

Missile Defense Dossier The Polish Perspective

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Poland has found itself in the centre of a growing controversy over the US initiative to deploy elements of the Missile Defence (MD) system to Europe. In January 2007, the U.S. government formally proposed Poland to host a base with 10 interceptors, defending the United States and a part of Europe against long-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles launched from the Middle East. Together with an X-band tracking radar based in the Czech Republic, these two permanent sites would form the European part of the MD midcourse defences, designed to intercept a ballistic missile after it has stopped propelling but before its re-entry into the atmosphere. Poland announced its willingness to start the negotiations, which the US hopes to conclude by the end of 2007.

The Polish Debate

Initial consultations on the possible deployment of the MD site in Poland started in 2003, but even before that date the issue had been on the agenda of a number of Polish-U.S. meetings. Those 'talks about potential talks' were mainly meant to provide the Polish side with information on the concept of the system, its operational developments and options for participations. At the beginning of 2005, dedicated MD task forces were created at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Defence. At the level of public discussion, however, little consideration was given to the potential consequences of hosting an MD base in Poland. The issue was seen mostly in the light of potential benefits of the increased American presence in the country, a logical strengthening of the much-touted strategic relationship between Warsaw and Washington. Hence, after the Parliamentary elections of September 2005, the new

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