

I will oppose the defense appropriations conference report before us because, at \$288 billion, it spends too much money and spends it inefficiently. The \$1.9 billion it contains for national missile defense is but the most glaring example. That is an amount even greater than the House voted for national missile defense last month.

President Clinton has said that later this year he will decide whether to deploy a national missile defense system. In light of the failure of the last two tests of this system, no decision to deploy should be made.

The President has said his decision will be based on four criteria: the technology, the cost, the threat, and the impact on arms control. For each, the case for deployment is weak at best.

On the technology, the recent test failures demonstrate just how hard effective missile defense is. It is impossible to know whether the system will work until realistic tests are done, and that will not happen for years, if ever. We should not risk American lives on a bet that missile defense will work.

On cost, since the late '50s, the U.S. has spent over \$120 billion on missile defense, with almost nothing to show for it. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Pentagon's current proposal will cost \$60 billion. This is pouring more money into a hole in the ground.

On threat, it is far better to pursue such endeavors as the ongoing talks with North Korea on ending its emerging missile program rather than attempting to build a defense against non-existent missiles.

On arms control, a U.S. national missile defense is likely to push countries that already have nuclear weapons, Russia and China, to maintain or expand their arsenals, and risks destroying the entire nonproliferation regime that the U.S. has tirelessly built over the last 50 years.

Speaking Against the National Missile Defense System

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A missile defense that does not work while exacerbating tensions with potential adversaries is far worse than no defense at all. We should spend our money on more useful things.