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On Missile Defense

Remarks by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Frontiers of Freedom, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Thursday, October 24, 2002.

When Senator Wallop asked me to come here today I was delighted to accept for two reasons. First, because Frontiers of Freedom is continuing to make important contributions to the debate on issues essential to our national security; and second, and I'd have to say even more important, because of my high personal regard for Senator Wallop. And it's a regard that is shared by many including graduates of your well-trained staffone of whom, J.D. Crouch, is now active with us in the Defense Department, an important member of the Rumsfeld team. So your work continues in the hands of others as well.

Malcolm Wallop is a real strategist who was working on tough issues like missile defense long before they were popular or even understood, and throughout his career he has worked to make the world safer and better. I don't think there's higher praise than that, so I guess we have a mutual admiration society working here.

Before I left this morning I mentioned to Secretary Rumsfeld that I was coming over here to speak to Frontiers of Freedom and he said that's great. It's good for people to hear from the experts. And just as I was basking in his praise he said, "So don't you talk for too long." [Laughter] Then he told me to give his warmest regards to all of you experts here, and Don Rumsfeld, as usual, is onto something.

It so happens that when he spoke here last July that was the very day that I was testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on missile defense. A lot has happened in that year, and not just in the war on terrorism. It's amazing to think how much the world has changed with respect to the issue that we're talking about this morning. I thought it might be useful to update you on how far we've come on missile defense in the past year and share our vision of where we're headed.

The past year has marked a turning point for the Department of Defense and not only because of the events of September 11th. Indeed, one thing that is remarkable, I believe, is how much we have been

achieving in the area that is generally called transformation, even while we are fighting a very difficult and unanticipated war. In short order the Administration has laid out a new defense strategy and accelerated the transformation of the U.S. military. It has adopted a new approach to deterrence that reduces our reliance on offensive nuclear weapons, and it has replaced the old nuclear triad with a new strategic triad that includes defensive capability as well as non-nuclear precision strike.

The Administration launched what the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, has called the most significant changes in the Unified Command Plan in his career. Those changes include a whole new command, Northern Command, which was established and given responsibility for the homeland defense of the United States, Canada and Mexico. Space Command and Strategic Command were merged into a single integrated command that was given broad responsibility including long range, [unwarned] conventional strike and missile defense. The Department also adopted a new approach to defense planning, one that emphasizes what we call the capabilities-based approach as opposed to a threat-based approach, an approach that emphasizes the need to think about the capabilities that adversaries could use against us and think about the capabilities that could most effectively enhance our forces, rather than planning to try to meet a narrow range of seemingly predictable threat scenarios that could easily leave us ill prepared to deal with inevitable surprises.

And under this capabilities-based planning framework we are recognizing that it may be very difficult to predict who will attack us or who might threaten us. In fact some of you may have heard Secretary Rumsfeld comment on the fact that when Secretary Cheney came up to the Senate for confirmation as Secretary of Defense some 14 years ago now, 13 years ago, neither the Secretary designate nor any of the Senators on the panel ever uttered the word Iraq, even though it was barely a year later that Iraq invaded Kuwait.

I point out that when Secretary Rumsfeld came up here to be confirmed for the second time as Secretary of Defense, nobody in those hearings mentioned the world Afghanistan.

It helps to think about the world. I've done a lot of thinking about possible threat scenarios, but I think we make a big mistake in defense planning when we base too much on single point prediction or even two point prediction. That's why we're looking at where we have vulnerabilities. Rather than who might attack us, we do think we can make a much better assessment of how they might threaten us or where they might threaten us. And clearly when you do that you cannot escape the fact that we are completely vulnerable as a continent in our homeland to attacks by ballistic missiles, and indeed that we remain highly vulnerable in the theater, our forces and our allies, to attacks by even short-range ballistic missiles.

I might add I had the experience 12 years ago of going to Israel during the Gulf War and being in a country that was under ballistic missile attack with then-Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, working to persuade the Israelis to stay out of that war. It is awful to think about the panic that a relatively small number of purely conventional, primitive ballistic missiles could cause and the way in which it very nearly changed the whole complexion, the strategic complexion of that conflict.

Ballistic missiles are not a threat to underestimate.

Moving forward on missile defense, particularly by taking advantage of new technological opportunities, is an essential part of a strategy to provide the range of capabilities necessary to defend against the broad spectrum of new threats and challenges that we will confront in the 21st Century.

Since May of the year 2000 during the presidential campaign, President Bush has been saying that it is critical to our ability to defend the American people and our allies to be able to develop missile defenses without the restrictions and limitations of the ABM Treaty. The critics warned that doing so would undermine what they called the cornerstone of strategic stability and lead to a nuclear arms race and a catastrophic deterioration in the United States' relations with Russia.

The President's response was, to the contrary, that we could remove the restrictions of the ABM Treaty while at the same time pursuing deep reductions in offensive nuclear arms and building a new and better relationship with Russia in which the centerpiece would no longer be maintaining an unclear balance of terror that was at the center of our relationship with the old Soviet Union.

Two and a half years later it is clear that the President was right, and the critics have gone on to making new prophecies of gloom without ever acknowledging the extent of their earlier failures of prediction.

But the important point is not who was right and who was wrong, although that is clear enough. The important point is that the United States is finally free to pursue missile defenses without the artificial constraints of an outdated 30-year-old treaty with a country that no longer exists. That will help us to improve our ability to defend against missiles of all ranges -- tactical as well as strategic.

To those who say the threat is still a remote one far in a distant and uncertain future, the fact is that the short-range threat is here with us today even as we worry about the dangers of a possible conflict in the Persian Gulf or on the Korean Peninsula. And while a longer-range threat may still be a few years away, thanks to the historic change that the President was able to achieve, we may now be in a position to be able to respond before that threat emerges.

With the elimination of the ABM Treaty constraints, we are now in a much-improved position to develop, test and evaluate ground, air, sea and space-based technologies and basing modes for the deployment of effective laser defenses. We are no longer bound by the territorial defense restrictions of the ABM Treaty and we can develop and deploy a ballistic missile defense system capable of protecting all 50 states.

On June 14th, accordingly, we began construction of the ABM interceptor silos at the missile defense test bed at Fort Greeley, Alaska. Other elements of the test bed will be built starting early in 2003.

Perhaps just as important, removing the restrictions of the ABM Treaty has enabled us to test in ways that we have been prohibited from for 30 years. Already we've learned an enormous amount about how

to employ missile defenses more effectively and efficiently. We are able to greatly increase the efficiency of our ballistic missile defense interceptors through the forward deployment of sensors that otherwise would not have been permitted. We are free to develop boost-phase defenses that are able to intercept missiles of all ranges, thereby addressing the short-range missile threat that we've been facing for the past ten years. And starting in September of this year we began integrating ship-based and ground-based radars into our test against intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The early results are promising and have great potential for the development of effective good-faith defenses. For example, this past September we used an Aegis sea-based theater defense radar aboard the USS Lake Erie to track all stages of a Minuteman III ICBM launched from Vandenberg.

On October 14th the Navy destroyer John Paul Jones participated in the test in which the on-board Aegis radar tracked a long-range ballistic missile target-launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Both of those test events provided valuable data on the capability of the Aegis radar to acquire and track long-range ballistic missiles, data that will eventually be integrated with other sea, air and ground-based sensors to increase the overall effectiveness of our defenses.

We are constructing and testing mobile sea and land-based ABM sensors. Doing so will make it harder for adversaries to use countermeasures effectively and increase our efficiency in terms of the number of interceptors required to engage any given incoming missiles and its associated warheads. This in turn will improve our technological foundation for boost-phase intercept.

We've made progress. We've made progress in the last ten years. We're making more rapid progress now. Our missile defense program since 2001 has demonstrated that missile technology, in particular hit-to-kill technology, actually works. We actually can hit a bullet with a bullet. We have four-for-four in long-range ground-based intercepts with the most recent successful test occurring just last Monday, October 14th. We are two-for-two in short to medium-range ship-based intercepts; and two-for-four in short-range ground-based intercepts.

I'd like to ask J.D. Crouch [Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy]

to show you a short video that illustrates some of the continuing progress we've been making. J.D., will you narrate?

[Video shown]

Mr. Crouch: This is a short video which shows some of the test intercepts over the last year that the Missile Defense Agency has undertaken.

It begins by demonstrating that we're looking for missile defense capabilities in all three areas -- boost, mid-course, and terminal phase flight against long-range, medium-range, and short-range systems. It's

not just a defense against national missile defense.

We begin with the terminal phase of flight. The first example is an intercept of a Patriot PAC-3, the son of the capability that was deployed during the Gulf War. Here you see the launch of the interceptor. You can see at the end of its flight it will begin a divert maneuver. Right there. Then a direct hit of an incoming warhead. A hit-to-kill. There is no explosive warhead on this particular Patriot system. It simply destroys by running into the target.

This is the higher altitude terminal phase, the so-called THAAD, Theater High Altitude Air Defense, Area Defense capability.

This is the launch of the interceptor missile. You see it going through some range maneuvers here. And this actually flies out, you can see it coming in against this parent target and closing on the target doing, again, a hit-to-kill intercept without any warhead. That's a real-time picture.

This shows you the actual seeker imagery and you can see just before hitting what that seeker was seeing. We're not only able to hit these things, we're actually able to hit them where we want to hit them on a particular warhead body. That's very important if you're trying to destroy a nuclear [inaudible] package for example.

Moving on to the long-range missile effect, this is the integration activity going on here for a ground-based interceptor, a long-range ground-based interceptor. It's setting up here at Kwajalein Atoll. Here you can see the ground-based interceptor lifting off from the Reagan Test Site in Kwajalein Atoll. This is intercepting at the mid-course. Here you see a target and a decoy and the warhead in space being hit by this interceptor. This shows you another version of this, another track where the EKV, the kill vehicle, hits the target.

This is a view of what the interceptor actually saw. You'll notice there are three objects out there. A real live decoy plus a tank from the ICBM. The interceptor missile locked on, picked out the real live warhead, and that is what it saw just before conducting the intercept.

Finally we have the mid-course sea-based system. We've got two successful tests now using the Standard Missile 3 system launched off Aegis cruisers. Again this is a hit-to-kill technology. There you see the intercept.

Again, here is an example of what the kinetic warhead saw just before hitting the incoming missile.

We're also working on boost-phase defenses in a variety of different areas. This is just an example where, this is the launch of a type Tae-Po-Dong 1 North Korean ICBM system. This is an area where boost phase might be particularly attractive to deal with. One of the systems we're working on is the airborne laser system. This gives you an example. This is the development of the mirror systems that will be incorporated into an airborne laser system. This year we've had not only the first light from that

laser that will be incorporated into it, but also the first flight of what General Dick Myers called the ugliest aircraft but still a very capable new system.

Finally one of the things that we've been able to do as a result of withdrawing from the ABM Treaty is, this is an example of looking at a boosting Titan-II U.S. ICBM with basically a theater-based sensor. That image demonstrated to us the ability to be able to pick the hard body out of a plume, the plume of the missile, and to be able to track that hard body which is (extremely, we thought it was) an extremely difficult thing. It turns out that with the sensors that we have now we think we're able to do it. We were unable to do that kind of testing with this particular sensor under the ABM Treaty.

DepSec Wolfowitz: Obviously one of the most important developments of the past year, slightly more, was this horrible attack on the United States on September 11th. What that also brought home, as the President explained in his State of the Union message where he spoke about the axis of evil, is the danger of countries, outlaw states, developing weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them, who also have close connections to the network of global terrorist organizations.

When I served with Secretary Rumsfeld on the Ballistic Missile Threat Commission one of the most striking observations which indeed came as a surprise to those of us who thought we knew what to expect in this area, was the extent to which these various outlaw states collaborated with one another in the development of dangerous capabilities and their lack of compunction about dealing with one another or dealing with terrorist networks. Indeed, I think one of the things that may have slowed proliferation in the early years of the nuclear age was that there was a tendency for countries once they joined the nuclear club to think that it was just about the right size and not to go out recruiting new members.

Somewhere in the last 20 years that changed very much and the countries that we are most worried about today are countries that quite vigorously pass that capability back and forth, and it's one of the reasons why the threat has developed more rapidly than predictions that were based on what was called indigenous development -- that is to say unassisted development.

Another striking observation during the Commission's work was just how often we underestimate the tenacity, the resourcefulness and the single-mindedness of potential adversaries seeking these dangerous capabilities.

Recent history is full of surprises. While we were doing Rumsfeld Commissions to the surprise of the country, though I would say not to the surprise of the Commissioners, North Korea launched the long-range Tae-Po-Dong missile in August of 1998. That event confirmed the judgment that the Commission had issued in July of that year that the United States was at a point where we could not assume strategic warning of an adversary possessing weapons of mass destruction and a delivery means.

It is clear that potential adversaries will pursue any means they can to exploit the vulnerabilities of a free society. They will exploit the freedom and privacy rights in the West. They will exploit our reluctance to kill innocent civilians in time of war. And they most certainly will seek to exploit our near total

vulnerability to ballistic missile and cruise missile attack.

While much of the discussion of the ballistic missile threat is focused on outlaw states developing long-range ballistic missiles that could reach our shores and those of our friends and allies, let me share with you another possibility.

We know that North Korea, Iran and Iraq are developing long-range ballistic missiles. That is the familiar line of threat development. But what is to stop such countries from launching shorter-range ballistic missiles that they already possess today from cargo ships near our shores, perhaps using non-state terrorist surrogates to attack without fingerprints. It's not a far-fetched threat.

The United States test launched a captured German V-2 rocket from the deck of a ship in 1947. And recently we have observed indications of an outlaw state attempting to do the same thing with a short-range ballistic missile from a ship.

We need to ensure defense capabilities against a range of novel threats and enemy concepts of operation, not just the classic scenarios.

In the aftermath of September 11th some have questioned the importance of missile defense in relation to the obvious need to deal with the threats of terrorists. Some have suggested that we should forego missile defenses and concentrate instead on defending against the low-tech terrorist threat. But the reality is that we do not have the luxury of choosing to defend against only one threat at the exclusion of others. The horrific events of last year demonstrate the need to deal with the full range of threats that we face, to do so in a balanced way, from terrorism to the use of weapons of mass destruction by state and non-state actors, to ballistic and cruise missile attacks.

Clearly we need to do everything we possibly can to prevent terrorists from getting access to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means and we are, and we must do everything we can to prevent outlaw states from providing weapons of mass destruction to deniable terrorist networks. But the need to close off that avenue of attack against the United States is hardly an argument for leaving other avenues of attack open.

We know the countries that support terrorism are also pouring large fractions of their national treasure -- billions of dollars for countries that in some cases do not have the money to feed their own people -- into the development of weapons of mass destruction and offensive ballistic missiles. The considerable investment these countries are making suggests that they certainly don't believe that such capabilities are useless.

Far from seeing these capabilities as useless, outlaw states see missiles and weapons of mass destruction as instruments with which to threaten and intimidate their neighbors, to deter foreign intervention, to blackmail their enemies in ways that anonymous terrorists might never be able to.

Indeed outlaw states may see long-range ballistic missiles and terrorist means of delivery as complementary capabilities. They may believe that the possession of long-range ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction increase their freedom of action to use terrorism abroad because they give them capability to deter retaliatory attacks. Thus long-range ballistic missiles could confer a sort of sanctuary for outlaw states intent on using terrorism.

Some critics refer to missile defense as a modern Maginot Line, but in reality the principal deficiency of the original Maginot Line was that it failed to close off other avenues of attack which the French assured themselves would not be pursued. Tragedy revealed itself when Germany did the unthinkable and invaded France through the forests of neutral, unfortified Belgium.

The existence of one vulnerability should hardly be a reason for leaving ourselves vulnerable in other ways. We need to close off all the avenues of potential attacks against the United States.

Let me just say a few words about the way ahead and then I would try to make time for just a few questions and then I have to get back.

As we look ahead we will continue to pursue an evolutionary approach to apply the layered defense against missiles of all ranges. That includes more effective use of sensors combined with multiple land, sea and air-basing modes to provide greater effectiveness with fewer numbers of interceptors and for therefore lower overall costs; increasingly stressful intercept tests to prove viability; adaptable technologies, flexible enough not only to defend the United States but to assist our allies and friends.

Three emerging capabilities will begin to emerge in the year 2004: Ground-based mid-course interceptors in Alaska as part of the test bed; sea-based mid-course interceptors on one or two Aegis ships; and an airborne laser prototype. Continued fielding of shorter-range defenses such as the Patriot PAC-3 and the introduction of the Army's THAAD terminal defense system. Indeed, we are looking at ways to accelerate the production of PAC-3 out of concern for near-term vulnerability.

Finally, while we have demonstrated that hit-to-kill works, as we look ahead we need to think about areas that would provide higher leverage. Nowhere is that more true than in space. Space offers attractive options not only for missile defense but for a broad range of interrelated civil and military missions. It truly is the ultimate high ground.

We are exploring concepts and technologies for space-based intercepts. If these prove successful they could offer future opportunities for global protection against intermediate and long-range missile attacks, not only for ourselves but our friends and our allies and all peace-loving nations.

To conclude, some of you may have heard Senator Wallop quoted as saying, "Diplomacy without military capability is merely prayer." Let me assure you we're working hard to make sure that America's military capability remains second to none.

And let me add just one more thing, something we can never forget when we talk about American military capability. I've had the opportunity to visit with American troops both here and abroad and I can tell you that when we see them engaged in such vital work I think you can imagine how we feel -- our pride and above all, our gratitude. So we must continue to work for the best for our nation, for the American people, and for those who wear our country's uniform.

Thank you. [Applause]

Senator Wallop: I promised the Secretary that he could leave on his own timetable, so there may be time for a couple of questions. But let me just begin by saying I've waited since 1978 to hear that speech. [Laughter]

DepSec Wolfowitz: [You worked for it too, Malcolm.]

Question: Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask you about the outlaw state that's testing ballistic missiles on a ship and also about the possibility of one of these states being able to base ballistic missiles in a third country that may not even know that they're being used as a platform for missiles aimed at the United States.

Senator Wallop: Would you identify yourself?

Question: Jamie Detterman, SpaceEquity.com.

DepSec Wolfowitz: I think what it points out, and I think it should be a reminder to people on every side -- I was about to say both sides of this debate, but I find it a multi-sided debate. Whatever position one holds, one I think should recognize the potential for things to develop in ways that we don't anticipate, and the fact that if you stop and think about it, that concern that I mentioned which is a real one -- As I said, we demonstrated it in 1947 and we aren't the only ones who have thought about it, is something that requires thinking about missile defense in yet another difficult way. One could build the best possible defenses against intercontinental ballistic missiles and miss that possibility.

I think as long as there are countries out there -- and there are -- who are as clearly determined as they are and they evidence it among other things, I mentioned the amount of resources they devote to being able to attack us. We need to be thinking ahead of them. We need to be thinking out of the box. We need to remember that there was a time when we said, I believe it was March of 1962, that it was inconceivable the Soviet Union would put missiles in Cuba. I believe in the 1980s when Saudi Arabia acquired long-range ballistic missiles from the Peoples Republic of China it took us completely by surprise. We think a relatively harmless surprise, but nonetheless a surprise.

I think it is not an inappropriate assumption of planning when you're dealing with countries that have demonstrated their intentions as clearly as the ones we're talking about, to anticipate that they will look for any doors that are open and it's got to be our job to try to close any doors that we can think of.

Question: Mr. Secretary, Frank Gaffney from the Center for Security Policy. Congratulations. That was a terrific speech.

Just picking up on that point, and in particular the threat of sea-launched ballistic missiles close by, I wonder if you might say a word about the recent tests of the Aegis components in the longer-range ballistic missile experiment that was done last week, and whether that creates a possibility -- I was very heartened to hear you say that there might be one or two Aegis ships made available for missile defense on an emergency basis in 2004. But whether given the experience we've had with some intercepts against shorter-range missiles, but perhaps the kind that you're, we have reason to fear being launched off our coast; and the performance of the sensor in the last test, whether there might be an option here, and whether you're pursuing an option for earlier deployment than 2004 in case we need it.

DepSec Wolfowitz: I think I'll take that question for the record. [Laughter]

2004 strikes me as pretty stressful. And clearly it's one of the things you look for. Intelligence isn't perfect but intelligence can be pretty good. If you think that something is closer to reality then you start to do more jury-rigging and more emergency measures.

There's no question but that there is to some degree a competition. It is argued, I'm not completely sure I'm convinced, but the emergency deployment of JSTARS in Desert Storm, while very useful in Desert Storm, may slow down the longer-term development of JSTARS so there's a balance that you've got to preserve. None of these things are simple.

I would say in terms of the problem I mentioned about the possible ship-based missiles, it's not one that I would want to divert large resources into right now based on what we think we know. But we're always learning new things.

Question: Karen Giafano with Reuters.

Could you elaborate a little bit more on this issue of the potential for ship-based, for enemies to launch missiles in the near term. Are you raising this issue because theoretically it's possible? In the environment since September 11th do you see this threat more clearly? Or do you actually have some evidence that something like this [inaudible]?

DepSec Wolfowitz: I didn't use the term near-term. I said it is a distinct possibility that not only we have thought of it, but other countries including some of the countries that we're most concerned about now. As I said in answer to Frank Gaffney, I wouldn't put it high on the list of a near-term concern, but its a reason to think about more than just long-range ballistic missiles as being a potential problem. One hopes, but one can't count on it, that if that country or other countries were to develop it further, we would get further indication. But again, one has to recognize how often we learn about things, as Secretary Rumsfeld was fond of saying during the Ballistic Missile Threat Commission experience, we

were presented some very interesting descriptions of the history of the development of the North Korean program, for example, or other countries' programs and it looked as though you were getting a real-time video, so to speak, over the course of ten years with how their program progressed. It would be laid out in years. 1979 they did this, in 1986 they did that. In 1995 they did that. But when did we learn that they were doing these things? The answer was very often one or two years later. Sometimes we learned four years later. In one case, one particular country, we learned about a developing concern 13 years after that country had undertaken it.

So one has to caveat all of these threats, but at the same time you have to make decisions about where to allocate resources. That's what I was trying to get across.

One last question, then I'm going to have to go.

Question: [inaudible]. You said earlier in your speech that while some people worried that the abrogation of the ABM Treaty would lead to [inaudible] in arms control, rather President Bush went out of the treaty and then agreed with the Russians to a reductions in strategic nuclear weapons. Some say that is not a true reduction because the warheads that would be removed from active deployment would be stored instead of destroyed, and then could be put back onto launchers, missiles, submarines, bombers very quickly so it's not a real reduction at all.

How would you respond to this?

DepSec Wolfowitz: First of all I think it is a huge reduction. The day-to-day immediate threat which is one of the things we've worried about for decades, though I must say I don't understand the depreciation of what has been accomplished. Secondly, it seems to me while clearly keeping some reserve capabilities in the recognition that things could change for the worse in the world, I think that on the whole we're much more likely to see over time that as relations between the U.S. and Russia improve that we will probably be comfortable with even less of that kind of reserve capability.

We're talking about an uncertain -- a future which is always uncertain. You could take some prudent measures about where we might be 10 years from now, 20 years from now is the right course of action. But speaking personally, I am actually very optimistic that what we've seen develop with Russia over the last ten years and particularly over the last year or two suggests that the hostilities that existed during the Cold War were nothing that was natural. It was the product of bizarre and now fortunately obsolete ideology and in the long run I think the United States and Russia are going to be very comfortable with one another in things that we feel we need to have today [inaudible] capabilities that we may in the future feel that we both need to have. But I certainly don't see it as a reason to cause great alarm.

Thank you. [Applause]