

# **WALLASEY CND WIRRAL CHRISTIAN CND**

## **A RESPONSE TO 'MISSILE DEFENCE - a Public Discussion Document'**

**Synopsis:** *The nuclear arms race showed the importance of being clear about the likely response of other countries to decisions about the development of weapons. The Discussion Document takes a very narrow view of this considering only the implications of deployment of an ABMS on the development and construction of long-range missiles. Yet the deployment will increase suspicion of the intentions of the USA and its allies. In these circumstances deployment is likely to result in increased preparation for effective terrorism. Rather than supporting this move, we should be pursuing more seriously a policy of disarmament and arms control.*

### **1. Introduction**

We write this as people without specific expertise but with a concern about nuclear arms that has led us to take a broad view of the context in which an Anti-Ballistic Missile System would be installed.

We fear that this invitation to public discussion may be a PR exercise to disguise that the main decisions have already been taken but feel we should make our views available for consideration.

### **2. Lessons from the Nuclear Arms Race**

There is evidence available that the nuclear arms race was in part fuelled by the failure of decision-makers on both sides of the iron curtain to take account of the likely response of the other side to decisions to increase or develop nuclear weaponry. It is true that eventually the doctrine of 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (para 65) was developed and this in turn led to the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (para 72). However this stage was not reached until the size of the nuclear armoury on both sides had reached extraordinarily wasteful proportions. Some have argued that this contributed to the bankruptcy of the Soviet economy and so, perhaps, to the fall of the communist regime. But the price of this has been very heavy. The Russian economy has never fully recovered from this; materials from its neglected nuclear armoury are readily available on the black market and environmental degradation is rife.

However, the policy of 'Mutually Assured Destruction' in the wider context of fear and rivalry did not result in nations feeling more secure. So while the two

blocs did not become involved in direct warfare, they continued the conflict by fighting wars by proxy in other countries. Again the consequences of this continue today in the instability and poverty of many third world countries.

This suggests the following principles:

- a. It is very important to be as clear as possible about how others will respond to developments of policy.
- b. A sense of security is not likely to arise from everybody arming to the teeth and building protective walls against each others' arms.
- c. Lack of a sense of security in the face of overwhelming power is likely to result in governments and peoples finding other ways to fight their battles which may have quite as long-lasting results as more direct conflict.

### **3. Limitations of the Discussion Document**

The Discussion document has a very narrow focus. While it acknowledges that diplomacy has an important role in responding to missile threats (para 36) it makes no attempt to evaluate the effect of the development of an anti-missile system on the diplomatic situation as opposed to the effect on missile development by other countries (paras 65 - 76). It is only concerned to evaluate the effect of the deployment of an Anti-Ballistic Missile System on the development of more long-range missiles as though defence systems were the only important means to security.

There is evidence for the belief that the deployment of such an ABMS could lead to another massive arms race. For example Nick Richie in August 2000 quotes the CIA National Intelligence Estimate for July 2000 as stating that 'deployment could unleash an arms race in Asia, cause Russia to re-MIRV its ICBMs and cause friction between the NATO allies'.\* Of course the CIA could be wrong again, but its view would still be worth considering, not to mention the views of our own Foreign Office and intelligence services. There is no indication in this document that these views have been considered in any but a very superficial way.

There is also no indication in the document that consideration has been given to the wider view that other people may have of the international political system. For this purpose one must take account of the place of the ABMS in American policy and how this will be regarded by other peoples.

\* Nick Richie, *'The NMD Debate: Influences on Policy Making'*, Oxford Research Group, Aug.2000

#### **4. Views of American Policy**

Governments and peoples whose interests may be threatened by US policies will tend to interpret this particular policy in the light of the following related factors:

The USA maintains massive military forces that are many times the size of those of its nearest rivals.

It has a history of intervention in the affairs of other countries wherever it considers its interests threatened. This has included armed intervention (eg. Vietnam and Panama), support for autocrats (eg. Saddam Hussein in the '80s), supporting armed revolution (eg. Nicaragua), subversion of legal regimes (eg. Chile) and the use of economic power to control their behaviour.

It has refused to sign the CTBT. It has failed to fulfil its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, both by failing to act on nuclear disarmament and more recently by the development of new weapons. This attitude has been confirmed by the Nuclear Posture Review of 2002. Nobody can be sure that it will not withdraw from the Treaty if it considers the Treaty does not conform to its interests.

It has refused to accept limitations on its own weaponry, eg. by refusing to sign the international agreement on the banning of anti-personnel mines; by boycotting the Verification Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which had already been amended to meet earlier objections; and by refusing to support control of the small arms trade.

It has refused to support international action on the environment through the Kyoto Agreement or the enforcement of international law through the International Criminal Court. It has also frequently used its veto in the Security Council, in matters concerning oppressed people.

The USA has instituted a policy of pre-emptive attack if it considers its interests may be at risk

This may seem a one-sided view, but it will be the predominant view of many governments and peoples that are opposed to US ambitions. Presumably the Foreign Office could provide information on this, if asked.

#### **5. Likely Consequences of Deployment of an ABMS**

In this context the deployment of an ABMS is likely to increase suspicion about the intentions of the USA and its allies from other Governments and

peoples. By making themselves invulnerable to a major form of attack, does it free them to use a wider range of weaponry more freely?

If suspicion is increased and missile defence is ruled out, other methods of attack will be considered. In particular means will be sought for developing WMD that can be used by terrorists and infiltrated secretly into the USA and its allies. It is clear that the USA and its allies had not confidence in the ability of inspectors to find WMD in Iraq, so the possibilities of developing such weapons secretly throughout the world are considerable.

The deployment of an ABMS is therefore likely to contribute to a very insecure and unstable world. We should not be supporting it.

## **6. An Alternative Policy**

Unless we regard the USA as a rogue state that is out of control, security would be better secured and at less cost, by picking up and expanding earlier efforts to promote disarmament and to control weaponry. Of course the power and influence of the military-industrial complex will make this hard, but it may be relevant that the strongest proponents of the ABMS are politicians and the arms industry, not the military (*Nick Richie, op.cit.*)

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