

NATO Missile Defence Advances New Missile Defence Feasibility Study Reaches Major Milestone

NATO's new Missile Defence Feasibility Study (MDFS) has cleared a major funding hurdle and with this has achieved a key milestone in Alliance efforts to examine options for protecting Alliance territory, forces, and populations centres against the full range of missile threats. The Defence Ministers noted at their meeting on 12 June 2003 at NATO HQ the excellent progress and expressed their confidence that the new study will be under contract by October 2003 to coincide with their informal meeting in Colorado Springs, United States.

Following approval by the North Atlantic Council on 10 June, common funding from NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP) was authorised for contracting one MDFS. The Alliance's Consultation, Command and Control Agency (NC3A), Host Nation for this Study Project, will soon issue an Invitation For Bid (IFB) to the two transatlantic consortia already involved in the feasibility study in support of a future NATO Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD) capability. The two multinational consortia are led by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) and the Lockheed Martin Corporation. Evaluation of the bids will take place in the timeframe August-September and the new study is planned to be under contract by October 2003, with an expected duration of 18 months.

According to Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment, Robert G. Bell, "This is truly an exciting time for missile defence at NATO: exciting for ALTBMD and exciting for full-spectrum Missile Defence. NATO managed to turn in a few months a demanding and challenging Programme of Work into an unprecedented success story". "Missile Defence", he said, "is without any doubt a major building block towards transformation of the Alliance to meet new security threats".

The Missile Defence Feasibility Study will:

- Examine options for protecting Alliance territory, forces, and population centres against the full range of missile threats.
- Define NATO consultation, command and control architectures and systems.
- Determine the best mix of systems and capabilities to obtain a NATO missile defence architecture to meet the Military Operational Requirement, considering performance, cost, and risk.
- Recommend options and configurations for system elements, including sensors and command and control, that are consistent with NATO and national missile defence capabilities, both planned and existing.

For further information please contact Mr Bernd Kreienbaum NATO HQ tel +32-2-707 4291 or Mr Denis Vandensavel NATO HQ tel +32 -2-707 7300, fax 0032 2707 4103.