The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus
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Missile Defense: Deploy First, Ask Questions Later
Dec. 19, 2010 - Dec. 26, 2010

Missile defense (MD) hasn't been much discussed in the Asia-Pacific Journal, but growing US-Japan and US-South Korea cooperation on installing or networking into MD systems, along with US (and NATO) moves to ring much of Eurasia with land and sea-based MD is a subject of growing diplomatic, political and military analytical importance.

But on the more narrow question of whether MD is technologically feasible, the jury still appears to be out (despite some 20 years of MD testing and deployment).

Here are two not overly technical reports, one by two MD analytical experts and a second by the US government, raising questions about MD impracticalities (as currently conceived MD is incapable of destroying enemy ballistic missiles) and premature deployment plans:

1. *How US strategic antimissile defense could be made to work* (link)

George N. Lewis and Theodore A. Postol

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

November/December 2010

[The authors argue that the current Ground-Based Missile Defense (GMD) system and the future variants of the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) designed to deal with long-range (not short-range) ballistic missiles do not have the capacity to work in real combat conditions and advocate instead a drone-based approach to MD.]

2. *Missile Defense - European Phased Adaptive Approach* (link)

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)

December 21, 2010

[According to a McClatchy Newspapers summary, the GAO report states that the US Defense Department's "phased adaptive approach" that emphasizes deploying SM-3 interceptors in and around Europe is guided by "a schedule that could be challenging to meet, based on the technical progress of missile defense element development and testing programs."]