

National Institute for Public Policy

The Clinton Administration and Ballistic Missile Defense: A Chronology 1993 to 1998

**Willis Stanley
Senior Analyst**

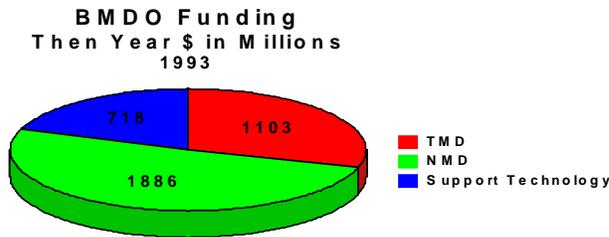
The Clinton Administration and Ballistic Missile Defense: A Chronology 1993 to 1998

Press reports on January 7, 1999 carried the story of President Clinton's decision to propose approximately one hundred billion dollars in new defense spending between now and 2005. Within that new spending is roughly seven billion dollars for national missile defense (NMD). This proposed spending is the latest evidence that the Clinton Administration's position on ballistic missile defense continues to evolve.

From the beginning of an Administration that welcomed the "end of the Star Wars era," the Clinton team has been forced to respond to both international events and pressure from a Republican-controlled Congress that sees national and theater missile defenses as priority defense issues. That response has included fairly consistent pursuit of robust theater defense capabilities and ultimately a grudging acceptance that NMD has a place on the agenda.

This report briefly illustrates how the Clinton Administration has approached BMD issues throughout its tenure to date. Rather than provide an exhaustive chronology, selective events have been chosen which exemplify the Administration's approach to policy and programmatic decisions.

1993



February 25 Deputy Secretary of Defense-designate William Perry testifies before Senate Armed Services Committee. Perry states that theater missile defense (TMD) is first priority, national missile defense (NMD) second.¹

May 4 Major General Malcolm O'Neill, Acting Director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO), briefs the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense regarding FY 1994 SDIO programs. Gen. O'Neill states that the space-based interceptor program has been "recast from an acquisition program to a technology base program and funding reduced significantly from previous plans." The option for deployment of a limited NMD slips from 2002 to no sooner than 2004.²

May 13 SDIO is restructured. The new Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) now reports to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition rather than the Secretary of Defense. Secretary Aspin heralds this step as the "end of the Star Wars era." Aspin rank orders BMDO priorities as: TMD, NMD, follow-on technologies. In response to questions, Aspin noted CIA estimates that it would take 10 years for a nuclear-armed missile threat to the United States to evolve, concluding: "that gives us roughly that period of time to develop a defensive system, to work out any agreements in the ABM system [sic] that we may need..." and that a deployment decision was sometime in the future.³

July 14 The Clinton Administration asserts "that the 'narrow' or 'traditional' interpretation of the ABM Treaty is the correct interpretation and therefore that the ABM Treaty prohibits the development, testing, and deployment of sea-based, air-based, space-based, and mobile land-based ABM systems and components without regard to the technology utilized."⁴

August 4 Major General O'Neill nominated for the position of BMDO Director with promotion to lieutenant general.

August 18 Secretary Aspin opens an investigation regarding 1984 Homing Overlay Experiment and whether or not the test had been rigged to deceive the Congress. Approximately one month later Aspin releases the conclusion that the test had not been rigged.⁵

September 1 Secretary Aspin announces the results of the Bottom-Up Review which is intended as a defense roadmap for the five year period between FY95 to FY99. The BUR endorses BMDO's emphasis on TMD.

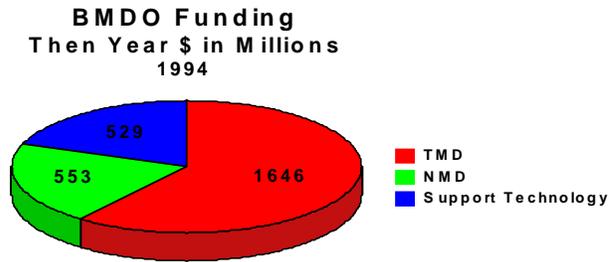
October Initial meeting in Moscow of bilateral Strategic Stability Working Group. The United States does not use this forum to address the agenda of the Ross-Mamedov process begun as a result of President Yeltsin's Global Protection System initiative.

November 29 - December 3 U.S. delegation to the ABM Treaty's Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) withdraws broad Treaty revisions proposed by Bush Administration and proposes its own clarification regarding the demarcation between TMD and NMD, the threshold being a demonstrated capability to intercept a reentry vehicle moving at speeds greater than five kilometers per second.

December 6 - December 16 The year's second SCC session does not resolve proposed U.S. "clarification" on demarcation or issue of ABM Treaty succession.

December 7 Secretary Aspin discusses the Defense Department's new Nuclear Counterproliferation Initiative before the National Academy of Sciences. Aspin cites reorientation of SDI and proposed ABM Treaty "clarification" to allow TMD "without undermining an important agreement" as elements of the Initiative.⁶

1994



February 11 The Extended Range Interceptor (ERINT) is selected as the missile for the PATRIOT PAC-3 program. PAC-3 is intended to provide a significantly-improved lower-tier TMD capability than was present during Desert Storm.

February 20 Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch signs a statement of intent calling on France, Germany, Italy and the U.S. to develop the Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS). The cooperative program is intended to meet the requirements addressed by the German TLVS project, the French SAMP-T and the U.S. CORPSAM. The system is intended to provide tactical air and missile defense for maneuver forces in the field.

March 10 In a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Sen. Paul Simon (D OH) asked ACDA Director John Holum “if we do not modify the [ABM] Treaty, we are not able to develop [THAAD] by the Treaty. Is that correct?” Holum affirmed that was correct.⁷

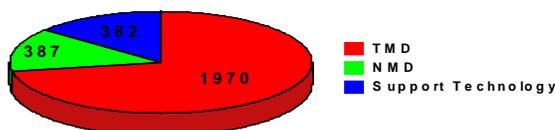
May 11 A SCUD missile strikes the city of Sanaa in North Yemen causing over 50 casualties, perhaps as much as half of those fatalities.⁸

May 25 The United States acknowledges that it is willing to accept Russia and other former Soviet Republics as successor signatories to the ABM Treaty.⁹

June The Administration pursues NMD as a “Technology Readiness Program” (TRP) which is stated as allowing work to continue on NMD components without making acquisition or deployment decisions. The TRP is based on an “objective NMD architecture” which is intended to be a ground-based ABM Treaty compliant architecture.

December Contracts awarded for design of Airborne Laser (ABL). ABL is intended to provide boost phase intercept capability based on modified 747 aircraft.¹⁰

B M D O Funding
Then Year \$ in Millions
1995



1995

February Press accounts describe OSD consideration of an emergency response NMD capability using interceptors boosted by converted Minuteman 3 ICBMs. The “thin” system could potentially be developed and deployed within four years.¹¹

June 20 Robert Bell of the National Security Council asserts that “core” U.S. TMD programs are moving forward while demarcation negotiations continue.¹²

July 31 Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Jan Lodal states: "On national missile defenses, there are national missile defenses that we can deploy without any changes to the [ABM] Treaty. There are others that might require some modifications to the treaty as their development proceeds and as threats emerge and we conclude that changes are necessary, we'll certainly raise those with the Russians as well."¹³

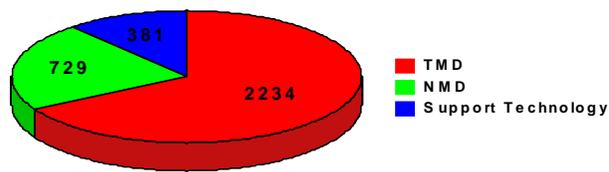
September 4 The Department of Defense begins a review of missile defense options in light of anticipated one billion dollar shortfall in TMD funding.¹⁴

September 28 Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin issue a joint statement at their Washington summit expressing their countries' shared interest in cooperation in developing and fielding TMD. The summit also endorsed joint TMD exercises.

September 28 Secretary of Defense William Perry, in a speech in St. Louis, Missouri, states that the size of the relevant threat for NMD is “several dozens of warheads.”¹⁵

November National Intelligence Estimate "Emerging Missile Threats to North America During the Next 15 Years" is produced. The President's summary, subsequently leaked to the press, is reported as asserting that "no country, other than the major declared nuclear powers, will develop or otherwise acquire a ballistic missile in the next 15 years that could threaten the contiguous 48 states and Canada." The summary discounts the likelihood of North Korea developing a "longer range operational ICBM."¹⁶

BMDO Funding
Then Year \$ in Millions
1996



1996

February 16 OSD revises the NMD TRP to a “deployment readiness program” (DRP). The DRP seeks to develop, within three years, the capacity to make a deployment decision which could be realized within an additional three years. This “3+3” approach doesn’t not require a deployment decision.¹⁷

March The Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) fires four M-9 missiles that land in the vicinity of Taiwan.

March Strategic Stability Working Group meets for the last time. SSWG activities are merged with the Bilateral Working Group to form the Defense Consultative Group.

April 9 BMDO is directed to set up a Joint Program Office (JPO) to manage the NMD DRP.

April 22 United States, Germany and Italy sign a statement of intent on MEADS. In the wake of a change in government and a pending review of defense programs, France elects not to sign the SOI.¹⁸

April 25 FY96 Authorization language setting out operational dates for TMD capabilities cannot be met according to BMDO. THAAD slips to 2002, Navy Upper Tier slips to 2005.

April 25 Secretary of Defense Perry, speaking at the George Washington University asserts that “today, we do not need a national missile defense system because our nation is not now threatened by missiles of mass destruction.... No rogue nation today has ICBMs, only the established nuclear powers have ICBMs. And if these powers should ever pose a threat, our ability to retaliate with an overwhelming nuclear response will serve as a deterrent. Deterrence has protected us from the established nuclear arsenals for decades, and it will continue to protect us....”¹⁹

April 28 The United States announces new assistance to Israeli rocket and missile defense programs. These steps include real-time early warning data and work on the Nautilus laser and Arrow TMD programs.²⁰

May 25 United States agrees to supply Japan with early warning data. Reports suggest Japanese concern is motivated by North Korea's high profile missile programs.²¹

June 4-7 A joint U.S.-Russian TMD exercise is held in the United States. Computer simulations are run at the Joint National Test Facility.²²

June 26 Lt. Gen. Lester G. Lyles, USAF, is nominated for the position of Director, Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.

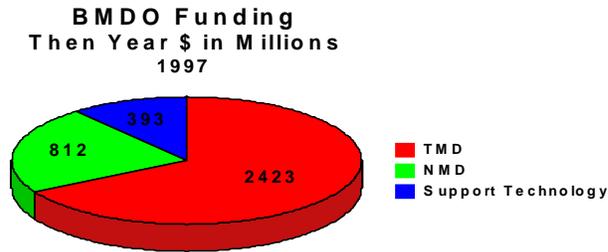
September 25 The new National Space Policy requires improved TMD capability by end of the decade, and NMD development as a hedge against emerging threats.²³

September 27 Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology Paul Kaminski, in testimony to Congress, states that: "The [NMD] system components that ultimately would be fielded... would depend on factors such as threat, and might comply with the current Treaty, or might require Treaty modification. The current program is proceeding, however, in the expectation that a deployment of up to 100 Ground-Based Interceptors would be Treaty compliant."²⁴

November 27 In a letter to Senator Conrad (D ND), President Clinton asserts that the Administration approach to NMD dovetails with Administration goals of moving the arms control process forward.²⁵

December 3 The Defense Department hosts a special briefing for the press to discuss the finding that data gathered by BMDO's Clementine space experiment indicated the presence of a substantial amount of ice in the north polar region of the moon.²⁶

1997



January 26 Secretary of Defense William Cohen suggests an NMD system might not be attainable by 2003.²⁷

February 2 ACDA Director John Holum states that “The determinant of our national missile defense program designed to deal with rogue state threats is going to be what the threat requires, not what the Russians think or what the [ABM] Treaty says.”²⁸

March 21 Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin issue a joint statement from their summit in Helsinki stating both parties’ interest in pursuing cooperative TMD activities, including technology cooperation, exercises and early warning sharing. The Presidents issued guidance to their negotiators to come up with an agreement on higher-velocity TMD systems based on the following elements:

- The velocity of target ballistic missiles will not exceed 5 km/sec.;
- The flight range of target ballistic missiles will not exceed 3,500 km, and;
- The commitment of the sides not to develop, test, or deploy space-based TMD interceptor missiles or components based on other physical principles capable of substituting for interceptors.

There were also a series of statements of intent to the effect that: Neither side has plans before April 1999 to flight test, against a ballistic target missile, TMD interceptor missiles subject to the agreement on demarcation with respect to higher velocity TMD systems. Neither side has plans for TMD systems with interceptor missiles faster than 5.5 km/sec for land-based and air-based systems or 4.5 km/sec for sea-based systems. Neither side has plans to test TMD systems against target missiles with MIRVs or against

reentry vehicles deployed or planned to be deployed on strategic ballistic missiles.

May 1 ACDA Director John Holum testifies before Senate Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services that "the Administration is fully committed to the ABM Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability." Holum also states that proposing changes to the Treaty now or opening negotiations is premature.²⁹

May 15 The President changes the Administration's position and agrees to submit the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on ABM Treaty succession to the Senate for approval.

May 19 Quadrennial Defense Review supports funding MEADS through FY99. NMD requires an additional two billion dollars to reach an initial deployment decision date of 2000.³⁰

July 21 Defense Department acknowledges that THAAD cuing software has been limited to comply with ABM Treaty article 6 constraints. The Compliance Review Group head asserts that this did not limit THAAD capability.³¹

August 11 NMD procurement plan approved by Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology

September 26 The United States, Russia, Kazakstan, Ukraine, and Belarus sign a series of agreed statements on ABM Treaty demarcation and succession. This includes: an agreement on lower-velocity TMD systems (under 3 kps) which cannot be tested against targets faster than 5 kps with ranges above 3,500 km; a statement on higher velocity TMD interceptors that did not go beyond the bounds set at the Helsinki summit; succession; SCC operation; confidence building measures; and information exchanges. In addition there were unilateral, nonbinding statements about plans regarding TMD development and deployment.³²

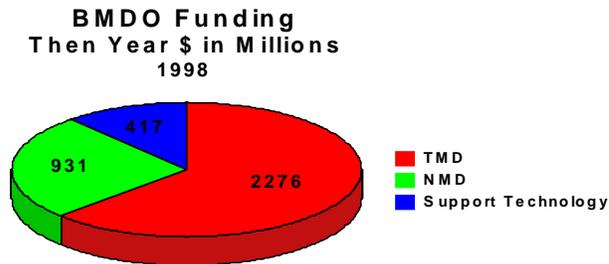
October 15 President Clinton uses his new line item veto to strike funding for Clementine II and ASAT.³³

October 26 U.S. Navy asserts that Navy Theater Wide requires an additional \$800 million between 1999 and 2002 to meet a 2002 deployment date.³⁴

November 30 Defense Consultative Group meeting in Moscow.

December 15 In a letter to Senator Strom Thurmond (R SC), Secretary Cohen endorses the National Defense Panel's support for developing NMD without making a deployment decision.

1998



January 2 The Clinton Administration discusses the idea of an international “clearinghouse” in which countries with laser programs could share information with the intent of preventing damage to satellites.³⁵

February 18 NSC official Robert Bell addresses the Arms Control Association and asserts that if the Senate does not ratify the demarcation and succession agreements, Russia might reject START II and the arms control process.³⁶

February 27 Panel on Reducing the Risk in Ballistic Missile Defense Flight Test Program issues its report, known as the Welch Report. The report highlights the technology and schedule risks in U.S. BMD programs.

March 11 - April 15 SCC 56 held in Geneva. Reportedly no discussion of a follow on to the September 1997 demarcation agreement for higher velocity TMD systems.

March 18 Press accounts describe an Administration memo suggesting that the United States offer China expanded commercial and scientific space cooperation in exchange for restraint on missile proliferation.³⁷

April 6 Pakistan test fires a 1,500 km range missile called the Ghauri.

May 21 President Clinton, in a letter to Senator Jessie Helms (R NC), asserts that Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine as well as Russia are legitimate successors to the ABM Treaty and that the Treaty will remain in force even if the agreement on succession concluded in September 1997 is not ratified by the Senate.

June 23 President Clinton vetoes a bill that would have penalized governments or companies that aid Iran's missile programs.

July 22 Iran tests the 1,290 km range Shahab 3 missile. Missile proliferation experts point out similarities between the Shahab 3, Pakistan's Ghauri and the North Korean Nodong program.

July 23 According to a Washington Times report, Secretary Cohen directs the Service Chiefs to act according to the 1997 Helsinki agreements regarding the ABM Treaty.³⁸

August 31 North Korea fires a three stage rocket asserting that it was an attempt to launch a satellite. The missile's staging and solid fuel third stage were significant indicators of the progress of the Taepodong 1 and 2 missile programs. North Korea asserts that the payload did achieve orbit although this is contradicted by U.S. sources. Estimates for the system's range are as high as 6,000 km.

¹ Arms Control Reporter (ACR) 1993, p. 575.B.425

² Major General Malcolm O'Neill, Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, May 4, 1993. (prepared statement).

³ ACR, 575.E.51.

⁴ ACDA press release dated July 14, 1993 and ACR 1993, p. 603.B.214.

⁵ ACR 1993, p. 575.E.57-8.

⁶ Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, "The Defense Department's New Nuclear Counterproliferation Initiative: Dealing with the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Post-Cold War, Post-Soviet Era," December 7, 1993. (mimeo)

⁷ ACR 1994, p. 576.E-1.5.

⁸ BMDO Missile Defense Milestones 1944 - 1997

⁹ As officially acknowledged in, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Fact Sheet*, "The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty," May 25, 1994, pp. 2, 4.

¹⁰ Aviation Week & Space Technology, December 12-19, 1994.

¹¹ Washington Times, February 17, 1995.

¹² ACR 1995, p. 576.E-1.10.

¹³ Jan Lodal (P)DUSD and Ash Carter, ASD (International Security Policy), Press Conference with Selected Reporters, July 31, 1995, 10:30 a.m. EST, mimeo provided by Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), p. 9.

¹⁴ ACR 1995, p. 576.E-1.11.

¹⁵ Remarks of Secretary of Defense Perry at the Regional Commerce and Growth Association of St. Louis, Missouri, 28 September 1995; Federal News Service Transcript, DIALOG File 660, item 00165224.

¹⁶ Washington Times, May 14, 1996.

¹⁷ Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), "Ballistic Missile Defense Program," February 16, 1996. Paul Kaminski, "Ballistic Missile Defense Program Review," February 16, briefing.

¹⁸ ACR 1996, p. 576.E-TMD.17

¹⁹ Washington Times, April 26, 1996.

²⁰ ACR 1996, p. 576.B.12.

²¹ Defense News, June 10-16, 1996.

²² ACR 1996, p. 576.B.14

²³ Jane's Defense Week, September 25, 1996.

²⁴ Paul Kaminski, *Statement of The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, Honorable Paul G. Kaminski Before a Joint Session of the Subcommittee on Military Research & Development and the Subcommittee on Military Procurement of the House Committee on National Security on Ballistic Missile Defense*, 27 September 1996, p. 21, (mimeo).

²⁵ Letter from President Clinton to Senator Kent Conrad, November 27, 1996 (mimeo).

²⁶ BMDO Missile Defense Milestones 1944 - 1997

²⁷ ACR 1997, p. 576.E-NMD.21.

²⁸ Bill Gertz. Arms Control Chief Says Pact Allows Missile Defense. In the Washington Times, February 2, 1997, p. A-8.

²⁹ ACDA Director John Holum testimony before Senate Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services, May 1, 1997.

³⁰ ACR 1997, p. 576.B.20.

³¹ ACR 1997, p. 576.E-TMD.33.

³² all statements available at www.whitehouse.gov

³³ ACR 1997, p. 576.E-NMD.24.

³⁴ ACR 1997, p. 576.E-TMD.30.

³⁵ Washington Times, January 2, 1998.

³⁶ Arms Control Today, January/February 1998

³⁷ ACR 1998, p. 706.B.248.

³⁸ Washington Times, July 23, 1998