Donald C. Winter Remarks at the Sixth Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Missile Defence Conference, London, UK

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On Wednesday, November 17, 2004, Northrop Grumman Corporation Vice President and Missions Systems Sector President Donald C. Winter delivered remarks at the 6th RUSI Missile Defence Conference in London, UK. Below are his delivered remarks.

Who will go with us?

Thank you, I am pleased and honored to be here and to be able to speak to such a distinguished and knowledgeable audience.

For over a hundred and seventy years, the Royal United Services Institute has provided a forum for the study and debate of complex issues relating to national and international defense and security. The subject of this conference, "Delivering Ballistic Missile Defence," is surely one that needs this open and informed debate and I applaud Admiral Richard Cobbold and the RUSI staff for providing this forum.

This lunch time talk is between the morning Session entitled, "Where We Are?" and the afternoon Session entitled, "Where We Are Going?" so, if you will allow me, I would like to call my talk, "Who will go with us?" Thanks to the demise of the ABM Treaty, Americans can now at least contemplate a shared defense with friends and allies against ballistic missile attack. I am here to argue that the time has come for the European defense community to take the lead in convincing your publics and governments to mount a robust defense of your cities.

In making our case, however, we must first acknowledge that we face intense public skepticism. The failure of virtually every intelligence service to correctly assess the readiness of Saddam's weapons leaves Americans and Europeans apt to see missile threats as more hype than substance.

What the public needs to understand is that near-perfect intelligence is unlikely. We face a range of troubling probabilities, with few certainties.

This was the point Donald Rumsfeld made two years ago. Now bear with me here, there are quite a few "knowns" here, and I want to differentiate among them. Rumsfeld said that there are developments we understand – called "the known-knowns." Then he said there are developments that we know *might* be happening – what he called "the known-unknowns." And then there are developments taking place in the world that we can't even guess at – what he called "the unknown-unknowns."

Now this statement was ridiculed by the British Plain English campaign as an example of obtuse public speech. And who am I to come to London to argue about the Queen's English? Perhaps the Secretary did manage to mangle the Mother tongue. But he didn't mangle the importance of the point. The point is – I believe – Secretary Rumsfeld – as a public servant – expressed a theory of knowledge worthy of a philosopher. More important, he applied that theory as a strategic guide.

Strategy in the Cold War era was principally about responding to the "known-knowns" of Soviet political thought, technology and deployments. Certainly this new age forces us to confront more of the "known-unknowns," developments that involve far more uncertainty. And after 9/11, who can doubt the possibility of "unknown-unknowns?"

The historical track record of understanding these latter categories is less than inspiring.

For example – as most of you know – the 1995 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate concluded: "No country, other than the major declared nuclear powers, will develop or otherwise acquire a ballistic missile in the next 15 years that could threaten the contiguous forty-eight states and Canada."

Only nine years after this report, North Korea announced it has a nuclear weapon. Now East Asia anxiously anticipates the flight-testing of the Taepodong-2 missile, making it is increasingly likely that North Korea is attempting to extend the range to hit the West Coast of the United States.

Then there is Iran, which recently announced a billion-dollar investment in long-range missiles. Just this October, former Iranian President Rafsanjani boasted that the range of the Shahab-3 had been widened to include parts of Europe.

And throughout the Nineties, as AMB Josef noted last night, the AQ Khan network acted with impunity, assisting Iran – providing state-of-the-art centrifuges to North Korea and Libya – and offering blueprints for nuclear warheads on the international market. How did the 1995 NIE get it so wrong? I would like to suggest that they saw the future through the prism of the past. They made the mistake of assuming that the North Koreans and the Iranians would use the same processes as the superpowers did in developing huge and reliable nuclear arsenals. These analysts never considered how the timetable could be advanced for missiles deployed as Weapons of Mass Terror, with limited concern for their reliability or testing.

Now of course, such mistakes go back to the beginning of the Cold War. Back in 1949, the CIA informed President Truman that the Soviet Union would not have an atomic weapon until 1953. As it turns out, Stalin had detonated an atom bomb while the CIA was still writing that report.

Now, don't get me wrong. Our intelligence community does a great job.

It's just that, while we're quite good at predicting evolutionary events, we're understandably not as good at predicting revolutionary ones – especially if they involve sudden, quantum leaps in military capability or an over-night "about face" in a nation's policy due to a sudden change of government.

The most striking example of this, perhaps, was Weimar Germany. In 1931 it was an enfeebled democracy. Ten years later, Nazi Germany was the heart of a thriving empire, armed to the teeth, embarked on a campaign of aggression and conquest, making a realistic bid for world domination. Or consider Afghanistan. Little more than a decade separates the time when the mujahedeen drove out Soviet forces, from the days when coalition forces drove out the Taliban and put the groundwork in place for that nation's recent free elections. Who foresaw *that* series of events?

Now, even worse are the "unknown-unknowns," the short-term events that take everyone by surprise. Iran turned, in an instant, from ally to adversary. India, though a friendly nation, shocked the intelligence establishment by preparing an atomic test in total secrecy. Who's to say that a coup in an unstable part of the world might not transform today's nuclear ally into tomorrow's nuclear adversary?

This is not like the Cold War, when we could develop technologies to counter a firm set of requirements based on the observable, slow, generation-by-generation advance of our adversary's weapons programs. We do not know – and we cannot know – all the threats we will face by the time our current missile defense systems are fully fielded.

What we need to do is to develop missile defense systems that accommodate the threat uncertainty and mitigate the risks inherent in threat evolution.

The re-elected U.S. Administration, already committed to the basics of missile defense, will surely seek greater strategic clarity in making these assessments. The Bush Administration will no doubt realize that new threats are outside our door, and so the time has come to build doors that are even bigger and stronger.

The choices of missile defense technology and basing modes beg other questions: What kind of threat? Which door? The reality is that there is not just one species of beast we have to worry about. There is, potentially, a menagerie of new threats.

Multiple, unpredictable threats demands more of our missile defense programs than a traditional requirements-based approach to development. They demand a spiral development program that is capabilities – based. That spiral development process will eventually result in a layered defense that will incorporate mobile assets to match geographic uncertainties.

Now, as you heard, the United States is already in the early stages of actually fielding one layer of a missile defense by deploying Ground-based Midcourse Defense interceptors in Alaska. Obviously, I am proud that my company, Northrop Grumman, is providing battle management command and control for this first layer of a missile defense**.** GMD is a necessary response to the most apparent threat we currently face, but that shouldn't lead to complacency. We need to continue the development of a robust system that guards against future threat uncertainties and GMD is but the first layer. As we look outward, we must ask: What other threats are out there? What new technologies are being developed that might be a part of that threat? As I noted earlier, our ability to project the threat environment 5 or 10 years out has proven to be very limited. And yet, under the best of circumstances, it will take us five to ten years to develop new systems.

A steady development program is the only way to go.

Because we cannot predict threats with certainty, we must have a missile defense that is both robust and flexible. Let me elaborate both points.

First of all, for argument's sake, suppose that you have three layers of a missile-defense architecture in which each layer by itself is only 90 percent effective in actual battle conditions. With two layers, your success rate rises to 99 percent. With three layers, it is 99.9 percent.

Such layers are not merely additive. They act in concert, achieving more than any single layer could on its own – synergies that deny an enemy any confidence that his attack will succeed. And they give you a chance to strategically deploy resources, allocating your interceptors efficiently according to which system, site or vessel has the best shot. They enable you to attack incoming missiles early in their flight so that a single interceptor can knock down a single attacker in the boost phase, avoiding wasteful salvos of interceptors to achieve the necessary probability of success.

What are these other layers of an effective missile defense?

The United States is moving forward with terminal air defenses. And we are helping to develop what I believe will be the most critical layer of missile defense – a boost-phase, shoot-down capability. Without this capability, missile defense will never be complete.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency is currently developing two boost-phase technologies. One utilizes high-powered lasers carried on aircraft, called the ABL. As Jim Evatt noted yesterday, the other is a system of hyper-velocity rockets that catch up to enemy missiles soon after launch, while those missiles are still in their boost or ascent phases of flight, known as the Kinetic Energy Interceptors.

KEI – was awarded to the Northrop Grumman and Raytheon team in a contract last December. It will be the first such system designed without the limiting constraints of the ABM Treaty. This boost-ascent phase interceptor is being developed for both land-based and sea-based operations.

A layered defense – incorporating such boost phase assets in conjunction with GMD – will provide the robust capability that we are seeking.

Now that I have addressed the issue of robustness, let me now turn to the importance of flexibility.

Flexibility of deployment gives us the ability to defend allies as well as America's own forward-deployed troops and bases. Once again, in a world of "known unknowns," the United States and coalition partners face uncertainty in who is targeting whom.

Flexibility in deployment enables us to get up close and personal to the enemy, whomever and wherever that enemy may be.

As Lt. General Trey Obering, director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, says: "geography counts." It does count, and we need to address deployment issues. There we have two options, landbasing and seabasing. A boost-phase interceptor, by definition, has to be near to the theater. To support international commitments and assuage coalition anxieties, interceptors can be based on blue-water ships. Yet, to make the most of this boost-phase capability we must lay the international groundwork necessary to clear the way for landbasing, as well.

For Northrop Grumman, KEI represents the first time we'll be able to seek international partners at the beginning of a program. Private companies around the world have expressed an interest in working with us -- a prospect we welcome and will encourage. A broader and more cooperative relationship between the United States and Europe on missile defense could yield all of us advantages in interoperability, economies of scale, reduced costs and efficiencies. While our governments take the lead and set the pace, business-to-business relationships between U.S. and European contractors could facilitate government-to-government relationships.

It is my hope that such broad-based industrial participation will lead to wide acceptance by European publics of this new doctrine of a shared defense, one our chairman, Dr. Ron Sugar, calls Mutually Assured Protection.

While our allies may or may not agree on troop deployments in Iraq, there are some concerns that are bigger than any of our disagreements. If a weapon of mass destruction were to be detonated anywhere in the world –

Over a U.S. base in Kuwait…

Or a British unit in Basra…

Over Frankfurt, Paris, or Indianapolis.

Then much of our common civilization would become a collateral casualty.

Remember that in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, the German DAX and Financial Times 100 took double-digit hits. In the aftermath of a WMD attack, it might take years for the world economy to recover.

None of us can take a blithe, go-it-alone attitude toward bully regimes that would use missiles threats to split our alliances and terrorize us one-by-one.

Standing together – and standing tall – is in our national interests. It is also an expression of our common morality. Genocide in the Balkans ended when we stood together – Italian and Belgian, German and French, American and British.

The emerging missile threat is another urgent opportunity for cooperation and moral leadership. Some governments are awakening to the threats and possibilities of this new age; however, some are not. We are geographically dispersed, but united in determination. We have the know-how of a global defense industry that can replace Mutual Assured Destruction and MAD-era thinking with a new era of Mutual Assured Protection.

Such a shared defense – layered, robust and flexible – can revive international cooperation and restore purpose to the trans-Atlantic alliance.

We share a common, though unpredictable, danger. It is now time for Britain, America and Europe to make the most of this shared opportunity.