out by liberal American experts opposed to the plans (Theodore Postol and George Lewis) show that U.S. interceptors in Poland could “catch up” to ICBMs launched from Russia’s westernmost or southernmost bases, but only in the most favorable combination of circumstances and only if the ICBMs targeted the East Coast of the United States (Boston, New York, Washington). However, these interceptors have never actually been tested under these conditions, and Russia deploys only a part of its nuclear forces at these bases. Despite the minuscule impact it would have on Russia’s nuclear deterrent, Moscow could not simply ignore the American plan to establish a “third site” missile defense. After all, to use the Americans’ own term, this was an open-ended program. In other words, neither the U.S. nor its allies provided any guarantee that things would stop at one radar installation and one base with ten GBI interceptors.[58]

[57] Wilkening, 45-46.
[58] Arbatov, 2-3.

The first part of the excerpt is quite consistent with the work done by Wilkening. Ten interceptors are simply too few to withstand a Russian nuclear attack. The Czech radar was also unable to monitor Russian launches from many locations.

In either analysis, the issue is not a matter of effective monitoring, which could be subjective, but any monitoring, which ought to be objective. This gets to Lewis and Postol's use of the phrase "might well affect Russia." There seems to be in fact no such possibility.

The fact that a substantial number of Russian ICBM's are so far north (see Arbatov) indicates that it was not just the planned number of interceptors, but also the location of both the interceptors and radar that rendered them ineffective against Russia. In other words, Russia is so large it has been able to place its nuclear capabilities far enough away from susceptibility to defenses. Russia may be partially in Europe geographically speaking, but their sensitivity to U.S. actions in Europe isn't grounded in technical reality, to borrow Wilkening's phrase. As with the idea that U.S.-based missile defense could rebuff Russian nuclear attack better than Europe-based defense, this is another sign that non-technical issues are at play.

However, Lewis and Postol argue, as Arbatov acknowledges, that Russia's more westerly or southerly bases could be vulnerable to missile defenses based in Europe. The caveats as presented by Arbatov are so large, though, as to again render technical concerns invalid.

Nevertheless, Arbatov argues that the open-endedness of American missile defense plans in Europe must still be of concern to Russia. Wilkening would appear to have addressed this when he notes that even if the radar capability were there, the

interception capability would remain insufficient to counter Russian attack. Once again, the concern seems to be political rather than technical. Postol and Lewis, whom Arbatov cites, say as much when they indicate that it is a "lack of candor" from the Americans that disturbs Russia.

It is possible, however, that technical or technological issues beyond the specifics of U.S. missile defense in Europe are at play in the missile defense dispute. Some of these, among them the Strategic Defensive Initiative and Reagan's rhetoric in announcing it, the historical differences between the countries in technological ability, and even the aborted attempts at cooperation between the United States and Russia on missile defense technology, are discussed next.

Broader Technological Differences between the United States and Russia

It would seem that the more technologically capable a country is, the more likely it is to see value in those technologies. Similarly, less technologically advanced nations are likely either to value technology less, or to seek out technologies that are easier to develop and might produce asymmetries or imbalances in their relations with other countries. If this relationship between technological prowess and pursuit of technology holds concerning the United States and Russia, it could explain why the United States appears to value missile defense as a technology or series of capabilities more than Russia. Such a relationship, if Russia believes that it contributes to an even greater and ever-growing difference in the technological abilities of the two countries, could partially explain Russia's objection to U.S. missile defense. This could create geopolitical

implications as well if that difference in technology also contributes to a different ability to project power.

Effect of U.S. Technology on General Attitudes towards Missile Defense.

When Ronald Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative, he relied heavily on the United States' technical advantages in his justification for the program:

> Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today. What if...we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies...Current technology has attained a level of sophistication where it's reasonable for us to begin this effort.[59]

Without a positive opinion of the technical strength of the United States, it seems unlikely that President Reagan would have undertaken the initiative. It took a great deal of optimism on this front to suggest that while the capability was afar off, it was worthwhile to begin building towards it. If one takes the view of Reagan rather than that of his critics, not only is technology an asset in the present, but a nation can anticipate future technologies based on current ones. This is, essentially, what Reagan argued when he discussed the sophistication of current technology.

Additionally, research and development budgets can offer insight into priorities. The U.S. federal government spends billions annually on research and development (R&D). Much of that investment is in defense fields. While R&D does not represent a majority of U.S. government spending, it is a significant investment.

In terms of missile defense, the Missile Defense Agency's $7.5 billion FY 2017 budget request consisted of 77% research and development, compared to the 85% in the

[59] "Primary Resources: National Security and SDI," Public Broadcasting System, accessed November 28, 2016. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/reagan-security/.

actual 2011 budget.[60] MDA has always been foremost a research and development agency, with R&D making up well over 90% of its budgets through 2009. Thomas Karako of the Center for Strategic International Studies notes that MDA was meant to "transfer procurement responsibility to the services, but for the most part this has not taken place," resulting in the R&D decreases as a part of the overall budget.[61] However, the numbers indicate that United States has always understood missile defense as largely an R&D project, whether the agency responsible for it has taken the form of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO), Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO), or the MDA. An R&D focus can be expected in most pursuits, but it has played a particularly large role in missile defense, from the announcement of SDI onward. Technological advancement was always necessary to fulfill Reagan's idea of what SDI could achieve.

This creates an interesting paradox of sorts. Russia states that future U.S. capabilities can adversely affect Russia. This may not be the case, as per Wilkening, but future capabilities are key to the initiatives the United States does undertake. This is possibly one reason why Russia feels justified in its concerns over the future.

Effect of U.S. Capabilities on General Attitudes towards Missile Defense. In some ways, trying to explain the effect capabilities might have on attitudes toward missile defense is working backwards, because capabilities are usually developed on bases other than how policy makers may feel about them. However, certain capabilities

[60] Thomas Karako, "FY17 Budget Squeezes MDA's Research and Development," CSIS, March 18, 2016 https://www.csis.org/analysis/fy17-budget-squeezes-mda%E2%80%99s-research-and-development.
[61] Ibid.

may be more promising than others, and the promise of a system may be unaffected by the threats it would counter.

Current U.S. strategic capabilities are effectively limited to the ground-based midcourse interceptors in California and Alaska. This will likely remain the situation in the near future, given the cancellation of Phase 4 of the EPAA. Missile defense thus can be viewed and discussed through the lens of existing systems, with less attention given to potential systems. Potential or future capabilities do play a role, however. When Russia expresses concern that continued development of missile defenses could eventually render Russia's nuclear capability less effective, the future capabilities take on importance. Nevertheless, as discussed above, whether these concerns are substantiated by evidence and physics is another matter.

There are other technical controversies over missile defense: despite advances and the emergence of a bipartisan consensus in government as to the need for missile defense, there remained those unconvinced by its potential as recently as 2014. Robert Gard writes for *National Defense* that current capabilities are insufficiently able to "discriminate between the incoming warhead and debris, decoys and other countermeasures."[62] This means, he writes, that "Any further expenditure on GMD for the foreseeable future should be limited to a scientific study of a practical solution to the discrimination problem as a precondition to continuing."[63]

Such an argument, like many of those set forth by opponents of SDI, uses technological shortcomings to make a case for rejecting deployment. However, SDI

[62] Robert G. Gard, "National Missile Defense Technology Still Falls Short," *National Defense*, August 2014.
[63] Ibid.

opponents argued that technological feasibility in their time should preclude any pursuit of any system—not just their deployment, but their development. By 2014, authors like Gard instead leave room in their arguments for future development.

This change represents acceptance of a role for missile defense that was not present thirty years earlier. To critics today, technological shortcomings are not permanent and/or absolute. Although the types of capabilities the United States seeks have also changed, they are more broadly accepted, albeit only implicitly by their critics. It is thus even harder to see missile defense fading away in the United States, and therefore in U.S.-Russian relations.

Meanwhile, others who strongly support missile defense have suggested that policy makers rejected the most technically promising capabilities. The clearest example of this argument comes from the 2009 "Independent Working Group on Missile Defense, the Space Relationship, & the Twenty-First Century" from the Institute of Foreign Policy Analysis. In chapter 4 on "The Politics Against Missile Defense," the working group noted:

> There is little prospect that space-based missile defense will be revived. At most, consideration is being given to limited experiments in the near future and a space test bed. The most likely explanation for this situation lies in the "weaponization of space" debate. According to the logic pyramid, the most promising missile defense technologies – space-based – are subordinated to the requirements of a political consensus against "weaponization of space." Although they are most technologically feasible, as demonstrated elsewhere in this report, such technologies are least politically acceptable.[64]

Although the report was published in 2009, there have been few developments to suggest any real return to the idea of space-based interceptors as a key component of U.S. missile

[64] Independent Working Group, 59.

defenses. Space-based sensors, however, have always been and continue to be an important component. Because the United States ultimately rejected space-based interceptors, the effect of that capability's potential ultimately seems to have had little effect on the policy view of it.

Effect of U.S. Capabilities on Attitudes towards Russian Missile Defenses. There is not much focus in the United States on Russia's missile defenses in terms of how those defenses might counter a threat from the United States. However, U.S. officials have long hoped to make missile defense cooperation a component of the U.S. relationship with Russia. It is in this sense that capabilities might drive U.S. attitudes towards Russian missile defense.

The two most notable attempts at cooperating with Russia on missile defense were Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) in the 1990's, and overtures through NATO in the 21st century. In both instances, the United States indicated a willingness to use its capabilities to improve those of Russia, if nothing else as a gesture of good will. GPALS did not end because of Russian hesitance, but Russia ultimately has rebuffed NATO's overtures. Had truly shared systems been achieved, the United States and Russia would have no reason for a missile defense disagreement, because their systems would be one and the same. The impact of U.S. capabilities on its view of Russian missile defense would then be tautological.

Attempts at cooperation play again into the relationship between current and future capabilities. Had significant cooperation been achieved, this relationship would have been mutually beneficial to the U.S.-Russian relationship. Viewed in this light, the very failure of cooperation contributed to the current situation.

As it stands, Russia's BMD system barely registers in policy discussions in the United States. A search of the MDA website reveals few mentions of the Moscow system. In the early 2000's, General Ronald Kadish would occasionally note Russia's use of nuclear interceptors to contrast it with the U.S. hit-to-kill technique.[65] Such a note might indicate Russian reliance on cruder technologies. More important to note, however, is the rarity of anyone in the United States discussing Russia's system in public fora. This rarity indicates that there is little connection between how the United States views its own capabilities on the one hand, and its perceptions of Russia's capabilities on the other.

Overall, technological developments in the United States do demonstrate how its missile defense technology has evolved. However, it does not demonstrate any particular reason for such animosity between the United States and Russia. One might also consider Russia's own technology and capabilities.

Effect of Russian Capabilities on General Attitudes towards Missile Defense. Russia is not beyond emphasizing the defensive nature of its pertinent systems, even as it dismisses similar American assurances regarding U.S. defensive capabilities. While this might be expected to result in cognitive dissonance, it seems Russian officials have little qualm making claims that they attack the United States for making itself. As an example, after Russia lifted its ban on sales of the S-300 to Iran, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated, "I'll point out that the S-300 surface-to-air complex, which is a completely defensive weapon, is not adapted for aggression and will not endanger the security of any state in the region, certainly including Israel."[66]

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[65] Missile Defense Agency, "Remarks by Lt Gen Ronald T. Kadish," MDA.mil. http://www.mda.mil/global/documents/pdf/ps_kadish30mar00.pdf.

[66] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Russia), "Statement by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the Russian President's decision to lift the ban on selling S-300 surface-to-air missile systems to Iran," MID.ru, April

Russia's view of its own defense systems relative to America's may only make sense cynically. Regardless, this view indicates one reason why Russia is comfortable pursuing capabilities that it does not want the United States pursuing. In other words, there appear to be defensive capabilities that Russia views as not purely defensive when they originate elsewhere. In that case, Russia sees no problem with pursuing these capabilities themselves, while simultaneously considering it unacceptable for the United States to do so.

Despite all of these considerations, it is notable that the A-135 is essentially Russia's only missile defense program with global repercussions. This is likely the result of geopolitical factors more so than difficulty developing capabilities: because Russian leaders have demonstrated that they still value the philosophy behind the ABM Treaty, on account of their view of world geopolitics (to be discussed in the next chapter), there is little incentive for Russia to research or develop other sorts of systems.

Effect of Russian Capabilities on Attitudes towards American Missile Defenses. Russia's longstanding capability to defend Moscow from ICBM's would betray any arguments on principle against any and all U.S. missile defenses. However, it does not necessarily delegitimize Russian concerns with specific systems. One such system, the various proposed U.S. missile defense systems in Europe, was discussed earlier. Although these proposals were and are not intended to target Russia, their geographic proximity to Russia can create the appearance of an immediate threat to Russia.

13, 2015. http://www.mid.ru/en/vistupleniya_ministra/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQuMdqBY/content/id/1160230/pop_up?_101_INSTANCE_MCZ7HQuMdqBY_viewMode=print&_101_INSTANCE_MCZ7HQuMdqBY_qrIndex=0.

More importantly, the capability that Russia values for itself is not one that the United States values. It is possible that if the United States had missile defenses only for defending the decision makers in Washington, DC, and no missile defense in Europe, that Russia would be less publicly critical of U.S. missile defense efforts.

The fact that the United States' capabilities do not reflect those of Russia speaks not only to the different threat assessments and geopolitical outlooks that the countries have, but also to the role that Russian capabilities themselves play in Russian thinking. If only Russia has "legitimate" capabilities, then the U.S. pursuit of different capabilities must be illegitimate. Therefore, U.S. missile defense capabilities must have an ulterior motive, perhaps to encroach on what Russia views as its sphere of influence. Encroachment on Russian territory is often cited as the source of Russia's discomfort with NATO expansion.[67] One speculates it might then also be a source of their discomfort with missile defense—especially when the United States deploys missile defenses in NATO countries, with the approval of those countries.

Implications

Just as with threats and missile defense, the technological question is largely shaped by global and regional geopolitics. As Wilkening states, "Any country may feel threatened by military developments in another country it does not fully trust, and even more so in one that was a mortal enemy for 45 years during the Cold War. But this

[67] Edward W. Walker, "Putin's dilemma: Why pushing back against NATO 'encroachment' makes Russia's NATO problem worse," EurasianGeopolitics.com, March 29, 2016. https://eurasiangeopolitics.com/2016/03/29/putins-dilemma-why-pushing-back-against-nato-encroachment-makes-russias-nato-problem-worse/.

understandable psychological state should be grounded in technical reality."[68] If a grounding in technical reality is lacking, however, something else must be at play. As noted at the outset of this chapter, Lilly reaches a similar conclusion, stating that, "The reasons for Russia's highly defensive attitude toward BMD went beyond an assessment of technical capabilities."

In one word, the something else at play is geopolitics, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter. Wilkening's above reference to the Cold War is just the beginning of this explanation.

[68] Wilkening, 33.

GEOPOLITICS

Geopolitical standing affects the decision-making of all countries, whether explicitly or implicitly. There are many potential avenues of discussion regarding how geopolitical considerations shape the U.S.-Russia missile defense debate. The previous chapter focused on U.S. technology, which necessarily implicates Russia. Here, the focus will be on Russian geopolitical attitudes, which necessarily implicate the United States. And ultimately, the cause of Russia's protest of U.S. missile defense boils down to geopolitical issues. The main one of these is polarity. It will be argued here that 1) Russia retains a bipolar mindset from the Cold War, which 2) drives their foreign policy, which in turn 3) drives their approach to missile defense.

Prior to that examination, it is important to establish the alternative to a bipolar order in the modern world. This is because Russia actually in many ways accepts the United States as the leading global power. The key is that Russia views this situation as illegitimate, destabilizing, and/or ahistorical, and believes a bipolar order is better for its own security. All this will be demonstrated below.

In the strictest definition, despite threats to the United States from North Korea and Iran (and Iraq in the past), unipolar is a more accurate term for the current situation than multipolar. The latter term suggests multiple states of equal strength. If Russia and China were somewhat stronger and the United States somewhat weaker, that situation might be considered multipolar in the truest sense.

However, there are elements of a multipolar world if smaller powers like North Korea or Iran can threaten the global power in any way. Amitai Etzioni of the Carter

administration addressed this concept in 2013 while refuting it, arguing that, "Instead of what is conventionally addressed as a global unipolar to multipolar shift, in fact rising powers are mainly regional powers, not global ones, although they may have global reach."[69]

The 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy refers to the United States as "the world's leading global power." If the U.S. has global rivals, recognition of them is absent from this statement. A term such as "leading global power" is thus only one logical leap away from suggesting that the United States, in fact, does view itself as the "only superpower." President Obama said nearly as much in his speech at West Point in 2014: "America has rarely been stronger relative to the rest of the world…Our military has no peer. The odds of a direct threat against us by any nation are low…our economy remains the most dynamic on Earth."[70]

Nevertheless, this perception can increase the believed significance of states such as North Korea and Iran. In the bipolar world of the Cold War, there were regional-level threats that were worthy of attention, even if less significant than the threat posed by the U.S.S.R. However, these smaller threats were often still related to Cold War issues. For example, in the 1950's through 1970's, the United States perceived a threat in Vietnam becoming a communist state, which only makes sense in the larger Cold War context. Without that relationship between the Soviet Union and less powerful states, the less powerful North Korea/Iran-types become independently significant threats. This is

[69] Amitai Etzioni, "The Devolution of American Power," *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 37 (2013): 13.
[70] The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony," West Point, NY, May 28, 2014. https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony.

consistent with the United States' emphasis that the focus of its missile defense efforts is these countries and not Russia.

Russia's Bipolar Mindset

As a starting point on Russia's geopolitics, let us consider an analysis by Stephen Kotkin in *Foreign Affairs* about "Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics." Kotkin, a Professor of History and International Affairs at Princeton, argues that Russian geopolitical views have a deep historical foundation:

> Throughout [its history, Russia] has been haunted by its relative backwardness, particularly in the military and industrial spheres. This has led to repeated frenzies of government activity designed to help the country catch up, with a familiar cycle of coercive state-led industrial growth followed by stagnation. Most analysts had assumed that this pattern had ended for good in the 1990s, with the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism and the arrival of competitive elections and a buccaneer capitalist economy. But the impetus behind Russian grand strategy had not changed. And over the last decade, Russian President Vladimir Putin has returned to the trend of relying on the state to manage the gulf between Russia and the more powerful West.[71]

This last point is important, as Kotkin later adds that there are "Russian elites who assume that their country's status and even survival depend on matching the West."[72] If one treats the United States as a stand-in for the West, a connection to bipolar geopolitical understanding might become apparent.

Kotkin also states that "Russia is right in thinking that the post–Cold War settlement was unbalanced, even unfair. But that…was the inevitable result of the West's decisive victory in the contest with the Soviet Union. In a multidimensional global rivalry—political, economic, cultural, technological, and military—the Soviet Union lost

[71] Stephen Kotkin, "Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics," *Foreign Affairs* 95 (2016): 2.
[72] Ibid.

across the board."[73] This is consistent with the idea that Russia has long viewed itself as a great power. It is understandable that Russia wants to reverse an unfair result, or even to act as if the result had not occurred.

Missile defense was but one thing the United States was able to develop and deploy while Russia recovered from the Soviet Union's complete loss in the Cold War and the resulting power imbalance. However, in the past few years Russia has tried to rebalance the region and reestablish its global power, for example by its actions in Ukraine. This is consistent with their view of the Cold War construct as more valid than the current construct.

For other Russian views on world geopolitics, one can turn to Putin's infamous 2007 speech in Munich. In it he derided a "unipolar model" of foreign affairs, referring "to one type of situation, namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making," and that "one state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way."[74] Putin clearly believes that the United States has obtained more power for itself than it has any right to. Richard Weitz, in his framing of Putin's Munich speech, states that Putin "explicitly warned that if the U.S. military 'hyperpower' were no longer deterred by Russian nuclear forces, Washington would be free to impose its will unilaterally on other countries without fear of effective military retaliation."[75]

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[73] Kotkin, 9.
[74] "Putin's Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy," WashingtonPost.com, February 12, 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200555.html.
[75] Richard Weitz, "Common Fears, Different Approaches to U.S. BMD for Russia, China," *World Politics Review* (Selective Content) 2012.

It is hard to imagine a framing of the argument that any more clearly places Putin's concerns about the United States into a bipolar framework. Putin sees Russia as a check on U.S. action, just as the Soviet Union was in the Cold War. Weitz continues that "both Beijing and Moscow fear that the United States is using missile defenses to widen and deepen security alliances designed to contain Chinese and Russian influence."[76] Putin's response to U.S. missile defense would appear to be related to his bipolar worldview: Russia cannot stand for any curbs on its influence—whether real, perceived, or both—if it maintains that Russian influence is needed to deter the United States.

A final insight on Russia's bipolar view of geopolitics can be gleaned from the translation offered by the Kremlin for the most famous part of Vladimir Putin's April 25, 2005 speech, which reads, "the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century."[77] Often the quote reads "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe," which was the translation of the Associated Press at the time the speech was given.[78] This discrepancy between "the" and "a/an" has been cursorily noted in the press.[79] It is a distinction worth addressing further because it makes a difference in scope. The confusion likely occurs because the Russian language lacks articles. If the collapse were one of many disasters, it might be considered of great importance to Russia, but perhaps less important outside of Russia's immediate sphere of influence.

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Kremlin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 25, 2005. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931.
[78] Associated Press, "Putin: Soviet collapse a 'genuine tragedy,'" last modified April 25, 2005. www.nbcnews.com/id/7632057/ns/world_news/t/putin-soviet-collapse-genuine-tragedy/.
[79] Katie Sanders, "Did Vladimir Putin call the breakup of the USSR 'the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century?'" Politifact.com, March 6, 2014. http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2014/mar/06/john-bolton/did-vladimir-putin-call-breakup-ussr-greatest-geop/.

However, given how Putin has framed Russia's role in the world vis-à-vis the United States, the likelier interpretation is that Putin considered the collapse to be the single greatest disaster of the century. This interpretation is more consistent with the idea that Russia is a necessary check on American power. In turn, this would seem to increase the importance Russia places on limiting U.S. defenses, including in missile defense.

One can see throughout this section that Putin, both explicitly and implicitly, accepts the current status of U.S. power while trying to justify Russia's role as a check on that American power. The overall result is that Russia acts as if it had parity with the United States, as if the world were bipolar. The question from here is how Russia's bipolar worldview, coupled with their apparent recognition of American power, plays out on the international stage.

Russia's Bipolar Foreign Policy

Return to Putin's discussion of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The context in which Putin meant the collapse was catastrophic is focused on affairs within Russia and the rest of the Soviet Union:

> We should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself...Many thought or seemed to think at the time that our young democracy was not a continuation of Russian statehood, but its ultimate collapse, the prolonged agony of the Soviet system. But they were mistaken.[80]

Certainly, one element of the catastrophe from Putin's perspective is the American hegemony. Meanwhile, in the sentence about tens of millions of compatriots, one impetus

[80] Kremlin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 25, 2005. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931.

for Russia's actions in Georgia and Ukraine is evident. Among the ways this might pertain to missile defense include theater, rather than global or strategic, concerns. One can at least understand a Russian fear that U.S. missile defense in Central and Eastern Europe could limit Russia's ability to project power in the region.

This begins the translation of Russia's views into actions. Angela Stent argues that Russia under Putin has had four broader foreign policy goals: 1) ensure Russian participation in major international decisions, 2) "maintain the status quo in the Euro-Atlantic arena" (especially preventing NATO expansion), 3) "minimize the possibility of regime change or instability in Eurasia," and 4) promote its economic interests.[81] One might suggest that these goals would all have been consistent with those of the Soviets. Whether that means that Russia has not quite come to terms with the fate of the Soviet Union is unclear. The second and third of these goals, which are the most geopolitical in nature, demonstrate the Russian worldview discussed previously. It is a worldview where Russia holds the same place as the Soviet Union did, or at least one where Russia ought to try and emulate its old position as much as possible.

Russia's posture and its attempts at power projection have consequences for missile defense. The United States' development of missile defenses, especially with NATO in Europe, could conceivably threaten the "Euro-Atlantic" status quo that Russia is trying to maintain. This is especially true if Russia indeed remains unconvinced that the U.S. capabilities are purely defensive. And if Russia's longer-term goal is to regain the power it had in the old geopolitical order, that threat to the status quo only becomes more serious for them.

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[81] Angela Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russia Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 263.

At the same time, the fact that Russia pursues little in the way of its own new missile defense capabilities indicates that they see little need for such pursuits. When one also considers that Russia's missile defense system for Moscow is a leftover from the post-ABM Treaty era of the Cold War, the continued operation of that system is another indication that Russia might view the Cold War geopolitical structure as a valid construct today.

U.S. Geopolitical Views

While Russia's approach to geopolitics is the focus of this chapter, the views of the United States certainly affect its missile defense approach as well. American geopolitical considerations are no less important to U.S.-Russian relations over missile defense than Russia's own considerations are.

There is a strong link in U.S. thinking between geopolitics and missile defense capabilities, as evidenced by Richard Weitz's discussion of "The Geopolitics of Missile Defense" in *The Diplomat*. He cites U.S.-Japan cooperation: "missile defense has become an important dimension of the revitalized Japan-U.S. security alliance. BMD has strengthened cooperation between both countries directly through their joint BMD programs, [and] discouraged Japan from developing its own nuclear deterrent."[82] Similar bilateral cooperation can strengthen security regionally. Weitz also argues that missile defense can "in principle…reassure U.S. friends and allies about the U.S. will and commitment to defend them, which contributes to other U.S. goals such as dissuading them from obtaining nuclear or other destabilizing retaliatory weapons."[83] Strengthening

[82] Richard Weitz, "The Geopolitics of Missile Defense," *The Diplomat*, April 5, 2013.
[83] Ibid.

relationships around the globe can increase global reach by building up from the regional level.

The positives are attractive, and explain why missile defense has expanded despite some possible negative geopolitical impacts. John Newhouse, in a critical overview during George W. Bush's first year in office, prior to U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, wrote, "All or most of the world's other major capitals see national missile defense (NMD), especially the U.S. approach to it, as irrelevant or unresponsive to plausible threats and a potential danger to global security."[84] The geopolitical concern here relates to the effect missile defense might have on how other countries perceive the United States, as well as the global effects of the defenses.

However, as the issue has unfolded, missile defense has, if anything, aided the United States' standing with its allies, as the above examples from Weitz demonstrate. This in turn can make the United States more willing to use missile defense as a way of strengthening relationships with other countries into the future. One can see why the United States wouldn't just give up on missile defense to placate Russia.

The larger question is how missile defense plays with adversaries and/or neutral states. For example, Weitz points out that "U.S. ballistic missile defenses (BMD) are driving China and Russia closer together."[85] He points to a news item from Russian government-owned media wherein Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Chen Guoping declared that "China and Russia have similar views" on missile defense, and

[84] John Newhouse, "The Missile Defense Debate," *Foreign Affairs* 80 (2001): 97. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/space/2001-07-01/missile-defense-debate.
[85] Weitz, "The Geopolitics of Missile Defense."

where a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman stated that U.S. missile defense plans would "intensify antagonism."[86]

Nevertheless, the United States has not appeared to view Russia as a global adversary or even a regional one. Statements by both George W. Bush and Barack Obama indicate as much. In 2002, when the geopolitical climate was different than it is today, President Bush stated that "America and Russia are friends."[87] Even as tensions ratcheted up and the Bush Administration gave way to the Obama Administration, President Obama stated that "Russia needs to understand our unflagging commitment to the independence and security of countries like a Poland or a Czech Republic. On the other hand, we have areas of common concern."[88] And at the outset of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, President Obama stated that, "The Russian people need to know…that the Ukrainians shouldn't have to choose between the West and Russia," adding, "We want the Ukrainian people to determine their own destiny, and to have good relations with the United States, with Russia, with Europe, with anyone that they choose."[89]

None of these statements indicates any inherent contest between the United States and Russia. Although there is certainly no longer any impression of friendship between the United States and Russia, the "common concerns" remain, and there is no concept in U.S. thinking of a with-us-or-against-us view of how other countries ought to interact with the United States and Russia. If anything, what the United States has demonstrated is continued adherence to the concept of self-determination for countries like Poland or

[86] "China, Russia to Stand Together on Missile Defense in AsPac," Sputnik News, March 19, 2013. http://sputniknews.com/world/20130319/180114267/China-Russia-toStand-Together-on-Missile-Defense-in-AsPac.html.
[87] Alex Beall, "How Obama, Bush, Clinton viewed Russia's Putin over time," USAToday.com, March 26, 2014. http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/03/26/obama-bush-clinton-putin/6880707/.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

Ukraine. This concept of self-determination is nothing new, as its roots go back to Woodrow Wilson and World War I. The view of Russia from the United States, then, is perhaps best stated in another comment from President Obama that "This is not a contest between the United States and Russia," although he added, "I don't think that Mr. Putin has the same values that we do."[90] Presumably, one such unshared value is that other countries have the right to set their own course.

Of course, in Putin's view outlined earlier, the tragedy in places like Crimea is that Russians have been left out of Russia. There is not necessarily an anti-self-determination aspect to this struggle if one views things from the Russian perspective. That does not make the Russian view correct, especially when one considers that territorial sovereignty is necessary in order for the Ukrainians in Ukraine to determine their own futures without interference.

Geopolitics and Russia's Approach to U.S. Missile Defense

This brings us back to Russia's geopolitical perceptions and how they affect missile defense. Here we might again consider missile defense in Europe specifically. Russian opposition can create further disputes or misunderstandings between the United States and Russia. The Soviet Union's sphere of influence included countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, and Ukraine. When the United States, because of its values, states that these countries should be able to assert their independence, remain secure, and align with whom they wish internationally, Russia might interpret such statements as a denial of Russia's own right to pursue its interests. This becomes especially important when one

[90] Beall.

again considers Putin's view of Russia as an important preventer of U.S. world domination. In this state of affairs, it is unclear what proper role Russia might be left to as the United States sees it. The proper role is certainly not that of a global power, and even Russia's regional interests may come into question.

Missile defense is part of this larger conversation. Russia insists that U.S. missile defenses are threats to world stability, for reasons outlined above. One can find a number of statements reflecting these perceptions as they directly relate to missile defense. In October 2015, Russian official Dmitry Rogozin responded to U.S. missile defense plans by saying that, "for the first time ever, the American strategists have developed an illusion…that they may defeat a nuclear power in a non-nuclear war."[91] Consistent with this was Putin's own claim in November 2015 that "references to the Iranian and the North Korean nuclear missile threat just have served to cover up the true plans, and their true task is to neutralize nuclear potential of other nuclear powers."[92] (Putin was in fact reacting to the Iran deal.) One of the "other nuclear powers" that Putin refers to must be Russia. He demonstrates not only that Russia may consider the United States a threat to it, but also that Russia considers itself a threat to the United States. In March 2016, the *New York Times* quoted a Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, as saying, "We still view the destructive actions of the United States and its allies in the area of missile defense as a direct threat to global and regional security."[93] Russian rhetoric at every level remains consistent with Putin's declarations in Munich nearly a decade ago.

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[91] Associated Press, "Russia: US May Have Delusion of Winning War with Russia," last modified October 30, 2015. http://www.bigstory.ap.org/article/5f23dce5884f431585d1214f46773adf/russia-us-may-have-delusion-winning-war-russia.
[92] Vladimir Isachenkov, "Russia to deploy new weapons to counter US missile shield," November 10, 2015
[93] Andrew E. Kramer, "Russia Calls New U.S. Missile Defense System a 'Direct Threat,'" *New York Times*, May 12, 2016. www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/world/europe/russia-nato-us-romania-missile-defense.html.

The underlying issue is that missile defenses can be interpreted as a threat to Russia's interests, even if they are of no real threat to Russia technically speaking. U.S. missile defense cooperation with NATO, and bilaterally with NATO countries, leads to a situation in which Russia's sensitivities are exacerbated, however the issue is framed. Russia has a long history of being surrounded and attacked, although this has not happened directly since World War II. However, this history has led to a culture that anticipates such attacks.[94] While the United States is enhancing the security of its allies, and thus its own security, via missile defense in Europe, none of this is in Russia's interests when its values are at odds with those of the United States.

Additionally, Stent notes that the ABM Treaty allowed "Russia to interact as an equal with the United States in its otherwise greatly weakened state."[95] In this way, the treaty implied geopolitical equality between the United States and Russia, even after the end of the Cold War. Once the Cold War ended and the countries had unequal global reach, it is apparent why the ABM Treaty might even have become more important to Russia. A mutual agreement not to pursue missile defenses could only have justified the legitimacy of the bipolar framework in their thinking, even after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Geopolitics and the Mutual Threat

One aspect in which the United States and Russia are largely equals is strategic nuclear forces. However, much of whatever threat the United States and Russia perceive

[94] Fritz Ermath, "Russian Strategic Culture in Flux: Back to the Future?" in *Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction*, ed. Jeannie L. Johnson et al. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 85-87.
[95] Angela Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russia Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 72.

from the other is a matter of geopolitics. Disentangling any threats from the geopolitics in the U.S.-Russia relationship can be difficult. Yet, it makes sense that the two countries with the largest arsenals of ballistic missiles and of nuclear weapons would represent the largest threat each other faces. Even if both countries were allies, this would hold true in theory. Therefore, while U.S. officials repeatedly underscore the fact that the United States means no threat to Russia, and there is no reason whatsoever to doubt this from an American perspective, there is a threat stemming from the existence of these weapon arsenals by default.

Richard Weitz states, "Although Russia and China are the only countries that have the capability to conduct a large-scale ballistic missile attack on the U.S. homeland, neither one is the focus of U.S. ballistic missile defense efforts, due to the unlikelihood of such an attack."[96] If Russia viewed the situation the same way—if they believed or understood that they are not the focus of U.S. missile defense—there might be less hand-wringing over U.S. missile defenses. But, as Weitz also notes, "Both countries fear that U.S. BMD systems threaten to weaken their nuclear deterrents and undermine one of their main tools for constraining U.S. foreign policy by shielding the United States from potential retaliation."[97] A successful shielding from retaliation is unlikely on account of the number of interceptors the United States maintains relative to the nuclear capability of Russia and China, but the perception of leaders in those countries that missile defense can negatively impact them is important. Nations predisposed to distrust the United States might do so regardless of missile defense, but anything on which they agree in opposition to the United States can only complicate U.S. security matters.

[96] Weitz, "Common Fears."
[97] Ibid.

This is a struggle of values as much as anything else. The United States sees its international involvement—including BMD cooperation—as mutually beneficial for the countries it works with. It may well be, given that other countries continue to cooperate with the United States in multiple areas. However, Russia sees that involvement as a negative. This would not be the case if the United States and Russia shared common values. Otherwise, there would be no apparent competition in the region, because all of the regional powers would have similar goals.

Geopolitics, Values, and Missile Defense

The geopolitical aspect of the missile defense question is complicated. Because of all the issues this aspect encompasses, it is perhaps the key to unlock why the United States and Russia do not see eye to eye on missile defense. A country's history and values help inform its view of world geopolitics. This has been the case in both the United States and Russia. In the U.S. view, there is a multipolar world in multiple senses. One, countries should continue to be free, politically and otherwise, and secure from outside interference. U.S. reaction to events in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrate this first point. Two, a multipolar world lends itself to threats from multiple directions, smaller in scope but significant as a whole. With regards to the intent of missile defense in the United States, these threats are North Korea and Iran. None of this is inconsistent with the United States being the foremost global power, whether one comes to understand the current global order as unipolar or multipolar.

Russia, meanwhile, understands the proper balance as a bipolar one, based both on a view of its own history as well as world history. For this reason, they believe the

United States, and the unipolar world the United States represents, is dangerous. In effect, Russia views itself as the counterbalance to the United States. Russian threat perceptions come back to this idea, where threats are only significant within the larger bipolar context. All of these points are apparent from the various Putin's statements discussed earlier in this chapter.

Therefore, countries that are against the United States, and have sufficient power to project their opposition, provide a check on the United States that allows Russia to work its way back to a bipolar order. Declaring a "year of friendship" with North Korea, or supplying surface-to-air missiles to Iran, will bring them closer to Russia, and thus further antagonize the United States. This in turn helps Russia's effort to recreate the bipolar world order.

This does not mean that Russia might welcome an attack on the United States by North Korea or Iran. If anything threatens world stability, it would be such an attack. But according to Putin, the United States "has overstepped its national borders in every way," implying that the United States is taking advantage of, or even creating, a unipolar world. If the United States and its allies must concern themselves with North Korea and Iran, then that creates an opening for Russia to do things like annex Crimea. The result is further pushback against the United States, which is consistent with Russian foreign policy objectives.

Of course, if U.S. missile defenses combats an imaginary threat—which Russia essentially maintains rogue states are—then missile defense merely distract the United States from confronting its more significant national security interests. If Russia took this view, it would also be consistent with the bipolar worldview, by assuming that Russia

remains the United States' true adversary. However, if the United States is sufficiently defended vs. rogue state threats, despite Russian claims that such threats are exaggerated or non-existent—if missile defense works—then Russia risks U.S. influence growing, creating an even more unipolar world that works against Russian interests. Therefore, it is ultimately apparent why Russia has protested U.S. missile defense.

Finally, Russia interprets the ideas of a unipolar and multipolar world as synonymous in a sense—what the United States views as multipolar is to Russia in fact unipolar. When other countries adopt American values, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia does not seem to allow for the possibility that these countries have come to hold such values honestly, i.e. without pressure from the United States. Even countries like North Korea and Iran, whose leadership manifestly does not accept U.S. values, fit into this idea that a multipolar world is actually unipolar: when Russia is not threatened by those countries, the emphasis in world affairs remains on the United States. The multipolar framework becomes simply the United States' excuse to increase U.S. global power. Hence Putin's complaints in Munich in 2007, for example.

The precise role missile defense plays in geopolitics is not completely clear, yet it is this final point which paradoxically makes apparent the main cause of U.S.-Russian disagreements over missile defense. In 2011, Stephen Quackenbush and A. Cooper Drury of the University of Missouri offered a statistical analysis to demonstrate "that US NMD policies have no impact on the way in which [Russia, China, or India] relates to the United States. Specifically, NMD events — regardless of valence — have no impact on USA-target relations."[98] They claimed that, "although anecdotal evidence in the past

[98] Stephen L. Quackenbush and A. Cooper Drury, "National missile defense and (dis)satistfaction," *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (2011): 475.

[has] suggested that each of these states took issue with different NMD policies, these are merely isolated anecdotes that do not compose an overall trend of dissatisfaction."[99]

This analysis would seem to suggest that missile defense geopolitically is a sign or symptom of U.S.-Russian tension, rather than a reason for it. In other words, the dispute is an effect of the geopolitical struggle rather than a cause of it. Quackenbush and Drury themselves conclude that, "Our empirical analysis finds no support at all for the extant, informal arguments that the development and deployment of missile defense by the United States actually creates dissatisfaction in other states."[100] In this situation, it is geopolitics driving the missile defense debate, rather than the other way around, which is what was argued at the outset of this chapter. Yet if Quackenbush and Drury are wrong, and missile defense does create dissatisfaction with Russia, the missile defense debate is still largely a matter of geopolitics.

[99] Ibid., 475.
[100] Ibid., 479.

CONCLUSION: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF MISSILE DEFENSE

The threats to, geopolitical position of, and technologies in the United States and Russia all impact the development of missile defense as a national and international security issue. Although geopolitics appears to be the key reason for differences, there are implications for U.S. policy in each of the examined fields. To summarize:

- Since the Cold War, the United States has moved to a multipolar view of world affairs while Russia has maintained a Cold War-era bipolar view. Russia behaves as an equal power by annexing land with majority ethnic Russians and, more importantly for the purposes here, their stated view that U.S. missile defenses are intended to thwart Russia.

- the United States' specific missile defense capabilities do not appear, based on relevant literature, to significantly dampen the potential Russia's strategic nuclear forces for technical reasons. At the same time, the United States' technology base is superior to Russia's, which in turn causes the United States to place more value on technical advancement, including missile defense capabilities.

- The United States faces missile threats from North Korea and Iran, against which missile defense is an important defense and deterrent. Meanwhile, Russia perceives less of a threat to it from these states. This difference of opinion on the threat itself leads to a difference in opinion over missile defense.

The most significant of these three points is the geopolitical one. Geopolitics shapes both countries' threat assessments and capabilities far more than these last two factors impact their geopolitical worldview. The differing governing values of the United States and Russia become even more important if one views those values as the key driver of each country's different geopolitical outlook.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the United States viewed it as a great geopolitical shift and reacted accordingly. This reaction was epitomized by withdrawal

from the ABM Treaty. As President Bush noted, "The 1972 ABM treaty was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union at a much different time, in a vastly different world."[101] Russia, on the other hand, never came to the same understanding of the geopolitical situation. The Russian view of the Soviet collapse instead appears focused on the matter of official borders—Russian people were temporarily displaced outside of Russia, but the world was still essentially bipolar. This discrepancy also led to a situation where, in the case of the United States, threats arise due to geopolitical factors, whereas for Russia, the geopolitical factors drive their threat assessments.

If there is a hierarchy of the three factors examined in this paper, it is as follows. 1) Geopolitical considerations create the atmosphere in which threat assessments are made. 2) These threat assessments in turn determine which capabilities are pursued. 3) The feasibility of these capabilities is impacted by general technological acuity. All of these factors impact views on missile defense because they are all interrelated.

What, then, are the effects of all of these factors on how the United States should pursue its missile defense policy? A question that must be answered is the true meaning of Russian protestations about U.S. missile defenses: do they amount to a significant concern for U.S. policymakers, or is Russia simply posturing for ulterior reasons? Earlier it was suggested that if the United States' missile defenses were intended only to protect Washington, DC, then Russia might be less critical of U.S. capabilities. If the matter could be that simple, it would seem that Russia's protests are mostly posturing.

However, this answer could change after a couple additional considerations. Wilkening writes that "technical realities" do not explain the U.S.-Russia missile defense

[101] Terence Neilan, "Bush Pulls Out of ABM Treaty; Putin Calls Move a Mistake," *New York Times,* December 13, 2001. http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/13/international/13CND-BUSH.html

divide, and the IFPA working group was critical of the United States' current (2009) missile defense infrastructure on technical grounds. A perfect system—say, to address Gard's concerns, one with ideal detection and discrimination, as well as enough interceptors to handle any number of incoming ballistic missiles—may only be possible in theory. However, were one attained, it would render moot the initial question about the true meaning of Russian protests. As long as the United States remains short of such a system, though, and as long as Russia retains the largest nuclear arsenal outside the United States, Russia remains a potential threat at a basic level. Thus, both serious concern and Russian posturing are possible, and not mutually exclusive.

While U.S. missile defense should be able to meet the threats it intends to counter, a number of considerations regarding Russia could enhance U.S. missile defense policy.

Policy Implications: Geopolitics

The multipolar worldview of the United States is one that ultimately makes sense given the threats facing it, but Russia's geopolitical view must be understood even if it is not incorporated into U.S. thinking. Even if the United States began considering Russia a full-on adversary, Russia is not as strong as the Soviet Union was during the Cold War, and the United States remains the world's foremost global power. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Russia behaves in a way inconsistent with a lesser power status.

Each country is looking at the same environment and coming to different conclusions. There may be an objectively correct interpretation of that environment, but if only one country holds that interpretation, there will still be disagreements. It is up to

each country to communicate its geopolitical worldview more effectively, as hard as that may be to accomplish. Otherwise, those disagreements will only grow deeper.

The different values and cultures raise the question as to whether missile defense itself is a manifestation of them. Russia established a missile defense system for Moscow as a matter of protecting its policy makers, not the people of Moscow. This is consistent with Kotkin's view that Russia's "highest value is the state."[102] Meanwhile, the United States' attempt to defend its cities is an extension of the values of "individual liberty, private property, and human rights" that Kotkin identifies as American.[103] As George W. Bush stated when the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty:

> I have concluded the ABM treaty hinders our government's ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks. Defending the American people is my highest priority as commander in chief and I cannot and will not allow the United States to remain in a treaty that prevents us from developing effective defenses.[104]

If the United States cannot protect its values at home, it cannot be expected to propagate its values abroad. Missile defense is but one way in which the United States attempts to enact policy that is consistent with its values.

Policy Implications: Threats

Rogue states, especially Iran, are greater threats to the United States than they are to Russia. The United States does not owe it to Russia to justify missile defense as a legitimate assurance against legitimate threats. In some sense, nothing short of an actual nuclear attack by North Korea on the United States would demonstrate that North Korea

[102] Stephen Kotkin, "Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics," *Foreign Affairs* 95 (2016): 8.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Terence Neilan, "Bush Pulls Out of ABM Treaty; Putin Calls Move a Mistake," *New York Times*, December 13, 2001. http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/13/international/13CND-BUSH.html.

is a real threat, rather than merely perceived as one due to its bluster. But North Korea is recognized as a threat by Russian policy makers, at least below the presidential level. If even Russia accepts the presence of a North Korean threat, the ground-based midcourse interceptors play an obvious role in protecting the United States homeland, in which case the implications for U.S. policy might be minimal regarding Russia's view of North Korea.

Iran, meanwhile, is a different story, in part because it does not yet have nuclear weapons, let alone at a scale needed to fit an ICBM. Until this happens, Russia will likely see cause to protest U.S. systems intended against Iran. This does not mean in any way that there is a need to mollify Russia by reducing American investment in missile defense, however, and the United States has already used diplomatic means as well to try to limit the Iranian threat. Nevertheless, missile defense remains an assurance in the event Iran does obtain nuclear capability. Russia, however, might view U.S. attempts to defend against a developing threat with more suspicion than defenses against an existing or imminent threat. That is the main implication of the fact that the United States assesses Iran as a threat while Russia does not.

In many ways, there is not much to do from a policy perspective about the difference in U.S. and Russian threat assessments *per se*. In other words, the United States is not going to change its threat assessment of North Korea or Iran simply because of Russia's different assessment. Other elements of U.S. policy, however, could help bridge the gap in threat assessments.

Policy Implications: Technology

A general refocus on technology could help build consensus on the promise of technology in multiple areas including missile defense. Although U.S. missile defense technology has not stagnated, despite the change in approach away from the one Reagan imagined for SDI, the United States could do more to prevent stagnation in the future. The MDA mission could be reoriented back to research and development, although this would require wide-ranging changes outside of MDA as well.

The United States continues to have far more technological potential than Russia, given factors such as its much larger research and development spending. It would be wise to push this advantage. However, if the U.S. technology base has led the United States to value missile defense, and if Russia's relative lack of such a base causes them to devalue missile defenses, then a growing technology gap may also exacerbate the different views on missile defense. Therefore, if the United States is to improve missile defense technology while also minimizing the effects of Russian opposition, it is important to have good communication with and accurate perceptions of Russia. Technology alone cannot solve every problem.

Policy Implications for Messaging

The United States might consider new approaches to diplomacy and messaging to attempt improved communication about U.S. threat perceptions as well as its capabilities. Even statements made at the presidential level have had little effect on situations on the ground, especially Ukraine. Other communications, such as U.S. persistence that its

infrastructure is not intended for Russia, have done little to quiet public criticism from Putin, Medvedev, and other key Russian figures.

Such arguments have not moved Russia to accept U.S. missile defense, which carries two possible implications. One is that Russia simply will never accept U.S. missile defense. Alternatively, there may be arguments to different Russian sensibilities that might reduce Russian antagonism on the basis of U.S. missile defenses. For instance, the United States might address the apparent gap in geopolitical views that has increased since Putin first entered office. It would be difficult to place missile defense in a bipolar framework while also arguing that its intent is not to counter Russia, but the suggestion could be made that rogue state threats can still be present in a bipolar world. Such an approach could, at least in theory, make Russia less unamenable to other U.S. policy goals. More likely, it could reduce Russia's inclination to make a wedge issue of U.S. missile defenses. If there is any real element of serious concern over Russia's protestations, that could be a productive outcome.

Whatever the exact solution, however, one appears to be necessary considering the apparent inefficacy of current messaging. Policy makers at every level may wish to consider other possible changes or additions that could be made if the United States is to optimize its communications on the subject of missile defense.

Policy Implications of Perceptions

Lastly, as suggested in the introduction, "postures might be considered that could reflect how Russia's perceptions might lead them to act in ways the United States may not anticipate on account of its own policy making perceptions and assumptions."

In a sense, it is too late for this. In other words, the kind of systems that could defend against an all-out Russian attack are politically if not technically unfeasible, at least in the near term. No reemphasis on space-based interceptors has occurred in the seven years since the 2009 Institute of Foreign Policy Analysis report. What was in 2009 roughly 15 years of no progress on space-based interceptors is now closer to 25. This passage of time has created more inertia that inhibits the chances of such progress in the future. These defenses may also become more difficult to deploy, as other countries such as China become more aggressive in the space theater.

In another sense, the United States already does account for Russian perceptions in its missile defense posture. However, this does not occur on the strategic level, or regarding defense of the homeland. Rather, the EPAA and NATO defenses, while intended to combat threats from the Middle East, could become relevant for other reasons. If Russia is serious in recent claims that they could use tactical nuclear weapons to deescalate a conflict, the United States may find other uses for its capabilities in Europe.

The policy implications of perceptions are complicated, even if they arise out of the remnants of the Cold War geopolitical structure and policy approach. What needs to be understood is that Putin's Russia is, while not exactly re-litigating the Cold War, certainly influenced by Cold War-era geopolitical views. When the United States debates or enacts missile defense policy, it should remember how Russian views might color their future actions. Otherwise, the United States risks being caught off guard by a situation it could have anticipated that could in turn lead to nuclear exchange.

Final Thoughts

The author Bilyana Lilly wrote the book, literally, on Russia's reaction to U.S. missile defense, entitled *Russian Foreign Policy Toward Missile Defense: Actors, Motivations, and Influence*. In her conclusion, Lilly states that missile defense has been "a barometer and a symbol of Russia's broader political considerations…the prospects for U.S.-Russian and NATO-Russian cooperation on ballistic missile defense depend on a number of variables other than missile defense itself."[105] Although this paper has not discussed cooperation in missile defense, Lilly's broader implications do appear to be accurate; U.S. missile defense appears important to Russia for a wide array of reasons not directly linked to the defenses themselves.

For the United States, however, ballistic missile defenses are a key element for promoting its national security interests. They remain so regardless of Russian protests and criticisms. An understanding of why such protests and criticisms exist—the roots in threat assessments, geopolitics, and technologies—is fundamental to tailoring U.S. missile defense policy so that it effectively serves U.S. national security interests.

[105] Bilyana Lilly, *Russian Foreign Policy Toward Missile Defense: Actors, Motivations, and Influence* (London: Lexington Books, 2014), 365.

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