Chapter 4

Abrogation of the ABM Treaty and East Asian Strategic Circumstances

On June 13, 2002, six months after President George W. Bush announced that the United States was withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the treaty was invalidated. Intended to stabilize U.S.-Soviet mutual deterrence based on retaliatory nuclear attack, the ABM Treaty banned the deployment of nationwide missile systems to defend against ballistic missile attacks. It also banned the development, testing, and deployment of mobile land-based, sea-based, airborne and space-based ABM systems. By invalidating the treaty, the United States is now able to develop and deploy any missile defense system of its choosing.

Russia and China, however, urged the United States not to abrogate the treaty and develop its own missile defense system, fully aware of the threat posed by these moves. Though it is likely that both nations will take steps to counter the U.S. withdrawal, their reaction so far has been somewhat restrained. This is partly due to their need to cooperate with the United States, for the time being, for their economic development. Also, the missile defense system that the Bush administration intends to deploy will be built piecemeal—as various technologies become available—making it difficult now for Russia and China to form a clear overall picture of the new U.S. system.

This is not to say, however, that the positions taken by Russia and China will remain unchanged. In response to U.S. overtures, Russia is trying to build a "new strategic framework" by promoting political, economic, and security cooperation with the United States. Depending on the success or failure of such an approach, Russia's stance might change. As for China, because it possesses only a limited number of strategic ballistic missiles, the emerging U.S. missile defense system will directly impact its defense policies, far more than Russia's. Therefore, China's true position will not be known until after the United States puts its missile defense system into place and an overall architecture of U.S. missile defense becomes clearer.

1. Conclusion of the ABM Treaty, and Its Significance

The advent of nuclear weapons, together with the development of ballistic missiles as a means to deliver them, has brought about a sea change in military strategy. The unprecedented destructive power of nuclear weapons has meant that the focus of military strategy has shifted from winning a war to deterring an outbreak of one. What made this trend irreversible was the development and buildup of ballistic missiles that can deliver nuclear warheads. The technology required to intercept an incoming ballistic missile—flying at tremendous speed—is so complex that the threat of nuclear retaliation became the only viable "defense," and this demanded possessing a credible retaliatory capability. Attaining a credible retaliatory capability, however, forced the United States and the Soviet Union to increase the number of weapons and delivery systems each possessed out of fear of becoming vulnerable to a first strike from the other side—resulting in an escalating arms race between the two countries. Against this background, the two countries fell into the condition of mutual assured destruction (MAD).

Since the MAD situation effectively dissuaded both the United States and the Soviet Union from initiating nuclear strikes against the other, MAD was considered to stabilize U.S.-Soviet mutual deterrence. In order to maintain this state of affairs, it was necessary to ensure the other side's retaliatory capability, thus restricting the development of an ABM system that would shoot down ballistic missiles. Accordingly, in May 1972, the United

The president of the USA, Richard Nixon, and the general secretary of the USSR, Leonid Brezhnev, signing the ABM Treaty (May 27, 1972) (Tass-Kyodo)

States and the Soviet Union concluded the ABM Treaty, along with an Interim Agreement on Certain Measures with Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. The ABM Treaty allowed for "point defense," namely, the defense of an intercontinental ballistic missile site or each capital by deploying a limited number of land-based anti-ballistic missiles, but banned the deployment of ABM systems designed to defend the entire country. It also banned the development, testing, and deployment of mobile land-based, sea-based, airborne, and space-based ABM systems, thereby legitimizing and institutionalizing the MAD relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

2. The End of the Cold War and the ABM Treaty

(1) The Bush (senior) Administration and the ABM Treaty

The ABM Treaty came into existence—and lasted as long as it did—due to the belief that hostile relations between the United States and the Soviet Union would continue. However, approximately 20 years later, at the end of 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War came to an end, giving rise to voices within the United States, particularly among supporters of missile defense, questioning the continued justification for the ABM Treaty. Yet the Bush administration's view was that the treaty should remain in force, even though it did not clarify which country of the former republics of the Soviet Union was the actual successor state of the ABM Treaty, since parts of the ABM system, such as early warning radar installations, were found not only in Russia, but also in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

As of February 1968, the United States and the Soviet Union were the only countries to possess ballistic missiles, yet when the late 1980s and early 1990s rolled around, other countries hostile to the United States—Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Syria, and Libya, some of whom were suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD: nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons)—also began de-

ploying ballistic missiles. Against this backdrop, the Bush administration began to research and develop "Global Protection against Limited Strikes" (GPALS), consisting of missile interception systems deployed in space, land-based missile defense systems deployed in the United States, and theater missile defense (TMD) systems to defend U.S. allies and U.S. forces overseas. In order to promote research and development of GPALS, in September 1992, the United States proposed an ABM Treaty protocol to Russia that included abolishing restrictions against the development and testing of ABM systems, and constructing six land-based missile interceptor bases (each with 150 interceptor missiles).

(2) The Clinton Administration and the ABM Treaty

The Clinton administration, considering that both the United States and Russia still deployed a large number of strategic nuclear weapons, viewed the ABM Treaty as the cornerstone of stability between the two countries, and acknowledged the need for its existence. At the same time, it sought to study and develop TMD systems, proposing that Russia sign the "First and Second Agreed Statements Relating to the ABM Treaty" that dealt with non-strategic ABMs not banned by the treaty. The Clinton administration also tried to research, develop, and test a national missile defense (NMD) system to the extent permitted by the ABM Treaty, while putting off a decision on deployment. Finally, in September 1997, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the ABM Treaty, one that acknowledged Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine—where the Soviet Union's early warning radar systems for its ABM system had been sited—as the legal successors of the ABM Treaty along with Russia.

The Republican-dominated U.S. Congress, losing patience with the Clinton administration's lack of commitment on the NMD deployment, repeatedly submitted bills—from 1995 on—requiring the government to deploy NMD systems. Yet it wasn't until North Korea tested their *Taepo Dong* missile in August 1998 that this

Table 4-1. Chronology Relating to the ABM Treaty

Jun.	'67	At an U.S.-USSR summit in Glassboro, New Jersey, leaders of the two countries discuss the relevance of restricting the ABM system.
Sep.	'67	U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara announces the deployment of Sentinel ABM systems to defend the entire American nation from ballistic missiles.
Nov.	'69	The U.S. and the USSR start talks on restricting strategic weapons, including ABM systems.
May	'72	The U.S. and the USSR sign an ABM Treaty as part of the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT I).
Jul.	'74	The U.S. and the USSR sign an ABM Treaty protocol that reduces deployment sites of ABM systems from two to one.
Oct	'75	The U.S. completes the deployment of a Safeguard ABM system for the protection of the ICBM base in Grand Forks. However, poor prospects for cost/performance leads to a decision to deactivate the site.
Nov	'78	The Standing Consultative Commission of the ABM Treaty agrees on the interpretation of the phrase "tested in an ABM mode" appearing in Article II of the ABM Treaty.
Mar.	'83	U.S. President Ronald Reagan announces the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).
Oct.	'85	Robert McFarlane, national security advisor to President Reagan, states that although the deployment of space-based ABM systems, and mobile ABM systems based on other physical principles (i.e., lasers, particle beams) are banned, they can still be developed and tested. President Reagan agrees with MacFarlane's interpretation of the treaty, but says that actual research and development of the SDI will be carried out according to the treaty's traditional interpretation.
Feb.	'89	President George Bush (senior) says his administration will vigorously pursue research and development of the SDI.
Jan.	'91	President Bush (senior) announces the "Global Protection Against Limited Strikes" (GPALS), a scaled-down version of the SDI.
Jun.	'91	The USSR unilaterally declares that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) may be effective and viable only if the ABM Treaty is observed.
Jan.	'92	Russia declares that it will succeed to all treaties signed by the former USSR.
Sep.	'92	President Bush (senior) proposes to Russia a protocol to the ABM Treaty that includes a provision for the abolition of restrictions on developing and testing ABM systems.
Jul.	'93	The Clinton administration ends the disputes over the interpretation of the ABM Treaty by confirming its traditional interpretation.
Nov.	'93	The Clinton administration proposes discussions with Russia to define the distinction between strategic ABMs (banned by the ABM Treaty) and non-strategic ABMs in order to facilitate the research and development of Theater Missile Defense (TMD).
Sep.	'97	The U.S. and Russia sign the First and Second Agreed Statements

		Relating to the ABM Treaty that lists non-strategic ABMs not restricted by the ABM Treaty, and a Memorandum of Understanding that confirms that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine are parties to the ABM Treaty.
Jan.	'99	The Clinton administration proposes to Russia an amendment to the ABM Treaty that provides for a limited deployment of a National Missile Defense (NMD) system.
Jul.	'99	President Clinton signs the National Missile Defense Act of 1999.
Sep.	'00	President Clinton announces that he will leave the decision on the deployment of the NMD system to the next administration.
May	'01	In a speech delivered at the U.S. National Defense University, President George W. Bush stresses the necessity of moving beyond the constraints of the ABM treaty.
Dec.	'01	President Bush announces U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.
Jun.	'02	The ABM Treaty is invalidated.
Dec.	'02	President Bush decides to deploy missile defense systems.

Source: Compiled from the website of the Federation of American Scientists.

tug-of-war ended. This incident opened the Clinton administration's eyes to a potential threat to its national security by rogue states' ballistic missiles. In 1999, the administration proposed an amendment to the ABM Treaty to Russia to allow for a limited deployment of NMD systems that deal with ballistic missile threats from rogue states.

However, in May 1999, the U.S. Congress, unhappy with the administration's handling of the NMD/ABM issue and demanding early deployment of NMD systems, passed the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 requiring the federal government to deploy NMD systems as soon as they became technologically possible. In July, President Clinton signed the bill. The significance of the enactment of the NMD bill went beyond just requiring the U.S. administration to deploy an NMD system. Since an NMD system covering entire territory of the United States was banned under the ABM Treaty, it would be fair to conclude that, by enacting a law allowing the United States to deploy it, both the federal government and Congress had already considered an option at that point to withdraw from the treaty, in view of Russia's opposition to amending it.

3. U.S. Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and Reaction of Russia and China

(1) U.S. Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty

From the time of his election campaign, President George W. Bush saw the ABM Treaty as an outdated relic of the Cold War, and hinted that the U.S. might withdraw. In a speech at the U.S. National Defense University on May 1, 2001, nearly four months after taking office, President Bush said that since Russia was no longer considered an U.S. enemy, the ABM Treaty had lost its relevance. He indicated his intention to build a new strategic framework not based on MAD. Later, President Bush proposed that both Russia and the U.S. abrogate or withdraw from the ABM Treaty. He stated that in the event Russia opposed his proposal, the United States might withdraw unilaterally. In response, the Putin administration rejected the idea of withdrawing, but indicated its willingness to amend the ABM Treaty and to make room for the United States to develop and deploy missile defense systems. It may have been that Russia saw value in maintaining the ABM Treaty for the predictability of the strategic nuclear balance between the two countries.

The Bush administration eventually gave up hope to win an agreement from Russia, and on December 13, 2001, it notified Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine of its intention to withdraw from the treaty. In giving its reasons, the Bush administration maintained that since the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems posed a significant threat to its security, it was forced to develop missile defense systems to protect itself and its allies. After a six-month “grace period,” ending June 13, 2002, the ABM Treaty was no longer valid, and the United States became free to develop and deploy missile defense systems. With the ABM Treaty losing its effect, the “First and Second Agreed Statements Relating to the ABM Treaty,” signed on the assumption that the United States would develop TMD systems, were rendered meaningless.

(2) Russian Reaction

Although the Putin administration had opposed scrapping the ABM Treaty from the very beginning, its reaction to the U.S. announcement of withdrawal from the treaty was muted, calling the U.S. decision "mistaken" but saying it posed no threat to Russia. President Putin went on to say that Russia and the United States must maintain their present cooperative relationship and create a new strategic framework. As if to underscore the president's position, Russia did not steer away from its policy—set forth one month before the United States announced its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty—to reduce its strategic nuclear warheads.

The following factors lie behind President Putin's reaction: (1) his belief that cooperation with the United States was indispensable for Russia's economic and social development, and his fear that a dispute over the ABM treaty might undermine that relationship; (2) his realization that the United States could not be stopped from developing and deploying its desired missile defense systems; (3) the difficulty in getting an overall picture of U.S. missile defense system; and (4) the conviction that even if the United States were to develop a limited NMD system, Russia would still be able to overwhelm it militarily.

Russia has thus come up with a measure to counter the missile defense systems of the United States. Just as former President Boris Yeltsin had done before, President Putin warned that if the United States violated or withdrew from the ABM Treaty, Russia would secede from the Second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II). On June 14, 2002, the day after the ABM Treaty was invalidated, President Putin announced that Russia was withdrawing from START II, a treaty that had abolished all ICBMs armed with multiple, independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRV). START II obligated Russia to destroy its MIRVed ICBMs (such as the SS-18, 19 and 24), which were the lion's share of its nuclear arsenal. In order, therefore, to maintain ICBMs under START II, Russia could only produce and deploy ICBMs armed with single

nuclear warheads. However, due to economic and fiscal constraints, it would have been difficult for Russia to develop these single-warhead ICBMs, so abrogation of START II effectively worked in Russia's favor by allowing it to keep its MIRVed ICBMs without spending badly needed cash for a new weapon.

(3) Chinese Reaction

Though not a signatory, China wanted the ABM Treaty to be preserved, and was opposed to the U.S. missile defense programs; yet its reaction to the announcement of U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty was as muted as Russia's. It stopped short of explicitly criticizing the United States or of taking any countermeasures. Instead, a statement merely said that it was very important to

Commentary

The Bush Administration Decides to Deploy Missile Defense Systems

On December 17, 2002, President Bush decided to deploy a limited number of three types of land- and sea-based interceptor missiles, for operation starting in 2004: (1) a fixed, land-based missile defense system aimed at shooting down incoming long-range ballistic missiles. A total of 20 interceptor missiles are expected to be deployed—16 in Alaska and 4 in California; (2) sea-based interceptor missiles aimed at intercepting incoming medium- and short-range ballistic missiles. A total of 20 are expected to be deployed on three naval vessels; and (3) *Patriot* PAC-III interceptor missiles aimed at incoming medium- and short-range ballistic missiles. The number of PAC-III interceptor missiles has not been made public. President Bush considered the deployment of these intercept missiles as a prelude to large-scale missile defense systems.

However, there are signs that deployment of the high-performance sensors required for operating these missiles—the X-band radar and the space-based infrared system (low orbit)—may be delayed. Therefore, even if some of these interceptor missiles are available in 2004, they may have to rely temporarily on improved versions of existing sensors.

Upon learning of President Bush's decision to deploy interceptor missiles, the Russian Foreign Ministry expressed its regret, and the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that the U.S. missile defense system should not undermine global strategic stability and international security.

maintain international arms control and disarmament efforts; that China was opposed to the deployment of missile defense systems; that it was concerned about the possible negative impact brought about by the U.S. withdrawal; and that it hoped the United States would heed the views of the international community. Such a tempered response was most likely the result of China's interest in securing U.S. cooperation in the areas of investment, technology, and trade, essential for China's economic development, which has been its top policy priority. Additionally, the fact that President Bush gave advance notice to President Jiang Zemin about his withdrawal plans, and proposed to deepen its strategic dialogue with China, helped soften China's reaction. As was true with Russia, China's difficulty in seeing a clear overall picture of U.S. missile defense systems also muted its response.

4. Post-ABM Treaty U.S.-Russia and U.S.-China Relations, and East Asian Strategic Circumstances

When faced with the likelihood of U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and even when the treaty lost its validity, neither Russia nor China announced any significant policy changes, with the exception of Russia saying it would keep its MIRVed ICBMs. It will not be until the actual deployment of U.S. missile defense systems, when both countries will be able to see the overall architecture of missile defense, that they make clearer responses. Even if a general outline of the U.S. missile defense were to become known, reactions from China and Russia could change, depending on the scale and capabilities of U.S. systems and the two countries' strategic nuclear forces and on the state of U.S.-Russia and U.S.-China relations at the time. Certainly, the strategic environment of East Asia will be profoundly affected by the policies of China and Russia in the coming years.

(1) U.S.-Russia Relations—Securing Strategic Stability

One reason for abrogating the ABM Treaty, according to President Bush, was the thinking that the United States and Russia are no longer enemies, a view later apparently confirmed by two events: Russia's cooperation with the United States in the war against terrorism, and President Putin's signing of the Moscow Treaty (also known as "the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty") that clearly reflected the strategic nuclear policy of the Bush administration.

The United States and Russia are trying to refocus their relationship from one based on military issues including strategic forces to one based on political, economic and international security cooperation. After signing the Moscow Treaty, both countries issued a joint statement listing the following five areas as focal points to strengthen U.S.-Russian relations: (1) Political Cooperation; (2) Economic Cooperation; (3) Strengthening People-to-People Contacts; (4) Preventing the Spread of WMD: Nonproliferation and International Terrorism; and (5) Missile Defense Systems, Further Strategic Offensive Reductions, and New Consultative Mechanism on Strategic Security.

This represents a genuine attempt to put an end to hostile relations and build a new relationship. However, the shift away from nuclear capability as the foundation for strategic stability to a cooperative relationship based on political, economic, and security areas that are open to interpretation and differences in perception carries the danger of increasing uncertainty. Nonetheless, with the treaty setting the number of strategic nuclear warheads each country can deploy at between 1,700 and 2,200, each is still capable of destroying the other. True, the significance of their nuclear arsenals, relative to other factors in U.S.-Russia relations, has decreased, but the possibility remains that the situation will revert to the old days, depending on how relations between the two countries develop.

Therefore, to ensure stability between the United States and

Russia, the following steps concerning strategic nuclear forces should be taken, in addition to efforts to deepen political, economic, and security cooperation. First, the United States should reduce the overwhelming counterforce capability of its ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM), not least their prompt hard-target kill capability, in order not to give unnecessarily threat to Russia. More specifically, this includes reducing the yield of nuclear warheads carried by ballistic missiles, and downgrading the readiness of ballistic missiles. Second, both the United States and Russia—the latter in particular—should improve the survivability of their ICBMs such as by changing the basing mode from fixed to mobile. Third, the United States should impose some constraints on the number of intercept missiles it would deploy in its NMD systems, and take steps to ensure their survival by protecting their space-based warning systems from anti-satellite weapons (ASAT). At present, however, there is no system in place to protect these vital satellites, so the next-best alternative is to place a large number of them in orbit. Therefore, it is imperative to reach an international agreement banning the development and deployment of ASAT.

(2) U.S.-China Relations—Avoiding Confrontation through Strategic Dialogue

Among the nuclear powers affiliated with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, only China has been increasing its nuclear capability since the Cold War. Of the strategic ballistic missiles it has deployed, just 20 (single-warhead ICBMs) target the U.S. mainland. Moreover, they are of the fixed, land-based type, and their survivability is by no means certain. It is thus likely that China will step up production and deployment of ICBMs regardless of whether or not the United States deploys an NMD system. Should the United States choose to strengthen its NMD system, it would certainly act as a spur to China, because even though the stated objective of the U.S. NMD system is limited to intercepting long-range ballistic missiles launched by rogue states, it would pro-

foundly affect the military balance between the two countries. Once deployed and strengthened, the NMD system would create a situation that would negate the effectiveness of China's 20 ICBMs as both deterrent and coercive weapons.

There are fears, too, that any deployment of a U.S. NMD system may cause China to increase its strategic ballistic missile capability for reasons beyond its own security. A widening of the U.S.-China military imbalance brought about by U.S. homeland defense would make it easier for the United States to intervene in an armed conflict between China and Taiwan, as long as the United States remains committed to defending Taiwan. An enhanced U.S. intervention capability would be conducive to Taiwan's status quo, or in the worst case, encourage Taiwan's aspirations for independence from China. Put another way, U.S. deployment of its NMD systems could put pressure on China to abandon Taiwan. Since China is unlikely to do so, it will be left with no choice but to take measures to counter the U.S. NMD systems.

At present, it is not clear whether deployment of NMD systems by the United States would actually prompt China to accelerate deployment of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. If China exercises this option, however, it would have a far-reaching ramifications for security in the region. It is inconceivable that a missile buildup by China would undermine the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella covering Japan and South Korea, but Russian and Indian reaction remains a concern. In order to prevents such a scenario, the United States and China must step up their strategic dialogue, which, hopefully, would give the Chinese leadership the impression that the United States is mindful of China's security concerns, and, while not dispelling China's mistrust of the U.S. NMD systems, would at least prevent a severe confrontation between them. In particular, given the view of the Chinese leadership that their stance toward the U.S. NMD system will be considerably influenced by overall U.S.-China relations, such a strategic dialogue takes on far-reaching significance.