



Missile Defense Briefing Report: No. 332

December 30, 2014

Related Categories: Missile Defense

A DIRECT HIT FOR AEGIS...

America's sea-based defense against ballistic missiles continues to move forward. In the first live-fire test of its kind, the Aegis defense system based aboard the USS John Paul Jones successfully engaged several cruise missiles and one ballistic missile target nearly concurrently. Taylor Lawrence, president of Raytheon, said that the November 6th test "showcases the U.S.'s ability to defend against numerous ballistic and cruise missile threats in 'raid' scenarios."

The trial marks a significant achievement, not least because it obviates the need to "defend the defenders" - namely, for the deployment of backup ships to protect those destroyers carrying the Aegis system. The version of the Aegis upgrade that performed successfully in the November test off the coast of Hawaii will be installed on U.S. Navy destroyers and will be a part of the Aegis Ashore system currently planned for deployment in Romania. (Reuters, November 7, 2014)

...AND BULLSEYE FOR THE BULAVA

For the second time in two months, the Russian Navy has successfully launched its Bulava RS-26 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The multi-warhead nuclear-capable missile was launched from an underwater position in the Barents Sea toward Russia's eastern Kamchatka Peninsula. The successful test showcases improvements to Russia's submarine-launched ballistic missile program, which has been plagued by a series of malfunctions and test fizzles. Yet another test of the Bulava is expected in coming weeks. (Defense Update, November 29, 2014)

DEFENDING RUSSIA

Recent reports out of Moscow indicate that, in addition to making advancements to its offensive missile program, the Kremlin is also in the process of strengthening its missile defense capabilities. Pavel Sozinov, a designer with the Russian Defense conglomerate Almaz-Antei, has claimed that "Russia is working on an equivalent of the THAAD missile defense complex, which is capable of intercepting ballistic intermediate range missiles and, to a certain extent, warheads of inter-continental ballistic missiles." According to Sozinov, the system "will undergo testing soon." The Russians are also planning on a road mobile and stationary equivalent to the U.S. ground-based midcourse defense (GMD) system currently deployed in Alaska and California to protect the U.S. homeland from long-range missiles. However, it is not yet clear how far along the system is, or when it will be ready for deployment. (Moscow Itar-TASS, December 8, 2014)

A SETBACK FOR THE ARROW

Israeli missile defense has become synonymous with success, largely due to the recent battlefield successes of the Iron Dome system. But the most recent test of Israel's premier defense against long-range missiles has had a less-than-stellar showing. The newly upgraded Arrow 3 interceptor never even left the launchpad during a recent test at the Palmachim air base. The launch was cancelled after the interceptor failed to successfully acquire the target missile. (Reuters, December 16, 2014)

HIGH-FLYING HOMELAND DEFENSE

The U.S. will soon have two new eyes in the sky to prevent cruise missiles and other 9/11 style attacks from occurring along the East Coast. In the near future, two blimps outfitted with radar will fly at an altitude of 10,000 feet above the coast and scan for threats as part of the Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System (JLENS) program. The new capabilities, which are slated to go online in February 2015, will be able to remain aloft and operational for as long as 30 days, and will be incorporated into the U.S. Northern Command and linked with the Patriot missile defense system. (Christian Science Monitor, December 17, 2014)

QATAR BUYS AMERICAN

Another Gulf Cooperation Council nation has officially opted for U.S. missile defenses. Qatar has reportedly chosen to acquire as many as 10 Patriot theater missile defense systems as part of a new \$2.4 billion defense deal with the United States intended to protect against Iran. The missile defense capabilities are currently scheduled for deployment and operation in the second quarter of 2019. (Doha News, December 20, 2014)