



AmericanRhetoric.com

Chuck Hagel

Missile Defense Announcement and North Korea

delivered 15 March 2013, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C.



[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio]

Today, I'm announcing a series of steps the United States will take to stay ahead of the challenge posed by Iran and North Korea's development of longer-range ballistic missile capabilities.

The United States has missile defense systems in place to protect us from limited ICBM attacks, but North Korea in particular has recently made advances in its capabilities and has engaged in a series of irresponsible and reckless provocations.

Specifically, North Korea announced last month that it conducted its third nuclear test, and last April displayed what appears to be a road-mobile ICBM. It also used its Taepodong-2 missile to put a satellite into orbit, thus demonstrating progress in its development of long-range missile technology.

In order to bolster our protection of the homeland and stay ahead of this threat we are taking four steps:



AmericanRhetoric.com

First, we will strengthen homeland missile defense by deploying 14 additional Ground-Based Interceptors (GBIs) at Ft. Greely, Alaska. That will increase the number of deployed Ground Based Interceptors from 30 to 44, including the four GBIs at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. These additional GBIs will provide a nearly 50 percent increase in our missile defense capability.

Second, with the support of the Japanese government, we are planning to deploy an additional radar in Japan. This second TPY-2 or tippy-two radar will provide improved early warning and tracking of any missile launched from North Korea at the United States or Japan.

Third, as directed by Congress, we are conducting Environmental Impact Studies for a potential additional GBI site in the United States. While the Administration has not made any decision on whether to proceed with an additional site, conducting Environmental Impact Studies will shorten the timeline for construction should that decision be made.

And fourth, we are restructuring the SM-3 IIB program. As many of you know, we had planned to deploy the SM IIB as part of the European Phased Adaptive Approach. The purpose was to add to the protection of the U.S. homeland already provided by our current GBIs against missile threats from the Middle East. The timeline for deploying this program had been delayed to at least 2022 due to cuts in congressional funding. Meanwhile, the threat matures. By shifting resources from this lagging program to fund the additional GBIs as well as advanced kill vehicle technology that will improve the performance of the GBI and other versions of the SM-3 interceptor, we will be able to add protection against missiles from Iran sooner while also providing additional protection against the North Korean threat.

Let me emphasize the strong and continued commitment of the United States to NATO missile defense. That commitment remains ironclad. The missile deployments the United States is making in phases one through three of the European Phased Adaptive Approach, including sites in Poland and Romania, will still be able to provide coverage of all European NATO territory as planned by 2018.

The collective result of these four decisions will be to further improve our ability to counter future missile threats from Iran and North Korea, while maximizing increasing scarce taxpayer resources.



AmericanRhetoric.com

The American people expect us to take every necessary step to protect their security at home and U.S. strategic interests abroad, but they expect us to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible. By taking the steps I've outlined today, we will strengthen our homeland defense, maintain our commitments to our allies and partners, and make clear to the world that the United States stands firm against aggression.

Thank you.



[Q&A]

SecDef Hagel: Bob?

Q: Mr. Secretary, can you with confidence that the Ground-Based Interceptors in Alaska would actually shoot down a Korean missile if fired at the U.S., given the very poor test performance of this Interceptor?

SecDef Hagel: Well, as you know there was a[n] issue regarding our gyro guidance system. As you probably know, we are going to further test later this year. We have confidence in our system. And we certainly will not go forward with the additional 14 interceptors until we are sure that we have the complete confidence that we will need. But -- But the American people should be assured that our interceptors are effective.

Q: Can I follow up on that, sir, -- [second reporter cuts in]

Q: So, when do you think these 14 interceptors will be fielded? And...also, if you could, do you really believe that a -- a deterrent will work against a country like North Korea?

SecDef Hagel: Well, we're looking at having all 14 interceptors in place by FY 2017 -- 2017. The reason that we're doing what we're doing and the reason we're advancing our program here for homeland security is to not take any chances -- is to stay ahead of the threat and to assure any contingency. And that's -- that's why we've made the decisions that we have.



AmericanRhetoric.com

Q: Mr. Secretary, in hindsight, was it -- was it a mistake to take Missile Field 1 offline and now having to spend the money to reactivate it?

SecDef Hagel: Well, I'm going ask either the Vice Chief [James ("Sandy") A. Winnefeld, Jr.] or the Undersecretary [James N. Miller, Ph.D.] to answer that question because they've been here through the process. I'll take one more, then I'll -- we'll get back to that question.

Q: What is the estimate for when North Korea would actually have a true intercontinental ballistic missile armed with a nuclear warhead?

SecDef Hagel: Well, one of the reasons, again, we're doing what we're doing, based on the intelligence we had, is to assure that whatever their timelines are, that we're not reacting to those timelines, that we're ahead of any timelines of any potential threat.

Q: Is 2017 ahead of the North Korean timeline?

SecDef Hagel: Well, we -- we feel confident that to have the 30 in place now and an additional 14 -- be 44 by the end of 2017 -- that gives our -- our country the security it needs, and the people need to be reassured that that security is there.