

ever guarantee their independence. To do so now would be “reckless and irresponsible,” Kurth says. It would “require of the American statesmen of the 21st century a level of sophistication and determination that would have amazed those of the 20th.”

Kurth sees two alternatives to the Bush plan: admit Russia to NATO or the Baltic trio to the European Union. But Washington won’t back the former idea and the EU, reluctant to take on more poor members, won’t back the latter.

Europe and Missile Defense

“Missile Defense and the Transatlantic Security Relationship” by Wyn Q. Bowen, in *International Affairs* (July 2001), Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 350 Main St., Malden, Mass. 02148.

Now that the Bush administration has shown its determination to push ahead with an ambitious “layered” ballistic missile defense system, America’s European allies have softened their opposition. Yet a “transatlantic schism” is not out of the question, warns Bowen, a lecturer at Britain’s Joint Services Command and Staff College.

The big European powers—Britain, France, and Germany—are not alarmed by U.S. intelligence estimates that say North Korea, Iran, or perhaps Iraq may be only a dozen years away from the ability to build long-range missiles. They doubt such weapons would be used, are skeptical that a technologically feasible defense can be built, and prefer “constructive engagement” with potential aggressors. Above all, they worry how Russia will react to a missile defense system.

The Bush administration has done one important thing to allay Europe’s fears. By deciding last February to extend the zone of protection to include its allies—only the United States was defended in the Clinton administration’s more modest plan—it eased concerns that missile defense would create a “Fortress America” mentality and spur America’s unilateralist tendencies.

Yet the Europeans still worry about Russia’s reaction, as well as China’s. A Russia provoked by a unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (which stands in the way of the Bush plan), or left feeling vulnerable by measures that undermined nuclear deterrence, might be tempted to build more offensive nuclear weapons. That would undermine European stability and put

pressure on Europe’s two nuclear powers, France and Britain, to make costly additions to their own arsenals. A deal to include Russia under the missile defense umbrella or to share the technology with Moscow could pose the same problem: The French and British deterrents would also be compromised.

At issue, too, is the architecture of any future system: What kinds of interceptors would be used and where would they be based? Would there be one command and control center, or more?

Cost is another consideration. The European states’ traditionally skimpy defense budgets are declining sharply (overall, by five percent annually in real terms), even as the European Union struggles to build an all-European “rapid reaction” force of some 60,000 troops. Europe doesn’t want to be called on to help pay for a system expected to cost more than \$50 billion by 2015 (although German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has declared that his country has a “vital economic interest in helping to develop missile defense technology”). Bowen suggests that a “grand bargain” may be possible: The United States guarantees nuclear security, while Europe assumes the burden of humanitarian intervention in places like the Balkans.

It’s encouraging that the Bush administration is now consulting its European allies, Bowen says. But one thing seems nonnegotiable in Europe’s capitals: Washington must “reach an agreement with Russia to amend the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, or at least not withdraw prior to engaging in serious discussions to seek an accommodation.”