

# NATO Acknowledges First Strike Interceptor Missile Plans

By [Global Research](#)

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We bring to the attention of our readers excerpts from an article in Aviation Week, which acknowledges NATO's Plans to implement First Strike preemptive attacks as part of missile defense.

"[Welsh] outlines four "pillars" for missile defense: active defense (intercepting a missile); passive defense (warnings to populations and consequence management); offensive operations (including preventing a launch and/or striking a launch site); and command and control."

*An actual flight test pitting a German Patriot terminal defense battery against a short-range missile target is scheduled for November. During the trial, which will take place in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, a U.S. Aegis cruiser will provide target tracking.*

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## Guidance Needed For NATO Missile Defense Ops

By Amy Butler

NATO missile defense officials are awaiting approval of a plan to lay out guidance for unified alliance missile defense in advance of a key interim operational capability declaration for the system slated for May.

The North Atlantic Council is reviewing this plan, which includes weapons release authority, contingency response, rules of engagement and weapons control status guidelines, says U.S. Air Force Gen. Mark Welsh, who oversees American air forces in Europe. He says approval is needed by December to conduct proper testing in advance of the May milestone. Welsh is confident that with the North Atlantic Council's approval, the interim operational capability goal is achievable.

This interim capability encompasses the exchange of data between the disparate command-and-control systems operated by NATO and the U.S.

"We have done data transfer of all types. We have worked email — which sounds minor but isn't — [but] we have not done active voice testing yet across the system. That is the next set along with the [Internet] chat," Welsh tells Aviation Week. "We are very close to being

able to transfer an air tasking order and an airspace coordination order for missile defense across this system.”

This coordination order provides guidance to forces on which systems and shooters operate in which airspace areas; it also outlines which terminal engagement systems are responsible for acting in the event of an attack.

Welsh acknowledges that the interim milestone planned for May is one of many steps needed to stand up a NATO missile defense in Europe. “We are at step zero right now trying to build this; the first step is connectivity...We still have to prove that,” Welsh says. “The next step is once we do have that, we will have a very small capability to actually intercept and destroy an incoming missile.”

Declaration of an initial operational capability was originally planned for 2014-15, with full operational capability to follow in 2018. The general acknowledges these dates are up for debate now at NATO. But “we are not far off” that plan, he says.

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“There are lots of things they can do if they would look at things with a little bit broader scope than they have,” Welsh says. “Many of the nations can contribute in [various] ways, for example, in offensive operations. Many nations have capabilities that would allow us to go in and strike a missile site before it launches an attack, if NATO ever made that decision.”

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