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Research Note

Golden Dome for America and its Impact on Nuclear Strategic Stability: An event series report

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Abstract

This report examines the Golden Dome for America (GDA) and its potential implications for nuclear strategic stability. Drawing on insights from a three-event webinar series organised by International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP) and Student/Young Pugwash UK (SYP UK) in late 2025, it reviews the initiative's conceptual scope, projected architecture, budgetary requirements, and technical feasibility, with particular attention to space-based sensors and interceptors, midcourse and boost-phase missile defence, and systems aimed at countering hypersonic glide vehicles. The report finds that GDA remains highly ambitious, politically significant, and conceptually fluid, while facing major technical, industrial, budgetary, and operational constraints. At the same time, the initiative is already shaping strategic perceptions among major nuclear powers. By extending US homeland missile defence aspirations beyond limited threats and toward peer competitors, GDA risks accelerating offensive and defensive arms competitions, intensifying counterspace developments, and undermining adversaries' confidence in the effectiveness of their nuclear deterrents. The report also briefly considers the limited conditions under which missile defence could have stabilising effects and identifies recommendations aimed at reducing misperception, improving transparency, strengthening pre-launch notification mechanisms, and grounding policy in realistic technical assessments.

Keywords

Nuclear deterrence, Golden Dome, strategic stability, outer space, missile defence, space-based interceptors, arms control

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1. Introduction

In January 2025 the Trump administration announced an ambitious initiative to protect the United States from all airborne threats. However, the Iron Dome for America, which would soon be renamed Golden Dome for America (GDA), brought with itself more questions than answers, including pressing questions on the future of nuclear strategic stability.

To explore this matter International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP) and Student/Young Pugwash UK (SYP UK) organised a series of webinars focused on GDA in Q4 2025. The events initially covered the status of the GDA initiative, questions surrounding its budget, and the technical feasibility and effectiveness of some of the systems that may form part of its architecture. These sessions build a solid knowledge base on these topics, enabling an in-depth discussion on GDA's potential and current impacts on nuclear strategic stability during the final webinar. The experts leading these discussions were Dr. Laura Grego, Todd Harrison, Dmitry Stefanovich, Dr. Cameron Tracy, Dr. Jessica West, Robert "Sam" Wilson, and Dr. Tong Zhao. This report gathers the main insights shared during this three-event webinar series and includes complementary sources.

2. What is the Golden Dome?

Overall, information regarding GDA remains scant, be it because of the level of classification required to access it or because of a lack of concrete direction by the current US administration. It was said during the event series that GDA is best thought of as an overarching, ambitious vision for protecting the US from aerial threats. The initiative will seek to achieve this through an integration of old and new systems into a "layered, integrated, global missile defence architecture"[1]. The goal is to defeat not just intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), but also hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs), cruise missiles, drones, and other airborne threats at any stage of flight. Said goal was initially planned to be achieved with a total amount of $175 billion[2]. President Trump announced that the system will be completed by the end of his second term and will have a near 100% interception success rate.

This is extremely ambitious and, at this fluid stage, no part of how this goal will be achieved is particularly clear; questions remain regarding, *inter alia*, technical feasibility, budgetary availability, and political will. For these reasons, GDA could very well be scaled

1 The White House. 2025. *The Iron Dome for America*. https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/the-iron-dome-for-america/.

2 Stone, M. & Mason, J. 2025. *Trump selects $175 billion Golden Dome defense shield design, appoints leader*. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-make-golden-dome-announcement-tuesday-us-official-says-2025-05-20/.

down in time. But across its possible incarnations, there are three functions which must be achieved in any architecture: detection and tracking, interception, and command and control[3]. To that end, GDA's layers will consist of sensors, including space-based sensors; kinetic interceptors that will likely be ground, sea, air, and space-based; and a partially autonomous command and control network.

Even if the vision of GDA remains conceptual, GDA has already unleashed strong political and economic forces taking on a life of their own. These include, as shared during the events, bipartisan support behind closed doors in some congressional subcommittees addressing the initiative, indicating that GDA may last beyond the Trump administration. There is also strong private sector interest to drive the design of GDA, caused in part by an apparent lack of clarity in the government regarding the specifics of the architecture and by the vast sums of money that have already been announced for GDA. Private actors are shaping the architecture themselves by announcing capability claims and partnerships, evangelising the feasibility of their GDA solutions, and positioning themselves as go-to partners. Multiple companies have announced future interceptor capabilities and demonstration tests in orbit, while others are designing sensor networks, tracking layers, and autonomous command and control systems. However, there is an opportunity cost in fixing the attention of the American defence-industrial base on GDA and in allocating huge sums to GDA, even if these have not been spent yet.

The urge to develop GDA is in part a response to the current strategic geopolitical landscape, in which existing defences may be tested by faster and more manoeuvrable missiles, hypersonic glide vehicles, advancements in drones, and other precision strike capabilities. In this context, GDA may require an important allied involvement, including the sharing of radar stations, data, and the protection of forward-deployed troops and bases in the Indo-Pacific. Canada has communicated its potential interest in joining GDA[4], and similar considerations are likely being contemplated in capitals across Europe as well.

Comprehensive defence is an alluring concept for certain American political circles, and the moniker of GDA evokes Israel's Iron Dome and its famed effectiveness. However, this serves as a false analogy. Iron Dome is a theatre missile defence system defending a specific area against short-range, low-altitude threats such as rockets and artillery, in contrast with the strategic scope of GDA. Technological realities are at odds with the ambitious promises of GDA, which could provide a false sense of confidence feeding into high-level US decision-making by invoking the image of an impenetrable shield defending the US. GDA also risks exacerbating the development of counterspace technologies, moving towards

3 West, J. & Barrett, K., 2025. *Golden Dome Explained: Ambition, Reality, Risk*. Project Ploughshares. https://ploughshares.ca/golden-dome-explained-ambition-reality-risk/.

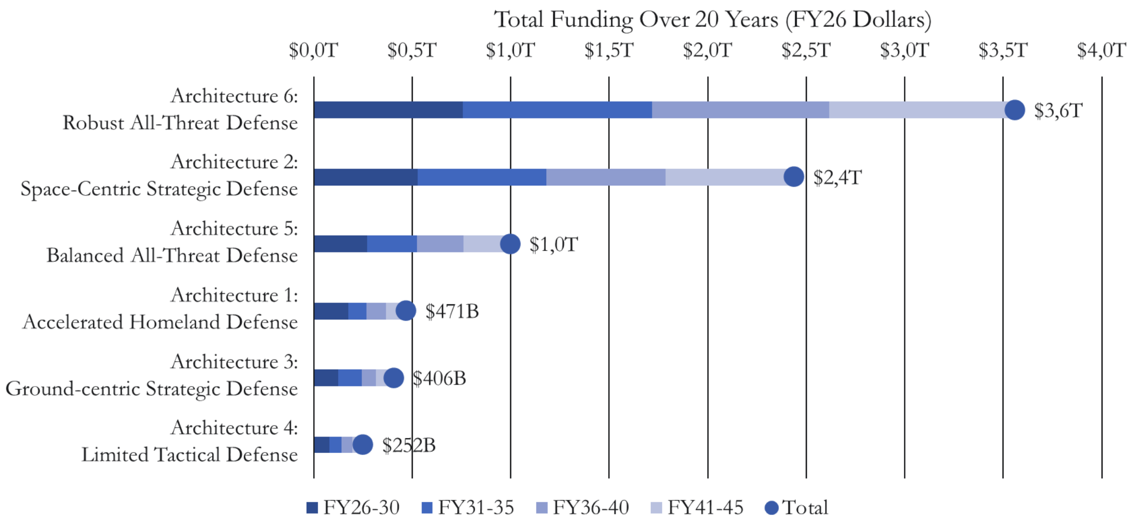
4 Panetta, A. 2025. *Canada wants to join Golden Dome missile-defence program, Trump says*. CBC. https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/golden-dome-trump-us-missile-defence-canada-1.7539390.

the normalisation of unambiguous, open weaponisation in orbit; a Rubicon that would be crossed if space-based interceptors were to be deployed and tested. GDA would also risk creating escalation pathways for conflict to potentially move into orbit, with potentially huge consequences for civilian life, as satellites that underpin navigation, communications, banking, and emergency services could be severely disrupted.

3. Budget

One of the few aspects of GDA about which there is concrete information is its budget. Harrison[5] has calculated the budget necessary for developing a set of possible GDA architectures (Figure 1), ranging from a fully-fledged system following President Trump's specifications, to more limited alternatives.

Figure 1: Projected budget for selected potential GDA architectures[6]



This analysis found that GDA would require a far greater budget than what was announced by the White House, and even with a budget of over $3.6 trillion, GDA would likely fall short of its stated goal of a near perfect interception rate for all aerial threats and would take far longer to implement than the stated three-year timeline. It was also stressed that developing a system of this magnitude on a politically driven timeline has failed in the past and will likely fail again, in part due to a lack of industrial capacity to produce space-

5 Harrison, T. 2025. *Build Your Own Golden Dome: A Framework for Understanding Costs, Choices, and Trade-offs*. AEI. https://www.aei.org/research-products/working-paper/build-your-own-golden-dome-a-framework-for-understanding-costs-choices-and-tradeoffs/.

6 *Ibid*.

based interceptors (SBIs) in sufficient numbers. These time and capability restrictions would also very much be the case with an architecture restricted to the budget announced by President Trump. The latest budget estimate of $185 billion shared by the Pentagon[7] places middle-term costs in line with Architecture 1 projections, which could include a boost phase SBI component theoretically capable of intercepting a five-missile salvo[8], but would fall short of GDA's stated aims.

Congressional budgetary documents can also provide information regarding the existing GDA budget. Wilson found that the Fiscal Year 2026 Reconciliation Act allocates $24.4 billion to elements that may be considered part of GDA[9]. The latest Reconciliation Act provides important information about the possible architecture of the system. $9.2 billion will be allocated to tracking threats pre- and post-launch from space, an expense likely related to improving satellites dedicated to HGV tracking. The Reconciliation Act also provides $5.6 billion to SBI development and $8.7 billion to non-space based potential elements of GDA. Previous budget documents have also provided details on the plans for proliferated sensor constellations, including the Next-Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared (Next-Gen OPIR) Missile Warning Satellites which would likely be considered part of the GDA architecture.

This is a significant resource allocation but falls far short of even the low budget provided by the White House. More budget may be allocated in the future. However, the tight deadline set by the current Trump administration would require funds to become available as soon as possible. It was also speculated at the events that, given the time, technical and budgetary constraints, the Trump administration will possibly claim that GDA has achieved its goal by testing an SBI in orbit by 2028.

4. Technical feasibility

In addition to questions regarding budget and industrial capacity, it is unclear whether GDA would be a technically sound initiative. The event series addressed this by exploring the technical dimension of a selection of capabilities that would arguably be part of most tentative GDA architectures. These include strategic terminal, midcourse, and boost phase ballistic missile defence systems, as well as HGV defence systems covering HGV's glide

7 Schepkof, V. 2025. *Golden Dome cost rises to $185 billion as new contractors join*. Yahoo News. https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/golden-dome-cost-rises-185-180611950.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAKW46xFQtgpn0uQBQHF4E3aOdEUn2GWjUTXgWan8M97Xgk680WarU2PEe0XVXiSq8I-7YXEO9DwaEeGRzuvEVIYod3ycZFmzott0F2-fSpQkqrKMciZvsNFITth5t97ylq-GgxrhSwwJNfsCgijbJPBvuH1JnPw2lyoMWzkkVPk9.

8 Harrison. 2025.

9 Wilson, R.S. 2025. *FY 2026 Defense Space Budget: Emergence of Golden Dome*. The Aerospace Corporation. https://csps.aerospace.org/papers/fy-2026-defense-space-budget-emergence-golden-dome.

phase. Successful interceptions in of all these cases are as reliant on sensor networks and communication links as they are on capable interceptors. It is also worth emphasising that these cases refer specifically to strategic missile defence, which represents a very different set of challenges compared to theatre missile defence. Therefore, the success rates of these two types of missile defence should not be conflated.

4.1 Midcourse missile defence

Strategic missile defence against ballistic missiles may take place during the boost, midcourse or terminal phases of missile flight. Midcourse missile defence (MMD) systems allow the defender to avoid the forward deployment of interceptors. This type of defence is enabled by a suite of land, sea and space-based sensors, and affords the defender a relatively generous timeline of 30–35 minutes for action[10]. However, there is a range of technologies which make midcourse interceptions particularly difficult, including multiple re-entry vehicles, launch debris, and countermeasures, which may include radar jammers, decoys, or high-altitude nuclear detonations. Countermeasures represent an important technical challenge for MMD[11]. Although there have been technological advancements in the last twenty years that support MMD's capability to surmount these challenges, the gap between defence and offence in this respect remains significantly large in favour of the attacker[12]. It was also highlighted during the event that current US MMD has an unreliable test record. US MMD capabilities are undergoing modernisation, including the Long-Range Discrimination Radar coming on-line, the likely inclusion of space-based sensors for tracking and discrimination, and the development of the Next-Generation Interceptor. However, even with this modernisation drive, interceptors remain scarce, expensive and difficult to manufacture, favouring the attacker's capacity to saturate the US MMD. This inability to cost-effectively and quickly expand interceptor inventories, as well as the technical difficulty of performing interceptions, make MMD vulnerable even to small, relatively unsophisticated attacks[13].

10 Lamb, F. K., et al. 2025. *Strategic Ballistic Missile Defense*. American Physical Society. https://res.cloudinary.com/apsphysics/image/upload/v1741185158/APS_BMD_Report_2025_qzgzaz.pdf.

11 Sessler et al. 2000. *Countermeasures*. Union of Concerned Scientists. https://www.ucs.org/resources/countermeasures.

12 Grego, L. 2025. *Do technology advances allow missile defences to make up ground?* Journal of Strategic Studies 48(2). https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402390.2024.2447306.

13 Lamb et al. 2025.

4.2 Boost phase missile defence

Boost phase is usually the most vulnerable phase of ballistic missile launch, as targets are relatively easily identifiable and are at the slowest moment of their trajectory. However, boost phase missile defence (BPMD) is not without significant technical challenges. These systems have a much shorter timeline for interception than MMD, at around 2–4 minutes[14]. It was argued that this compressed timeline would likely require significant AI involvement in decision-making, potentially increasing the risk of inadvertent escalation. Moreover, this time constraint limits BPMD systems to standoff distances requiring potentially vulnerable forward deployments on sea or land, while lacking the capacity to reach launch sites deep in enemy territory.

These spatial constraints make Low Earth Orbit (LEO) a potentially attractive location for the deployment of BPMD interceptors, as it allows proximity to launch sites that would be out of range for sea or land-based BPMD interceptors. However, it was explained that there are several setbacks related to BPMD SBIs. Orbital BPMD is even more vulnerable to being overwhelmed by salvo attacks than MMD due to the difficulty of having enough SBIs to cover a launch location at the same time. To defend, for instance, against a salvo of 10 solid-propellant ICBMs launched by North Korea against the US, the system would need 40,000 SBIs, with the generous assumption of only one SBI being needed per ICBM[15]. These SBIs would then need to be promptly replenished to avoid prolonged coverage gaps in the SBI architecture, facing potential bottlenecks due to launch and industrial capacity. These factors would make SBIs extremely challenging to use against large-scale attacks, or consecutive attacks through gaps created. These gaps in the architecture may also be created through the targeting of SBIs with anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. SBIs may also be used as kinetic ASATs themselves, or they could support MMD. However, these two use cases where not explored at length during the event series due to limited time.

14 *Ibid*.

15 Harrison, T. 2025. *Space-Based Interceptor Calculator*. AEI. https://toddsharrison.github.io/SBI/?sbiOrbitAltitudeKm=300&averageAccelerationG=15&maxDeltaVKmPerS=10&divertVelocityKmPerS=2.5&thrusterIspSeconds=240&killVehicleDryMassKg=25&interceptorBodyDryMassKg=25&supportModuleDryMassKg=50&sbiLifeExpectancyYears=5&killProbabilityPercent=80&compositeKillProbabilityPercent=96&salvoSize=900&interceptAltitudeKm=200&maxLatitudeCoverageDeg=90&flyoutTimeSeconds=480&nonRecurringDevCostMillion=7000&firstUnitInterceptorCostMillion=70&interceptorLearningPercent=85&operatingSupportCostPerYearMillion=450&costEstimatePeriodYears=20&payloadCapacityPerVehicleKg=45000&firstUnitLaunchCostMillion=150&launchLearningPercent=95.

4.3 Hypersonic glide vehicles

HGV defence is identical to ICBM defence during the boost and midcourse/re-entry phases. However, differences exist in the terminal phase and the HGV-specific glide phase. Short range interceptors placed close to the defended area can be used for terminal phase defence. As a rule of thumb, interceptors require a 3:1 acceleration rate compared to their targets[16]. Given their endoatmospheric trajectory and the potential slowdowns due to manoeuvres, HGV are slower than ICBMs in their terminal phase. Therefore, terminal-phase defence against hypersonic missiles is possible if attempted sufficiently late in the target's flight, but this remains a difficult and very complex action[17].

HGVs also have a specific endoatmospheric glide phase, during which they can fly under MMD system coverage areas[18]. In contrast to MMD, glide phase missile defence (GPMD) does not have to deal with decoys, as most decoys cannot survive the same aerothermal heating conditions as gliders, and the ones that can are almost as costly as gliders. Tracking for GPMD may be achieved through orbital sensors, including infrared, radar, and optical sensors. However, it was stated during the event series that GPMD would require new, more agile interceptors, as well as new seekers potentially based on radio frequency sensors. Considering these factors, the level of challenges and costs of glide phase missile defence can be considered as similar to MMD.

It was also emphasised that the capability to engineer a system does not guarantee that this system will have its intended strategic impact. Not impossible does not necessarily translate to operationally feasible or strategically sound. In the specific case of GDA, this means that the potential capacity to build effective strategic missile defence does not necessarily lead to a safer strategic situation for the US. This is because the announcement, development, and deployment of these systems may work against nuclear strategic stability by modifying adversarial threat perceptions and reducing adversaries' confidence in their nuclear deterrent.

5. Nuclear strategic stability

Even before the first SBI has been deployed, GDA has already had an impact in nuclear strategic stability by stoking the flames of the ongoing international nuclear modernisation drive. Whereas US missile defence previously focused on defending the homeland from

16 Palumbo, N. F., et al. 2010. *Modern Homing Missile Guidance Theory and Techniques*. Johns Hopkins Apl Technical Digest, 29(1).
17 Wright D. & Tracy, C. L. 2023. *Hypersonic weapons: vulnerability to missile defenses and comparison to MaRVs*. Science & Global Security 31.
18 *Ibid.*

limited threats (e.g., from a small number of North Korean ICBMs), GDA explicitly aims to address threats from peer competitors, representing yet another chapter in the missile defence saga involving the US, Russia and China[19]. Even if missile defence is likely to remain imperfect, to the extent that GDA is successful at damage limitation it raises the spectre of a pre-emptive first strike by the US and undermines Russia's and China's confidence in their second-strike capability. It was also stated in the events that these fears are further reinforced by left of launch and missile defeat concepts being increasingly promoted in certain American security circles. Therefore, GDA may trigger an arms race, qualitatively and quantitatively. Russia and China are likely to continue increasing their missile stockpiles and developing countermeasures such as novel delivery vehicles to circumvent GDA.

It was stated during the events that China is particularly likely to strongly react to the announcement of GDA, as even respected Chinese technical experts tend to be overly generous in their assessments of American capabilities. Moreover, it is a widespread assumption in Chinese strategic communities that in the case of a nuclear confrontation with the US, the US would opt for a comprehensive disarming strike against China.

Two examples were offered. In 2016 and 2017, prominent Chinese technical experts made sincere arguments that the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system deployed in South Korea could distinguish between warheads and decoys on Chinese ICBMs. The concern was that this information would then be passed on for US homeland missile defence, weakening China's second-strike capability. Prominent and influential space experts in China simulated the US using Starlink to intercept hundreds of Chinese ICBMs even though this technical analysis was dismissed by most US and international experts[20]. As the political environment within China has become increasingly restricted, the scope for informed, free discussion within China among technical experts about US homeland missile defence has become narrower. This then increases the already-existing tendencies to exaggerate genuinely misplaced concerns and incorrect assessments of US missile defence capabilities.

With that said, it was recounted that there appears to be some Chinese understanding that President Trump's personal interest in GDA and his assumed lack of expertise on these issues may be causing counterproductive decisions on the US side. There has also been concern as to whether GDA is partly aimed at deceiving China, to mislead China into excessive countermeasures and responses which prove to be a waste of resources.

19 Zhao, T. & Stefanovich, D. 2023. *Missile Defense and the Strategic Relationship among the United States, Russia, and China*. American Academy of Arts and Sciences. https://www.amacad.org/publication/missile-defense-and-strategic-relationship-among-united-states-russia-and-china.

20 Yuangzheng, R. et al., translated by Cowhig. 2022. *The Development Status of Starlink and Its Countermeasures*. Modern Defense Technology 50(2). https://gaodawei.wordpress.com/2022/05/25/prc-defense-starlink-countermeasures/.

However, it is also possible that China will seek to develop its own orbital missile defence network, an endeavour which could be supported by Russia through data sharing and the deployment of sensors on Russian soil.

Overall, China is confident in its ability to outlast the US in an arms race due to the advantages provided by one party rule, increasing technological prowess, and a position of economic strength. Moreover, it was said that China is increasingly confident in its conventional military capabilities vis-à-vis the US and will aim to keep any confrontation below the nuclear threshold.

In Russia, GDA's announcement has validated a pessimistic branch of strategic thinking, rooted in the Star Wars-era, that saw the deployment of American SBIs as a matter of time. In response, Russia has been developing capabilities to defeat this type of system for decades.

In response to the Trump administration's announcement of GDA, Beijing and Moscow stated that the initiative creates "hardly surmountable obstacles to the constructive consideration of nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament initiatives"[21]. Russia, China, and the US also rely on space-based assets for conventional intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and command and control; as well as for nuclear early-warning, and command, control, and communications. SBIs orbiting above Russian and Chinese territories would be an unprecedented crossing of that line symbolically and operationally. Moreover, testing these interceptors would likely be perceived by other countries as the test of a co-orbital kinetic ASAT weapon. It was argued that in response, Russia and China are likely to accelerate the development of counterspace capabilities to both hold GDA at risk and to protect their own assets in space. In turn, the US is likely to develop capabilities to protect GDA from such countermeasures. In the worst case, Russia and China may plan to detonate nuclear weapons in space to wipe out GDA. Chinese experts associated with the People's Liberation Army and China's defence industry have simulated the effects of a nuclear explosion in space on satellites in low-earth orbit[22]. Additionally, Russia is allegedly developing a nuclear anti-satellite system which would use the explosion for weapons effects[23].

However, it was also stated in the events that the asymmetry brought about by GDA may create opportunities for arms control discussions and threat reduction measures.

21 Office of the President of the Russian Federation. 2025. *Joint statement by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on Global Strategic Stability*. http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/6310.

22 Liu, L. et al. 2022 *Numerical Simulation of Debris Motion from a Near-space Nuclear Detonation*. Chinese Journal of Computational Physics 5. https://cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?filename=JSWL202205003&dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=DKFXTEMP&v=.

23 Samson, V. et al. 2025. *FAQ: What We Know About Russia's Alleged Nuclear Anti-Satellite Weapon*. Secure World Foundation. https://www.swfound.org/publications-and-reports/faq-what-we-know-about-russias-alleged-nuclear-anti-satellite-weapon.

Additionally, effective missile defence capable of defeating a limited nuclear attack could prove stabilising. For example, if it effectively defends against a small number of missiles, it may dissuade countries from launching a limited nuclear attack. However, it may also increase the likelihood of limited nuclear strikes, as it would allow the attacker to communicate its resolve while facing more limited retaliation, based on the expectation that most of its nuclear missiles will be defended against.

In acknowledging the potentially positive aspects of missile defence, it was noted that for missile defence to be stabilising, there need to be predictable limits on the capability. This was akin to the role played by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty during the Cold War. In the events unilateral limits, if not formal limits, were suggested.

On the topic of arms control, the point was raised that China is increasingly emerging as a somewhat equal player to the US and Russia in terms of missile defence and nuclear weapons capabilities. China is increasing its focus on research and development in missile defence, including in layered missile defence systems for purposes ranging from key point to homeland defence. It was also noted that Russia is helping China to develop early warning systems which support these efforts.

Finally, it was also said that the American development of GDA is a rich opportunity for China to monitor technical developments, and to implement lessons learned from the initiative, taking advantage of China's industrial and engineering capability. It was mentioned in the events that if the relationship among these three major powers becomes increasingly symmetric, perhaps more opportunities could emerge for arms control, or at least cooperative threat reduction mechanisms. For example, if China develops its own missile defence network relying on a Chinese fleet of early warning satellites, that may spur mutual understanding that no countries should attack each other's early warning satellites.

6. Recommendations

During the three webinar events certain recommendations were made to prevent or minimise the possible destabilising effects of GDA on nuclear strategic stability. This includes conducting technical, scientific studies regarding the actual capabilities of missile defence, which must inform policy. Moreover, it was said that more research is needed on the impact that different configurations of GDA may have on strategic stability.

Another recommendation focused on strengthening pre-launch notification. This would involve strengthening and universalising the Hague Code of Conduct, including by working with commercial space companies. As SBIs would need to be launched almost immediately upon detecting a plausible enemy threat, notifications could help to avoid the accidental interception of space launch vehicles or missile tests.

Additionally, states developing missile defence capabilities should be more transparent about what it is they wish to achieve in specific terms. In this respect, more transparency from the US on the rationale behind the GDA and its specific objectives, including how it relates to responsible space behaviours and nuclear strategic stability, would improve the quality of discussion and potentially assuage worst-case fears and concerns. Similarly, it was said that there needs to be better alignment between different states regarding honest threat perceptions to prevent inadvertent escalation.