

China and missile defense

The Cold War produced an arms race and untold human tragedy, but it also diverted attention from something with even greater historical significance: The rise of China. While the U.S. was spending fortunes to try to counter Soviet influence, it was engaging in policies that would allow China to come to dominate the 21st century. To an extent, this Cold War diversion continues today. Barack Obama and Dmitri Medvedev reached a framework accord yesterday on reducing nuclear warheads and on vague missile-defense cooperation, but the real winner will likely be seen in time to be Beijing. Its military strength is rapidly rising, and any reductions by Washington and Moscow will bring it closer to parity. The U.S. has made it clear that Russia can't stop missile defense in Europe (see [Michael McFaul](#)), but the odds are greater that [China](#) will be the one that ends up getting Washington's attention.

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