

The Militarization of Planet Earth: U.S. Extends Missile Buildup From Poland And Taiwan To the Persian Gulf

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On January 20 Poland's Defense Ministry revealed that a U.S. Patriot missile battery previously scheduled to be stationed near the nation's capital will instead be deployed to a Baltic Sea location 35 miles from Russian territory; on January 29 the White House approved the transfer of 114 Patriot missiles to Taiwan as part of a \$6.5 billion arms package that also includes eight warships the receiving nation plans to upgrade for the Aegis Combat System with the capacity for carrying Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) ship-based anti-ballistic missiles.

On January 22 head of the Pentagon's Central Command General David Petraeus told an audience at the private Institute for the Study of War that two warships equipped with the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System "are in the Gulf at all times now." [1] A news report on the same day remarked "That statement - along with the stationing of other U.S. air defense assets in the region - sends a strong signal to Iran..." [2]

The New York Times reported on January 30 that the U.S. was expediting the deployment of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) interceptor missiles to four Persian Gulf nations - Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates - thereby paralleling the combination of sea-based Aegis and land-based Patriot missiles intended for the Taiwan Strait aimed at China and in the Baltic Sea targeting Russia. The Gulf deployments are intended for use against Iran.

"One senior military officer said that General Petraeus had started talking openly about the Patriot deployments about a month ago, when it became increasingly clear that international efforts toward imposing sanctions against Iran faced hurdles..." [3]

On February 1 The Times of London commented on the coordinated interceptor missile plans: "Tensions in the Gulf between the US and Iran are set to rise further after it emerged that American-made anti-missile systems are to be deployed to Washington's Arab allies in the region.

"The Obama Administration said yesterday that it was speeding up arms sales to a number of states and that it had also deployed warships in the Gulf..."

As in the Baltic Sea and Taiwan, PAC-3 missiles - "dedicated almost entirely to the anti-ballistic missile mission" [4] and which soon will have their capability increased by 50% with

an upgrade called Missile Segment Enhancement – will be used for short- to medium-range and Aegis class warships for medium to long-range missile interceptions. The basic ingredients of a multilayered theater missile shield.

Last May an American news source waxed enthusiastic over Aegis capabilities: “The AEGIS combat system, at its heart, is a computer controlled combat and data system. It can simultaneously launch strikes against missiles or other targets in the air, and on land and sea, either surface or underwater.

“AEGIS is the most capable missile launch system the Navy has ever put to sea. In any weather, including full cyclones, AEGIS can attack multiple targets underwater, and from wave top to directly overhead, at all speeds from subsonic to supersonic.” [5]

Its Standard Missile-3, already in the Persian Gulf and soon to be permanently based in the Baltic, South China, Mediterranean and Black Seas, has an acknowledged range of 500 kilometers but can be enhanced for longer distances and was used by the U.S. to destroy a satellite 130 miles above the Pacific Ocean in February of 2008 in a test inspected by Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. “The satellite was unlike any target the system was designed to go after....The satellite was in orbit rather than on a ballistic trajectory. Also, the satellite was traveling at incredible speeds.” [6]

As to the Patriot missile defense system, it is the only component of the U.S. (and allied) global interceptor project to be used in combat, both times in full-fledged wars.

Patriots were employed in Operation Desert Storm in 1991 against Iraqi Scud missiles and were based in Israel, not a formal belligerent in the war, and Saudi Arabia, which was and which served as a base for a large percentage of the 100,000 sorties by the U.S. and its allies in the air war over Kuwait and Iraq.

The U.S. stationed and used Patriot missiles in Kuwait 2003 during the invasion of Iraq and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization deployed three Patriot batteries (and AWACS) to Turkey before the attack.

Unlike other, longer-range, elements of the layered missile shield system, the Patriot has been proven an effective battlefield weapon. It is only defensive in the sense that a shield was a means of defense for a sword-wielding warrior or armor is for a battle tank. It is designed to protect an aggressor from counterattack.

In commenting on the Pentagon’s plans to move Patriot and SM-3 – and even longer-range – missiles into the Persian Gulf, a newspaper in the region wrote that “US anti-missile systems may be installed in Bahrain to protect the country against possible retaliatory attacks from Iran....” [7] A degree of candor absent in the American press. One which reveals that the U.S. is installing interceptor missiles in the Gulf as it did earlier in 1991 and 2003 to neutralize short- and medium-range missiles fired in response to acts or threats of aggression.

One of the false rationales for the expanded missile deployments dutifully retailed by major American and British newspapers of late is that they are intended in part to prevent rather than encourage attacks on Iran by Israel. That argument is contrary to logic and fact alike. By assuring the second nation and Gulf states Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia

which host U.S. infantry, air and naval forces that they are invulnerable to retaliation after attacks on Iran is to increase the risk of unprovoked Israeli and U.S. assaults.

Compared to 1991 and 2003, though, the groundwork for a much broader conflict is being laid, one which will include interceptor missiles several stages more advanced than the Patriot and SM-3.

Last August it was reported that "Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. [United Arab Emirates]...want a wide range of military platforms, with particular interest in missile defense systems such as the U.S. Theater High Altitude Air Defense system [THAAD]. Approval was recently given for the Pentagon to sell this to the U.A.E., THAAD's first foreign customer." [8]

THAAD picks up where the SM-3 (which is being transitioned for ground deployment in Europe and the Middle East as part of new - post-September 17, 2009 - U.S. and NATO interceptor missile plans) leaves off and after THAAD comes the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system to intercept missiles in space (the exoatmosphere).

On January 31 the U.S. Missile Defense Agency launched a ground-based interceptor missile from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California in what proved to be an unsuccessful test.

Four days before a local newspaper wrote that "A missile-defense system test set for Sunday at Vandenberg Air Force Base will involve a different scenario, this time gauging how the system would react to an Iran-like attack, officials said."

The report further detailed "a target weapon set to take off from the Kwajalein Atoll, about 4,200 miles southwest of Vandenberg" and that "the launch will be followed about 20 minutes later by a ground-based interceptor launched from an underground silo on north Vandenberg." [9]

The last such test occurred in 2008 "when [a] target launched from Kodiak, Alaska, was successfully hit by a Vandenberg interceptor." [10] Staging long-range missile interception tests from Alaska, including from the Aleutian Islands near Russia's eastern coast, are not limited to plans for Iran.

In mid-January head of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency Lieutenant General Patrick O'Reilly visited Fort Greely, Alaska, "the first line in America's missile defense" and home to ground-based midcourse missiles, and his comments included: "In a time of war we would launch." [11] Missiles launched from Fort Greely would have to pass over Russia, China or both to reach Iran, incidentally.

News that the U.S. is to deploy a Patriot missile battery in Poland close to its border led to Russia's ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin stating recently: "Do they really think that we will calmly watch the location of a rocket system, at a distance of 60 km from Kaliningrad?" [12] The deployment of Standard Missile-3s, with several times the reach of the Patriot, on land and sea in the same neighborhood will only makes matters more dangerous.

The official authorization of Patriot transfers to Taiwan - the missiles are produced by Raytheon Company, whose former vice president of Government Operations and Strategy William Lynn is now Deputy Secretary of Defense - resulted in China's vice foreign minister, He Yafei, saying "We believe this move endangers China's national security" [13] and to Luo Yuan, senior researcher with the Academy of Military Science, adding "The US action gives

China a justified cause to increase its national defense expenditure, to enhance the development and purchase of weapons, and to accelerate its modernization process in national defense....China did nothing to threaten the US, why should the US challenge our core strategic interests?" [14]

China and Russia, by not capitulating to U.S. and Western European pressure to enforce further, even more onerous sanctions against Iran of the type that have in recent years been followed by all-out war against other nations, have frequently been chastised by U.S. leaders, with China lately being dressed down by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, about whom it cannot be said as President John Quincy Adams claimed of the early American republic that "she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy."

China has suspended military contacts with Washington and threatened sanctions against American arms firms involved in the completion of the \$6.5 billion deal with Taiwan.

With the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review which calls for a record \$708 billion in Pentagon spending next year, Bloomberg News ran a feature titled "China, Iran Prompt U.S. Air-Sea Battle Plan in Strategy Review" which stated "The U.S. military is drawing up a new air-sea battle plan in response to threats such as China's persistent military build-up and Iran's possession of advanced weapons." Pentagon chief Robert Gates was quoted as alluding to - in an obvious reference to China - "the military modernization programs of other countries" and of the Quadrennial Defense Review in general that "This is truly a wartime QDR." [15]

"The budget underscored the administration's commitment to a 'robust defense against emerging missile threats,' saying it would pay for use of increasingly capable sea- and land-based missile interceptors and a range of sensors in Europe." [16]

The blatant provocations against Russia and China of late last month are being repeated against Iran.

The Times of London on February 1 reminded its readers that "The UAE and Saudi Arabia have bought more than \$25 billion of US arms in the past two years. Abu Dhabi has bought \$17 billion of US hardware since 2008, including Patriot anti-missile systems, while the UAE as a whole recently bought 80 F16 jets."

It also recalled, even more ominously, that "The chairman of the US military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen...said last month that the Pentagon must have military options ready to counter Iran should Mr Obama call for them." [17]

An integral part of plans to contain and confront Iran is the Pentagon buildup in and near the Persian Gulf. Last year United Press International published a report that "Middle Eastern countries are expected to spend more than \$100 billion over the next five years....Most of the procurement will be carried out by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Israel....The core of this arms-buying spree will undoubtedly be the \$20 billion U.S. package of weapons systems over 10 years for the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council - Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain." [18]

On January 27 in the United Arab Emirates "The UAE Armed Forces [began] military training with the US Central Command (Centcom) along with armed forces from other GCC [Gulf

Cooperation Council] and friendly countries.” [19]

Last October and November the U.S. and Israel conducted their largest-ever joint military exercise, Juniper Cobra 2009, which tested five interceptor missile systems in tandem. [20]

On September 17, while announcing plans to abandon ground-based interceptor deployments in Poland in favor of a broader stratified system in Europe based initially on Patriot Advanced Capability-3 and Aegis missiles, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in reference to Iran and its neighbors that “the United States has already formed a Gulf missile defense network that consisted of PAC-3 and the Aegis sea-based systems....The reality is we are working both on a bilateral and a multilateral basis in the Gulf to establish the same kind of regional missile defense that would protect our facilities out there as well as our friends and allies.”

He added: “We have very strong bilateral relationships in developing missile defense with several of the countries in the Gulf. And now what we’re encouraging is to layer on top of that multilateral cooperation as well.” [21]

What Gates was describing is a comprehensive missile shield in the region that integrates all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states into a single interceptor grid linked with facilities and deployments in Israel and Turkey (if the latter nation permits it) and a continent-wide NATO system in Europe.

The same source reported:

“Officials said the United Arab Emirates has been the most advanced in plans to form a missile defense umbrella. The UAE has ordered the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, designed to destroy nuclear missiles in the exoatmosphere. Over the last two years, the Pentagon has been meeting GCC military chiefs to discuss regional and national missile defense programs....At the same time, the U.S. military has been operating PAC-3 in Kuwait and Qatar. The U.S. Army has also been helping Saudi Arabia upgrade its PAC-2 fleet.” [22]

The Associated Press stated days after last September’s announced change in U.S. global missile shield plans – in which the “Obama administration shift[ed] its focus on missile defense away from Europe and toward the Middle East” – that “Between 2004 and last year, the Emirates bought more weapons than any other country besides China and India, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The majority of those arms came from the U.S. Lockheed and partner Raytheon Corp. of Waltham, Mass., are leading the push to strengthen the Emirates’ missile defense systems....It is not the region’s only U.S. ally to have placed such an order. Saudi Arabia, Israel and Kuwait have all bought Patriot and other missile shield systems....Abu Dhabi is...pushing to become the first country after the U.S. to deploy what Lockheed says is an even more advanced missile defense system known as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD....” [23]

William Lynn, the Pentagon’s second highest ranking official and former lobbyist for the manufacturer of Patriot missiles, Raytheon, delivered a speech in Washington, D.C. On January 21, the contents of which were reported as containing the demand to “put the Defense Department on a permanent footing to fight both low-intensity conflicts to maintaining air dominance and the ability to strike any target on Earth at any time....The

next air warfare priority for the Pentagon is developing a next-generation, deep-penetrating strike capability that can overcome advanced air defenses....” [24] The new Prompt Global Strike system is designed to accomplish just those last three objectives. [25]

Were a leading defense official of any other nation to publicly promote that agenda the newspapers of the world would report it and the Pentagon, State Department and White House would not be silent on the matter. The American media and the government alike would condemn it for what it is: A threat to world peace and to the world itself.

Notes

- 1) Wired, January 22, 2010
- 2) Ibid
- 3) New York Times, January 30, 2010
- 4) Wikipedia
- 5) OnMilwaukee, May 12, 2009
- 6) American Forces Press Service, February 24, 2010
- 7) Gulf Daily News, February 1, 2010
- 8) United Press International, August 25, 2009
- 9) Lompoc Record, January 27, 2010
- 10) Ibid
- 11) Alaska Dispatch, January 13, 2010
- 12) Radio Poland, January 29, 2010
- 13) New York Times, January 29, 2010
- 14) China Daily, February 1, 2010
- 15) Bloomberg News, February 1, 2010
- 16) Reuters, February 1, 2010
- 17) The Times, February 1, 2010
- 18) United Press International, August 25, 2009
- 19) Gulf News, January 27, 2010
- 20) Israel: Forging NATO Missile Shield, Rehearsing War With Iran
Stop NATO, November 5, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/11/05/israel-forging-nato-missile-shield-rehearsing-war-with-iran>

- 21) World Tribune, September 30, 2009
- 22) Ibid
- 23) Associated Press, September 23, 2009
- 24) Defense News, January 22, 2010
- 25) U.S. Accelerates First Strike Global Missile Shield System
Stop NATO, August 19, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/09/02/u-s-accelerates-first-strike-global-missile-shield-system/>

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Stop NATO, June 18, 2009

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