

lack of forthrightness regarding the administration's intentions.⁴⁹ Moreover, American interpretations of the potential threats to the United States and its allies have broadened so radically since September 11 that the rank order of NMD among Washington's defence and security priorities is anything but immutable. Prior to the September 11 attacks a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center indicated that public opinion on missile defences ranged between ambivalent and negative; after the attacks the same organization found that the public favored offensive and preventive action over homeland defence as the best response to terrorism.⁵⁰ In other words, President Bush's policy of preemptive action has potential support among the American public but the popular appeal of missile defences among the array of security policy choices facing the United States is comparatively weak. As the American domestic debate focuses more closely on cost-benefit questions, the proponents of an ambitious missile defence program are likely to find progress more difficult. Congressional resistance is indeed already sharpening, in the continuing concern of the Senate Armed Services Committee over the administration's various NMD research projects -- most notably in the area of "systems integration" for linking the various technologies into a single system.⁵¹

In the current international security environment deterrence, defence, and diplomacy represent complementary aspects in practical multilateral efforts to cope with missile proliferation, whatever the natural tensions between them theory. Both the uncertain direction and pace of scientific progress and the domestic politics of missile defence in the United States testify to the probability that Bush administration will readdress the emphasis it has placed on the principle of defence and the fiscal resources it has allotted to NMD.⁵² For democratic states with a nuclear capacity deterrence will remain effective against a good many opponents who have recently acquired crude missile capabilities. But the past decade's experience in the proliferation and use of missiles is such that it would be folly not to pursue in the short-term technologies such as TMD which can shield peace-support operations in some of the most dangerous regions of instability. Equally it would be irresponsible not to advocate in the long-term a global surveillance system for transparency and confidence-building among potential adversaries. This latter goal calls above all for creative diplomacy in moving beyond traditional arms-control vehicles such as the MTCR and the NPT, possibly to focus international attention on states of particular concern but certainly to cultivate cooperation among states interested in sharing early-warning data in pursuit of transparency and calculability.

All is not lost, lastly, for traditional arms control. Despite the weaknesses of the MTCR, states from regions as volatile as the Middle East, such as Egypt and Iran, have made incremental steps toward accepting its spirit and guidelines.⁵³ The transparency offered by global surveillance systems should be incorporated in to a reconstituted and more broadly multilateral MTCR, geared above all to enhance confidence and calculability among potential adversaries, while identifying and isolating states which refuse cooperation in a new regime of truly mutual benefit. As a suppliers cartel, the MTCR has failed the cause of non-proliferation.

The reality is that missile defences are now necessarily an integral part of responsible thinking about arms control by civilized states in a post-ABM world --- to degrade the value of ballistic and cruise missiles to rogue regimes and terrorists on the one hand and to protect peace-support operations on the other. The sharing of early warning data and the development of global surveillance, in a limited format to begin with, holds out the possibility of still greater security from WMD and the proliferation thereof.