



Missiles at Fylingdales?

In October it was reported that Tony Blair had secretly agreed to allow the US to site Missile Defence missiles at the Fylingdales radar base - currently being upgraded to play a role in the system.

Publicly, the US has stated its intentions to site interceptor missile sites in central Europe - Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary - and has also pointed to "North-West Europe" in documents in the past.

However, there is scepticism about the siting

of missiles at RAF Fylingdales. There is, for example, no operational need to base missiles close to a Missile Defence radar. What's more, there would, in all likelihood, be a considerable risk of damage to the radar from the hot plume of a missile boosting upwards.

More importantly perhaps, the siting of interceptor missiles at the same location as the tracking facility makes it possible to target and destroy two elements of the system with one attack.

However, follow-up coverage of the story suggested that the press report was simply inaccurate in the detail of location and that the UK Government has indeed been in informal discussions about siting US Missile Defence missiles somewhere on UK territory.

On 28th October 2004, in response, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said *"There have been no discussions between Ministers or officials of either government about the stationing of*

interceptor missiles in the UK."

Critics however point to Mr. Hoon's reluctance to be forthcoming with information when the US was requesting use of Fylingdales for Missile Defence.

Russia reacted to the initial article by stating that the move would "represent a disturbing new step" in international relations and posed a "possible threat to the security of Russia".

Missile Defence Bulletin is produced by the Yorkshire Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

It aims to present a regular picture of recent important events related to Missile Defence for the information of individuals and organisations across civic society.

This first issue will cover key stories from the past couple of months.

The bulletins are always only one side of A4, allowing readers to quickly familiarise themselves with important developments.

To comment or make suggestions, contact us at

*Missile Defence Bulletin
Yorkshire CND
22 Edmund Street
Bradford, BD5 0BH
tel: 0845 4583315
info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk
www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk*

Canada to sign up to Missile Defence?

According to an article in Canada's "Edmonton Journal" in January, the Canadian government committed to Missile Defence involvement as far back as early 2004. The paper quotes Prime Minister Martin in newly declassified documents as saying *"Canada is committed to reaching an agreement on co-operation in the ballistic missile Defence of North America during the coming months... Canada sees its participation in BMD as being anchored in Norad, which has for almost 50 years been an integral part of our partnership in the defence of North America,"*

The United States is reportedly optimistic that Canada will sign on to the US Missile Defence program by the end of March, U.S. Ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci has told the Canadian Press.

Cellucci, who is due to leave his post this spring, was quoted by the Montreal Gazette as saying "We've been told that it will be dealt with over the next couple of months." Asked whether he anticipates Canada will take part, Cellucci replied: "Yes."

Missile Defence debate has been hot in Canada for several months with scepticism about the project high amongst the general public and main political parties. Some analysts believe it could even threaten the minority Liberal Government.

Prime Minister Martin has indicated that the Canadian Parliament will be consulted on the issue, but has been less clear on

the exact mechanism and timing.

Martin has voiced some misgivings in recent weeks about the Bush plan to deploy Missile Defence.

He has stated that the system, if they were to be involved, would not lead to the siting of missiles on Canadian soil. Martin has also been clear that Canadian support would rest very strongly on clear US commitments to avoid the deployment of space weapons.

Despite these clear commitments, Martin reportedly contacted the US in late December to assure officials that the critical comments did not reflect a definitive decision by the Government.

US may never declare Missile Defence operational

Having missed Oct. 1 and Dec. 31 deadlines for activating components of the ground-based Missile Defence system ordered by President Bush, U.S. military officials now say they may never declare the system operational.

The news comes a month after the first Missile Defence test for two years failed, due apparently to a "software glitch." The administration has invested billions of dollars to install interceptor missiles in Alaska and California in preparation for the deployment of the system.

Bush signed a directive in December 2002 stating that his *administration "plans to deploy a set of initial missile defense capabilities beginning in 2004."* Following Bush's 2002 order, officials initially had set the deployment date for Oct. 1, 2004. They later said it would occur by the end of the year.

Deploying a Missile Defence system by the end of 2004 had been a Bush campaign vow in 2000 and again last summer when he said, *"Later this year, the first components of America's Missile Defense system will become operational."*

The Pentagon however has said that it is *"not marching toward a particular date on which we will say the system is now operational."* It also denied the administration had ever set a deployment

date, stating, *"I don't think that the goal was ever that we would declare it was operational. I think the goal was that there would be an operational capability by the end of 2004."*

Development follows a "spiraling" plan of continuous development and improvement, meaning that some elements of the system may be functional whilst others are still under development.

Japan - Missile Defence to defend only Japan

The Missile Defence system currently under development in Japan with US help will be used solely to intercept ballistic missiles targeting Japan, Japanese Government sources have stated.

The government says it has decided to limit the operational scope of the system, to be purchased from the U.S. and deployed by 2007, because intercepting missiles targeted at other countries could be construed as collective defense, which runs counter to its pacifist constitution.

If true, the policy would mean Japan would not take action against missiles aimed at the U.S. - the country that is helping Japan to create the system. The Japanese Government has stated that in cases where the precise destination of a missile cannot be predicted, it will consider the probability of it

targeting Japan as high and consider it an armed attack on Japan, allowing interception. However, this may not be sufficient for the US.

Observers have cast doubt over Japans statements of collective self-defence however, pointing out that Japan is entirely dependent on U.S. sensors and infrared satellites (which detect heat plumes when missiles are launched.) They also point out that, in reality, Japan may have to adopt

such a policy as a condition of purchase.

The developments come at the same time as news that Japan is considering a US proposal for joint research on an anti-missile laser weapon. The system - an airborne directed-energy anti-missile weapon - would be deployed to destroy ballistic missiles when they enter the first phase of flight - their booster phase - as they boost up out of the atmosphere.

Russia develops new nuclear weapons

According to the Washington Post Russia is planning to deploy a nuclear missile "of a kind that other nuclear powers were unlikely to develop".

President Putin told a conference of top military officials that Russia was preparing to develop a ballistic missile that could penetrate any missile defense system, such as the one being put in place by the United States. It reportedly would have the maneuverability of a cruise missile after reentering the atmosphere from space, helping it to evade

interceptor rockets. President Putin declared:

"We have not only conducted tests of the latest nuclear rocket systems, I am sure that in the coming years we will deploy them. Moreover, these will be things which do not exist and are unlikely to exist in other

nuclear powers."

Reports at the end of January also suggest that Russia plans to install next generation air defence and powerful tactical missile systems later this year.