

investigated defense systems against missile attack but rejected the option for interrelated reasons of strategic philosophy and technical practicality. The United States adhered officially to the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), according to which peace between the superpowers was based on mutual vulnerability to nuclear destruction, no matter which side chose to initiate an attack.<sup>13</sup>

The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 was a symbol of superpower stalemate institutionalized by the doctrine of MAD. The attractiveness of the doctrine was always dependent on the fact that the available technology of the time was too primitive to permit the development of an effective defence system. When the Reagan administration unveiled the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in 1983, MAD and the ABM Treaty came under scrutiny, again for reasons philosophical and practical. Ossified thinking about the ABM Treaty made SDI seem radical, because, as Colin Gray captured it at the time, "this was the first presidential endorsement of the idea of defending the country to have been issued in more than twenty years."<sup>14</sup> The administration viewed arms-control agreements skeptically, but it additionally charged that Moscow had violated the ABM Treaty and thus the principle of mutual vulnerability upon which the treaty was based.<sup>15</sup> Equally, the emergence of laser and particle beam technologies, high-speed battle-management computers, and high-grade optics had made the development of strategic and tactical missile defenses more plausible than had been the case a decade earlier. The political momentum behind SDI faded as the Reagan administration and the Cold War drew to a close. The first Bush administration and the Clinton administration both reduced the resources committed to strategic defence and reordered its priorities.

Continuing progress with new technologies alone nonetheless sustained an articulate missile defence policy community in the United States. Because the initial commitment to the ABM had been informed by the technological limitations of the time, a strategic philosophy favoring missile defense capabilities and the revolution in new technologies fed off each other. By the late 1980s security scholars were discussing missile defence with regard to the emergence of China and potential security contingencies over Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.<sup>16</sup> Their apprehensions were vindicated when in March 1996 China attempted to intimidate Taiwan by conducting missile tests in the Taiwan Strait and the Clinton administration felt obliged to dispatch a naval task force to the region in answer to Beijing's threats.<sup>17</sup> Like North Korea, moreover, China has been an agent of missile proliferation. In the early 1990s the Clinton administration applied economic pressure in order to bring Beijing into compliance with the MCTR yet made only incremental progress in getting China to commit to the "parameters" of the regime. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Bush administration sought Beijing's cooperation on anti-terrorist intelligence, law enforcement, and proliferation issues but made little headway, much less a breakthrough.<sup>18</sup>

Whereas President Clinton gave only reluctant attention to missile defence --- yet committed a good deal of public rhetoric to the threat of the missile capabilities, not only of revisionist states such as China but also of the "rogue states,"<sup>19</sup> such North Korea, Iran and Iraq --- the administration of George W. Bush has accorded high priority both to NMD in principle and the threat posed by rogue states in particular.<sup>20</sup> The reemerging missile defence debate of the 1990s took place against a backdrop of continuing erosion of faith in arms control agreements in the U.S., symbolized most clearly on the Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in October 1999. The commission report tabled by Donald H. Rumsfeld, now Secretary of Defense, in July 15, 1998 is the cornerstone of the Bush administration's policy on missile defences. Many of the report's concerns are integrated in to the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*.<sup>21</sup> Together with the congressionally mandated *Nuclear Posture Review*, these reports testify to American