

determination to achieve maximum military flexibility in dealing with an international security environment of flux and uncertainty.

As noted above, the September 11 terrorist attacks deepened administration's commitment. The *QDR* announced a refocused and revitalized missile defense program, "shifting from a single-site 'national' missile defense approach to a broad-based research, development, and testing effort aimed at deployment of layered missile defenses" to protect forward-deployed forces, the U.S. homeland, and American friends and allies.²²

Washington's announcement of its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in December 2001 thus represents the final act in the process of the treaty's eroding relevance to U.S. security priorities in a post-Cold War world, notwithstanding the warnings from Moscow. Prior to the move, the Treaty of Moscow signed by Presidents Bush and Putin in May 2002 possibly testifies to a stronger appreciation of this fact in Russia than has been evident among Washington's Western critics.²³ The ABM made a virtue of necessity, but the emergence of technologies that make missile defense more practically plausible than ever --- combined with the nature of new missile threats --- gives a fundamentally new cast to the issue of responsible security policy. As long as deterrence was the best of the unsavory options, adherence to it was not inherently irresponsible. As one of the more thorough studies of U.S. nuclear policy of the 1990s concludes, "choosing to base deterrence indefinitely on the threat to unleash a nuclear holocaust is immoral" and "a refusal to explore potentially viable alternatives is bizarre."²⁴ The United States is committed to missile defence. Given its resilience from the mid-1980s to the present, it is a prudent assumption that Washington will remain committed to it in one or another form. The practical political question properly concerns what form this will be and where it will lead.

The most frequent assertion made by opponents of missile defence is that the deployment of missile defenses by the United States will provoke a new international arms race. While such a negative response from major powers such as Russia and China is certainly possible, there is no *inherent* threat to internationally accepted non-proliferation principles stemming from the advancement of missile defence technology. A choice for defence is not of itself a choice against deterrence. Having attempted unsuccessfully to persuade the Bush administration to abide by the ABM, President Putin has felt politically compelled not to expand Russia's offensive arsenal but rather to make sweeping cuts to it according to the terms of the Moscow treaty.²⁵ Putin would have preferred a revision of the ABM treaty, but countermeasures such as an increase in offensive weapons would be of little strategic benefit and would be financially onerous for a government dealing with Russia's current problems.²⁶

Additionally, the Russian military and civilian leadership are aware of the nature of Western concerns. As early as 1995 a dangerous trend of proliferation among developing states was well underway. A policy response ought necessarily to supplement traditional non-proliferation mechanisms such as the NPT and MTCR with programs to address the emerging threat directly, including counter-proliferation.²⁷ The MTCR in particular is based on partly erroneous assumptions about what is required to manufacture ballistic or cruise missiles. Prominent among the trends in proliferation of the 1990s is the fact that countries seeking a missile capability need not possess cutting-edge science in order to reach that goal.²⁸ Iraq is not unique. Syria's Scud-B missiles are indigenously produced and have become the backbone of Syria's strategic calculations vis-à-vis Israel. Iran successfully tested a Shihab-3 missile in July while Israeli and Palestinian leaders were negotiating at Camp David.²⁹ Yet while traditional non-proliferation agreements have not contained the growth of the missile threat, they need not be discarded as failures.