Countermeasures to the Proposed US National Missile Defense System

Recommended Citation

that it will need to have high confidence in the system effectiveness: the classified requirements for the system are reportedly that the United States be 95% confident that the system would be
So if US policymakers would be deterring from intervening without an NMD system, they should be deterred with an NMD system of unknown effectiveness. The Pentagon apparently understands
was used.
North Korean missiles down. But in reality, even if the NMD system were highly effective, US policy makers would not know, with high confidence, how effective the system would be before it
in a potential future conflict. They further argue that if the United States had deployed its NMD system, that such a threat could be ignored because the NMD system would be able to shoot the
Secretary Cohen and others argue, for example, that North Korea might threaten to attack a US city with long-range missiles to deter the United States from intervening on behalf of South Korea
real attack.
The same thing is true for the NMD system—the probability of intercepting an incoming warhead (or the effectiveness of the system) can only be determined through testing. And in order to have
The second criticism raises a valid point, but not one that undermines the conclusions of our report. First, as noted above, we considered the full planned NMD system, with all of its sensors and
impose on countermeasures, there would be no missile threat.
The United States declared the North Korean Nodong missile operational after a single test flight. If the missile programs of emerging missile states had to meet the standards some want to
programs. In fact, US threat assessments are based on the premise that emerging missile states can present a credible threat without adhering to high standards of testing and reliability. Thus,
we believe that the first criticism is clearly incorrect. Any country capable of building both an intercontinental-range ballistic missile and a nuclear warhead compact and light enough to be
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countermeasures and could do so "by the time they fly test their missiles."
our study took the next step: we considered in detail the types of countermeasures that would be available and then assessed how effective the planned US NMD system would be against such
countermeasures. Such a detailed analysis is possible because the United States is now so close to potential deployment that it has selected the specific interceptor and sensor technologies that the NMD system would use.
In contrast, the United States is likely to know very little about the emerging missile states that is developing. A potential attacker will understand the importance of not divulging
such information. As the Rumfeld Commission emphasized, emerging missile states are increasingly able to conceal sensitive activities. The countermeasures we considered are well suited for testing in ground facilities or from aircraft and would not require flight testing on a missile. The Rumfeld Commission noted in their July 1998 report, emerging missile states such as North Korea neither require nor seek high standards of reliability in their missile programs. In fact, US threat assessments are based on the premise that emerging missile states can present a credible threat without adhering to high standards of testing and reliability. Thus,
The countermeasures report surveys the types of countermeasures that would be available to an emerging missile state, and then goes into considerable detail for those of those countermeasures:
It may indeed be possible to modify the planned NMD system to respond to the some of the countermeasures we discuss (but not to submunitions, which only a boost-phase system could hope to counter), it is important to realize that the states made hardware changes to us as a result of this report. Thus, we modified the NMD system to respond to these countermeasures. We also assumed that the
Confidence The issue of “effectiveness” (i.e., how well would the system work?) is different from, but related to, the issue of “confidence” (i.e., with what certainty would US military planners and
The third countermeasure is a “coated shroud,” in which the attacker covers its nuclear warheads with a double-walled container containing liquid nitroglycerin. The very cold liquid nitrogen would greatly raise the temperature of the warhead, causing interference with the居间 Cold and SHIELD: The defend would need to shoot at all the warheads to prevent the warheads from getting through, and an attacker could deploy enough balloons that the defense system.
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The system thus is shown -- through analysis and through intercept tests -- to be effective against the types of offensive countermeasures that an attacker could reasonably be expected to deploy with
The two primary considerations are size and weight. An attacker with these capabilities can build a wide range of
The United States should not make a deployment decision unless that system is shown – through analysis and through intercept tests – to be effective against the types of offensive countermeasures that an attacker could reasonably be expected to deploy with
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