

**BASIC/DEMOS**  
**Missile Defence Conference**  
**London, 9 November 2004**

**THE UK GOVERNMENT AND**  
**MISSILE DEFENCE**

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# My Objective and a Disclaimer

- My Purpose today is :
  - to describe and comment on what the UK Government has done about BMD
  - to explain some of the issues and developments
  - not to argue for or against missile defence
- I speak for myself, not HMG
- I consult for industry
- I advise the House of Commons Defence Committee

# The UK Government's Response

In summary, the UK government has been

- Consistent and cautious, over 20 years.
- The relationship with US has always been paramount
  - In spite of different threat perceptions
  - Close cooperation under MoUs
- Deployed force and national defence have always been treated separately
- Fylingdales has always been important
- Procurement cost has always been a problem.

# Some History

- PM Thatcher began UK interest, supported President Reagan's SDI initiative, set up SDIPO
- SDI MoU 1985
  - Enabled technical dialogue and research cooperation with US (SDIO/BMDO/MDA)
- Never committed to procurement or budgeted much beyond research (never more than 0.1% of US spend)
- Political interest tailed off through the Major years
- Defence policymakers have never been won over by US enthusiasm

# More History

- MoD undertook many national studies, including a Pre-Feasibility Study (early 90s) & TRRAP (late 90s)
  - No “unclassified summary” of recent work is available
  - Peak funding was in '93 to '94 when PFS and MESAR demonstrator were begun
- PM Blair has ‘supported’ Presidents Clinton & Bush, without committing funds
- New MoU (June 2003) followed US deployment decisions and ABM Treaty withdrawal
- Agreement to allow US the use of Fylingdales
- MoD sets up a Missile Defence Centre

# Policy Issues

- National threat assessments
  - Threat = capability + intention
  - Influence of recent intelligence failures?
- Theatre Defence higher priority than homeland
- US relationship central, mainly technical
- BMD and deterrence
- “Active” measures one of many possible responses
  - Diplomacy, deterrence, “passive” means, pre-emption
  - Balance of Investment
- Weak military advocacy
- Little support in the past for UK industry
- No European debate or consensus
- No public pressure, for or against

# Recent Developments

- US decisiveness under Bush
  - ABM Treaty
  - Deployment of GMDS (Alaska)
  - \$9B annual spend growing to \$10B
- US invitation in 2002 to join Global MD
  - Fylingdales request end '02, speedy agreement
  - New MoU, including Fylingdales and RDT&E
- MoD Discussion Paper Dec 2002

# MOD DISCUSSION PAPER Dec 2002

There are an increasing number of potential threats to the security of the UK and her Allies in the world today. To choose only to tackle some of these and hope others never materialise would be a dangerous approach. The **precise extent of the threat** to the territory and forces of NATO member states from ballistic missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction is certainly **difficult to quantify** in time and scale. However, potential threats are growing and cannot be ignored. If we are to meet these prospective threats as far as we can, we need to plan ahead and prepare properly. There are **complex issues** to be considered before the UK and others can determine the best overall strategy for addressing this threat, and the role that missile defence could play as an element of this strategy: issues of **technology, timescale, international relations and cost**, all of which are closely linked. But now is the time to consider these issues. It is hoped that this discussion paper will help that debate.

# The UK Government's Response

## Current Issues

- Still no UK commitment to acquire BMD
  - More information & understanding wanted
- What does US want to do in Europe?
- What are implications for UK?
  - Interceptor launchers?
  - Command & control?
  - Costs?
  - UK industry benefits?
- Effect of Iraq War? Libya? Iran? North Korea?
- Will new “rogues” emerge?
- Credibility of intelligence-based policies

# FROM THE DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

December 2003

Missile defence technology is a growing area of interest following the ending of the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty. Although the technologies are developing rapidly, missile interceptors and other means of destroying missiles will only be able to deal with a limited ballistic missile threat. They are **not a substitute for nuclear or other forms of deterrence**. However, the addition of active missile defences may complicate the thinking of an adversary. We have agreed with the US to allow the Fylingdales radar to be used for this role, but will continue to examine, with our NATO Allies, the complex web of strategic issues to inform future political and policy decisions. Active missile defences could provide an option for meeting the threat from WMD and its means of delivery. But **we will need to consider the right balance of investment between it, forces for nuclear deterrence, and other deterrent, defensive and preventive strategies**.

# RAF Fylingdales

- Important to US (for their GMDS) and to UK
  - political & economic leverage hoped for?
  - little benefit apparently gained
- Longstanding element of BMEWS
- Built by US, operated by RAF
- Needs internal upgrade, no external changes
- Short period from US request to Govt agreement
- New MoU also needed, signed Dec '03
- Upgrade work underway

# SoS Hoon Statement to Parliament

## 5 February 2003

.....we have been able to clarify that: the upgrade essentially comprises computer hardware and software modification, and involves no new development or change to the external appearance or power output of the radar; the radar will continue to fulfil its long-established ballistic missile early warning system (BMEWS) role; it will continue to be operated and staffed by the Royal Air Force, and we will continue to enjoy full access to its data; and the upgrade does not of itself commit the UK Government to any greater participation in the US missile defence programme. It does, however, keep open the prospect of acquiring missile defence capabilities for the UK, should we desire such protection at some point in the future. We will continue discussions with the local planning authorities on the detail of the upgrade work.

# NATO and BMD

- A growing interest in BMD from NATO
- “Active Layered” TBMD Study (deployed force defence) completed 2003, NSR agreed, next step soon to begin
- New industry study begun, looking at defence of territories and population centres (following agreement at Prague Summit)
  - *Could* form basis for European BMDS
- UK now involved after a reluctant start in 1999
- US more engaged with NATO on BMD than hitherto
  - But prefers bi-lateral agreements
- NATO doesn't work quickly!

# Theatre BMD

- Means defending troops when deployed
- Probably willing to rely on US “cover”, if offered
- TBMD is not a high priority of the UK military
  - No procurement budget
  - Emphasise burden sharing with coalition partners
- Look to NATO in long run?
- Navy solution, on Type 45 Air Defence Frigate, is a possibility, developing PAAMS air defence missile

# The Missile Defence Centre

- Set up in July 2003, funded at £5M pa
- A joint government & industry initiative
- Primary interface with US MDA
- Technical advice to UK policy decisions
- Concepts for defence of UK in European context
- A role for UK industry in US programme
- Understand US system
- Develop hardware demonstration programmes
- Build coordinated team, expertise & capability

# Independent on Sunday Article

## 17 October 2004

- “Tony Blair has secretly agreed to allow President Bush to site US missiles on British soil as part of the new US “Son of Star Wars” programme”
- “Mr Blair and Geoff Hoon ... insist that the US has made no formal request to site missiles here.”
- “... an offer to site missiles in Yorkshire was made in a meeting in Washington in May”
- “the system must be strictly defensive and ... it must cost the British taxpayer nothing”
- “Critics of ballistic missile defence argue that it will lead to a new arms race”
- Sir Menzies Campbell: "This could have major implications for the defence posture of the UK, our relationship with NATO countries and other allies, and the strategic balance of nuclear weapons around the world."

# Guardian Article, 29 October

- MoD officials (do) not deny that talks between the two countries have taken place. "There may have been discussions"
- Director of the US MDA, Gen Obering said: "I think it's important that we invite our friends, our allies to participate in this with us, and that they can benefit from the coverage the same way we have".
- The Annex covers "potential threats, including threat countermeasures, development and analysis of options for the extension of the US system to make missile defence capabilities available to the UK".
- Gen Obering said Tuesday that discussions were well under way with allies about a site for ground-based interceptor missiles in Europe

# Personal Viewpoint

- A Secret agreement, that must last through elections in the US and the UK, is most unlikely
- However, it is naïve to expect that discussions around the topic are not taking place between officials.
- The “no cost to the taxpayer” and ”strictly defensive” criteria sound plausible, but ...
- A Fylingdales site is highly improbable. This, to my mind, casts doubt on the whole story.
- However, “No formal request” is a familiar refrain
- Statements by Gen Obering say nothing specific
- Recent signing of the RDT&E Annex may have triggered the leak, if leak it was, but I don’t believe there was a leak.
- Delay in placing a copy in the Commons Library is a non-issue. It’s there now, and contains no surprises.

# SUMMARY

- UK government still fence-sitting on acquiring national OR theatre missile defence, except...
- A desire to be part of the US system
- Hope to benefit from political and military support to the US
- No BMD funding in procurement budget
- Research, technology investigations, technical cooperation with US and demonstrations remain
- Little obvious engagement with Europe on BMD
- For TBMD, rely on US &/or NATO

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