

www.nytimes.com

The New York Times
 ON THE WEB

July 10, 2001

Pentagon to Seek Money for Testing Missile Defense

By JAMES DAO

WASHINGTON, July 9 — The Pentagon is preparing to ask Congress for money to build a missile defense test site in Alaska that could also become the command center for a working antimissile system as early as 2004, military officials said.

If it becomes operational, the site will be a clear violation of the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty, which allows some testing of antimissile technology but forbids deployment of a shield against long-range missiles in any state except North Dakota.

Despite that, the proposal has won qualified support from some influential arms control advocates and missile defense skeptics, suggesting that it could blunt Democratic opposition in Congress to President Bush's missile defense plans.

John B. Rhinelander, a lawyer who advised ABM negotiators in 1972 and is a leading arms control advocate, said in an interview that the new Pentagon proposal was so limited in scope that the Russians were not likely to worry that it could effectively counter their nuclear force of about 6,000 weapons. The Pentagon plan calls for installing 10 or fewer interceptors at Fort Greely, near Fairbanks.

As a result, Mr. Rhinelander argued, the Russians may be willing to amend the ABM treaty to allow deployment of such a small system even as close to their borders as Alaska. That would allow the Bush administration to claim victory while keeping the current arms control system largely intact.

"I think this is a more ingenious plan, and one that does less violation to the treaty, than anything I can think of," Mr. Rhinelander said. "Ten launchers is peanuts. The Russians will object initially, but hopefully they will accept this concept. And we will have this behind us. Basically the treaty will be preserved, with this one wrinkle."

But many other arms control advocates have attacked the proposal as an effort by the administration to deploy a missile defense system quickly under the guise of improving testing. Many Democrats have urged the Pentagon to conduct more realistic tests on antimissile technology, while conservative Republicans have demanded immediate deployment of a rudimentary system.

"I think they are trying to trap us in our own rhetoric," an aide to one Democratic senator said.

Joseph Cirincione, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said: "I think it's a transparent ploy to abrogate the treaty. There is no compelling reason to put a test site in Alaska."

Under the Bush plan, which has been outlined in briefings to reporters and




**Experience
the difference:**

- Rated #1 online broker*
- Over a decade of online investing experience
- 24/7 service from Series 7-trained reps
- Quality research, plus 6 independent sources

*Invest
online
with*



[Apply now](#)

*Barron's, March 12, 2001

Congressional aides but not yet detailed in budget documents, the Pentagon would build missile test sites on Kodiak Island, off Alaska's southern coast, and at Fort Greely in central Alaska. The Wall Street Journal reported on the plan today.

The plan calls for using launch sites on Kodiak to fire target missiles toward the continental United States and interceptors to shoot down test missiles coming toward Alaska from either California or Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific. Those flight tests would more realistically simulate the speed and trajectory of weapons launched from, say, North Korea, than do current tests, in which missiles are launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California toward Kwajalein, Pentagon officials said. The next flight test between Vandenberg and Kwajalein is scheduled for Saturday night.

In a more controversial element of the plan, the Pentagon would also build silos and missile storage facilities for about five interceptors at Fort Greely, which military planners view as the likely base for a system of ground-launched interceptors capable of defending the nation. Pentagon officials say Fort Greely would initially be used as simply a storage site and command center for launching test missiles from Kodiak.

But if development of antimissile technology proceeded on schedule, the Bush administration would consider declaring Fort Greely a working missile defense system as early as 2004, if there was credible evidence of a missile threat to the United States, Pentagon officials said.

"If you face an emergency and had some confidence in these interceptors, then they could be used as an emergency missile defense," said Lt. Col. Rick Lehner, a spokesman for the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.

The Pentagon is also expanding testing on other missile defense technologies, including a laser that would be mounted on the nose of a Boeing 747 and interceptors that could be launched from Navy destroyers. If those technologies developed quickly, they also might be put into operation in the next four to five years, Colonel Lehner said.

The Pentagon is still drawing up the detailed budget documents that will spell out how much money it needs to start work on the Alaska sites. The Bush administration is seeking to increase spending on missile defense by 57 percent, to \$8.3 billion, mostly for research and development.

Pentagon officials said the Defense Department might ask Congress for permission to begin work soon, to take advantage of the final weeks of Alaska's short construction season. Such work would probably be limited to cutting trees and grading landscape, the officials said.

Some arms control advocates contend that under the ABM Treaty, the United States must seek Russian approval to build new test sites. They also assert that any work on such test sites will violate the treaty if the sites are intended to become part of a working missile defense system.

But some experts say that the treaty is not clear on those issues, meaning disputes are likely to rage no matter what the administration does.

"It is a question that doesn't have an answer," said Amy Woolf, a defense specialist for

the Congressional Research Service, a nonpartisan agency of Congress, when she was asked if building a test site at Fort Greely would violate the treaty.

"Whatever we say, the Russians are likely to disagree with," Ms. Woolf added. "It's a question of how you want to handle the political fallout from that."

Some powerful Democrats, including Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, have said they will oppose any defense appropriations that might violate the ABM Treaty. Mr. Levin's office said today that he had not received enough information about the Alaska proposal to know whether it would violate the treaty.

In a sharp exchange during a committee hearing last month, Mr. Levin repeatedly asked Mr. Rumsfeld whether any action in the 2002 budget might violate the treaty.

"One or more of the activities may — eventually will, the good Lord willing — run up against the treaty and be a violation," Mr. Rumsfeld said.

"Before that happens," he continued, "we would have been in discussions with the Russians. And we fully intend that we would have fashioned some sort of a framework to move beyond the treaty."

Missile Test Is 1 for 2

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M., July 9 (AP) — The Pentagon reported partial success today in a test of the Patriot missile system, with one of its interceptors destroying a remote-controlled F-4 fighter plane that was using radar-jamming signals, while a second Patriot failed to hit an incoming missile.

The F-4 test was the first time the Army had fired its latest-generation Patriot, the Pac-3, at a fighter airplane. The other Patriot test firing was aimed at a Hera target missile which was designed to simulate an incoming ballistic missile.