What's Risky Now?

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Candidate Al Gore's favorite word is "risky." If George W. Bush calls for a tax cut, Gore calls it a risky tax cut. When Bush makes any proposal, whether on health care or Social Security or education, Gore's knee-jerk reaction is to say it's risky.

The one issue where the word risky is appropriately applied is the Clinton-Gore plan to keep the American people totally vulnerable to a nuclear missile attack. This policy is truly risky in a world where 20 unstable, unpredictable, anti-American dictators possess or are developing weapons of mass destruction.

Russia still has almost 6,000 nuclear warheads deployed on strategic ballistic missiles, has 10 of its most sophisticated ICBMs on "combat alert," continues to modernize its arsenal, and exports missile technologies to countries hostile to the United States. China has 300 nuclear warheads already deployed on ballistic missiles and has 13 ICBMs targeted on U.S. cities.

The list of Third World countries developing nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, plus ballistic missile delivery systems, includes North Korea, Iran and Iraq. The risk comes not only from intentional use but from accidental or unauthorized launches.

Nevertheless, the official policy of the Clinton Administration, which candidate Gore fully supports, is to keep Americans like sitting ducks in the face of this danger. To achieve this incredible goal, Clinton is using all his executive-branch powers, and his friends in the media are cooperating to downplay the danger.

On March 18, 1999, the House passed the National Missile Defense Act, H.R.4, by 317-105, stating that "it is the policy of the United States to deploy a national missile defense," and the Senate passed it unanimously on May 18. However, when Clinton signed it on July 22, making it Public Law No. 106-38,

he arrogantly said it is not the intention of his Administration to deploy a missile defense system anytime in the near future.

The bipartisan Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, the Donald Rumsfeld Commission, unanimously reported in 1998 that the U.S would have "little or no warning before operational deployment" by rogue states of missiles capable of reaching the United States. North Korea, Iran or Iraq "would be able to inflict major damage on the U.S. within about five years of a decision to acquire such a capability," and we "might not be aware that such a decision had been made."

The Cox Report released last May 25 exposed China's success in obtaining U.S. military technology through espionage, transfers of technology as part of all commercial transactions, and illegal political donations especially to Clinton's reelection. This strategy gave China's nuclear program a ten-year leap.

It's been 17 years since President Ronald Reagan went on national television and showed the urgent need for a system to shoot down enemy missiles coming at us. He repudiated the dangerous, potentially fatal policy of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) and asked the ultimate question: "Isn't it better to save lives rather than avenge them?"

To protect American lives and troops, as well as our allies, we need a layered, comprehensive missile defense, starting with sea-based anti-missile capabilities. It makes good sense to deploy a sea-based system first because, being mobile, it could be dispatched to any trouble spots anywhere in the world and some of the infrastructure already exists aboard Aegis cruisers and destroyers.

The arguments against deploying an anti-missile defense system don't pass the straight-face test. It doesn't work? Well, with the American can-do spirit, we can make it work. It costs too much? It would cost only one percent of the defense budget.

It violates the old 1972 ABM Treaty that forbids us to build an anti-ballistic-missile system? That treaty is defunct because the country we signed it with, the old Soviet Union, doesn't exist any more, which means that under international law the treaty no longer exists, either. The Soviets consistently violated the treaty anyway, particularly with their construction of a giant illegal radar.

The Clinton Administration tried to breathe new life into the old ABM Treaty by signing new agreements with the Russians in New York on September 26, 1997. These agreements make a bad treaty worse by replacing the Soviet Union with four new treaty partners: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and

also by extending its restrictions to defenses against short-range missiles.

The Senate hasn't, and won't, ratify these agreements, but Clinton is trying to implement them anyway. The Senate should declare the 1972 Treaty null and void and repudiate the outrageous notion that any other country can exercise a veto over U.S. ability to defend our own people.

If Republicans are serious about winning the Presidency and Congress this year, it's time to orchestrate a full-scale attack on the risky Clinton-Gore plan to keep Americans undefended against nuclear attack from Communist or other rogue dictators. Ask all 2000 candidates what they will do to build an anti-missile defense system immediately.