U.S. MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAMS

Recommended Citation

As for the Taiwan Strait situation, in my judgment it is understandable that China feels it needs a certain coercive advantage if it is not to be simply an act of aggression or a territorial claim. But it is a long way from being realistic, given China's ability to build up its force, develop midcourse decoys, and if necessary consider other types of weapon systems as a threat. Some Americans, most of them Republican, would also like a robust defense against China if they could have it. To some extent, they would be delighted to have a perfect defense against the entirety of the PRC nuclear force, whatever its size. At one level, this is understandable, given the perils of nuclear war. But it is also a fantasy, even if they might wish it could be real. We should also re-emphasize that a missile defense system is only a part of a strategic mix that includes diplomacy, economic sanctions, alliances with friends and allies, arms control agreements, and a variety of other tools. The United States must also keep in mind that long-range missiles are primarily weapons of confrontation and war, and that they are not really a threat in the context of a situation that can be resolved by negotiation and diplomacy. The arms race兴起 in the 1980s demonstrated that unilaterally increasing missile defense forces is not a viable strategy for preventing confrontation, and the Clinton Administration's proposals for a robust missile defense are not a good example of this strategy. The balance of power can be achieved only through peaceful diplomacy and dialogue between states. The Clinton Administration's proposals for missile defense are not a good example of this strategy. The balance of power can be achieved only through peaceful diplomacy and dialogue between states.