Conference on "The political implications of ballistic missile defence".
Parigi,17-19 X 68.

1) - Programma.
2) - L.W.Martin:Europe and ballistic missile defence.

The Atlantic Institute
L'Institut Atlantique

CONFERENCE ON

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE

October 17-19, 1968*

PROGRAMME

Thursday, October 17

7.30 - 8.15 p.m.	Reception for conference participants at the Union Interalliée, 33, rue Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris 8e.
8.15 p.m.	Dinner

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Friday, October 18

FIRST SESSION 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	BMD and the Strategic Relationship between the Super-Powers The present stage of BMD planning/deployment; its future course (in USA and Soviet Union); its strategic and political implications (a) for the relationship between the two powers; (b) for their position vis-à-vis the other countries.
SECOND SESSION 2 - 5.30 p.m.	BMD and Europe The impact on European-American relations; the changing position of Europe between the two BMD powers; BMD deployment and the political situation in Europe.

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*) With the exception of the reception and dinner on Thursday evening, all meetings will take place at the Atlantic Institute, 24, quai du 4-Septembre, 92 Boulogne-sur-Seine (Tel. 825-5140)

Saturday, October 19

THIRD SESSION 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	BMD and the Alliance The effects of BMD on common defence policy; the position of the two European nuclear forces, France and Britain; BMD and strategic planning; a European BMD?
FOURTH SESSION 2 - 5 p.m.	BMD and Arms Control Towards a new arms race? The effects on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and a comprehensive test ban; a 'thin' vs. a 'full' BMD system; the changing relationship between 'offensive' and 'defensive' weapons.
5 p.m.	Conference disperses.

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PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Prof. Raymond Aron	Professor of Sociology, La Sorbonne, Paris
Mr. Leonard Beaton	Editor, The Round Table, London
Gen. André Beaufre	Director, Institut Français d'Etudes Stratégiques, Paris
Dr. Rolf Björnerstedt	Disarmament Affairs Division, United Nations, New York
Dr. Donald G. Brennan	Hudson Institute, New York
Ambassador Attilio Cattani	President, General Electric Company, Rome
Prof. J. I. Coffey	Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh
Dr. Donald Cotter	Sandia Corporation, Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Ambassador Walter Dowling	Director, The Atlantic Institute, Paris
M. André Fontaine	Foreign Editor, Le Monde, Paris
Dr. Curt Gasteyger	Director of Studies, The Atlantic Institute, Paris

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Prof. Franklyn Griffiths	Acting Director, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto
Mr. Niels J. Haagerup	Diplomatic Correspondent, Berlingske Tidende, Copenhagen
Mr. Arthur Hockaday	Assistant Secretary-General for Defence Planning and Policy, NATO, Brussels
Dr. Johan J. Holst	Strategic Analyst, temporarily Hudson Institute, New York
Brig. Kenneth Hunt	Deputy Director, The Institute for Strategic Studies, London
Prof. William W. Kaufmann	Dept. of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
Prof. L. W. Martin	Professor of War Studies, King's College, London
VLR Dr. C.W. Sanne	Planning Staff, Foreign Office, Bonn
Prof. Thomas C. Schelling	Dept. of Economics, Harvard University
Mr. Helmut Schmidt, MdB	Head of the Social Democratic Parliamentary Party, Bonn
Dr. Robert Shreffler	Director of Nuclear Planning, NATO, Brussels
Prof. Marshall D. Shulman	Director, Russian Institute, Columbia University, New York
Dr. Theo Sommer	Deputy Editor-in-chief, Die Zeit, Hamburg
Dr. Altiero Spinelli	Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

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Dr. Jeremy Stone	Dept. of Economics, Stanford University, Stanford
Mr. J. A. Thomson	Cabinet Office, London
Mr. Adelbert Weinstein	Defence Correspondent, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt
Dr. Thomas W. Wolfe	The RAND Corporation, Washington

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October 17-19, 1968

at the Atlantic Institute, 24, Quai du 4-Septembre, Boulogne-sur-Seine

EUROPE AND BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE

by Lawrence W. Martin

Note: This paper is intended to facilitate recognition of topics for discussion. It is in no way a draft of the larger paper which will, it is hoped, result from the work of the conference.

Discussion of ballistic missile defence, by experts as well as among the public, is frequently bedevilled by proceeding upon disparate assumptions. Sometimes debate revolves around the theoretical consequences of defence becoming possible after a period in which the offence was believed to be unanswerable. Many of the conclusions of such debate would thus be appropriate in practice only if perfect defence became obtainable. Other discussion concerns the more immediate and practical implications of the degree of defence made possible by existing technology. Even here, there is room for confusion as to whether we speak of the capabilities of the systems currently being deployed, of such systems if more intensively established (the "thick" rather than the "thin", for example), or of extrapolations of technology already conceivable (particle barriers, lasers, all-phase interception, etc...). Moreover, in the popular debate at least, there has been no rigorous distinction between different strategic applications of defence technology : between, for instance, population defence and installations intended to secure invulnerability of retaliatory forces. It will therefore be as well for us to make clear in our discussions which particular future possibilities underlie our conclusions.

At present the Soviet Union appears to be deploying, perhaps less than whole-heartedly, an area defence around the Moscow region, capable of early terminal interception, similar to the Nike-Zeus and utilising radiation effects as part of its distinctive mechanism. Other deployments, such as the Tallinn line, are now said by the American Administration to have no significant anti-missile capability. Two questions of considerable importance arise : whether the Soviet Union will extend this deployment and whether much more sophisticated Russian systems will appear. Is the apparent hiatus in deployment evidence of Soviet disenchantment with the notion of defence as such or merely of dissatisfaction with the existing model ? The pattern of Soviet procurement in other fields - naval weapons, for example - should warn us against surprise if a new system emerges after the first has lagged, leaving an apparent generation gap.

The American Sentinel system, procurement of which was announced last year, is said to be an advanced area defence by exoatmospheric interception (Spartan) supplemented by some point protection of the defensive installations (Sprint). Mr. McNamara's chief justification for this investment was defence against a light chinese attack of the kind conceivable in the next decade or so, though he and his spokesmen have also been willing to welcome the incidental ability to counter accidental firings and to inflict some attrition on an assault upon American landbased offensive missile sites by the Russians. To attempt a population defence against the Soviet Union would, according to Mr. McNamara., be counter productive, merely serving to stimulate the wholly adequate Russian capability for devising and producing off-setting counter-measures. Exactly when the relative costs of such a competition would be has now become a subject for hot contention.

There has been some vacillation in the explanation of why a counter-chinese system is necessary. Mr. McNamara's initial justification on San Francisco in September, 1967, stressed supposed chinese irrationality as an explanation of why the overwhelming American deterrent thought satisfactory against Russia would not suffice against China. Later glosses by other

officials minimized simple irrationality and emphasized the temptation the Chinese would be under to launch desperate preemptive attacks during the period when their deterrent remained wholly vulnerable to an American first strike. The 1968 American posture statement, however, reverted very explicitly to the -presumably less transient and determinable - theme of irrationality. In recent months, Mr. Clifford and such spokesmen as Senator Henry Jackson, have cast doubt on the Chinese rationale altogether, and have entertained the notion, which has consistently been a suspicion in the mind of critics, that Sentinel should be regarded as the development stage of a defence against all-comers as well as a device to compel Russia to negotiate about the whole strategic balance.

European reactions to these various developments are governed by the vital concern of America's allies, indeed of all nations, in the relations between the Super-powers and the state of the balance between them. Allies of America must view with alarm any deterioration in Soviet-American relations carrying with it the prospect of conflict. Equally they must have misgivings about any worsening of the relative military strength of the United States that might result in a real or supposed infirmity of purpose in resisting Soviet pressure. The second set of European concerns comprises the specific effects that BMD and reactions to it may have on Europe itself : their consequences, for example, for the future of European nuclear forces and for the relationships of dominance or partnership within the Western alliance.

The general trend of European reaction to the American decision to join Russia in the business of BMD has been overwhelmingly unfavorable. In assessing this reaction it seems fair to say that much official as well as public opinion has been ill-informed on the technological possibilities and prospects. Defence of retaliatory forces as an assurance of invulnerability , and thus of stability, has received little discussion and the debate has almost exclusively concerned defence of population. Such a defence has been generally regarded as provocative and destabilizing by its tendency to erode an opponent's confidence in the assuredness of his retaliatory destructive capability and consequently to stimulate a compensatory increase in offensive forces. The vigour with which opposition on these lines is pushed is reinforced by a general scepticism as

to whether any really effective defence is in fact attainable in the face of the wide variety of counter-measures so widely publicised by American scientific opponents of the Sentinel system. The thought that bad strategic and political consequences may flow from what are actually profitless efforts increases the irritation of critics. Indeed many of these critics, believing as they do that the defence will work very badly under combat conditions but that the offence must build up his force upon pessimistic assumptions, anticipate that the results of a nuclear exchange would be more rather than less catastrophic in the presence of BMD.

Many of the specific objections raised against BMD in Europe undoubtedly draw added vehemence from the belated recognition that there exists no natural, effortless technological plateau upon which a relatively cheap strategic stability can rest. A stratified series of related dangers is perceived : that BMD might combine with other new technolgy, such as MIRVs, to breed faith in the rebirth of counter-force; that the effort, almost certainly successful, to prevent such a rebirth will stimulate a reinvigorated arms race with no natural stopping place like finite deterrence in an undefended world; and that such a race will entail a deterioration in East-West relations, bringing new strains within the Western alliance.

It is difficult to see how any of these anxieties can be decisively refuted or allayed other than by experience. The consequences of BMD might indeed take these forms if the nations concerned choose to react in the ways suggested, whether or not abstract analysis supports the wisdom of such a course. We shall presumably wish to discuss the merits of this outlook. Here, however, it may be sufficient to add one or two preliminary observations.

All students of this question must recognize that the outcome of technological and strategic developments in actual policy is more likely to be determined by the general atmosphere of international relations than is the contrary the case. One might well argue that Czechoslovakia will do more to affect East-West relations and to set the pace of military competition than Sentinel. Certainly this would seem to be true of certain specifically European concerns such as the prospect for a European security system.

Within this overarching political context, the effects of pursuing BMD, in its present forms and beyond, upon strategic relations is a genuinely open matter for argument. The systems currently being procured, and even extensions of them into thick systems, appear quite incapable of placing a Super-power in a position to strike another decisively with anything remotely approaching impunity, unless we assume that one side gives up the technological competition altogether. The advent of BMD is thus an undoubted stimulus to further technological innovation and investment, given present day unrestricted strategic relationships, but it does not do much to make counterforce and first strike an attractive option. In its application to defence of retaliatory forces it is, indeed, a positive discouragement. It is not so clear, however, that deployment of BMD may not impose, as a countermeasure, tactics, such as salvo and saturation attacks, capable of affecting the results of nuclear war if it occurs.

It may also be worth noting that the effect of BMD on the propensity to initiate nuclear war will vary according to the strategic and political circumstances. Would a nuclear power, possessed of substantial if less than perfect defences, behave precisely the same as an undefended power either in the early stages of a crisis - when subordinate decisions may be called for in what only later turns out to be a historical sequence leading to nuclear war - or in the very last stages of confrontation - when the atmosphere is preëmptive and when the alternative of mutual restraint may not seem to be available ?

If it were to appear that even partial BMD might affect nerve and conduct in crisis, we would have to discuss whether symmetrical or asymmetrical deployment is preferable. Here, of course, we enter the broader question of nuclear parity. Mr. McNamara seems to have held the superficially paradoxical view that numerical superiority of a high order was both essential and incapable of affording effective strategic or political ascendancy. Presumably such a margin is valued as a desirable - but not generalisable - assurance of adequacy. One must ask whether parity

or superiority, whichever is the preferable, is better or more attainable if BMD forms part of the exchange ratio.

Once again we must recall, however, that the strategic balance exerts its influence within a political framework. An inferior power may very well hesitate to run risks of nuclear war but the significance of this will depend upon whether it regards particular policies as being in fact risky. This assessment will depend as much on a general opinion of an opponent's character, resolution, and interest, as upon the precise state of the military balance. For Europeans, therefore, the overall image of America and the American relation to Europe is more important than wide variations in the order of battle. Nevertheless behaviour in military competition is itself one of the criteria of character, and a failure to undertake even dubious technological developments may be read as weakness by an opponent who values them highly.

Finally, in discussion of the general considerations about BMD which affect European and others alike, there is the effect upon the arms race and the climate of political relations. It is certainly possible that the American adoption of BMD may provoke energetic Soviet countermeasures of either the offensive or defensive kind. Until recently one might have cited in rebuttal Russian assertions on their own belief that defensive weapons could not be provocative and called for no active responses, but perhaps the recent Soviet inclusion of defensive weapons in the range of forces upon which they are willing to talk about limitations has to be regarded as an abandonment of this position in its pure form. On the other hand, the Soviet Union, as initiator of BMD deployment, is in a poor position to represent or even perhaps regard BMD as alarming. By the same token, Russian motives for investing in BMD, having preceded American deployment, may well prove impervious to offers to abstain or make other strategic concessions. We may wish to debate whether historically the Soviet Union has reacted sharply and directly to American strategic

programmes and, if it has, whether this is as true of defensive as offensive systems. Can we be sure that, as Mr. McNamara seems to assume, the Soviet Union has assured destruction as an overriding strategic goal rather than some other notion of how wars should be threatened and fought ? What is the relative importance of political events and perceived strategic strengths in determining Soviet military dispositions ? It seems important to assess comparisons of Soviet-American qualitative and quantitative military strength in the ligth of differences in domestic politics, military structure , diplomatic purpose and geopolitical situation. Only thus can we appreciate how strategic questions appear to Russian eyes.

The effect that BMD may have on the readiness with which the Super-powers launch, threaten or plausibly seem to threaten hostilities is a matter of vital importance to the Western Europeans who, insofar as they do not rely on simple Soviet forbearance, depend on what is ultimately American willingness to use nuclear weapons in their defence. In recent years, as the United States has become increasingly vulnerable to damage from a Russian attack, such American guaranties have become potentially more costly. Indeed, if we read Mr. McNamara's more recent posture statements literally, the United States does not expect strategic nuclear weapons to do more than deter nuclear attack, though allied countries do continue to be explicitly included in at least this residual assurance. In the last resort, given the present balance of forces, European safety depends upon Soviet lack of certainty that America might not, under indefinable circumstances, take what would prove a suicidal step.

This situation, arising from inability or disinclination to establish a conventional balance, does not at present occasion any very lively misgivings for the reason that hardly anyone believes that a serious test of the system will take place. If political relations in Europe continue to worsen, the debate over American credibility may reawaken, in which case BMD will form part of the balance to come under scrutiny.

It is argued by advocates of an American counter-Chinese BMD system that the purchase of invulnerability in this way will prolong the credibility of the American guarantee of its Asian allies by extended deterrence. This argument is not readily transferable to Europe so long as it continues to be asserted that BMD can afford no substantial defence of population against a sophisticated attack. The case would be different if we accepted the suggestion rehearsed earlier that even partial defences might stiffen behaviour in crises. In doing this, we would have to take account of the possible reciprocal effect of Soviet defences on the Russian proclivity for taking risks. It may be added that, insofar as respect for American resolution has been bolstered by the American reputation for technological supremacy, American adoption of BMD may neutralize what would otherwise have been a Soviet advantage deriving from unilateral exploitation of an impressive line of weapons.

There is a contrary argument that American deployment of BMD may increase the exposure of Europe by enabling the United States to retire into "Fortress America", perhaps increasing Russian need to use Europe as a hostage. This is thought particularly possible because Europe has ceased to have any great signficance for the military security of the United States itself, a trend which there is at present little reason to expect BMD to reverse. Yet it is dubious whether BMD does much to justify such fears except in a misleading, symbolic way. The option of abandoning Europe has always been open to America, especially since the advent of the ICBM, which also brought the incentive. Moreover, such an abandonment is surely more likely to reduce than to increase Europe's value as a hostage. One might indeed argue that the requirements of penetrating American active defence might well detract from the fire brought to bear on Europe. In any case it would surely be unsound to believe that American policy toward Europe will be dominated by this admittedly important technological development. The deep American commitment to security in Western Europe has always rested on more than the technical aspect of immediate military strategy. A more substantial source of anxiety is perhaps the American efforts, stimulated in part by BMD, to achieve a strategic <u>modus vivendi</u> with Russia, may result in reluctance to oppose Russian diplomacy as vigorously as hitherto. Quite obviously some comment upon the Czechoslovakia crisis implies that such a mechanism

is already at work.

Such thoughts relate directly to the future of the Europeans' own nuclear forces. Complete dependence upon an alien power can never be wholly acceptable and everything that casts doubt upon the guarantee is inevitably the occasion for reviewing alternatives. BMD, however, is more commonly said to undermine than to reinforce the case for small nuclear forces by rendering them incapable of penetrating to their targets.

As a general weapon against nuclear proliferation, BMD has severe limitations, for many of the potential nuclear powers do not have Super-powers as enemies and are, moreover, as anxious to redress conventional as nuclear balances. For the Western Europeans the problem is certainly relevant, for their most plausible foe is the Soviet Union, although it is not utterly inconceivable that nuclear forces could play a part in the internal affairs of a fragmenting Western Europe.

Whether the French and British national nuclear forces perform any useful service for their proprietors, with or without BMD, is a vexed question in its own right. While it is never easy to produce a convincing account of the circumstances in which they might be used - and some recent efforts appear unusually strained - it is hard to believe they have no bearing on the deterrent equation in Europe, as they certainly do upon political relations. If this is so, with the procurement of BMD by Russia, destroy the effectiveness of the European forces or, perhaps more important, destroy the domestic basis of faith upon which they depend ? The latter possibility is imponderable but there are several reasons for supposing that, insofar as the European forces have any present military value, BMD will not readily invalidate them.

The European delivery problem is now the same as that of the United States and it seems possible that the European could exploit a variety of methods not central to the Soviet-American strategic balance, incidentally imposing a burdensome defensive task on Russia. It must

also be recalled that the current forms of Soviet BMD are generally believed inferior to the American - themselves far from perfect - and cannot be deployed over the whole of even European Russia for years to come. The European forces are, after all, very probably superior to those that China can possess over the next decade or so and which nevertheless occasion the United States such anxiety. Admittedly Western Europe and China present very different targets and are doubtless also widely disparate in political will and ambition.

The last observation bears directly upon the prospect of Europe combining to produce the major, joint nuclear force of which she is economically and technologically capable. To this possibility the objections are well-known. Most formidable is the absence of the will to do it and to spend the sums required upon armaments. Second comes the difficulty of establishing any institutions to control such a force; notions of joint trusteeship prior to the realisation of true political unity almost certainly underestimate the trying nature of nuclear decision-making. Related to this problem is the special question of the role to be played by the German Federal Republic. None of these obstacles seems likely to be overcome by the incentive of overcoming Russian BMD. Were political circumstances to become favourable to such developments, however, it is highly improbable that BMD would be a decisive objection.

The question frequently arises as to whether Europe should acquire BMD protection for itself. There being no large number of hard targets in Europe and little prospect of very many appearing, discussion must concern the defence of population. For this there are two main arguments, the first the direct purpose of reducing damage in the event of war, the second the removal of a sense of naked inferiority in the years to come when Americans acquire protection. Such a sense might well develop even though experts believed American protection against Soviet attack to be negligible.

The only plausible basis for European BMD, for both technical and economic reasons, would be collaborative. In this case the problems of control might be less, because of the reactive nature of the force, the need for prearranged firing plans and the possibility of engagement only over Western European territory. In practice, one suspects the task of reaching agreement would nevertheless prove difficult. The German problem would also not be wholly eradicated because, whatever arrangements were made; it would be easy for critics to allege that defensive weapons were a backdoor to proliferation of offensive weapons. The most decisive objection to European BMD, however, is the same geographical situation that helps to perpetuate the plausibility of the European deterrents. Proximity makes avaiblable to the Russians too great a variety of methods for devastating Western Europe. Europeans have shown remarkably little concern about the huge Soviet IRBM force aimed at them. This indifference reflects, one suspects, the knowledge that if Russia is determined to destroy Western Europe it can do so. The exact method employed thus ceases to be of absorbing interest. Europe may acquire BMD for a variety of reasons but it seems unlikely at present that the strictly strategic case for it will be convincing.

European reactions to the American decision to procure BMD have been much affected by the decision to justify the move by reference to China. While Europe might not have welcomed an American programme of population defence against Russia, it would at least have been understood. The kind of BMD once said to have been most favored by the American military, defence of retaliatory forces, would have received the best European reception as a stabilizing influence, even though it would have been suspected as the entry of the damage-limiting wedge. To base the justification on China was calculated to arouse the most sceptical reaction. Europe has been notoriously unsympathetic to American anxieties about China and inclined to resent American preoccupation with Asia as a distraction from the more important concerns of Europe. By its alleged

provocative effects on Russia, American BMD against China falls neatly into the category of policies by which the United States endangers European security for illusory purposes in Asia. Basing the case on China also undermines faith in the policy of active, offensive, extended deterrence upon which Europe's own security must rest. Moreover, if the case of China were accepted as conclusive, no concessions by Russia could justify the total American abstention from BMD for which some European hope as the result of arms control agreements. All of these objections are compounded by doubts as to whether the types of intervention in Asia that America is likely to undertake will really be of a kind that would make a Chinese nuclear strike on America a remotely plausible possibility.

The effect that BMD will have upon prospects for arms control is a large subject in its own right with perhaps little special significance for Europe except insofar as it may affect the main Russian-American strategic balance upon which Europe is so peculiarly dependant. Fears that BMD will accelerate the nuclear arms race have generated suggestions that BMD should be forbidden or limited by agreement. Such proposals have been reinforced by the argument that the unrestricted pursuit of a major new branch of technology would run counter to the demand of non-nuclear powers that the price of a non-proliferation treaty should be the acceptance by the Super-powers of curbs on their own arsenals. Many also believe that large programmes of BMD will result in increased production of fissile material, cutting off hopes of progress toward control in this field. Research into advanced forms of defence may also constitute an incentive to intensify nuclear testing. Anti-missile work has already much accelerated the pace of underground testing, thereby impairing the chances of securing a comprehensive testban. If an allow BMD race were to begin, the pressures to resume atmospheric testing and thereby approximate more closely operational conditions for system tests might also grow heavier, though the political inhibitions would be immense.

Whatever restrainsts on the deployment of BMD were instituted, energetic research and development, with accompanying temptation to deploy, must be expected to continue, for the rewards of a break through are too great to concede the sole possibility to an opponent, Moreover, much of the offensive technology, such as MIRVs, which critics are inclined to associate with BMD, have purposes and dynamics of their own. The easy achievement of a virtual standstill in sophisticated weapon technology simply by an attack on BMD is certainly a delusion.

There is a school of thought that argues with some force that strategic stability might be more readily attainable with rather than without BMD. According to this view a mix of offensive and defensive weapons could establish a situation in which the results of war would be less catastrophic than are assured by the high levels of assured destruction sought by present American policy, but still far too terrible to make the initiation of nuclear war a remotely attractive option. One's judgement of this argument will depend as much on assumptions about the underlying psychological foundations of the present strategic balance as on the technological possibilities. It is also not enough to decide the question purely on a bilateral basis. If developments elsewhere in the international system, such as proliferation, provide the Super-powers with incentives extraneous to their mutual relations to persist with BMD, then the alternatives may well appear different. It may be relevant to reflect that Russia, the pioneer of BMD deployment, has for many years faced a multiplicity of nuclear opponents.