

**Opening Statement  
Chairman John F. Tierney  
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**

**“Oversight of Missile Defense (Part 2):  
What are the Prospects, What are the Costs?”**

**As Prepared for Delivery**

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Good afternoon, and welcome to you all.

Thank you for being here today, as the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs holds the second oversight hearing in our series on the nation’s missile defense program.

This Subcommittee is undertaking this extensive and sustained oversight of missile defense for three primary reasons.

First, the Missile Defense Agency operates the largest research development program in the Department of Defense, consisting currently of about \$10 billion a year. Since the 1980s, this is a program that has already cost \$120 to \$150 billion or more. As some of have pointed out, this is an amount of time and money already exceeding what we spent on the Manhattan project, the Apollo program, or the Stealth program, and there is no end in sight.

Second, the broader history of missile defense efforts teaches us a number of important lessons. The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service put it this way:

*[E]fforts to counter ballistic missiles have been underway since the dawn of the missile age at the close of World War II. Numerous programs were begun, and only a very few saw completion to deployment. Technical obstacles have proven to be tenacious, and systems integration challenges have been more the norm, rather than the exception.*

Third, the excellent analysis and work of those who are testifying today and at our previous hearing – and others like them – have raised very serious concerns about the efficiency, effectiveness, and even the need for our country’s current missile defense efforts.

At our first hearing, we had an extraordinary discussion about the hard realities of the threats facing our country from intercontinental ballistic missiles versus other

vulnerabilities we face – a discussion which should form the foundation for any wise policy making, but that too often gets ignored, distorted, or manipulated.

Now, we will tackle head-on the questions of what are the prospects of our current missile defense efforts and at what costs. We have the very good fortune today to host some of our nation’s finest minds and top experts on the subject of missile defense. We have a group of people who have literally devoted their lives to understanding these problems, who are more familiar with these issues than anyone in the world, and I am honored to have them here and eagerly await our discussion this afternoon.

When we talk about prospects of missile defense, a number of issues come up that we’ll hear extensively discussed today, for instance, the realism of the testing regime; the pace of testing; fundamental physics constraints; and a mind-numbing variety of serious technical challenges, just to name a few.

One problem, in particular, that comes up again and again is the use of countermeasures. The analysis holds that a country sophisticated enough to build an intercontinental ballistic missile with a miniaturized nuclear warhead – an effort that we learned from the Congressional Research Service at our first hearing that was truly “extraordinary” – would also develop countermeasures that could pose fundamental problems for any missile defense system.

As will be pointed out by at least a couple of our witness today, the CIA itself has acknowledged the wide, potential use of countermeasures.

The 1999 National Intelligence Estimate concludes, and I quote:

*We assess that countries developing ballistic missiles would also develop various responses to U.S. theatre and national defenses. Russia and China each have developed numerous countermeasures and probably are willing to sell the requisite technologies.*

*Many countries, such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq probably would rely initially on readily available technology – including separating RVs, spin-stabilized RV’s, RV reorientation, radar absorbing material, booster fragmentation, low-power jammers, chaff, and simple (balloon) decoys – to develop penetration aids and countermeasures.*

*These countries could develop countermeasures based on these technologies by the time they flight test their missiles.*

My simple question for our panel today is, taking this into account, what are the prospects of success of our current missile defense system and how likely are we going to be able to overcome this fundamental problem in the foreseeable future?

The Missile Defense Agency was born at the moment the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the U.S. and Russia was killed. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld promptly exempted this new agency from normal acquisition, testing, and reporting requirements, and the agency went down a path of “spiral development” that has been carried out, in the words of one of our witnesses today, to an, and I quote, “unworkable extreme.”

A number of our witnesses today will point out the consequences of this, including that we have an incredibly opaque system, and one in which accountability and transparency are greatly sacrificed.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that assuming the Missile Defense Agency continues on its present course, the taxpayers will spend an additional \$213 to \$277 billion dollars between now and 2025. I need to stress that this is in addition to the \$150 billion we have already spent.

In a time of economic hardship, budget deficits, and many pressing and expensive challenges – both foreign and domestic – we need to all ask ourselves – whether you’re a conservative Republican or a liberal Democrat – are we wisely spending the taxpayer’s money here; is there a real threat we are trying to guard against; and are we actually going to have something useful at the end of the day?

That is why we are here today. I now yield to our Ranking Member, Mr. Shays.