

## **Bush's Star Wars plans: double trouble**

When U.S. President Clinton, pressured by political considerations, initiated plans for a National Missile Defense System, he proposed a limited land-based system, costing \$60 billion and consisting of 100 interceptor missiles located in Alaska, backed by a network of early warning satellites, ground-based radars and battle management computers. In the words of former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the system would be designed to shoot down "a few tens" of incoming missiles. With serious concern the system could ever work and worried about allied support for a system that will breach the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, President Clinton decided to defer a decision on deployment of the system until sometime in 2001.

With the election of President George W. Bush defense contractors, promoting a larger and even more expensive system, have found stronger support. During his election campaign President Bush said, that despite opposition from Russia, China and European allies he would deploy a Star Wars missile system as soon as possible. Bush also appears intent on a multi-layered system designed with even more launch sites on land, sea and even in space. For such a system U.S. taxpayers will pay \$122.7 billion between now and 2015, according to an analysis of Congressional Budget office figures.<sup>i</sup> The Center on Strategic and International Studies has suggested an even higher cost at \$240 billion, four times the estimated cost of the Clinton/Gore plan.<sup>ii</sup>

President Bush's clear commitment to Star Wars has already provoked a strong response from other nuclear weapons countries. Russian President Putin has condemned George Bush's escalation of the project, warning it would "irreparably damage global stability". In earlier responses to President Clinton's more limited proposal Russia and China both threatened to walk away from all ongoing disarmament talks.

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who in his confirmation hearings described the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty as "ancient history", will

spearhead President Bush's Star Wars plan. Rumsfeld, who in 1998 was awarded the military defense lobby's "Keeper of the Flame" award, has never been friendly to nuclear arms control and disarmament. He opposed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) II agreement and ratification of both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Rumsfeld also chaired the commission which filed a 1998 report grossly exaggerating the nuclear threat posed by so called "rogue states" or "states of concern". The report systematically ignored the obstacles developing countries face accessing military hardware and claimed they could acquire ballistic missiles within "five years of a decision to do so."

Other key players include Stephen J. Hadley, a Star Wars advocate and Bush foreign policy team member, whose Washington law firm represents Lockheed Martin, one of the defense contractors for the proposed system and Vice-President Richard Cheney, a former board member for TRW, another Star Wars contractor. Cheney's wife is also on the board of Lockheed Martin. The Bush team is guided by foreign policy put together at the Republican National Convention by a committee chaired by Bruce Jackson, vice-president for corporate strategy and development at Lockheed Martin.

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<sup>i</sup> Council for Livable World Report, April 25, 2000 – [www.clw.org/ef/cbobmdreport.html](http://www.clw.org/ef/cbobmdreport.html)

<sup>ii</sup> Quoted in "Tangled Weg: The Marketing of Missile Defense 1994-2000, by William Hartung and Michelle Ciarrocca, <http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/tangled.htm>