

Text of written presentation and oral comments by Peggy Mason, President of the Rideau Institute (in relation to her testimony on September 14th, 2017 from 2-3pm to the Standing Committee on National Defence).

In my written submission, I made the following arguments.

1. North Korea seeks nuclear weapons for defensive purposes.
2. There is no effective military means to denuclearize North Korea.
3. Dialogue with North Korea without preconditions has not yet been tried.
4. There is a role for Canada in promoting a diplomatic solution to the crisis.
5. American strategic ballistic missile defence does not work, undermines strategic stability, puts civilian satellites and indeed the peaceful uses of outer space at risk and is exorbitantly expensive.
6. Given the “toxic” history in Canada-USA relations of potential Canadian participation in USA GMD), it is not only futile but risky to raise it again.

Time is short and I wish now to focus mainly on the prospects for a diplomatic approach as the only effective way forward.

North Korea seeks nuclear weapons for defensive purposes.

What is the nature of the nuclear threat from North Korea? The only possible threat to Canada is from a wayward missile if North Korea were to launch an ICBM at the USA (if it had the capability to do so, growing but still uncertain, and if it was able to arm it with a miniaturized nuclear warhead – again growing but still unproven).

So what we are really assessing is the level of threat to the USA from North Korea, bearing in mind the overwhelming nuclear and conventional superiority that America has.

While DPRK President Kim Jung-un is undoubtedly an odious dictator, there is no evidence he is suicidal. On the contrary, he is almost obsessively focused on regime survival. Given the respective fates of Saddam Hussain and Muammar Gaddafi, Kim Yung-un appears to believe that only through North Korea’s ability to demonstrate a credible *retaliatory* capability against the USA mainland can he hope to ensure the USA will not attack. (It should be noted that, in this regard, Kim Yung-un is espousing the classic theory of nuclear deterrence.)

Each North Korean missile or nuclear test since Trump was inaugurated has taken place in the context of perceived extremely hostile actions by the USA, including bellicose Trumpian threats and particularly USA-ROK and USA-Japan war games simulating an attack on North Korea to overthrow the regime.

Perhaps President Putin best summed up North Korean determination when he stated on September 5th: “They will eat grass but will [not stop their \[nuclear\] programme](#) as long as they do not feel safe.”

There is no effective military means to denuclearize North Korea.

Despite all the hyperbole from President Trump, the fact remains that the USA cannot destroy North Korea’s nuclear capability (or overthrow the regime) without a catastrophic loss of life in

Seoul, South Korea, in South Korea more broadly and even in Japan. (And that is not to mention the potential loss of innocent life in North Korea.)

Thus, the only possible option to address the crisis is a combination of sanctions (underway but insufficient as their long history demonstrates) and diplomacy.

Dialogue with North Korea without preconditions has not yet been tried.

Both the U.S. Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defence respectively have voiced their openness to diplomacy on more than one occasion. But so has North Korea over and over again.

Former Senior American official and now [Visiting Professor Robert Carlin](#) has [catalogued](#) recent North Korean offers to negotiate which typically are along the following lines:

“We will, under no circumstances, put the nukes and ballistic rockets on the negotiating table. Neither shall we flinch even an inch from the road to bolstering up the nuclear forces chosen by ourselves, *unless the hostile policy and nuclear threat of the U.S. against the D.P.R.K. are fundamentally eliminated.*”[Emphasis added.]

Troublingly, western media all too often report the first, but not the second, part of the North Korean statement.

Also less well-known is that the USA has yet to offer dialogue that is not conditional on North Korea *first* renouncing nuclear weapons before talks can begin, clearly a non-starter insofar as North Korea is concerned.

That is why Senator Diane Feinstein, Senior United States Senator from California and Vice-chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, issued a [statement in August](#) urging the U.S. government to “quickly engage North Korea in a high-level dialogue without any preconditions.”

To put this another way, this means that diplomacy has not yet been given a meaningful chance to work.

There is a role for Canada in promoting a diplomatic solution.

Canada needs to get behind the call for dialogue without preconditions. We also need to support the recent offer of diplomatic “good offices” from the [UN Secretary-General](#).

German Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) has offered to play the same diplomatic role with respect to North Korean talks as Germany played in the successful “6 plus one” nuclear talks with Iran.

Many [civil society organizations](#) have identified the elements of a comprehensive diplomatic solution along the following lines:

1. International opposition to any pre-emptive use of force by any of the parties, which would be counter-productive and likely lead to nuclear war;
2. Call on all parties to refrain from militaristic rhetoric and provocative military exercises;
3. Encourage China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea and the United States to consider the phased and comprehensive approach for a North-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone

with a 3+3 arrangement¹, *which already has cross-party support in Japan and South Korea and interest from the North Korean government*; [Emphasis added]

4. Encourage China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea and the United States to also consider options and modalities for turning the 1953 Armistice Agreement into a formal end to the 1950-1953 Korean War;
5. Welcome the call of the UN Secretary-General for a resumption of Six-Party talks and his offer to assist in negotiations;
6. Welcome also the offer of the European Union to assist in diplomatic negotiations, as they did successfully in the negotiations on Iran's nuclear program;
7. Call on the United Nations Security Council to prioritise a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

[Additional point not in written submission:

Sadly, however, this proposal may be too optimistic. North Korea may have gone too far down the road of nuclear armament to renounce them entirely. But freezing their capability may be an achievable goal. And this is the thinking behind a recent [joint Russian-Chinese](#) proposal that merits close attention. They summarize their proposal as follows:

The Parties are putting forward a joint initiative, which is based on the Chinese-proposed ideas of “double freezing” (missile and nuclear activities by the DPRK and large-scale joint exercises by the United States and the Republic of Korea) and “parallel advancement” towards the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and the creation of peace mechanisms on the peninsula, and the Russian-proposed stage-by-stage Korean settlement plan.

American strategic ballistic missile defence does not work.

I would like to recall my testimony to this Committee on May 5, 2016, where I stated the following:

Beginning of excerpt:

1. GMD does not work.

One of the leading American experts on missile defence, the Honourable Philip E. Coyle, testified to this effect before the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence in May, 2014. He brings the technological challenges into sharp relief with the following analogy:

“Shooting down an enemy missile going 15,000 mph out in space is like trying to hit a hole-in-one in golf when the hole is going 15,000 mph. And if an enemy uses decoys and countermeasures, missile defence is like trying to shoot a hole-in-one in golf when the hole is going 15,000 mph and the green is covered with black circles the same size as the hole.”

¹ The 3+3 arrangement would include Japan, South Korea and North Korea agreeing not to possess or host nuclear weapons, and would require China, Russia and the USA agreeing not to deploy nuclear weapons in Japan, South Korea or North Korea, nor to attack or threaten to attack them with nuclear weapons.

Another American expert, retired Lt. General Gard testified that, even if a more reliable interceptor (or “kill vehicle”) is developed than the current version which usually fails to hit its target even when the trajectory is pre-determined, there remains “the insurmountable problem of discrimination between missiles and decoys.

Coyle and Gard are long-standing expert critics of GMD. But even ardent proponents like General (ret’d) Francis Mahon, former head of the Army’s Missile Defence Command and former Director of Testing at the Missile Defence Agency, writing in Defence News in April 2015, cannot help but acknowledge the need for a “redesigned” interceptor and the development of a long-range discrimination radar.”

End of excerpt from May 5, 2016 testimony.

Since then, we have even more evidence of the ongoing failure of this enterprise, in the form of an authoritative study from leading scientists of the Union of Concerned Scientists, released in July 2016 entitled: [Shielded from Oversight: The Disastrous US Approach to Strategic Missile Defense](#).

Perhaps one quote from that damning report will suffice:

“Today, with a price tag of \$40 billion and counting, and nearly 15 years of effort, the GMD missile defense system is now recognized by both supporters and critics as being in serious disarray. It has no proven capability to defend the US public from missile attack; moreover, it is not even on a credible path to achieving such capability.”- page 5

I urge Committee members and staffers to read this 45 page, fully-documented report in its entirety.

[Additional point to be made orally (not in written submission circulated):

GMD proponents have made much of a “successful” intercept test in May 2017. As with previous tests, it took place in a highly controlled, scripted (and therefore entirely unrealistic) environment. Philip Coyle, former director of weapons testing for the Defense Department stated that the test does not resolve doubts about whether the GMD system can be relied on anytime soon to protect the continental United States against a limited attack, such as one launched from North Korea. He noted that: “The mock enemy target was only barely of ICBM range, and slower than an ICBM from North Korea to Los Angeles would be.”

And of course, as noted earlier, there still remains what experts have termed the “the insurmountable problem of discrimination between missiles and decoys.”]

American Strategic Ballistic Missile Defence undermines strategic stability.

Once again, I wish to recall my May 5, 2016 testimony on this issue:

Excerpt begins:

2. The vital arms control dimension. It is worth briefly recalling why the Soviet Union and the USA agreed to the 1972 ABM Treaty (which severely restricted ballistic missile

defences). It was because of a straightforward proposition: it is much easier and much cheaper to build more offensive systems to overwhelm defensive systems like BMD than it is to develop a reliable defensive system; thus if they are pursued, they risk triggering an offensive nuclear arms race;

- At a minimum both Russia and China have to take into account the potential effect of a functioning BMD system negating their retaliatory capability which, in turn, means they must keep open the possibility of building up offensive forces as a hedge against USA BMD development (whether or not they believe American assertions that, right now, the system is aimed not at them but at rogue states);
- The American BMD system also acts as a catalyst to nuclear weapons modernization as Russia and China seek not only increased numbers of nuclear weapons but also increased manoeuvrability (through MIRVs); (one missile with multiple warheads capable of independent re-entry from space into atmosphere)
- Preventing these incredibly destabilizing developments was the whole rationale behind the ABM Treaty which President George W. Bush abandoned in 2002 in order to pursue BMD;
- And it is precisely these destabilizing developments that we have seen increasing since then.

Excerpt ends

American GMD puts civilian satellites and indeed the peaceful uses of outer space at risk.

While American strategic ballistic missile defence does not work effectively to intercept incoming ballistic missiles, it is inherently an anti-satellite weapon. Because satellites and long-range ballistic missiles travel on similar paths through space with similar speeds, this technology can also be used to target satellites. In fact, it is actually easier to target satellites than ballistic missiles, since someone attacking a satellite can wait until conditions are optimal but ballistic missile launches come with little warning and may be accompanied by decoys and other countermeasures. (Laura Greco, Union of Concerned Scientists presentation)

The risk to satellites – upon which our modern societies literally depend – from such technology (even when ground-based) is incalculable, runs counter to the Outer Space Treaty and undermines professed Canadian goals (as set out in the new Defence Policy) “in promoting the peaceful use of space and fostering norms of responsible behaviour in space”.

The cost to Canada of participation in American GMD (if it were on offer) would be exorbitant.

I noted in my May 5th, 2016 testimony that there would be significant financial costs to Canadian participation in American GMD, given American demands (even prior to the Trump presidency) that Allies pay their “fair share” of the collective defence burden. We can now potentially put a number on that cost, in the range of at least \$1 billion per interceptor.

Given the “toxic” history of this issue in Canada-USA relations, it is not only futile but risky to raise it again.

In my May 5, 2016 testimony I outlined why participation in American GMD, if it were on offer, will not give Canada a meaningful seat at the table. The United States made the decision in 2004 to locate the ballistic missile defence command in NORTHCOM not NORAD and, during

subsequent negotiations on participation, would not ensure Canada a meaningful operation role or voice or even a guarantee that Canadian cities would be defended. Faced with the prospect of trying to sell such a “passive observer” status to the Canadian public, then Prime Minister Paul Martin wisely decided to withdraw Canada’s request to participate.

[Additional point to be made orally but not in written submission circulated:

An area of concern raised in the 2005 public debate was whether Canadian sovereignty would be compromised if we had no role in an American attempted interception over Canada of an incoming missile, if such a role were on offer which I have argued is not. However, as its name implies: GMD – ground-based midcourse missile defence – while the interceptor is launched from the earth, it is intended to intercept an incoming missile above earth’s atmosphere in Outer Space. As the Outer Space Treaty makes clear, nations have no claim to sovereignty over any part of Outer Space which is the “province of all mankind”.]

In light of the positive signals some Committee members had received while at NORAD headquarters, I was asked the last time I appeared before this Committee whether I had ever visited NORAD command in Colorado Springs and I said I had not. What I should have added is that I have, however, visited the Pentagon and members of the National Security Council at the White House. That is where the decision on Canadian participation will be made. Given the past history – whereby Canada has twice declined in very public circumstances – a senior official in the Obama administration privately described the issue of Canadian participation, insofar as the Americans were concerned, as “toxic”.