

Playing Defense?

Examining China's Intentions Regarding Ballistic Missile Defense

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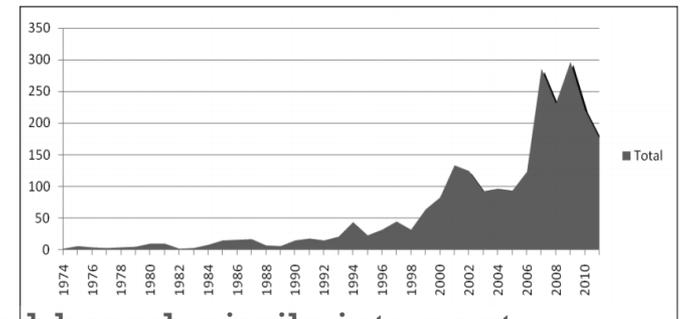
+ Outline

- The History of the Chinese Ballistic Missile Defense Program
- What are China's Intentions?
 - First Model: For the Advancement of Science and Technology
 - Second Model: For Prestige
 - Third Model: To Deploy a Missile Defense System
 - Fourth Model: To Cover Up and Anti-Satellite Program
- Guideposts for the Future
- Implications for Strategic Stability
- Moving Forward



+ China's BMD Timeline

- 1955 – Research begins
- 1986 – China launches 863 Program that revived missile defense research in response to U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative
- 1998 and 2001 – Increased criticism and research
 - Following U.S. announcements of intent to pursue BMD
- 2007 – Anti-Satellite Test
- 11 January 2010 – China conducts mid-course, ground-based missile intercept
 - “Defensive in nature and not targeted at any country”
- 27 January 2013 – China conducts second mid-course, ground-based missile intercept
 - Xinhua: “Weapon system experts said such [a] test could build [a] shield for China’s air defense by intercepting incoming warheads such as ballistic missiles in space.”
- 23 July 2014 – China claims it conducted a missile intercept test
 - U.S. Government sources assert that it was an anti-satellite test
- 2015 – Heightened criticism over the idea of THAAD deployment to South Korea



What are China's Intentions?

Four Models



- For Science and Technology
- For Prestige
- To Deploy a Missile Defense System
- To Cover Up an Anti-Satellite Program

The models are not mutually exclusive and may change with time



First Model: For the Advancement of Science and Technology



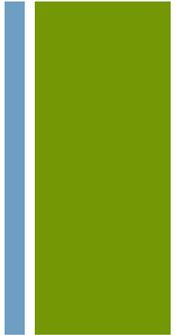
- To better understand U.S. missile defense systems to learn how to defeat them
- To evaluate the utility of a program
 - Technology Reserve Model – may not have developed the capability with the intent to deploy
 - Dual-Use Technology
- To avoid falling behind and becoming vulnerable to outside security threats
 - *Luohou jiuyao aida* – “the backward will be beaten up”
- To advance the fields of science and technology

+ Second Model: For Prestige

- China views missile defense as a marker of a modern military
 - Yields international and domestic prestige
 - Important in the mist of China's military modernization
 - "Do what others have done," –*Deng Xiaoping*
 - The PLA "must make great leaps in development and innovation so as to close the gap with its better-developed peers in the world," –*Xi Jinping*
- In the context of China-India relations
 - India considers China to be its principal security threat while India is a mid-level priority for China
 - China wouldn't want a secondary military power to develop the capability first



Third Model: To Deploy a BMD System



- Point Defense
 - To defend strategic assets and cities
 - Do what it can to reinforce protection of strategic nuclear forces
- National defense – thick or thin?
 - Less likely because of the cost of doing so, China's threat environment, and the concentration of population and assets along the coast
- 2001 *Science of Military Strategy*: “the only way to enable [China] to effectively react to all forms of challenge is to include it in overall deterrence and combine it with other deterring means to make them complement one another.”
- December 2012 – Xi Jinping instructed the Second Artillery to accelerate the development of strategic anti-missile capability



Fourth Model: To Cover Up and Anti-Satellite Program



- 2003 DoD China Power Report – “China is believed to be conducting research and development on a direct-ascent ASAT system that could be fielded in the 2005-2010 timeframe”
- 2005 and 2006 – China conducted two fly-by tests
- 11 January 2007 - China demonstrated its ASAT capability when it used a medium-range SC-19 ballistic missile to intercept the defunct Fengyun-1C weather satellite
 - Created over 3,000 pieces of debris
- 2008 – U.S. Operation Burnt Frost destroyed a failing U.S. spy satellite
 - Did China learn from this?
- 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, and 2013 tests all use the SC-19
 - Information not yet released for 2014
- May 2013 – China tested a second interceptor that reached GEO



Guideposts

Science and Technology

- Increased writing about dual-use technology
- Unclear if tests would or would not continue

Prestige

- Changes in line with developments in the United States or India
- Increased publicity about progress

Deploy BMD

- Deployment of the complementary suite of capabilities for a missile defense system
- Differentiate between point and national systems based on the size and speed of the interceptor and the number of interceptors deployed

Cover Up for Anti-Satellite Program

- Another interdiction of a satellite, test to GEO
- Increased rhetoric emphasizing space dominance
- Minimal deployment of BMD system





Implications for Strategic Stability



- If China remains vague
 - Remains difficult for U.S. policymakers, especially as China refuses to engage on the topic

- If China were to deploy a point defense system
 - To defend strategic nuclear missiles: could reduce U.S. ability to destroy missiles in a first strike
 - Could also enhance strategic stability and China would reduce criticism of U.S. systems

- If China were to deploy a thin or thick system
 - Strong regional implications for Taiwan, Japan and India
 - U.S. arsenal could overwhelm it

- If China is pursuing an anti-satellite program
 - Puts civil, commercial, and military assets at risk
 - Further weaponization of space

Moving Forward

Impossible to make an assessment of where exactly China is headed



Continue attempts to engage with China to pursue a strategic arms control agreement or establish a “rules of the road” and progress from there

- 2013 *Science of Military Strategy* showed greater willingness for arms control
- Explain the implications of deployment on regional security dynamics

Encourage Chinese transparency and “name and shame” the Chinese to raise awareness

Important to think about BMD in the context of cross-domain conflict