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FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

COLLOQUY ON BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE IN EUROPE

SUMMARY RECORD

of the Colloquy on Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe
held at the French Senate, Paris

on 7 November 2007

COLLOQUY ON
BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE IN EUROPE

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PROGRAMME

14.15 **Opening**

Mr Jean-Pierre MASSERET, President of the Assembly of WEU

14.30 **First sitting**: **Problems of Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe**

Chairman: Mr Jean-Dominique MERCHET, Journalist

Mr Edward O'HARA, Chairman of the Technological and Aerospace Committee of the Assembly of WEU, United Kingdom: Analysis of risks and threats – state of play as regards non-proliferation agreements, the ballistic/nuclear threat

Mr Bruno GRUSELLE, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, FRS, Paris: American, NATO and Russian programmes

Debate

15.50 **Second sitting: Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe or European Ballistic Missile Defence?**

Chairman: Mr Jean-Dominique MERCHET, Journalist

Mr Robert G. BELL, SAIC – Science Applications International Corporation: The American vision

Mr Denis VANDENSAVEL, Deputy Secretary for Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence, NATO: Status of deliberations within NATO

Ingénieur général Robert RANQUET, Strategic Affairs Department, French Ministry of Defence

Ambassador Jiři SCHNEIDER, Programme Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI), Czech Republic

Debate

18.00 **Conclusions**

Mr Jean-Pierre MASSERET, President of the Assembly

18.15 **Close of colloquy**

COLLOQUY ON BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE IN EUROPE
Wednesday 7 November 2007

OPENING

Address by Mr Jean-Pierre MASSERET, President of the Assembly

The Assembly was seeking to provide a forum for discussion of missile defence at a time when the United States was developing new European components of its missile defence system. He felt that missile defence had both technological and political importance. Questions regarding the system's effectiveness had to be answered, for example how impenetrable and reliable was it in the face of the many forms of missile proliferation and asymmetric threats. The strategic consequences of its implementation also had to be considered. Was the United States seeking superiority and domination? Were we at risk of a new arms race? Or, on the contrary, would the threat of missile proliferation draw the major actors – the United States, China and Russia – closer together, resulting in more comprehensive international regulations in the fight against proliferation?

Europe was very much concerned both by the threat posed by the proliferation of missiles and weapons of mass destruction overall and by the strategic nature of the American system. What would this mean for a future world order? Not to address this issue would be to show that Europe did not exist. A Europe without opinions on these subjects would soon find itself on the sidelines of the international scene. NATO had its own missile defence programme which in particular provided a framework for cooperation with Russia, a country that was showing its new resolve geopolitically. President Masseret also raised the question of the role of French deterrence for a Europe within reach of the missiles in the Middle East.

FIRST SITTING:

Problems of Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe

Chairman: Mr Jean-Dominique MERCHET, Journalist

Address by Mr Edward O'HARA (United Kingdom, Socialist Group), Chairman of the Technological and Aerospace Committee of the Assembly of WEU: Analysis of risks and threats – state of play as regards non-proliferation agreements, the ballistic/nuclear threat

Ballistic missile defence in the United States was first and foremost seen as a way to face the risks posed by states with marginal capabilities, such as North Korea and Iran. This did not rule out taking the system currently under development a step further towards a more sophisticated capability that could reduce or neutralise the real and significant offensive capabilities of Russia and China – the only two countries with proven capabilities to launch a nuclear strike on the US mainland.

Europe, that is to say the European states that were members of NATO and/or the European Union, was in a more difficult, less clear-cut position. The European Security Strategy simply stated that "the spread of missile technology adds a further element of instability and could put Europe at increasing risk", without going into any more detail.

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) initiated in 1987 by the G-7 countries did provide for some restrictions on the transfer of missiles and ballistic technology. However, it was an informal arrangement, not an international treaty: membership was voluntary and restricted – currently there were only 34 participating countries. The Hague Code of Conduct – adopted in 2002 – was an encouraging step towards a universal effort against the proliferation of ballistic missile technology. A total of 111 countries were now signatories to a set of measures seeking to increase transparency, in particular through confidence-building mechanisms such as information exchange on missile programmes and pre-launch notification. But we were still a long way from an international treaty on the non-proliferation of missile and missile-related technology. The Code of Conduct did not provide for verification and there were no sanctions in case of non-compliance.

A distinction had to be made between (potential) "risks" and (real) "threats". The risks and threats were directly linked to the positive or negative perception of the political intentions of the countries in

possession of these systems. We could therefore say that the Russian ballistic risk was real but that the threat was low and, on the contrary, that the Iranian ballistic risk was low (in terms of military and technical capabilities) but that the threat was high. The same reasoning could be extended to other states that had medium- and long-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching Europe. The Worldwide Ballistic Missile Inventories published by the Arms Control Association listed no less than 32 countries possessing ballistic missiles.

Military and technical criteria helped hone the perception and analysis of the risks and threats posed by ballistic missiles. First and foremost were medium- and long-range missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and terror – nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological. This first category included intercontinental (over 5 500 km), intermediate-range (between 3 000 and 5 500 km) and medium-range (from 1 000 to 3 000 km) capabilities. The range was clearly important, as it determined the other characteristics of the missile: weight, propulsion, speed, altitude and payload. Intercontinental missiles were beyond the range of current air and missile defence systems. The two other categories included those capabilities that the American system currently under development aimed to counter in the short term – before eventually being capable of intercepting potential intercontinental missiles from Iran and North Korea (towards 2015 and beyond).

As regards Europe and its geographic location, it should be stressed that all the ballistic missiles deployed at its borders represented a threat. Even short-range missiles with a range of less than 1 000 km posed a real and measurable risk to Europeans. The European Security Strategy for once referred to a nearby region as a source of threat: "We are now (…) entering a new and dangerous period that raises the possibility of a WMD race, especially in the Middle East".

The question of the warhead was also crucial when it came to analysing the risks and threats. A missile with a conventional payload or one capable of "massive disruption" had limited operational effectiveness that depended on precision, the quality of information about the target and available air and missile defence capabilities.

Range, payload and saturation effect were three military and technical criteria that allowed us to measure the current status of the Iranian threat. This state had a wide array of short- and medium-range missiles that were constantly being improved upon. It was said to have the intention of joining the category of states in possession of weapons of mass destruction. This situation concerned the United States, Israel, Iraq, the whole of the Middle East and Europe, and the consequences were unpredictable. The most dangerous scenario in the medium term would be that of a head-on confrontation between Israel and/or the United States and Iran. The threat and the risk would be equally high.

The definition of the risks and threats posed by ballistic missiles was not an exact science and today's perceptions might turn into realities or might remain at the stage of planning scenarios. That was not an obstacle to preparing for and adapting to the risks and threats. In this regard, the European states were in an awkward position. As allies of the United States they were de facto covered by the future American system, although depending on the level of sophistication and the location of the system not all European members of NATO would be equally protected; as members of NATO, they were involved in a Euro-Atlantic theatre missile defence and territorial and civil defence programme. And now, as members of the EU, they were bound by a collective defence clause which was written into the new treaties. It still remained unclear, however, whether the United States would be willing to open decision-making to Europeans on the use of their ballistic missile defence capabilities. The debate on European interests in ballistic missile defence could not be more timely.

Mr MERCHET noted with interest the distinction that had been made between "risk" and "threat". He wondered whether the United States would be prepared to involve the Europeans in the decision-making process on missile defence.

Address by Mr Bruno GRUSELLE, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, FRS, Paris: American, NATO and Russian programmes

For the United States missile defence was part of a coherent whole. The US devoted an annual budget of 10 billion dollars to its missile defence system. The US system, which had existed in embryonic

form since the middle of the decade, would probably evolve into an initial global capability by 2015. The 2002 NPR (Nuclear Posture Review) had called for the establishment of a new triad composed of offensive nuclear weapons, offensive conventional weapons and defensive weapons. The first milestone for establishing this new balance of strategic capabilities had been set for 2012. What was new about this triad was not so much the development of a national missile defence as the *prompt global strike* concept. This concept, which could revolutionise the role of ballistic missiles, in fact posed more strategic, political and practical problems than did missile defence per se.

The new American triad also involved protection of the United States' allies in Asia and Europe. The installation of American missile defence components on European soil was not new. There were already ground-based radar installations in the United Kingdom and Greenland, which had now been modernised. Countries like Spain were also now involved in naval missile defence exercises in the Pacific, following the procurement of AEGIS ships. The proposed installation of sites in Poland and the Czech Republic was not part of an American conspiracy to upset the nuclear balance between the US and Russia. However it did modify the strategic environment and give rise to political tensions. In the United States-Russia context it was interesting to look at the different western European sites: due to the laws of physics a missile fired from Russia towards the United States would travel in a northerly direction and the interceptors based in Poland would have to follow a tracking trajectory, making destruction almost impossible. The other elements in the UK and Greenland, which had been designed in the cold war context but had since been updated, had not given rise to any controversy. The tracking radar in the Czech Republic could to some extent, it is true, monitor tests conducted south-east of Moscow.

The US missile defence system corresponded to a real threat. The Iranian threat had emerged over the last few decades with the help of foreign suppliers; Iran's growing autonomy for missiles of all ranges raised concerns at regional level and worldwide. Three developments were likely between now and 2015:

- an increase in the range of the Shahab missiles, the latest version already having a range of 1 500 to 2 000 kilometres;
- qualitative improvements to Iran's tactical missiles, in particular with the adoption of solid propulsion and the integration of modern navigation systems;
- appearance of ground-attack cruise missiles capable of reaching the major cities of the Gulf.

Hence the European countries had to take on board the fact that Iranian missiles would be capable of reaching their territory by 2015.

What would the consequences of establishing the US missile defence system be? In order for this system to work, several complex functions – alert, tracking and interception – had to be coordinated. This was the task of the command centre in Colorado, under the supervision of Stratcom. Whether or not elements of the system were deployed in central Europe, Europe would have to live with it. Could Europe refuse a new American umbrella which could be presented as strengthening collective security using defensive means? NATO's future strategic concept would need to take account of this new element. It was therefore urgent to engage in discussions with Washington – and with the future new Administration in particular – on Europe's role in this new triad and in its day-to-day operational management. This was particularly important in view of the reactions to the American project, which made it all the more urgent to establish a common European position.

Mr MERCHET remarked that the United States would in any event develop its own national missile defence system and that Mr Gruselle was therefore in favour of Europe "accompanying" the development of this American system.

Debate

Mr Alain CHARMEAU (CEO Astrium ST), noted that ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems posed major challenges. The US programme had prompted reactions from Russia, China and India.

What was Europe's response? Important decisions had to be taken about the deployment and use of BMD systems, technological know-how, the threats and the political solutions.

Europe was strongly involved in the space sector which was also affected by BMD systems. The European countries had technical and technological solutions for the interception of missiles in space. How should Europe position itself?

Mr MERCHET asked what the objectives were: to get more investment in space technologies? And who could speak for Europe in this area?

President MASSERET remarked that it was a question of political responsibility. Europe was absent from these discussions, which was a political failure on its part. Industry was ahead of it in this area. In reality, Europe was simply providing the ground on which to deploy elements of the American system. Greater advantage should be taken of European know-how and Europe should discuss with the United States in order to draw its attention to existing European technology. The US and Europe were industrial and economic partners and cooperation would generate both an economic and industrial spin-off.

Mr Pascal MALLET (Agence France-Press) remarked that Europe was engaging in the same strategic debates as those of the 1960s. France was still battling on Europe's behalf to accommodate the United States' interests. Enhanced cooperation among European states was also a way of strengthening European industries, but such a project would exceed the scope of BMD. Another question arising in connection with space technologies was that of the militarisation of space.

Mr Roman ZHOLUS (Russian Embassy) questioned whether the Russian ballistic threat really existed. Russia proposed to maintain and open to other parties the Treaty on intermediate nuclear forces (INF) as well as to promote, together with the EU, the adoption of a space treaty to prevent the weaponisation of space. Russia was part of Europe and wanted to cooperate with other European states.

Mr Joao MOTA AMARAL (Assembly, Portugal) thought that the current discussion highlighted the weakness of Europe and of its strategic thinking. The debate had started only after the Americans had decided to deploy elements of their system in Europe. What were the threats to Europe: Russia, Iran? On defence matters the mindset of the European countries was pacifist and timorous.

Mr GRUSELLE pointed out that the United States, whose aim was to develop a global strike capability, was studying the possibility of deploying weapons in space and the development of very high speed missiles. One should not exaggerate the issue of the militarisation of space, however. The ballistic missile threat from Russia was linked with the size of the Russian arsenal.

Regarding the treaties, it would make sense to open the INF Treaty to other signatories. The United States would not agree to limitations on its access to space for military purposes. Pacifism was a political issue which was also a matter for the legislators.

Mr O'HARA said that the weaponisation of space was a major problem and should be avoided. Our societies depended to a great extent on the proper functioning of satellites and these should not be endangered, for any threats or harm to them would have serious economic and social consequences.

China's shooting down of one of its satellites had been a political statement that it had the capacity to do so. Russia for its part was a part of Europe and the threat it represented was small.

Europe's position was not one of neutrality, but what it lacked was a coherent approach to the defence of its interests. There was also the real problem of the short- and medium-range missiles that threatened Europe.

President MASSERET remarked that it was not a matter of pacifism but of political deficiencies on the part of Europe. The cold war was a thing of the past but mentalities had hardly changed and there was no genuine autonomous European defence spirit. Europe continued to need the United States.

Europe did not have sufficient foresight and depended on the decisions of others and on their protection. Citizens were sometimes more farsighted in this respect than politicians, for it was their daily lives that were at stake.

Mr MERCHET observed that Europe's dilemma was always "to do or not to do?" If it cooperated with the United States there was a risk of it becoming even more dependent, as brought home by the example of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF).

Mr GRUSELLE felt that cooperation on BMD between Europe and the United States could also be seen in terms of technical and operational capabilities. The NATO air defence structures which were shared among the member states were a case in point. There were political and operational questions that needed to be studied in order to integrate the American system in the NATO programmes. Europe had its own technological niches which it should make better use of.

General QUESNOT (Director, *Défense Nationale)* wondered about the United States' strategic intentions for Europe. Was there any urgency? The United States was giving fresh impetus to its diplomatic efforts and engaging more in *realpolitik* in order to win back the influence it had lost due to the failure of its plans for the greater Middle East (Iraq) and the deadlock with Iran. The United States also needed Russia and China to be its allies on these questions. Moreover, the United States had turned its attention to the Pacific region.

Russia and China were opposed to the American BMD system but compromises were possible – this would gain time for Europe.

Mr O'HARA underlined that BMD was a project which called for cooperation. Europe needed to work not only with the United States, but also with Russia and China.

Mrs Josette DURRIEU (Assembly, France) thought that Russia was the key to resolving many of the frozen conflicts in Europe. A major political issue was at stake. There was a Russian strategy and an American one, but no European strategy. Attention must also be paid to China.

Mr Imre SOOÄÄR (Assembly, Estonia) drew attention to the problem of orbital debris in connection with BMD. What would be the consequences for the population if a missile were to be intercepted above central Europe? How would problems of nuclear or other forms of contamination be managed?

Mr Didier COMPARD (Consultant) noted that the space weaponisation issue shared common ground with that of BMD. The US programmes should be taken seriously, as should be the United States' declared policy of freedom of action in space (National Space Policy 2007). The US was in the process of establishing a global reactive strike policy. Since Europe was cooperating with the US on BMD, it too was concerned. The Assembly had put forward some interesting recommendations which should be heeded.

Lord RUSSELL-JOHNSTON (Assembly, United Kingdom) felt that Russia should not be isolated but that its policy was worrying. BMD called for cooperation but there was no coherence at European level. This had a lot to do with the United Kingdom's position on these issues.

Mr GRUSELLE noted that the problem of debris was taken into account by the programmes which made provision for decontamination measures following a detonation or the release of radioactivity. The prime objective of US space policy was to protect American space systems. The US would not respond favourably to a draft space treaty presented by Europe or Russia. Russia was not yet a strategic partner of Europe in the same way that the United States was.

SECOND SITTING:

Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe or European Ballistic Missile Defence?

Chairman: Mr Jean-Dominique MERCHET, Journalist

Address by Mr Robert G. BELL, SAIC, Science Applications International Corporation: The American Vision

The focus was on two main points: the strategic logic of the US and how it perceived the Russian stance. The American threat prevention strategy was clearly aimed at Iraq and Iran and missile defence was part of a strategy designed to support deterrence and back up the diplomatic efforts to prevent the nuclear programmes not only of Iran but other countries too. He pointed out, with the aid

of slides showing the various Russian installations, that Russia had been deploying a missile defence system since the Soviet era and that certain sites were still operational. This was part of Russia's defence: Europe and the West too were entitled to their defence system, which was in no way directed in an aggressive fashion against any country, but designed rather to protect their territory and sovereignty.

The problem was more a geopolitical one. The West could develop a system in cooperation with Russia which could constitute a real barrier to Iran's nuclear ambitions. Everything might change if Iran were to renounce its intentions.

Mr MERCHET noted that it had unfortunately not been possible to get a Russian representative to participate in the round table, despite the efforts of the organisers of the colloquy.

Address by Mr Denis VANDENSAVEL, Deputy Secretary for Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence, NATO: Status of deliberations within NATO

The NATO position would probably be elaborated in greater depth at the April 2008 Bucharest Summit. Three main avenues were being explored: the protection of deployed troops (for which a programme was ongoing), the protection of the population and debris management; activities in cooperation with Russia. Technically speaking the first programme was well advanced, while the second depended on evaluations of further elements that had since cropped up. Work had been well under way with Russia but the situation had been somewhat disrupted by the announcement of the US programme. There were many issues that needed to be resolved, including that of the degree of commitment on the part of the European countries and the budgets needed to implement proposals. Clearly the purpose of a missile defence system was to supplement diplomatic efforts to alleviate the current tensions. NATO could acquire an autonomous missile defence system in Europe which might be different from that of the US and include a short-range interceptor. In order to develop a more sophisticated European capability a transfer of American technology would be needed. The Bucharest Summit would help make progress on these issues.

Address by Mr Robert RANQUET, Strategic Affairs Department, French Ministry of Defence

Mr Ranquet would endeavour to answer the question posed by the title of the second sitting "A Ballistic Missile Defence in Europe or European Ballistic Missile Defence?" The concept of missile defence was not new, but rather stemmed from the *Strategic Defense Initiative* (SDI) programme launched by President Reagan. He underlined that the American decision to progressively develop a national missile defence system was broadly supported, including by the American population. This had been particularly true since the 11 September attacks. However, the idea of extending the missile shield to European countries was a recent one. The debate in NATO had focused to begin with on theatre missile defence, which now existed. NATO was now giving thought to territorial missile defence. France's White Paper on defence and national security would be completed only in spring 2008. Thus France would doubtless adopt a cautious or even reserved stance at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008.

The Reform Treaty approved on 18 October last placed the emphasis on crisis management and seemed to give priority to NATO for collective defence.

It was in the EU's interests to engage in a dialogue with Russia on missile defence issues. The EU's position on this issue should be distinct from that of NATO.

Furthermore, the missile defence system would not be a substitute for nuclear deterrence. Hence the question also arose of the sharing of nuclear deterrence among the European states. Out of the 27 EU member states, France and the UK were the only ones to hold nuclear weapons. Were they prepared to extend their protection to the whole of the EU?

Regarding the industrial aspects, one might consider applying a strategy of technological "niches" (in particular in the field of early warning and upper layer interception capabilities) which would benefit European companies in the framework of a "balanced" system of transatlantic cooperation.

Mr MERCHET observed that the question of missile defence arose at three levels: that of NATO, the EU and at bilateral level.

Address by Ambassador Jiři SCHNEIDER, Programme Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI), Czech Republic

Ambassador Schneider expressed his gratitude to President Masseret for the invitation to this colloquy. He said that the debate on ballistic missile defence (BMD) and particularly as regards the proposed US sites in Poland and the Czech Republic was being raised in a multiplicity of new forums. This was surprising as the talks between the United States, Poland and the Czech Republic begun three years earlier at a low level had at the time provoked no response. Today they had opened a real Pandora's box and become a global issue, although this was never the intention. The subject of his talk today would be European BMD sites and Europe's lack of a missile defence system.

He began by saying the United States believed Iran would become a threat to the West in about 2015 when it would be in a position to target European capitals. The threat as perceived by Europe, however, was different. Europe was closer to the Middle East and was concerned about long-range missiles not only from Iran but from a number of other locations and not necessarily unleashed only by state actors.

A point of view the Czech Republic shared with the United States was that there could not be two different levels of security among NATO and EU members. Europe should further develop its missile defence capabilities. Former French President Jacques Chirac had said over a year previously that BMD was a tool and could not be considered a substitute for deterrence. It could however supplement it by reducing Europe's vulnerability to blackmail. This had to happen if Europe was to make a good job of preventive diplomacy. If it did not acquire the protection BMD offered, its diplomatic persuasiveness would be diminished.

It was evident that Europe wanted to expand its global role through its ESDP missions. If, say, Iran acquired nuclear capabilities, would Europe give in to blackmail? Obviously not! Blackmail exerted through troop kidnappings had resulted in reductions in troop numbers. If stronger pressures were to be applied, involving missiles, what would be the reaction? If the EU was not prepared to give up its missions abroad this might be a starting point for considering increased defence investment in order to raise the level of security to one that was acceptable.

The current missile defence architecture did not offer the same level of protection to all members. If NATO did not plug into the shorter range system, its south-eastern flank would remain vulnerable. A dialogue in NATO was therefore needed to eliminate this weakness. Regarding an arms race in space, it was not clear at present how likely this was, but there was increasing industrial interest, especially in the United States, in seeing these missile sites get off the ground and into space.

Cooperation with Russia was crucial. There were evident reasons why sharing data on early warning systems, as proposed by the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, had to continue and that offer should remain open. But Russia should not enjoy higher levels of transparency than those that applied to the host countries of such systems or any other European country. Negotiations were currently in progress to examine how to provide the same levels of transparency and access to all.

Until a full-scale NATO missile defence architecture existed, the Czech Republic would continue its present defence and military arrangements with the United States as these fulfilled Article 3 of the Washington Treaty which stipulated that "in order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack". It would be more acceptable within the Czech Republic if the whole system were fully interoperable with NATO's multi-layered system. More work needed to be done to achieve that goal.

A final point was the fact that there was no precedent for the EU examining its own member states' bilateral relations. A very lively debate would ensue if such arrangements were put on the table. Should missile defence be developed further in any future EU security doctrine? There was good reason for Europeans to do this, especially if the EU continued to send troops abroad. The same levels

of defence should also be available to those at home so as not to leave the continent vulnerable to blackmail. NATO, at its Prague summit, had commissioned a feasibility study. It would be a good idea if the European Council during the Czech Presidency (if there were to be one in 2009) were to commission a similar study on multi-layered missile defence in Europe.

Debate

Mr Mike HANCOCK (Assembly, United Kingdom) asked how Europe was supposed to pay for projects like the missile defence shield when it could not afford to fund and equip its own troops abroad. He noted that while the notion of two different levels of protection had been roundly rejected there were nonetheless two distinct levels of commitment involved: those countries that sent troops and those that voted on whether to do so or not.

Mr ZHOLUS (Russian Embassy) observed that today Russia was indeed a partner and not an enemy and that people were increasingly coming to accept this. The early warning system that surrounded Moscow, built in 1972, was outdated. Russia had proposed joint use of the Gabala radar but this had been rejected by the United States. The main difference between the Moscow system and the US one was that the Russian one surrounded the capital whilst the US system was being built thousands of miles from home in a different country.

Mr du PUY-MONTBRUN (Astrium) asked how the speakers could talk of enormous costs. Where was their point of comparison? Did this mean abandoning projects before they were even begun?

Ambassador SCHNEIDER replied that there were practically no direct costs for the Czech Republic in hosting the US radar which was highly advantageous for it. There were few indirect costs involved in preparing the infrastructure around the site and under the lease being offered by the government no rent would be demanded of the United States.

Mr RANQUET said that France took the view that security was indivisible. Countries were usually protected where they were geographically. If a country was situated close to the front it would bear the brunt of battles and its security would be as efficient as the amount invested in it.

Mr BELL noted that as regards costs, the proposed sites would cost the United States approximately 5.6 billion euros over the next 20 years. The system would allow NATO to fill gaps; plugging into the US system would cost NATO 1.05 billion euros over the same period of time in which the United States paid its 21% NATO share. This meant a cost of approximately 40 million euros for 25 states per year – working out at less than the cost of a single tank.

Mr John GREENWAY (Assembly, United Kingdom) had Fylingdales radar in his constituency. Local opinion held that they were there for something that would never happen and would never be used. If the West needed to protect them (as Mr O'Hara had suggested) then the system being proposed by the US had to be built. But this should be with the cooperation and involvement of the United States, Russia, NATO and the EU together, rather than the United States alone.

Mr Robert WALTER (Assembly, United Kingdom) noted that in recent meetings with Russian officials in Moscow, three points of view from the Russian side became clear. Firstly Iran was not a threat; secondly, that the system being proposed would be inefficient, especially in repelling a threat from Iran and the East, and thirdly and perhaps more importantly, there were worries that the system would be able to detect Russian missiles being pointed towards Europe and the West. Did this last point of view indicate a Russian intention to point missiles in this direction and, if not, why the great concern on their part?

Mr Jaakko LAAKSO (Assembly, Finland) asked how Russia could become more involved in Europe. When talking about politics and culture, Russia was involved in Europe but when military and security issues came up it was excluded. If Russia was isolated, what countermeasures might it be likely to take? This was a serious issue for Finland.

Mr RANQUET acknowledged that the tracking radar which was to be built either in Poland or the Czech Republic would become a primary target for those wishing to deploy missiles against the West as that radar would need to be taken out to avoid the early detection of such missiles.

Mr BELL concurred that at present there was no evidence of an Iranian plan against Europe, but he outlined a possible future scenario. If diplomacy failed to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, the West would in all likelihood apply very heavy sanctions. These would be interpreted by Iran as a declaration of war and it would probably close off the Straits of Hormuz and the supply of oil to the West. Naval intervention from NATO would be required to reopen the Straits. Iran would then probably announce that European cities were under nuclear threat.

The West and Russia could work together on a joint BMD programme. However, if Russia adopted a tougher stance, this would be unlikely to happen.

Ambassador SCHNEIDER replied that **t**he security of the proposed missile defence sites would be crucial, but if Iran did indeed want to harm the West the assumption would be that it would have acquired enough capabilities to destroy the sites and harm the population – a difficult task and a question for the military experts to ponder. Regarding whether Russia was part of Europe, that was more of a Russian decision.

Conclusion

President MASSERET noted that throughout the afternoon's discussions on missile defence, the question of the relationship between the United States and Russia had been ever present. The fact that this question was now dominating the debate, whether in Moscow or Paris, was becoming a "matter for concern". Every effort should be made not to fan the flames but rather to calm the situation down by seeking out and building concrete and constructive partnerships. During the cold war, we managed to reduce the pressure; at present everyone should keep abreast of developments and those that were in a position to do so should try to calm things down. For its part, the Assembly of Western European Union would strive, as it had always done in the past, to follow the matter and make a significant contribution to the debates.