

Stop Star Wars

Star wars is likely lead to a new arms race, make the US more aggressive in its foreign policy and create new targets for attack, including the UK. Below are a selection of quotes from political leaders, military commanders, parliamentarians, media commentators and foreign affairs specialists on Star Wars (National Missile Defence).

Star wars will lead to a new arms race

"If you look at world history, ever since men began waging war, you will see that there's a permanent race between sword and shield. The sword always wins. The more improvements that are made to the shield, the more improvements are made to the sword. We think that with these [anti-missile] systems, we are just going to spur swordmakers to intensify their efforts."

French President Jaques Chirac, New York Times on December 17 2000

"Within the scientific community there is widespread scepticism that such (NMD) systems could ever work effectively, and real concern that their deployment cold lead to a new arms race, set back nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policies, and create new incentives for missile proliferation. I trust that states will weigh these factors very carefully before embarking on a path that could jeopardize the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and that may reduce, rather than enhance, global security."

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General ,30 August 2000, United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization"

"We call on the USA to consider the consequences for disarmament and non proliferation of developing a national missile defense system, and to refrain from pursuing this project,"

Anna Lindh, Swedish Foreign Minister, February 8, 2001, Nordic Business Report, "Sweden Urges U.S. to Abandon NMD"

"National missile defence at the instigation of the Americans has the capacity to cause severe damage to NATO. More than that, it has the capacity to refuel a nuclear arms race, particularly in Asia. Deployment of national missile defence could result in the Chinese deciding to increase their nuclear arsenal, with the risk of a corresponding and chilling escalation by India and Pakistan: the domino theory in reverse."

Menzies Campbell, Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, House of Commons, 7 Jun 2000 : Column 349

"I dont think this [NMD] is the right road... this is what I call the road of pessimism, the road of abandonment of non proliferation, which was at the heart of common policy, the policy of the international community."

General Jean-Pierre Kelche, French armed forces chief of staff February 9, 2001, Associated Press, "Europe Unhappy With U.S. Missile Plan"

"...The establishment of the missile defense system runs the risk of halting and reversing multilateral progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons."

New Zealand, Foreign Minister Phil Goff and Disarmament Minister Matt Robson: World Wary About Bush's Missile Defense Plan", Associated Press, 2 May 2001

" [There are] fears that deployment of NMD will be destabilising in terms of its impact on strategic arms control. Strategic stability would be undermined if Russia and China felt obliged to respond to NMD by enhancing their offensive nuclear capabilities. This would adversely affect the progress of nuclear arms control which, in turn, could have serious repercussions for the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. NMD might also trigger an arms race, particularly in regions such as East Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent which are already volatile."

House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Select Committee, 8th Report, 1999-2000, "Weapons of Mass Destruction, August 2000

"It is in the interests of the United States as well as in the interests of Britain to maintain strategic stability and not to create a situation in which the whole fabric of arms control begins to unravel. NMD potentially could be so serious as to unravel the whole basis of strategic arms control"

Professor John Baylis, Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth - April 4th 2000, Evidence to House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee

"On the part of other nuclear powers historically engaged in competition with the US a natural response would be measures to offset the unilateral advantage of deploying strategic missile defences, to ensure survival after a [nuclear] first strike, to prepare to overcome or disable the missile defences of the United States. That means 'good-bye' to radical reductions and research and development restraint, 'welcome' to new arms race, to an accelerated development of new technologies and techniques, to make the defended territory vulnerable again and retain deterrence at all costs."

Professor John D. Steinbruner, Professor of Public Policy, University of Maryland, Director of Centre for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM). Non-Resident senior fellow at Brookings Institute and academic advisor to Carnegie Corporation of New York. Speech on NMD to Danish parliamentarians, Copenhagen, 25.4.01

"As President Vladimir Putin said, 'building the National Missile Defense would initiate an arms race between attacking and defensive systems around the world, not just between two countries as in the Cold War. The cure will be more dangerous than the illness...' He warned that 'instead of protecting itself and eliminating the proliferation of missiles and missile technology, the move will breed a real missile boom and shatter accords that limit and destroy weapons.' In other words, world security will be undermined, and it will all be America's doing..."

Russian Defense Minister, Igor Sergeyev in an interview with Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 2000

"While the benefits of the proposed anti-ballistic missile system are dubious, the dangers created by a decision to deploy are clear. It would be difficult to persuade Russia or China that the United States is wasting tens of billions of dollars on an ineffective missile system against small states that are unlikely to launch a missile attack on the U.S. The Russians and Chinese must therefore conclude that the presently planned system is a stage in developing a bigger system directed against them. They may respond by restarting an arms race in ballistic missiles and having missiles in a dangerous "launch-on-warning" mode. Even if the next planned test of the proposed anti-ballistic missile system works as planned, any movement toward deployment would be premature, wasteful and dangerous."

Federation of American Scientists, letter to President Clinton, July 2000, signed by 50 Nobel Laureates...full text and signatories at the Stop Star Wars website.

"..in the short run it is highly probable that Russia and China will attempt to build up their offensive deterrent forces if they fear that there is no multilateral solution to the problem presented by national missile defence."

Baroness Williams of Crosby, House of Lords Hansard, 2 May 2001, Column 1916

Relations with China

"A decision to deploy could...actually increase the threat against us...A major increase in Chinese missile defence deployments could heighten Indian concerns and lead it to increase its nuclear arsenal, which could then trigger a response from Pakistan. Harder to forecast, but at least as worrisome, is how Japan, Korea and Taiwan would react to this increase in regional military threat."

William Perry, US Secretary of Defense (1993-1997), speaking at the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues, Canada, 16 February 2001

"U.S. plans for NMD are viewed by China as a sign of increased hostility toward their country. Current plans for NMD deployment are likely to serve as a catalyst for China to accelerate nuclear weapons modernization, since it believes that even a simple missile defense configuration will leave its nuclear arsenal vulnerable. A deployment decision at this time may also make U.S. cooperation with China on a range of issues more difficult, particularly with respect to Taiwan and regional security questions. In addition, the U.S. plans to expand trade and economic relations with China would be adversely affected by a precipitous NMD deployment decision."

Letter to President Clinton, June 2000, signed by Jan Berris, Vice President, National Committee on United States-China Relations, Elizabeth Economy, Senior Fellow for China, Deputy Director, Asia Studies Council on Foreign Relations and forty two other specialists in China/ US relations. Full text and signatories at www.stopstarwars.org

"In its [China's] perspective, NMD is not only a wrong approach to the security of the United States but may also have a long term negative impact on the stability and peace of the world at large...."

Major-General Pan Zhengqiang, former director, Institute of Strategic Studies at the PLA National Defence University, Beijing, writing in "American Missile Defence. Views from China and Europe", Oxford Research Group, 2000 www.oxfrg.demon.co.uk

Relations with Russia

"Current plans for NMD present Russia with an intractable policy dilemma that could trigger major security and economic problems. Even a limited NMD system poses an implicit threat to Russia's deterrent force. Russian military analysts consider this an unacceptable risk that would require a retention of Russia's still enormous strategic and tactical nuclear arsenal...."

"Russia has made it clear that it views NMD plans as a sign that the United States is less committed to nuclear arms control, despite reassurances to the contrary. As a result, Russia is likely to reduce its commitment to missile reductions -- which could prompt some nations, particularly in Asia, to consider the acquisition or development of nuclear weapons"

Letter to President Clinton, June 2000, signed by Gary Bertsch, Professor of Political Science, Centre for International Trade and Security, University of Georgia, Joseph Cirincione, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and others. Complete text and signatories at www.stopstarwars.org

"[Bush's position] appears to be that we will give the Russians an option to sign on to whatever form of defence we decide to build, but if they do not, we will give notice and abandon the ABM Treaty without regret, making it impossible for either side to know how far the other will go in deploying strategic defences. Perhaps the Russians will buy into all of this. If they do, we could have a fatally flawed nuclear relationship, by mutual agreement. ...

On the other hand, if the Russians do not buy in, we will end up with an open field for a new arms race: no arms control agreement to formally confine offensive nuclear weapons; no agreement to regulate defensive systems; and no agreement to prevent renewed testing and diversification of nuclear weapons. That's not win-win. It's not even win-lose. It's lose-lose."

Leon Fuerth, Former National Security Advisor to Al Gore, the Washington Post, 20 February 2001

"If we proceed to deploy national missile defenses unilaterally and in a manner other nations may find threatening, we risk a new Cold War, Cold War II. It could prompt Russia to keep nuclear weapons that they are ready to dismantle, and it could prompt China to deploy more nuclear weapons than it would otherwise build. Those greater numbers of nuclear weapons increase the risk of proliferation to nations and terrorist groups seeking to acquire nuclear material or nuclear weapons. These consequences could make the United States less secure rather than more secure..."

Senator Carl Levin, Ranking Democrat on Armed Services Committee, Reaction to Bush Speech on National Missile Defense, Press Release, 2 May 2001

Star Wars will make the US more aggressive

"missile defense is about preserving America's ability to wield power abroad. It's not about defense. It's about offense. And that's exactly why we need it."

New Republic, Senior Editor Lawrence Kaplan, February 2001

"People have good reason to believe that Washington seeks through NMD and absolute military superiority to ensure its perfect security. On that interpretation, it seems pointless to debate whether NMD is defensive or offensive as the two attributes together constitute one comprehensive military capability. To augment the former makes a country more daring with the latter. This is true not least in the nuclear field."

Major-General Pan Zhengqiang, former director, Institute of Strategic Studies at the PLA National Defence University, Beijing, writing in "American Missile Defence. Views from China and Europe", Oxford Research Group, 2000

"... the clear implication is that the American missile defense program is not intended to operate independently but rather as a supplement to pre-emptive attacks by United States offensive forces... Voluntary reductions in the nuclear weapons component at the level of 1500 warheads are apparently being discussed by the Bush administration, but those provisions would not remove or even fundamentally alter the pre-emptive potential of the United States."

Professor John D. Steinbruner, Professor of Public Policy, University of Maryland, Director of Centre for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM). Non-Resident senior fellow at Brookings Institute and academic advisor to Carnegie Corporation of New York. Speech on NMD to Danish parliamentarians, Copenhagen, 25.4.01

Making the UK a target for attack

"The Government have made it clear that, in the light of a series of careful reviews of the United Kingdom's security, we apprehend no immediate threat to the UK from so-called rogue states or the proliferation of nuclear weapons."

UK Defence Secretary Geoffrey Hoon MP, House of Commons, Official Report, 15 Jan 2001, Column 4

"The necessary upgrades to Thule [Greenland], Fylingdales and Menwith Hill [UK] are not permitted under the current ABM treaty. The upgraded X-band radar sites would become the forward eyes of an NMD system. They would therefore become the priority targets for any enemy which wished to penetrate a US NMD system."

Sir Timothy Garden, Visiting Professor for Defence Studies, Kings College, London, Distinguished Visiting Fellow and Scholar in Residence at Indiana University, Spring 2001, served on expert panel for UK Governments 1998 Strategic Defence Review. Extract from speech on National Missile Defence presented to Danish parliamentarians, Copenhagen, 25.4.2001