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Despite the overwhelming military force marshalled to enforce United Nations resolutions, notions of deterrence prevented neither the tragic war in the Gulf from starting nor ballistic missiles from being launched. SCUD missiles were fired in the opening days of conflict and targeted at civilian populations. Patriot interceptors defended troops and civilians, and greatly lessened the political terror that the SCUD attacks were designed to spread. The Patriot proved instrumental in containing the conflict, maintaining the international coalition, and possibly shortening the war. And let us not forget the most simple and important fact: the Patriot saved lives.

Yet, had these SCUD missiles been mated with chemical or nuclear warheads, the short-range Patriots could not have intercepted their targets far enough from civilian populations to provide the necessary defence. Far greater human tragedy would have occurred. Further, the SCUD is an old ballistic missile; far more capable missiles have already been developed.

The Patriot originally was designed as a point air defence weapon; it does not have the range, speed and manoeuvrability to intercept more capable, advanced types of ballistic missiles. Its success proved that defensive technology is feasible, but advanced interceptors, much more capable than the Patriot, are required to meet future crises that will involve ever more advanced missile threats.

According to the Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, by the year 2000, in addition to the United States and Soviet Union, more than two dozen countries will have ballistic missiles; 15 of these countries will have the technical capabilities to produce their own missiles; half of these countries will have, or will be developing, nuclear capability. By 2000, 30 countries will have chemical weapons; 10 will be able to field biological weapons. Many of these countries will have ballistic missiles of various ranges; a few could achieve strategic range. In addition, as we saw in the Gulf War, ballistic missiles can be improved to add to their ranges and capabilities.

Such an environment can only be met with a broad, comprehensive strategy which includes political and diplomatic measures as well as defences. The United States is dedicated to strengthening and expanding the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, supporting the work of the Australia Group and advancing President Bush's Middle East arms control proposal. With dedication from all of us, we can expect to build upon the successes these efforts have already achieved. Still, experience and common sense suggest that these efforts alone cannot stop all proliferation. The introduction of modest, effective defences will complement the MTCR and other diplomatic efforts to deter missile proliferation.