

Congressional Testimony

Remarks by Lieutenant General Lester L. Lyles, USAF, Director, Ballistic Missile Defense Organization before the House National Security Committee,

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I appreciate this opportunity to be before this committee and to share my views about all of the programs going on in ballistic missile defense. I'll keep my remarks brief because I think Dr. Kaminski and General Ralston covered all the issues very, very thoroughly and I believe in and support all the comments and all the words they've stated about the program.

I just want to make one comment, I've been in the job for about 30 days and I am enjoying the opportunity to interact with all of the people involved with it.

I want to make one comment relative to an issue that is really germane to all of our programs in the Department of Defense and particularly one of this nature. And that is the commitment of the leadership in the Department of Defense. I can tell you because I look very closely for this. I think all of us in uniform do for any major programs we are responsible for.

I have been absolutely pleased and thoroughly, thoroughly impressed with the strong commitment on the part of the leadership - the civilian leadership - of the Department of Defense and OSD: Dr. Kaminski, Dr. White, Dr. Perry all down through the line in OSD and certainly in the chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff office, for all of our programs in ballistic missile defense.

There is complete commitment to the activities that are going on. Complete understanding of the threat involved. Complete commitment to making sure we provide the best commitment and best capabilities to our warfighters in the field. I feel very, very positive about that and very, very pleased with that kind of commitment that I see involved in all of the activities.

As I look at the various programs - again in my 30 day perspective -- of all of the activities that are going on, our theater missile defense program, our national missile defense program and the technology program for which BMDO is responsible, one thing that really jumps out me is the thrust at which we're working each one of the different elements, particularly our near term elements for theater missile defense. In my 28 years of experience in the United States Air Force, all of which has been involved in research, development and acquisition, I can say that, again, the commitment to working these programs is extremely strong and I think the pace by which we're taking on each one of the elements, in spite of some of the engineering problems, in spite of the questions about threat, are really right sort of thrust to have for each of the programs we are involved in.

And while there may be some questions about the capabilities we have today, in my opinion, when I look at and compare other programs I've had experience with, we have made significant, significant improvement since Desert Storm and the ability to

provide protection for our warfighting forces. And again I feel very pleased about that for our organization.

I'll just make one last comment as the one I think if very germane to the picture of the activity and that's our management structure. Dr. Kaminski has given me a mandate for our management of National Missile Defense. We will have a joint program office that is no larger than sixty people, and we'll even try to keep it a little smaller than that. But I am absolutely committed to the fact that we need a joint program office to bring together all of the elements involved in a national missile defense capability. It is not just the activities that are currently managed by the Army. It's not just the activities that are managed by the Air Force in our space realm and BM/C3. It's not just the various elements that even the Navy can bring to this picture. It's all of those together to give us a system to system perspective. And I'm absolutely committed to make sure that we get that kind of ability from a systems to systems perspective and not look at it in terms of parochial interests. So we need a joint program office to help us look at that total perspective.

Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Harman, I'm very pleased to be here. Thank you.