



United States Department of Defense

# Speech

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## Beyond The ABM Treaty

*By Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Wall Street Journal, June 14, 2002.*

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Last year the president announced our intention to withdraw from the 1972 ABM treaty. Yesterday, that withdrawal formally took effect.

As a result, we are now free to develop, test and deploy effective defenses against missile attacks from states like North Korea and Iran -- states that are aggressively seeking weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles. As the president said in his State of the Union Address, we will not allow the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons.

We need to defend against all avenues of attack with weapons of mass destruction. Missiles in the hands of states that support terrorism are a growing threat to the U.S. and our friends and allies. We've watched rogue states invest scarce resources to acquire increasingly capable missiles even while they starve their people. Until yesterday, because of the ABM treaty, we have not been able to develop appropriate defenses against this threat.

We are at a turning point in defense and deterrence policy. We can now move forward with the robust development and testing program that the Department of Defense has designed to take advantage of new technologies and basing modes. Recent tests provide a foundation on which to proceed. Development and testing will continue, but we will also begin to deploy effective layered defenses against limited missile attack.

Tomorrow, the U.S. will break ground in Alaska on silos to house missile-defense interceptors. These silos, scheduled to be completed in 2004, are part of our test program but could give us, for the first time, an emergency capability to protect our country in a crisis. We are determined to improve these initial defenses over time, building additional silos there and possibly in other locations for operational deployment of ground-based interceptors.

This week, the U.S. is also testing an interceptor from a Navy destroyer against a missile off the coast of Hawaii -- a needed step toward deployment of sea-based missile defenses. If our testing and development efforts progress as planned, we should be able to begin initial deployments of sea-based interceptors in the 2004-2005 period.

We will soon reach another milestone in our pursuit of advanced technologies for missile defenses as well. The prototype Airborne Laser is scheduled to attempt to shoot down a target missile. If successful, the program could represent a major advance in missile-defense capabilities.

In addition to limiting development and deployment, the ABM treaty prohibited us from sharing and working on missile defense with other nations. The president is committed to working closely with them now to address the shared threat we face and helping to extend missile-defense protection to our friends and allies. Over the coming weeks and months, the administration will open a new phase of dialogue on the issue. We will explore ways to deepen existing cooperative efforts and begin new joint programs to develop missile-defense systems.

The end of the ABM treaty also marks a historic milestone in our strategic relationship with Russia. We no longer have a treaty that divides us by assuming that our security is derived from our ability to destroy each other. We can now base our relations not on mutual destruction but on mutual interests. It was clear during President Bush's visit to Moscow and St. Petersburg that both our countries are committed to the new course.

Over the past year, we have worked hard to improve relations with Russia, and made good progress together. Today, the U.S. removes a Cold War structure that prevented us from defending ourselves in the name of preserving the nuclear balance of terror.

We take this step in full confidence that doing so will not cause an arms race with Russia, as some had predicted. In fact, the treaty recently signed in Moscow will reduce our nuclear arsenals to their lowest levels in decades. Even more important, we have agreed to cooperate on a host of economic, political, and security issues of common interest, including missile defense.

As a result of hard work and determination on both sides, relations with Russia -- and between Russia and our NATO allies -- are entering a new and promising era. Future U.S.-Russian summits will not be dominated by the question: What treaty are you planning to sign to regulate the nuclear balance of terror? Instead, we will focus on cooperating to meet the security challenges facing both our nations, the war on terrorism, and what we can do to enrich the lives of our peoples through closer economic, cultural, and political ties.

At the dawn of the 21st century, the time has come to bury the last vestiges of the Cold War and to reorient our national security policies. By working with others, forging relationships with new friends like Russia, and adapting to meet new challenges, we can make the world a safer place for years to come. Our withdrawal from the ABM treaty represents an important step in bringing about a safer world for all Americans, as well as for our friends and allies.

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