

America's Star Wars: NATO Surrenders Europe To U.S. Global Missile Shield Project

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On January 27 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization took the most decisive step yet toward the implementation of the decades-old project first proposed by the Ronald Reagan administration for a Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as Star Wars.

In what will be the culmination of five years of extensive planning by the U.S. and NATO to construct an impenetrable interceptor missile shield to cover the European continent, the military bloc announced on the above date that it had handed over the first-ever theater ballistic missile defence capability to NATO military commanders at the NATO Combined Air Operations Centre in the German city of Uedem, which occurred “after NATO technicians computer-tested a software system linking anti-missile equipment from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United States.” [1]

Italian Air Force Brigadier General Alessandro Pera, head of the NATO Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD) Programme Office, delivered the plan to NATO Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero while the second day of a NATO Military Committee meeting at the Atlantic Alliance headquarters in Brussels with chiefs of defense staff and other military representatives from 66 countries was underway.

Those also present in Germany included U.S. Air Force Major General Mark Ramsay, deputy chief of staff for Operations and Intelligence at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (NATO's main European command) and other military and civilian authorities from the Alliance and Germany. General Mark Welsh III, commander of Allied Air Command Ramstein, paid his first visit to the NATO Combined Air Operations Centre to coincide with the capability demonstration of the ALTBMD program. Brigadier General Pera “handed over a symbolic key to the operational user of the capability,” represented by Major General Ramsay. [2]

This year the Pentagon will begin its announced ten-year Phased Adaptive Approach (sometimes with a comma between the first two words) project to deploy medium- and intermediate-range interceptor missiles on ships in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean Sea, which will be followed by the stationing of no fewer than 48 advanced Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) interceptors in Eastern Europe: 24 each in Romania and Poland.

The SM-3 is a ship-based missile jointly developed by the U.S. and Japan which will be deployed on Aegis class guided missile destroyers and cruisers in the two above-mentioned seas. A land-based version of the missile (Aegis Ashore) will be deployed near the Baltic and Black Seas in Poland and Romania.

Missile radar sites will accompany the interceptors, with potential sites discussed to date

including Bulgaria, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Azerbaijan and Georgia in addition to the X-band radar (AN/TPY-2 Transportable Radar Surveillance/Forward Based X-band Transportable) designed for the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system, with a range of 2,900 miles, deployed to the Negev Desert in Israel in 2008, manned by over 100 U.S. military personnel including a representative of the Missile Defense Agency. [3] The Azerbaijani location would be the early warning radar facility at Gabala currently operated by the Russian Space Forces.

This week four U.S. senators endorsed the placement of an interceptor missile radar facility in Georgia, which fought a five-day war with Russia in August 2008.

Last May the U.S. deployed the first interceptors in Europe, a Patriot Advanced Capability-3 battery in the Polish city of Morąg, 35-40 miles from the Russian Kaliningrad district. An estimated 150 American troops arrived with the missiles to service and train Polish service members to operate them.

Until 2005 the U.S. had concentrated its missile shield initiatives further east: In Alaska, including its Aleutian Islands chain, and Japan, with preliminary radar facilities in Greenland, Britain and Norway to the west. The Missile Defense Agency's 280-foot-high Sea-Based X-Band Radar, which displaces 50,000 tons and has a surface as large as two football fields, is based in Adak in the Aleutian Islands near Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula.

Developments took a dramatic turn in that year, however. On March 11 NATO's North Atlantic Council, its highest civilian governing body, approved plans for a theater missile defense (TMD) system to protect deployed troops. The military bloc at that time had forces on the ground in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Six years ago NATO envisioned a combination of the U.S.-German-Italian Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS), Patriot Advanced Capability-3 and Surface Air Moyenne Portée/Terre systems as the foundation for lower-tier - battlefield or theater - components of its interceptor missile program, with U.S. Theater (now Terminal) High Altitude Area Defense and the then-current sea-based Standard Missile-2 systems serving as the upper-layer complements. [4]

The integrated system was to achieve initial operating capability last year - when NATO's 28 members unanimously authorized a far wider-ranging missile shield at the Alliance's summit in Portugal in November - and full operating capability in 2013.

To that end NATO's Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD) program was established in September 2005 after a seven-year feasibility study had been conducted by eight of the bloc's leading members and in which "various NATO projects cooperatively participated." [5]

At that time the ALTBMD project was described in part as an "integrated system-of-systems architecture [that] will create a larger range of detection, communication and missile defence capabilities for NATO forces, whether deployed within or beyond NATO's area of responsibility. It will also provide complete coverage against the threat posed by tactical ballistic missiles with ranges up to 3,000 kilometres. [6]

The U.S. arms manufacturers Boeing and Northrop Grumman announced intentions in the

same month to bid on “systems engineering and integration work on NATO’s Theater Missile Defense capability.” [7]

At almost exactly the same time, in November of 2005, Agence France-Presse disclosed that the U.S. was developing a complementary and more advanced interceptor missile program for Europe. Eastern Europe.

Citing a senior, unnamed, Pentagon official, the press service stated that although discussions had been held “below the radar screen” since 2002, “the US government was now nearing the point of making decisions on whether and how to go forward with such an initiative.”

The Defense Department source was quoted as stating: “There have been a handful of countries, Poland is one, but there are several others with whom we’ve been having discussions with.” [8]

A week earlier the Gazeta Wyborcza had revealed the plans to base American interceptor missiles in Poland. Four years later the same newspaper divulged weeks ahead of the event that Washington was shifting its plans for ten ground-based interceptors in Poland and a missile radar base in the Czech Republic – because of their impracticability, their ineffectiveness – to what on September 17, 2009 President Barack Obama termed a “smarter, stronger, and swifter” missile shield system that would include components from the Baltic to the Black to the Mediterranean Seas. [9]

The U.S. official quoted above would not divulge which other countries would be involved in the system as planned at the time, but confirmed that the deployment in Poland would be comparable to those at Fort Greely, Alaska where the Missile Defense Agency is working on completing the construction of as many as 14 silos with 30-40 long-range ground-based interceptors as part of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense element of America’s global missile shield plans.

That was the strategy pursued by the George W. Bush administration but superseded by its successor in 2009.

In adopting a continent-wide interceptor missile program as part of its new Strategic Concept last November, NATO agreed to subordinate its 26 members and 14 partners (17 if the South Caucasus is included) in Europe to a U.S.-dominated missile system that is not limited to the continent but is an integral part of a global layered and integrated missile shield network.

The Lisbon summit declaration of November 20 affirms that “We have adopted a new Strategic Concept [and] decided to develop a missile defence capability to protect all NATO European populations, territory and forces....”

“Our Strategic Concept underscores our commitment to ensuring that NATO has the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against any threat to the safety of our populations and the security of our territory. To that end, NATO will maintain an appropriate mix of conventional, nuclear, and missile defence forces. Missile defence will become an integral part of our overall defence posture....”

“[W]e have decided that the Alliance will develop a missile defence capability to pursue its core task of collective defence. The aim of a NATO missile defence capability is to provide

full coverage and protection for all NATO European populations, territory and forces against the increasing threats posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles, based on the principles of the indivisibility of Allied security and NATO solidarity....”

“To this end, we have decided that the scope of NATO’s current Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD) programme’s command, control and communications capabilities will be expanded beyond the protection of NATO deployed forces to also protect NATO European populations, territory and forces. In this context, the United States European Phased Adaptive Approach is welcomed as a valuable national contribution to the NATO missile defence architecture, as are other possible voluntary contributions by Allies. We have tasked the Council to develop missile defence consultation, command and control arrangements by the time of the March 2011 meeting of our Defence Ministers. We have also tasked the Council to draft an action plan addressing steps to implement the missile defence capability by the time of the June 2011 Defence Ministers’ meeting.” [10]

A sop was thrown to Russia, which with the best of reasons had been suspicious of American and NATO interceptor missile plans since their inception, with the summit statement claiming that NATO had “invited Russia to cooperate with us.”

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was the first head of state of his nation (and its predecessor state, the Soviet Union) to attend a NATO summit last year, but despite the Russian political leadership’s (over-)willingness to trust its NATO “partners,” two months later Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen threw cold water on Moscow’s self-deluded understanding of where it stood in regard to U.S.-NATO European missile shield plans in announcing that “the alliance’s plan for a European missile shield involves two separate but collaborative programs, one operated by the military alliance and the other by Russia,” although “Moscow and Brussels in November decided to work on researching and potentially setting up a continent-wide program for missile defense.” [11]

That is, Russia will have no role in monitoring or in any other direct manner affecting Western interceptor plans. American officials have been blunt in asserting that the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) pact will in no manner restrict U.S. and NATO continent-wide (except for Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova for the time being) interceptor missile arrangements. Or the Pentagon’s new Prompt Global Strike program designed to accomplish with conventional measures the task formerly assigned to the American nuclear arsenal and triad. [12]

Immediately after Rasmussen’s reaffirmation that Russia, like all NATO partners, can only expect to play a subordinate role in this as in all other matters, the lower house of the Russian parliament, the State Duma, posted a draft supplementary statement to the new START agreement ratification document on its website demanding that “Russia must quickly modernize its nuclear deterrent focusing on the deployment of ballistic missiles capable of penetrating the most sophisticated missile defenses.”

The supplement stated:

“The State Duma believes that maintaining Russia’s nuclear deterrent in an adequate state of readiness is a key venue of the country’s military doctrine, with the focus on the deployment of strategic offensive weapons that possess the most combat effectiveness and the highest potential to penetrate missile defenses.

“The combat effectiveness of Russia’s nuclear deterrent must be maintained at the level that guarantees the protection of the country from attacks carried out by any foreign state or a group of states in any military-strategic situation.” [13]

On January 24 President Medvedev demanded an unequivocal response from NATO on what role his country will be permitted to play in Western missile shield plans, stating:

“Our partners have to understand that we do not want this simply to have some common toys that NATO and us can play with, but because we want adequate protection for Russia.”

“So this is not a joking matter. We expect from our NATO partners a direct and unambiguous answer.

“In either case, we are either together with NATO, or we separately find an adequate response to the existing problem.

“Either we agree to certain principles with NATO, or we fail to agree, and then in the future we are forced to adopt an entire series of unpleasant decisions concerning the deployment of an offensive nuclear missile group.” [14]

Two days later Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov told the upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, that “Russia will go forward with plans to develop its own missile defense system after the ratification of a strategic arms reduction treaty with the United States.”

“As far as our missile defense system is concerned, we have been developing it and will be further developing it,” he added. [15]

On the same day Chief of General Staff Nikolay Makarov said “that Russia’s permanent involvement in designing the architecture of the European missile defense system should be the main precondition for NATO-Russia co-operation.” [16]

A Russian commentary of January 27 included these observations – and warnings:

“Neither NATO nor the US has answered Russia’s questions so far. The would-be shield is even called differently by both sides. While the Russian leadership describes it as ‘European missile defense system,’ it is referred to as ‘NATO’s missile defense system’ in the alliance’s official documents.

“Moscow will not participate in any joint program where it does not have its say. The big fear is that the European shield will be directed by the US, which does not abandon the idea of its own global missile defense shield.” [17]

NATO’s comprehensive, all-encompassing interceptor missile system is in fact controlled by the U.S. and is part of an international network that includes air, land, sea and space elements. [18] Washington has added South Korea and Australia to its missile shield alliance with Japan in the Asia-Pacific region and is selling billions of dollars worth of theater and more advanced interceptor missiles to Taiwan, Japan and the Persian Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. [19]

The same source cited Yury Solomonov, director and general designer of the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology, who said Russia is developing new warheads for

intercontinental ballistic missiles which “would be able to overcome any existing and future missile defense systems.”

The article continued:

“The development of new warheads looks like Russia’s answer to plans of the US and NATO to create a new missile defense shield for Europe. Both Washington and the alliance had formally invited Moscow to take part in a joint program. But even Europeans themselves do not know the exact details of the initiative.

“NATO member states are still to come to an agreement between themselves....[T]o maintain the potential of strategic nuclear forces Russia must radically increase the production of intercontinental ballistic missiles. [Solomonov] also said that the Bulava sea-based intercontinental ballistic missile will be commissioned and pass into service in 2011 if the planned test launches are successful.” [20]

On the day the above appeared NATO announced the activation of its first anti-ballistic missile capability.

On February 3 Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted warning that “If negotiations between NATO and Russia will only be used as a cover for a NATO-American missile defense system that ignores the Russian interests then of course we will have no choice but to take adequate measures to protect ourselves.” [21]

So much for pushing reset buttons with the new START agreement and the reactivation of the NATO-Russia Council in November.

Before this month’s announcement that NATO was integrating hitherto separate interceptor missile systems into a coherent network linked with the new American European system, Italy’s Brigadier General Pera, head of NATO’s Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence Programme Office and veteran of NATO campaigns in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, gave an interview to the U.S.-based Defense News in April of last year in which he itemized the components that will be incorporated into the missile interception program:

“For the interim capability, five nations are contributing weapons systems and sensors: Germany, Patriot PAC3 missiles; France, SAMP/T missiles; Italy, Horizon-class frigates; the Netherlands, Patriot PAC-3 missiles, ADCF (Air Defense Command) frigates; and the United States, Aegis cruisers, Patriot PAC-2 and -3 missiles, space early warning. The missiles mentioned can act both as missile interceptors and as anti-aircraft missiles.

“In its final configurations, we will also have MEADS (Medium Extended Air Defense System) missile weapon systems from the U.S., Germany and Italy; SAMP/T weapon systems and TPS 77 sensors, Italy; NATO sensors Fixed Air Defense Radar/Deployable Air Defense Radar, Aegis Standard Missile-3 systems, AN/TPY 2 radar and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system from the U.S.; Patriot PAC-2 and F100 frigates, Spain; F124 frigates and Global Hawk IR, Germany; Patriot PAC-2, Greece.”

“ALTBMD has a lower layer to deal with short- and medium-range missiles (the interim capability is the first step of it) and an upper layer to deal with longer-range tactical missiles, up to 3,000 kilometers. The ultimate aim is for theater missile defense to be able to counter long-range missiles, too, so that NATO countries remain one step ahead of the threat by being able to knock out missiles not just in their re-entry phase but also in the

midcourse and boost phases.”

“The interfaces between ALTBMD and the U.S.A.’s Phased Adaptive Approach have already been successfully tested.

“ALTBMD is planning to have an initial operational capability in 2012, while the plan is for the full spectrum of capabilities to be available by 2017.” [22]

His inclusion of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense and its AN/TPY-2 Transportable Radar Surveillance/Forward Based X-Band Transportable which “is capable of tracking and identifying small objects at long distance and at very high altitude, including space” [23] indicates a more sophisticated overall plan than is generally acknowledged. Though last summer Lieutenant General Patrick O’Reilly, director of the Missile Defense Agency (which grew out of Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative) said “combined defenses would feature the best of both worlds: an ‘upper layer’ framework of SM-3 and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, interceptors, operated by the United States, that could shoot down enemy missiles in space or the upper atmosphere; and a ‘lower layer’ of Patriot batteries, operated by European allies, providing a second layer of defense closer to the ground.” [24]

On December 1 of last year Frank Rose, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, testified before the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Strategic Forces and stated of the American Phased Adaptive Approach that “this approach to missile defense squarely in a NATO context as was decided at the Lisbon Summit. Missile defense is now firmly entrenched in NATO as both the summit declaration and Strategic Concept make it clear. NATO will develop missile defense as part of the Alliance’s core task of collective defense.”

He added: “The deployment of the AN/TPY-2 radar in Southern Europe in the 2011 timeframe will augment the capabilities of our existing Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system to intercept long-range missiles launched from the Middle East, should that threat emerge. In many ways, this is analogous to the AN/TPY-2 radar deployed in Japan that serves to assist with the defense of Japan and U.S. territory from the North Korean threat.” [25]

Washington persists in the disingenuous contention that covering Europe in a U.S.-controlled missile shield is aimed at protecting nations from Poland to Britain from North Korean, Iranian, Syrian and even North African threats.

A NATO press release on the January 27 event stated:

“The ALTBMD Programme Office will continue to upgrade the NATO Command and Control System for Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence in incremental steps from 2013 to 2018, to field a more robust Final Operational Capability. In line with the Lisbon Summit decision of November 2010, the ALTBMD capability will also be expanded to protect not just deployed forces, but NATO European territories and populations as well.” [26]

2018 is the year the U.S. will inaugurate its Phase 3 advanced SM-3 interceptor site in Poland.

Late last month pro-American Romanian President Traian Basescu, recruited last year by his American counterpart Obama to host Standard Missile-3s on his nation’s soil, said:

“The United States remains our strategic partner and our main ally in the field of security. Today, the main vector of our cooperation is the anti-missile shield. We wish to conclude this year the bilateral negotiations.” [27] In 2005 the Pentagon secured the use of four military bases in Romania, including what is being upgraded into a strategic air base.

Two days before the above quote appeared on the Internet, it was reported that the U.S. Air Force had “augmented the hardware of a missile defense radar facility in Greenland,” NATO ally Denmark’s possession, and that it “has already upgraded early warning radar sites at Beale Air Force Base in California and at Fylingdales Royal Air Force Station in the United Kingdom,” and “intends to update two more of the sites.” [28] An island between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans is an odd location for tracking imaginary Iranian and North Korean intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Also in late January and in the Atlantic Ocean, the U.S. Navy, the Missile Defense Agency and weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin conducted a missile interception training exercise off the coast of Virginia with an Aegis class guided missile cruiser and two Aegis guided missile destroyers. Lockheed announced that “the ships tracked a short-range ballistic missile target and two performed simulations that would have resulted in successful interceptions of the target.” [29]

The Navy announced in a press release that it was “the first live ballistic missile defense test on the East Coast,” as before then Standard Missile-3 intercepts of target missiles (and in February of 2008 a space satellite) had been conducted from the Pacific Missile Range Test Facility in Kauai, Hawaii.

In the same week Lockheed, working with Raytheon, and Boeing, partnering with Northrop Grumman, submitted proposals to the Missile Defense Agency in competition for a \$4.2 billion, seven-year contract “to develop and sustain the Ground-based Midcourse Defense [GMD] portion of the nation’s ballistic missile defense program.”

“Elements of GMD, including some of the radars and Standard Missile 3[s] used in the ship-based Aegis system, are being considered for use as part of President Barack Obama’s ‘phased adaptive approach’ to enhancing missile defense in Europe.” [30]

Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) International, based in Orlando, Florida, recently disclosed that it had successfully conducted “milestone tests” on an X-band radar system and was preparing for systems testing this year at the Pratica di Mare Air Force Base in Italy. The U.S. funds 58 percent of the MEADS European missile defense program, with Germany and Italy providing 25 and 17 of the financing respectively.

The MEADS consortium, for which Lockheed Martin provides Patriot and longer-range missiles, describes its operation as follows:

“Under development by Germany, Italy and the United States, MEADS is a mobile system that will replace Patriot in the United States and Nike Hercules in Italy. It will replace Patriot and the retired Hawk system in Germany. The system is designed to permit full interoperability between the U.S. and allied forces, and it is the only medium-range air defense system to provide full 360-degree coverage.”

In addition: “In August 2010, the MEADS program completed an extensive series of Critical Design Review events with a Summary Critical Design Review at MEADS International in

Orlando, FL. The program is now completing final build, integration and test activities leading to flight tests involving all system elements at White Sands Missile Range in 2012.” [31]

On February 1 NATO announced that a subsidiary of the joint U.S.-French ThalesRaytheonSystems won a contract for “enhancements to the Air Command and Control System (ACCS) as part of the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD) programme.”

“This award is for the Preliminary System Definition of the first phase of the ACCS TMD [theater missile defense] project and will be followed by the development, integration and testing of two increments leading to an Initial Operational Capability (IOC). The new functionality developed under the contract will provide sensor and weapon system configuration, management and coverage, air and missile track processing, dissemination, classification, display and alerting. It will also provide weapon system status, engagement, monitoring and control.”

The NATO website quoted Dr. Gerhard van der Giet, General Manager of the NATO ACCS Management Agency:

“As Allies decided at the NATO summit in Lisbon last November, the scope of ALTBMD will be expanded beyond the protection of deployed forces to also protect NATO European populations, territory and forces. The command and control enhancements developed under the ACCS TMD project provide a future foundation for Missile Defence.” [32]

It was reported two days afterward that Siemens Turkiye, the German electronic and engineering firm’s Turkish subsidiary, and a local software company “will develop and implement NATO’s strategic Air Command and Control Information (AirC2I) System....[T]he system will set a benchmark for future NATO Bi-Strategic Command Automated Information Systems Functional Services, be a key component of NATO’s Active Layered Theater Ballistic Missile Defense system’s initial operating capability, and provide a possible foundation for missile defense.” [33]

A copy of Ronald Reagan’s Star Wars speech of March 23, 1983 is displayed prominently at the Missile Defense Agency’s Von Braun Complex in Huntsville, Alabama. U.S. officials, military and civilian, have openly spoken of having brought to fruition Reagan’s plan for a Strategic Defense Initiative in intent and practical effects if not precise configurations.

The Aegis Combat System is a product of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Last year President Obama pushed for an increase in the system’s Standard Missile-3 interceptors to 436, up from the previous year’s request of 147 of the missiles costing \$10-15 million apiece.

NATO’s summit in Lisbon last November has delivered almost the entire European continent to a 21st century version of Star Wars.

Notes

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- 5) North Atlantic Treaty Organization
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<http://www.tmd.nato.int>
- 6) Ibid
- 7) Defense News, September 9, 2005
- 8) Agence France-Presse, November 16, 2005
- 9) U.S. Expands Global Missile Shield Into Middle East, Balkans
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- 12) Prompt Global Strike: World Military Superiority Without Nuclear Weapons
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- 13) Russian Information Agency Novosti, January 22, 2011
- 14) Agence France-Presse, January 24, 2011
- 15) Russian Information Agency Novosti, January 26, 2011
- 16) RT, January 27, 2011
- 17) Ibid
- 18) Militarization Of Space: Threat Of Nuclear War On Earth
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- 20) RT, January 27, 2011
- 21) Russia rules out being NATO's patsy on missile defense
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- 22) Defense News, April 5, 2010
- 23) Global Security.org
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/space/systems/an-tpy-2.htm>
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- 26) North Atlantic Treaty Organization, January 27, 2011
- 27) Sofia News Agency, January 21, 2011
- 28) Global Security Newswire, January 19, 2011
- 29) Philadelphia Business Journal, January 28, 2011
- 30) Huntsville Times, January 29, 2011
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- 33) Defense News, February 3, 2011

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