

## *The Empty Promise of Global Missile Defense*

Frida Berrigan and William D. Hartung

The Bush administration has been widely criticized worldwide for its go-it-alone foreign policy. But in one area the administration is enthusiastically embracing multilateralism, along with the Pentagon and U.S. defense corporations. All are working hard to get other countries to buy into their internationally unpopular missile defense program by giving their corporations a piece of the Star Wars action.

The U.S. aerospace conglomerate Boeing has struck an unprecedented deal with British BAE Systems to cooperate on research and development for the Bush administration's multi-billion dollar ballistic missile defense program. Industry insiders suggest that the deal, which would promote collaboration between the two firms on command and control technologies, was formally announced on July 24 at the Farnborough International Air Show outside of London.

While analysts tout the potential technical gains of collaboration between firms, the expected political payoff outweighs all other factors. Among missile defense boosters, the hope is that cooperation between U.S. and British defense corporations will become a model for the Bush administration's efforts to neutralize the strong global opposition to missile defense. As Baker Spring, research fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, notes "if you can get foreign firms involved, they will bring their countries along."

Missile defense advocates are hoping to apply the logic of pork barrel politics on a global scale. In the "good old days" military contractors would try to spread the work on costly systems like the B-1 bomber across as many congressional districts as possible as a way to make their pet projects invulnerable to budget cuts on Capitol Hill. This globalization of pork barrel politics involves currying international favor for

U.S. defense policy by doling out contracts in as many politically influential countries as possible, and has already been pioneered in the case of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter project, a joint U.S.-UK project that is seeking corporate and governmental partners in Germany, Italy, Turkey, Israel, and Japan.

Europe has been especially critical of Washington's Star Wars plans. But if partnerships with giant U.S. defense firms promising money and jobs help to change their minds, the Boeing-BAE agreement is likely to be the first of many such deals. Defense News reports that other U.S. corporations with missile defense contracts are already exploring cooperative agreements with counterparts like the Netherlands-based European Aeronautics Defense and Space Co., Europe's largest aerospace company. In Japan, Mitsubishi, which has a long history of collaborating with American arms industries, is a major player in U.S.-financed theater missile defense efforts. And U.S. promises of possible future cooperation with Moscow on missile defense are made in part to help Russian President Vladimir Putin win support for the Bush-Putin nuclear arms accord—which places no formal limits on U.S. missile defense development—by dangling the prospect of new business in front of ailing Russian military enterprises.

This strategy fits into Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's plans to globalize missile defense. Last year Rumsfeld dropped "National" from National Missile Defense, with officials now referring to the program as a "global missile defense system." A delegation from the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency will embark on an international tour to NATO and Asian allies later this month to discuss missile defense cooperation. The Pentagon hopes they will agree to basing rights for radar and interceptors, as well as provide technical assistance. The

Pentagon has already outlined plans to base radar in Turkey to serve as an early warning system for missiles launched from the Middle East, to station interceptors in Central Europe, and to deploy radar on British ships.

At first glance, it seems there's plenty of missile defense "pork" to spread around. The United States has spent more than \$90 billion on missile defense projects since 1983. But these expenditures pale in comparison to the \$200 billion or more it will cost to build the multi-tiered missile defense system envisioned by Sec. Rumsfeld and his fellow Star Warriors at the Pentagon. With \$7.8 billion being spent in 2002, missile defense is already the most expensive research and development program in the Pentagon budget. An internal memorandum by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz suggests that figure could hit \$11.1 billion per year by 2007.

But behind the appearance of Star Wars largesse for our allies, serious questions lurk. How much "sharing" between American and overseas contractors will actually occur, and what economic impact will it have? The major U.S. companies, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and TRW, have already racked up long-

term contracts for missile defense worth in excess of \$20 billion. According to a new study by the World Policy Institute, these "Big Four" contractors split two-thirds of all missile defense contracts awarded by the Pentagon between 1998 and 2001. And missile defense work has been highly concentrated geographically, with roughly 90% of the contracts since 1998 going to firms in just four states: California, Alabama, Colorado, and Virginia.

Given the "boutique" nature of missile defense production—the \$11 billion Airborne Laser Project (ABL), for example, is currently slated to produce only 7 aircraft in all—the billions spent on missile defense are likely to have very little "bang for the buck" in terms of generating jobs. Spreading this work out internationally will further dilute any job-creating potential, undermining industry claims that missile defense funding will spur job and economic growth either here or abroad. The highly touted Star Wars pork barrel will more likely turn out to be less than half full for American and international defense workers alike.

Our government is ready to spend \$200 billion or more over the next 15 years on an unprovable system least likely to protect us from a hostile

nation or terrorist bent on attacking U.S. territory. Instead, a portion of these funds should be spent on preventive measures against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The administration could finance the accelerated destruction of U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons and bomb-grade materials, bulk up enforcement of international agreements to stem the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and fund the now-suspended U.S.-North Korean framework agreement to cap Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. These efforts would create at least as many jobs per billion dollars spent on a missile defense program no one is sure will actually work, but they would have a big additional benefit. Instead of sparking a new arms race, as the Bush administration's missile defense program is likely to do, they might actually make the world a safer place.

*(William Hartung  
<hartung@newschool.edu> is the  
president's fellow and Frida  
Berrigan  
<berrigaf@newschool.edu> is a  
research associate at the Arms Trade  
Resource Center at the World Policy  
Institute, and both are military  
analysts with Foreign Policy In  
Focus (online at www.fpif.org).)*