

Why International Theater Missile Defense Is Still A Challenge Rather Than A Reality

Eugene Fox & Stanley Orman

Orman and Associates, Alexandria

A number of factors which have been alleged to influence the attitude of Governments towards investment in Missile Defense are reviewed. These include the relationship to the original Strategic Defense Initiative, the absence of an agreed threat, desired reductions in defense spending, uncertainty in the capabilities of projected defenses and the influence of the ABM Treaty. Recommendations are made for actions which will have to be taken before allies are likely to overcome their reluctance to get more actively involved in Missile Defense activities.

Key Words: Theater Missile Defense (TMD), ABM Treaty, Strategic Missile Defense (SDI), Cold War, Helsinki Agreement

A question that merits thoughtful attention is why international participation in Theater Missile Defense (TMD) remains such a contentious subject. No nations other than America and Israel have yet made missile defense a high priority issue, nor have they been prepared to invest substantially in the acquisition of equipment. Yet despite this reluctance to acknowledge the growing missile threat, some of America's allies continue to support the United States in peacekeeping and crisis reduction activities by deploying troops to trouble spots all over the World. It seems odd that nations are willing to expose their forces to possible hostile action, without making adequate provision for effective missile defense.

There has been so much publicity given to the extensive proliferation of missile and unconventional warhead technology^{1,2,3,4,5} that no Government could now use the excuse that it was unaware of the ever increasing risk. One possible explanation is that allies believe that the U.S will provide TMD for all participants in a multinational force, even though, as yet, the U.S. is still unable to provide any effective protection for its own forces.⁶ Other explanations that have been advanced to explain allied reluctance to become heavily involved in TMD include: the lack of full agreement on what constitutes the

threat, precisely what could be accomplished by an active defense, or at what financial cost. None of these issues alone would appear to justify the danger to which troops are now being exposed, and to which some European, Middle Eastern and Asian populations are becoming more at risk. This paper examines in some detail these and other issues, with the objective of identifying what could be done to foster more real interest internationally in TMD programs.

The Relationship To SDI

The Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI, introduced by President Reagan in 1983 proved to be highly contentious internationally, and did not even succeed in getting full bipartisan support within America.⁷ Nonetheless, viewed from a historical perspective, there is clear evidence to support the claim that SDI contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union, and in so doing achieved one of its primary objectives; that of reducing the likelihood of a major nuclear exchange. Many leading members of the former Soviet Government have since admitted the influence the SDI program played in determining their reactions at that time, leaving little serious doubt about its role^{8,9,10}. This has led many to believe that with the end of the Cold War, the requirement for missile defense has significantly diminished. A belief that equates with the continued importance attached to the ABM Treaty, which was established in 1972, specifically to keep the signatory nations vulnerable to missile attack.

The irony of the proposition that the need for missile defense was removed with the ending of the Cold War is that the fall of the Soviet Union has been quickly followed by a large increase in proliferation of missile and unconventional warhead technology. In terms of offensive missile capabilities, Third World can in no way be equated with third rate. Tens of nations now have the capability of delivering warheads over distances of hundreds of miles. Without an effective missile defense, America and its allies would have neither the means of dissuading others against investing in missile technology, nor the capability of defending vital assets should diplomatic efforts fail to avoid a conflict. Offensive systems that are opposed by no effective defense will inevitably remain attractive to nations seeking regional dominance. This concept was the basis for the introduction of counterproliferation, a policy that extended the diplomatic efforts of non-proliferation to include military means to counter offensive

missiles should hostilities break out. Yet, with the exception of the U.S. and Israel, counterproliferation has been virtually ignored.¹¹ For most governments the relationship of missile defense with the unpopular, and supposedly unattainable, concept of Strategic Missile Defense, appears to have diminished interest in the programs.

The Absence of an Agreed Threat

It is clear that governments would not even consider spending billions of dollars to counter threats equipped just with high explosive warheads. The damage such systems could achieve would not justify the investment. Chemical, Biological or Nuclear warheads on the other hand, besides being capable of inflicting severe casualties, fall into the category of terror weapons, and the mere threat of their use could paralyse a population. This was clearly illustrated by the Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel during the Gulf War, and the lesson will have been learned by many others. Now it is acknowledged that many nations possess or are actively engaged in acquiring these offensive capabilities, the burning questions that remain unanswered are; "How likely is it that warheads of mass destruction will be used?" "Would the threat of like retaliation deter such an attack?" And if it did not, "Would it be better to intercept the attacking warheads, rather than exact retribution?" A significant lesson should have been learned during the Gulf War with Iraq, and in the several crises that have succeeded it. Namely that we can never be sure what capabilities an enemy might possess, or what will result in them being utilized. The only certainty, in this highly uncertain environment, is that proliferation is an established fact, and therefore the potential threats will inevitably grow with time.

All the existing formal and informal international restrictions to proliferation may delay, but they cannot preclude the inevitable. At some time in the future our military forces, and eventually population centers, are likely to be faced by missiles carrying warheads of mass destruction. As matters now stand, if such an attack does occur, the only response will be to retaliate in kind, assuming of course that the attacked ally has an appropriate capability. In the case of NATO, if an attacker chose a country other than France, the UK or the US, which of these would be prepared to launch a retaliatory nuclear strike on behalf of its ally? For too long most NATO and other allies have sheltered under the American umbrella of extended

deterrence, and have not yet recognized the profound geo-political changes which have followed the fall of the Soviet Union.

The revelations of the UN Inspection teams that have been investigating Iraqi capabilities, should have induced several governments to ponder what might have occurred during the Gulf War, had Israel not launched a successful attack against the Iraqi nascent nuclear facilities in the early 1980's. The basic question with regard to missile defense needs to be rephrased from, "Can we afford a TMD?" to, "Can we afford not to have a TMD?" There is no longer any justification for accepting that tens of warheads could be launched against American or allied troops in a crisis area, or against allied centers of population, without having the means to defend against such threats.

Reductions in Defense Spending

Many Governments are seeking additional peace dividends that were fully expected to follow the end of the Cold War. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, it seemed logical that the ending of the Superpower standoff would lead to a drastic reduction in the need for new, improved armaments. Programs and policies had been dominated for so long by the polarization into the two superpower groups, that little thought was given to the dramatic change in the balance of world power that would follow the end of the Cold War. Few, if any, predicted the rapid proliferation of missile and warhead technology, and how this would transform the stability of international security. Even now proliferation is viewed in many quarters as leading to an increased risk, rather than a direct threat that has to be countered.

The prolonged and expensive research programs into missile defense conducted by the U.S. have shown that it should be possible to counter attacks of tens of relatively unsophisticated missiles, such as could be mounted by nations other than Russia. It is still well beyond the capabilities of any envisaged defense to negate an attack of thousands of missiles, as was considered as one of the worst scenarios if the Cold War led to open hostilities. It is ironic that at the very time that these research programs are demonstrating the capability of negating the level of threat that now exists, or is likely to develop from emerging nations over the next decade, America's principal allies are seeking to cut defense expenditure by ignoring the

missile threat, and thus avoiding any new commitments. There have even been efforts within Congress to further reduce the American defense budget, although to date these have been successfully rebutted. Nonetheless several items which are of doubtful benefit to the military have been retained within Defense appropriations, such as refusal to close bases which are surplus to requirements, thereby effectively lowering the resources available for TMD and other systems.

One of the solutions to the problem of how to develop and field new systems in an environment of limited resources is through international cooperation. Although international programs are alleged to cost more overall, the sharing of that cost reduces the burden on individual nations. Unfortunately past experience has also demonstrated that national rules, governing technology transfer and equipment acquisition, have acted as a significant barrier to effective cooperative development. All nations involved would have to make significant changes to their acquisition procedures to overcome these problems, and until those changes are implemented coproduction rather than co-development would appear to be a better way to proceed. However as noted earlier, with the exception of Israel and America, no nation has yet acknowledged that the missile threat justifies significant investment in TMD, leaving little opportunity for arranging any cooperative ventures.

MEADS (Medium Extended Altitude Defense System), provides the sole exception to this; it is a collaborative development effort between Germany, Italy and America. Despite the fact that the system is designed to provide forward defense against cruise and ballistic missiles, Germany has consistently stated that MEADS is a merely a replacement for Hawk, an anti-aircraft system, thereby avoiding opening a debate on the value of missile defense. Furthermore the funding of the program, for which America contributes over 60 %, has been severely questioned in Congress and within DOD, at each yearly renewal. This discussion on future funding continues as this article is written, inevitably sending quite the wrong signals to allies regarding the manner in which collaboration is viewed within the U.S.¹² These several factors have combined to provide an environment internationally in which in most allied countries missile defense has been relegated to study status only. Britain¹³ and Japan¹⁴ independently initiated their own financed

TMD studies after participating in American supported activities. Neither of these studies has yet led to any major commitment to invest in TMD hardware. While it is of course difficult to assess the underlying reasons for the allocation of the priorities of any Government, it seems clear that avoidance of new defense spending is a significant contributor in most cases.

The Capabilities of Defenses

Considerable uncertainty remains in some Government and Military circles regarding the effectiveness of missile defenses which could be deployed in the foreseeable future. There are many factors which contribute to this uncertainty, some historical, some technical, and some resulting from over zealous claims which have been made during the American Missile Defense development programs conducted under SDIO and later BMDO.

Early attempts in the 1960s and '70s to achieve missile defense were thwarted by an inability to guide a defensive missile close enough to an attacking missile to incapacitate it with a high explosive warhead. The initial systems deployed by America and the Soviet Union relied on nuclear tipped interceptors to destroy incoming missiles. It is often overlooked in the West that Russia still maintains a system around Moscow, using this technology. The generation of multiple nuclear detonations above one's own cities represented a "defense" of last resort, and the corresponding American system was dismantled soon after its initial fielding. This contributed towards a belief that missiles could not be intercepted successfully, a belief that was reinforced by the signing of the ABM Treaty, which formalized the position that the signatory nations would remain vulnerable to missile attack.

The destructive forces generated by striking a missile with an opposing missile are obviously much greater than those resulting from fragments of an exploding warhead. Such a system also dispenses with the difficult problem of fuzing, necessary to ensure that the defensive warhead explodes at the correct location to inflict critical damage to the attacking warhead. When dealing with attacking warheads of mass destruction, lethality becomes paramount. Research on the capabilities needed to accomplish these objectives has yielded impressive results, and tests have shown that hit-to-kill can now be achieved for interceptions at altitudes up to about 20 Kft. These

results were obtained with a missile that will be incorporated into an upgraded Patriot system, Pac 3, which will enter Service around the turn of the century. The technology incorporated in the Pac 3 missile has been in development since the 70s and represents an investment in excess of \$1 B. By the end of 1997 two successful preliminary integration test firings had been completed. These verified the interfaces of the missile with the existing Patriot system and confirmed launch and flight functions. No intercept was attempted on either of these tests. At the time of writing the first attempted interception test which was due in February 1998 remains on hold. Another program called Navy Area TBMD, based on an improved Standard Missile (Block IVA) fired from an Aegis cruiser, is due to have a first unit equipped in 2001. The Navy has adopted a different approach than the Army, by continuing to rely on an exploding warhead to destroy the incoming missiles, but have modified the missile seeker and fuzing to improve the lethality. A follow-on program called Navy Theater Wide, will utilize yet a further adapted Standard Missile (Block IVA + Aegis LEAP), with an added third-stage motor and a light weight exo-atmospheric kill vehicle. This LEAP is another form of hit-to-kill, in which the explosive free warhead is guided onto the attacking warhead to destroy it kinetically.¹⁵

The Navy exo-atmospheric interceptor has a land based parallel in THAAD, Theater High Altitude Area Defense system. The missile component of THAAD has experienced several development test firing failures, resulting in significant delays to the predicted fielding date. It is now unlikely to be available before 2006.

The systems to be deployed first, Pac 3 and Naval Area TBMD, will be capable of defending limited areas, sometimes referred to as point defense, such as ports or airfields against relatively unsophisticated ballistic and cruise missile attacks. But until competent upper tier interceptors such as THAAD and/or the Naval Theater Wide system, become available, and are fully integrated into a single family of systems, the defense will remain fragile, and incapable of providing population defense. On current planning the Battle Management system will not have access to a single integrated air picture until about 2010. This integration of the separate systems into a family of systems represents an essential step towards the creation of a highly effective defense. On current planning the

availability of this capability will be the final element to come on stream.

Mention was made earlier of another development program to provide a tactically mobile lower tier system called MEADS. It is being codeveloped between Germany, Italy and America, essentially as a replacement for Hawk in Europe, that could provide forward area defense for troops against air breathing and missile attacks. America is paying over half the cost of the project, which has been the subject of repeated funding attacks in Congress and in DOD. Its future is still uncertain, even though a further \$40 M has been allocated for FY 98. As things currently stand the MEADS program is likely to remain uncertain year to year with the real crunch coming when it is in competition with THAAD and Naval TMD for Engineering and Manufacturing Development, and production funding.

Less attention has been focussed in this brief technical review on the other components of the system, such as sensors, launchers, and the Battle management (BMC3I). This is not because they are any less important, but because, with the exception of the BMC3I, their development appears to be proceeding satisfactorily. Until recently little has been reported on the progress of the Battle Management system that integrates all the components into a single family of systems, so that they can operate in harmony. It was reported recently however that a demonstration will be mounted in 2002 of the air and missile defense technologies integrated into a unified system. It was further noted that a successful demonstration should lead to the fielding of a coherently linked system by 2010. As noted above, without such a capability linking all the separate military systems with an integrated air picture, the U.S forces will not have a fully robust defense.

The yet more complex topic of interoperability and integration of international systems is one that not unnaturally has received little attention, since the allies have yet to commit to an involvement in TMD. The longer the allies procrastinate, the harder it will be for them to influence the form of international interoperability that will eventually have to be introduced, if multinational forces are to be capable of operating cooperatively.

It cannot have escaped the notice of allies, that America has expended more than \$50 B, since 1983 on missile defense research,

yet no systems have yet been deployed, and it is likely to take a further 13 years before a fully capable TMD system becomes available. This is a clear indication that the task was much harder politically and technically, as well as more costly, than was at first envisaged. Although criticism could be made of the frequent changes in priority to which the American program has been subjected by successive Administrations, these have only exacerbated what was an underestimation of the complexity of the whole task. These difficulties will undoubtedly have discouraged allied interest, and are likely to continue to do so until the problems are seen to be overcome.

With hindsight it can be seen that the ending of the Cold War also marked a transition in the U.S. SDI research into what could have been an effective TMD acquisition program. One which would have been capable of countering the more limited attacks of the emerging nations. Instead, the switching of resources and priorities between National and Theater missile defense has adversely affected both. This mixture of misguided policies, resulting mostly from lack of agreement between the Legislative and the Executive branches of the US Government, has significantly slowed the initial fielding of a limited defensive capability. With hindsight it is clear that with a more consistent approach, the \$50 B invested across the broad range of missile defense activities, could by now have produced the elements of an operative TMD. It would also have had a far less negative effect on allies, who would have seen positive results at a lower cost.

The ABM Treaty

The ABM Treaty, signed in 1972 between the U.S. and the Former Soviet Union (FSU), was designed specifically to inhibit the size, format, location and capability of an NMD. While the Treaty remains in force, the parties are severely restricted in the quality of a strategic defense that either can deploy.

When the Treaty was signed the U.S. and the FSU dominated nuclear weapon and BM capabilities. Deterrence, through Mutual Assured Destruction, was the accepted means of avoiding armed conflict between the two power blocks. Ensuring vulnerability to missile attack was at that time viewed as a means of preserving the effectiveness of deterrence. As noted earlier, since the fall of the

FSU, proliferation of missile and warhead technology has blossomed. Many countries that would previously have been dismissed as minor risks, are now capable of mounting genuine threats to allies and to U.S. interests around the world, if not yet to the U.S. itself. It is by no means certain that all of these newly empowered nations are susceptible to deterrence. Furthermore as proliferation increases so does the likelihood that a subnational, terrorist group will acquire the ability to inflict considerable havoc. There is ample evidence that such groups are unaffected, if not positively encouraged, by the threat of overwhelming retaliation.

Although the ABM Treaty was designed specifically to limit the capabilities of Strategic defenses, while it remains in force it is capable of interpretations that would inhibit the deployment of any effective population defense.¹⁶ This results from restrictions that inhibit early cueing of interceptors from space based sensors, and acceleration limits on interceptor missiles. Both of these restrictions could make it difficult, if not impossible, to intercept attacking missiles well away from their target area. The achievement of population defense against warheads of mass destruction would only be achievable if interceptions are attempted early in the flight path of the attacking missile. At the time the Treaty was signed, some observers noted that threatening to kill populations was permitted, but threatening to kill missiles was not. It appears that the same philosophy still applies in some quarters.

The demise of the FSU provided an opportunity to alter or terminate the Treaty, on the grounds that one of the two parties to it no longer existed. This was not done at the time, and since then retention of the ABM Treaty has remained a basic tenet of U.S. security policy. This, despite the fact that we believe the Treaty's retention is incompatible with the deployment of a fully effective Theater missile defense. Agreements announced at the Helsinki Summit in March 1997 between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin provide a clear illustration of how the Treaty can be used to restrict projected TMD capabilities, through limitations that would apply to the capability of the upper tier interceptors and to the full use of modern sensors.¹⁷ At the same summit the two leaders agreed to another fundamental change to the Treaty, proposing the addition of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine as full participants, on the grounds that some sites associated with the old Soviet defenses lie within their

borders. If this proposal of adding the newly independent countries is formally accepted by the Senate, it will make any further changes in Treaty obligations much more difficult to achieve, because modifications will require the agreement of 5 rather than 2 nations. This could make it impossible for the U.S. to deploy the most effective TMD. The clear impression given by these actions is that the present U.S. President is far more concerned about retaining a Treaty which specifically restricts missile defenses, than in taking actions that will lead to the fielding of an effective system.

Other non-signatory allies also continue to view the Treaty as important. The distinctive aura it acquired as the first major arms agreement between the two then Superpowers, coupled with the fact that it also was seen as preventing another arms race, appear to have elevated the Treaty to a special status. Despite the obvious proliferation that is now in progress, opponents of missile defense continue to suggest that the acquisition of defensive capabilities, rather than provide protection, will in fact encourage others to intensify and refine their own offensive systems. This returns to the theme of an arms race which the existence of the Treaty is considered to avoid. In terms of wishing to retain and even broaden the Treaty, it appears that the present U.S. Executive has the support of the governments of most allies.

The Way Ahead

The review of the issues which are assessed as having influenced attitudes towards international missile defense, indicates that advocates of the concept have made remarkably little headway over the past 14 years. The major geo-political and other changes which have occurred since the fall of the FSU should have reinforced the case for action. Many more nations, that America and its allies consider to be unstable, and/or potential adversaries, now possess missile and warhead capabilities. This coupled with the growth of nationalism has led to far more instabilities around the globe. Although the large U.S. investment in BMD technologies has not produced the expected capabilities, in terms of being able to counter a massive attack of thousands of missiles, it has produced significant results. There is now every expectation that systems could be deployed that would successfully intercept the smaller raids which nations other than Russia might threaten to use. What has also

become clear is that even the U.S. cannot afford to tackle the full task alone, and certainly cannot afford to provide effective protection for all its allies. If the allies wish to protect their homelands, and their troops in out of area operations, they are going to have to invest in Missile Defense.

The changes described are extremely unusual in historical terms. The threat has magnified significantly in breadth and uncertainty, but diminished in quality and quantity to a level that enables each individual threat to be countered by newly developed defensive technologies. Yet despite this unanticipated opportunity to acquire defensive capabilities that would nullify the present and growing missile threat, most allied governments continue to give the subject scant attention.

For a short time following the Gulf War, it seemed that Saddam Hussain would accomplish the task that had eluded so many advocates of missile defense. His Scud attacks against Israel and Saudi Arabia made the topic front page news, even though earlier use of missiles, and even chemical warheads, by both Iran and Iraq had gone relatively unnoticed. The public, in 1991, perhaps for the first time since the V2 attacks in 1944/5, were made acutely aware of the dangers of enemy missiles, now to include the risk of chemical and biological agents. A way has to be found to reawaken that interest, without waiting for the next rogue state to make it for us by claiming substantial casualties in an unopposed raid.

The technical and military communities in allied countries that understand the situation have to make extra efforts to convince appropriate Senior Policy Makers in each nation of the heightened requirement. The case has to be made on cost effectiveness grounds, with emphasis on the appalling cost of failure. A strong case should be made initially for the provision of missile defense for troops sent to out-of area crises. There can be no justification for sending them without the ability to defend themselves against threats which clearly exist, and are increasing.

The education process has to include the incompatibility of retention of the ABM Treaty as it now exists with the deployment of effective defenses. This truism has to be repeated at every opportunity. The Treaty may once have served a positive purpose, but the substantial changes throughout the world in technology and power structure, which have developed since the Treaty's institution, has

made it an anachronism. To achieve effective defense against warheads of mass destruction, it will be necessary to destroy them as early in flight as possible. The ability to achieve this with ground or sea based systems, becomes marginal within the current restrictions of the Treaty.

Through it's investment in SDI/BMD America has acquired a substantial lead in the technologies which support missile defense. All it's allies therefore look towards America to assess what can be accomplished in this field. They now see a number of promising programs while recognizing that it will be impossible for America to afford them all in the presently planned time scale. There is a strong case that can be made for each of the individual programs; Pac 3, THAAD, MEADS, Naval TMD, NMD, but without substantial funding increases, priorities will have to be allocated. Advocates have to be far more realistic in claims for what could be deployed, in what time scale, and at what cost. There can be no doubt that over-zealous predictions by US Administrations have undermined the credibility of missile defense, almost to a level from which it will be difficult to recover.

Although U.S. authorities have made sterling efforts for over 12 years to encourage allies to get involved in BMD activities, with the sole exception of MEADS, there has never been a clear indication of how an ally could participate. There has been no clear policy, so allies have consistently received mixed signals. For example, even the only ongoing international effort, MEADS, has been subjected annually to threats of cancellation by Congress and DOD, in an attempt to release funding for other missile defense activities. Although genuine international cooperation could be the answer to some of the funding problems, unfortunately the changes that would be required in US and allied national regulations to enable this to occur, seem to be too substantial for this to be achievable for the programs that are already well underway. It is particularly ironic that MEADS is now being viewed in Europe as the way in which future collaborative efforts should be structured, while in the U.S., which initiated the program, it enjoys limited support and remains in danger of cancellation.

There are still opportunities for international cooperation through interoperability and joint use of some capabilities, such as space based sensing, but only after the allies have accepted the importance of TMD. The plain truth is that with the sole exception

of Israel, no other nation's leaders have made BMD a high priority item. It is up to advocates in each country to make the case for missile defense and to raise the awareness, throughout all levels of society. For too long it has been assumed that either American persistence would induce others to participate, or that America would go still further and provide defense in crisis situations. Our analysis indicates that America will not be in a position to defend itself or its own forces adequately for at least another decade, so other alternatives have to be examined. Continuing down the present path could be a recipe for disaster.

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The Mafia Threat to Freedom in Russia

Jennifer A. Kelly

James Madison University

The author examines the economic situation in Russia, with special reference to the Mafia-type terrorist organizations that have flourished and which are corrupting government officials as efforts are made to transfer economic assets from the Government to private ownership.

Key Words: Russian economy, extortion, mafia, economic crime

Russia has no semblance of democracy and is far from achieving real market reform. Russia's present rulers are hardly better than the Communists. A stable and tight oligarchy of 150-200 people is deciding the fate of the nation. For the past 10 years, leaders have robbed their own people of national wealth, pocketing billions of dollars, impoverishing millions and possibly leading to the death of thousands. Russia's economic chaos is the result of nearly criminal reforms that have created a new class of mafia capitalists.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn¹

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 31, 1991, the struggle for power between various groups within the disintegrated state has yet to produce a visible and dominant leader. Boris Yeltsin claims to be the liberator of the Russian Federation and mediator of the other fifteen republics, guiding them towards democratic and market reforms. However, those who were once members of the political elite, the former Communists, still hold a majority of the political and economic authority in the former USSR. During the 1993 parliamentary elections, the Communists and nationalists gained a large share of the State Duma's seats, and Communist Party leader Gennadii Zyuganov and the Liberal Democratic Party leader Zhirnovsky both grew more popular and influential. Zhirnovsky's faction received 23 percent of the votes.² In order to avoid a Communist victory in the 1996 presidential elections, seven prominent bankers provided approximately three

¹ Alexandre Konanykhine and Elena Gratcheva, "Mafiocracy in Russia" (1996) URL: <http://www.konanykhine.com/mafiocracy.html>: 1.

² Stephen Handleman, *Comrade Criminal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 307.