This is well argued. Its weakest point is the lack of dealing with opposing arguments.

Thesis: 15;

Summarize opposing arguments: 5

Main point: 15

Particulars: 15

Supporting evidence: 15

Conclusion: 10

MLA style: 4

Grammar, etc: 15

Total: 94/100

The National Missile Defense System - Burden for the United States

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Since the beginning of the nuclear age, both the United States and the Soviet

Union have been searching for effective ways to defend themselves against nuclear attack. In the early 1960’s, the Soviet Union’s superiority in long-range ballistic missiles forced the United States to reevaluate its air-defense system. This nuclear race was a major facet of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the war that has been a burden rather than weapon competition for both the Soviets and America.

The Cold War was still fully active during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. He proposed a National Missile Defense System. Originally, President Reagan's plan called for development of a space based weapons system that could detect and destroy ballistic missiles of any kind, launched against the United States from any distance, without causing harm to the people or the environment of the United States. Due to the current political role of the United States in the world, and especially after the attacks of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush’s administration has reasserted its intention of building this system.

These recent attacks have increased the US awareness of a growing threat. Proponents state that given the growing ballistic missile industry in other countries, the US has to prepare itself for attacks of any kind. They claim that the building of a National Missile Defense will provide more security to the people of the United States, and will in fact assure the safety of every citizen of the United States within its territory. Especially after the recent attacks, this is what the majority of the people want at present. Even though these reasons seem to indicate that we should implement the National Missile Defense System, there are many sound arguments against it.

Currently, chances of the United States being attacked by ballistic missiles of long range are very low, or do not exist at all. Even though the United States government suspects that countries like North Korea, Iran, or for that matter any Muslim state may launch such an attack, these countries are not in possession of weapons of mass destruction with capabilities of harming the United States. An article published by Robert Joseph and Keith Payne of the Institute of National Strategic Studies asserts that “No proliferant state currently has the ability to strike the United States with ballistic missiles. If threats do emerge, US conventional superiority or, if necessary, offensive nuclear forces will deter attacks on the United States” (Joseph and Payne 1).

Even though the US government is insisting on building this missile defense system, the Pentagon hasn’t thoroughly tested the system. Seven tests of hitting an airborne target were conducted. The Pentagon states that all seven were successful, and that the US government is ready to start this project. A group of scientists from Institute of technology explained how the tests were conducted, and how they were in fact unsuccessful. They clearly state that in the first two tests, the system failed to distinguish between the target warhead and a set of decoys that were shaped like warheads. Modern nuclear missiles all launch multiple decoys along with one or more warheads. After this failure in the first two tests, the multiple realistically-shaped decoys were replaced by a single large balloon-shaped decoy in all of the later tests. In order to make the tests appear successful, the unidentifiable decoys were removed from the test field.

Another controversial issue about the National Missile Defense system is the cost to the American public. This will be the single most expensive project in the history of the United States, estimated to be between sixty billion and one hundred billion dollars. Assuming that some parts of nuclear warheads periodically need to be replaced due to radioactive decay, the price might go up to half a trillion dollars, depending on the exact system that the US government develops. This amount will mean more taxes from every citizen, and increase of national debt. Instead of spending this amount of money building the National Missile Defense system, the US government would be better served paying off the national debt to its citizens.

The recent attacks of September 11 weren’t nuclear; they were realized by using civilian airplanes as a weapon. These attacks claimed more than three thousands lives. Considering the unavailability of nuclear weapons at present, these kinds of attacks are more likely to occur than nuclear attacks. So instead of focusing on nuclear attacks, the US government should spend the money on security at airports, malls, or other public places.

The only state that has the power to launch weapons of mass destruction against the United States is Russia. Although the Russia of today is not the same as the Soviet Union of 1984, it is still very powerful in the field of nuclear weapons. Some think that if US starts developing the Missile Defense System it might encourage Russia to upgrade its nuclear arsenal, but it won't happen for one reason: its too expensive for Russia's current budget. Cold War brought Soviets bankruptcy and collapse, and neither Russia nor any former Soviet state would like to repeat this experiment again.

Right now the building of a National Missile Defense system should not be among priorities for the government. The building of such a system however would not make the United States more secure, because instead of launching ballistic missiles terrorists target places of high civilian concentration, besides this Missile Defense project is too expensive for America and it will bring nothing else rather than huge national debt.