

# Documents related to the *US National Missile Defense* debate in year 2000

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## 1 Introduction

The following documents were collected between May and September 2000 in order to follow and analyze the public scientific debate on the *US National Missile Defense* proposal during the year 2000. This debate was abruptly terminated on 2 September 2000 as a consequence of President Clinton's decision to postpone the decision on building the missile shield, leaving to his successor in the White House the responsibility to build it or not.

As a contribution to this debate, I wrote a commentary emphasizing my opinion that the debate on the *US National Missile Defense* was not really accurate and comprehensive enough from a technical point of view, and that for this reason the feasibility potential of this system was underestimated by the opponents to the system.

This commentary was submitted to *Science* and *Nature*, the two world leading weekly magazines read by professional scientists. *Science* accepted the commentary and published an edited abridged version on 8 September 2000.

I will make a more extensive use of the following documents in an analysis I hope to perform next year.

## 2 *Science* and *Nature* documents

1. **U.S. National Defense: Looking at the Whole Package**, by André Gsponer, *Science*, 8 September 2000, page 1688.

This is the published abridged version of a commentary sent the 23 August 2000 to *Science*. The *Science* magazine is the most important professional scientists's weekly in the United States. It is published since more than 100 years by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information on *Science* can be found at [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org).

2. **Technical objections (?) to the US National Missile Defense**, by André Gsponer, submitted to *Science*, 2 pages, August 23, 2000.

This is the full length version of the commentary sent to *Science*.

3. **Technical objections (?) to the US National Missile Defense**, by André Gsponer, submitted to *Nature*, 2 pages, August 18, 2000.

This is the full length version of the commentary sent to *Nature*, one of the oldest and certainly the most prestigious scientific magazine in the world.

4. **Correspondence**, by Julia Clark, 31 August 2000. This is the announcement that my commentary was not accepted by *Nature*.

### 3 Original documents

1. **Letter to Theodore Postol**, by André Gsponer, 1 page, 20 July 2000.
2. **Explanation of Why the sensor in the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV) Cannot reliably Discriminate Decoys from Warheads**, by Theodore Postol, 6 pages, undated, but most probably written in early May 2000.

This is probably the document **prepared for the White House** announced in *The New York Times* of 9 June 2000. It is attachment A of the letter Postol sent to John Podesta, White House Chief of Staff, on 11 May 2000. Theodore Postol did not send me a more substantial document in response to my letter of 20 July 2000 to him.

3. **Budgetary and Technical Implications of the Administration's Plan for a National Missile Defense**, Congressional Budget Office, 37 pages, April 2000.
4. **Countermeasures— A Technical Evaluation of the Operational Effectiveness of the Planned US National Missile Defense System**, by A. M. Sessler et al., MIT/UCS, 175 pages, April 2000.

See press coverage of this report in the section on *Union of Concerned Scientists* documents.

5. **Pushing the Limits — The Decision of National Missile Defense**, by S. W. Young, Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, 56 pages, Second edition, July 2000.

First edition was April 2000.

## 4 Internet documents

1. **Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States Through 2015**, National Intelligence Council, CIA, 14 pages, September 1999.
2. **Cooperative Ballistic Missile Defense**, R.L. Garwin, 11 pages, November 17, 1999.

## 5 *Union of Concerned Scientists* documents

1. **Scientists to Congress: Base NMD Decision on Science, Not Politics**, press release, 2 pages, 12 June 2000.
2. **Researchers Target Flaws in Ballistic Missile Defense Plan**, *Science*, pages 1940-1941, 16 June 2000.
3. **Coverage of UCS/MIT Report *Countermeasures* and related NMD Issues**, 33 pages, 11 May to 6 June 2000.

## 6 Additional documents

1. **National Missile defense: An Indefensible System**, by G. Lewis, L. Gronlund and D. Wright, *Foreign Policy*, pages 120–137, Winter 1999/2000.

This is an often cited critical analysis by a group of MIT/UCS political scientists, with an interesting commentary on **boost phase intercept** by Theodore Postol on pages 132–133.