

Bob Dole



## NEWS

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### MISSILE DEFENSE

#### DOLE SETS RECORD STRAIGHT ON DEFEND AMERICA ACT; DEMOCRATS OBJECT TO DEBATE

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole tonight spoke in support of the Defend America Act and asked unanimous consent that the U.S. Senate proceed to the bill. Senate Democrats objected and Senator Dole scheduled a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the bill for June 4. Senator Dole's statement follows:

Yesterday, President Clinton acknowledged -- belatedly -- that the post-Cold War era presents us with new national security challenges. He stated, and I quote, "the end of communism has opened the door to the spread of weapons of mass destruction...."

#### President Unwilling to Respond to Ballistic Missile Threat

Unfortunately while the President is finally willing to recognize the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, he remains unwilling to seriously respond to it -- with progress, as opposed to pronouncements on national missile defense.

Most Americans do not know that United States has no defense against ballistic missiles. If a rogue state such as North Korea were to launch a single missile at us, we could do nothing to stop its deadly flight toward an American town or city.

In his speech yesterday, President Clinton pointed to his \$3 billion dollar budget request for missile defense programs as evidence of a "strong, sensible, national missile defense program." This is 21% less than the President's own national security advisers proposed in their Bottom Up Review of U.S. defense needs. It is also 30% less than what the Senate Armed Services Committee provides in this year's Defense Authorization Bill. In short, it is not enough for a determined and effective effort to defend the American people from the threat of ballistic missiles.

President Clinton attacked the Defend America Act -- which I introduced two months ago -- claiming, and I quote, "They have a plan that Congress will take up this week that would force us to choose now a costly missile defense system that could be obsolete tomorrow." That is simply not true.

#### Commit Now to Deploy A National Missile Defense System by 2003

The Defend America Act only "forces" us to commit now to deploy a national missile defense system by the year 2003. The choice of what type of system is left up to the Secretary of Defense who would report back to the Congress on the requirements for an effective ballistic missile defense system.

Making the decision to go forward with missile defense now will not, as the President argued yesterday, lead to America deploying an obsolete system. The programs we currently have in development can serve as the building blocks for a system that meets the missile threat as it emerges. Furthermore, as with the procurement of any weapons system, moving from development to deployment requires lead time -- it does not happen overnight. The President's assertions contradict those of his own Secretary of Defense, who recently stated that these technologies, and I quote, "would be quite capable of defending against the much smaller and relatively unsophisticated ICBM threat that a rogue or a terrorist could mount any time in the foreseeable future."

Now I would like to address the issue of cost. There has been quite an uproar about a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate of the cost of deploying a national missile defense system pursuant to the Defend America Act. The CBO stated that total acquisition costs through the year 2010 would range from \$31 billion to \$60 billion -- if such a system largely consists of advanced space-based components included. However, the Defend

(more)

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America Act does not specify any required components of a national missile defense system -- to include space-based components. On the other hand, the CBO says that a ground-based system with upgraded space based sensors would run around \$14 billion.

**Secretary of Defense to Determine What is Affordable, Effective**

Section 4 of the Defend America Act states, and I quote, "...The secretary of Defense shall develop for deployment an affordable and operationally effective national missile defense system which shall achieve initial operational capability by the end of 2003." The decision on what is affordable and effective is left up to the Secretary of Defense. What I would like to know is how the CBO estimated a national missile defense system whose components are unknown?

It seems to me that the CBO's approach was a somewhat like a family deciding they are going to buy a house and being told by their real estate agent that it could cost them anywhere between \$40,000 and \$4 million. That is true. Houses come in many prices. There are two-bedroom homes and mansions. The couple's decision would come down to what they need and what they can afford.

Those are the same guidelines we need to use here. What does the United States need to protect its citizens and how can we achieve this protection in an affordable manner.

Outlandish estimates are a good way to avoid a serious debate on a most serious issue. The American people deserve better. We are talking about the safety and security of their children and grandchildren.

While you would not know from some of the press coverage on this issue, the Cold War is over. We do not need a so-called space shield to defend against an attack of thousands of missiles. We do, however, need to defend the American people against the much more limited threat of an accidental launch or an attack by a rogue and terrorist regimes such as North Korea and Iran who are acquiring a limited, but deadly capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction with ballistic missiles.

As President Clinton's former director of central intelligence testified, the threat of ballistic missiles is growing and the administration is not addressing this frightening reality. In his testimony to the House National Security Committee, James Woolsey stated, and I quote, "Ballistic missiles can, in the future they increasingly will, be used by hostile states for blackmail, terror, and to drive wedges between us and our allies. It is my judgment that the administration is not currently giving this vital problem the proper weight it deserves."

**Move Beyond Rhetoric & Misinformation to Serious Debate**

Through budgetary scare-tactics and skewed analysis, the administration is trying to confuse this issue and avoid answering the central question of whether or not the American people should be protected. By seeking to proceed to the Defend America Act today, I hoped to move beyond rhetoric and misinformation to a serious debate on a critical matter affecting the future security of all Americans. I believe that the number one responsibility this government has to its citizens is to provide them with protection. That is what the Defend America Act is all about.

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\* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 7:00 p.m.