

The P-5, Ballistic Missile Defense, and the Future of Global Strategic Stability

Frank A. Rose

**Senior Fellow, The Atlantic Council
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Outline

- **Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and the “Security Trilemma”**
- **The United States, Russia, China, and BMD**
- **The UK, France, Russia, and BMD**
- **The P-5 Process and Strategic Stability**
- **Recommendations**

“The Security Trilemma”

- “A central feature of the second nuclear age is that most nuclear weapon states face threats from two or more potential adversaries...This gives rise to a security trilemma where actions taken by a state to defend against another state have the effect of making a third state feel insecure.”
 - Greg Koblentz, *Strategic Stability in the Second Nuclear Age*, November 2014.
- U.S. homeland ballistic missile defense (BMD) is a prime example of the “security trilemma”
 - U.S. defenses designed against “limited” regional threats (e.g., Iran, DPRK)
 - Russia and China see BMD a potential threat to their strategic deterrents
 - How does U.S. reassure both Russia and China?

“The Security Trilemma”

- Russian and Chinese BMD Systems
 - Not as widely reported as U.S. BMD deployments
 - However, both countries are developing and/or modernizing their BMD capabilities
 - What impact will this have on British and French strategic forces?
- Questions to Explore
 - What can be done at a bilateral level to address the “security trilemma” that BMD presents?
 - Can the P-5 process initiated in 2009 make a contribution to addressing the trilemma and enhancing global strategic stability?

U.S. Homeland BMD, Russia, and China

- U.S. Homeland Ballistic Missile Defense
 - Over the last 20 years, U.S. BMD has been focused against “limited” threats from regional states such as Iran and the DPRK
 - Missile Defense Act of 1999
 - Ballistic Missile Defense Review (2010)
 - United States deploying 44 long-range interceptors to Alaska and California by the end of 2017
- Despite clear political statements and “limited” deployments, Russia remains concerned about impact of BMD on its strategic deterrent
 - Key concerns not current systems, but the development of “game changing” technologies in the future
 - Russia has demanded “legally-binding” limitations on U.S. BMD capabilities

U.S. Homeland BMD, Russia, and China

- U.S. approach to reassuring Russia about BMD has included:
 - BMD cooperation (e.g., exercises, joint centers)
 - Missile early warning cooperation (e.g., RAMOS, JDEC)
 - Transparency on U.S. missile policy and programs (e.g., briefings, site visits, declarations)
 - Political statements and assurances (e.g., BMDR, joint statements)
 - Sizing homeland BMD deployments specifically to the threat from DPRK and Iran
- None of these proposals have satisfied Russian concerns
 - Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov: “We’re not going to take the rope to hang ourselves with.”
- Legally-binding guarantees
 - Russia continues to demand such guarantees
 - U.S. unlikely to provide for a variety of reasons (e.g., dynamic nature of ballistic missile threat from DPRK, opposition in the U.S. Senate)

U.S. Homeland BMD, Russia, and China

- U.S. approach to reassuring China has included:
 - Far less robust than engagements with Russia
 - Policy statements (e.g., BMDR)
 - Transparency on U.S. missile defense policy and programs (e.g., briefings)
- Wildcards/Unknowns
 - Congressional amendments to the Missile Defense Act of 1999?
 - Will the Trump Administration embrace this approach?
 - What if the DPRK begins deploying larger numbers of ICBMs?
 - How will the United States respond with regard to BMD deployments?
 - What implications will that have for strategic stability with Russia and China?

Russian and Chinese BMD Capabilities

- Russia and China have been modernizing/developing their own BMD capabilities
- Russia BMD systems
 - A-135 currently operational around Moscow
 - A-235 ABM system currently under development
 - S-400 and S-500 TMD interceptors
- Russia BMD focused on limited defense of Moscow and theater air and missile defense
- Doesn't appear Russia seeking a "national" missile defense system
- What impact will slowing of Russia economy have on its BMD programs?

Russian and Chinese BMD Capabilities

- China conducted Strategic BMD tests in 2010, 2013, 2014
- Lack of transparency into Chinese BMD systems and capabilities
 - “Purely defensive, not directed against any country.”
- BMD program appears closely linked to its anti-satellite program
 - July 2014 test: “The United States has high confidence in its assessment, that this event was an ASAT test.”
- It unclear at this point how far China will proceed with development of Strategic BMD
- What impact could a Chinese decision to proceed with a Strategic BMD have on the U.S. and Russia?
 - U.S. and Russia likely will have sufficient strategic capabilities to penetrate any Chinese BMD system in the near- to mid-term

The UK, France, Russia, and BMD

- **United Kingdom**

- Currently maintains 225 warheads deployed on four Vanguard-class SSBNs
- In 2016, UK decided to replace existing SSBNs with four new SSBNs
- UK force will decline to about 180 warheads by mid-2020s

- **France**

- Currently maintains 300 warheads based on aircraft and four Triomphant-class SSBNs

- UK and French deterrents primarily directed against Russia
- Absent major change in priorities, current Russian BMD program unlikely to result in major changes to UK and French strategic posture

P-5 Process and Global Strategic Stability

- P-5 process began in 2009, primarily focused preparing for 2010 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference
- Since 2009, the process has made incremental progress:
 - Agreed to a P-5 glossary
 - Agreed to revised NPT reporting mechanisms
 - Held six P-5 conferences
- Efforts underway to begin discussion on global strategic stability
 - October 2016 P-5 seminar on nuclear policy and doctrine
- Is there a role for the P-5 on BMD?

Key Observations

- The U.S. has done a reasonable job balancing the need to deploy BMD to deter regional states, while at the same time maintaining strategic stability with Russia and China
 - DPRK's likely deployments of larger numbers of long-range missiles could upset that balance
 - However, even the deployment of larger numbers of U.S. interceptors would have limited, if any, capability against advanced Russia and Chinese systems
- Russia's current BMD deployments unlikely to change British and French strategic posture
- Unlikely that Chinese BMD capabilities will result in major changes in U.S. and Russia strategic postures in the near-term
- As I noted in February 2015:
 - “Developing a comprehensive system to cope with a full-scale attack from another nuclear-armed great power would be expensive and ultimately unsuccessful.”

Recommendations

- ***United States should:***
 - ***Reaffirm*** the “limited” nature of its Homeland BMD programs in NPR, BMDR, and other policy statements
 - ***Tailor*** actual Homeland BMD deployments to DPRK and Iranian threats
 - ***Continue*** BMD transparency measures with Russia and China (e.g., briefings)
 - ***No longer pursue*** BMD cooperation with Russia; it’s an idea whose time has passed
 - ***Resume*** strategic stability talks with Russia on full range of strategic policy issues (e.g., BMD, nuclear, space, conventional strike)
 - ***Press*** China to begin a more robust strategic policy dialogue
 - ***Encourage*** China to be more transparent about the scope and purpose of its BMD program
 - ***Include*** BMD in future P-5 discussions on global strategic stability