



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

STUDIES

Strengthening the Phalanx: Layered, Comprehensive, and Distributed Air and Missile Defense in the Indo-Pacific

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Resources: Forces & Capabilities

One of the most critical operational challenges the United States is likely to confront in a future conflict, particularly in the Indo-Pacific theater, is the threat of massed precision-guided air and missile attacks on overseas ports, bases, and other vital facilities. DoD has invested significant resources to defend against ballistic missile attacks on the United States, as well as its forward bases and forward-operating forces. However, it cannot still defeat large numbers of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and unmanned aerial systems.

Integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) plans still rely on defensive interceptors that cost too much, deliver too little, and do not sufficiently address the growing threat of complex salvo attacks.

Alternative approaches should include layered, comprehensive, and distributed IAMD concepts that address the full spectrum of threats. Specifically, new concepts should be built around concentric rings: an outer ring that can detect and engage hostile targets far beyond the range of ground-based defensive systems located at or near a threatened base; an inner ring that can protect the area immediately surrounding that base; and a close-in ring that provides point defense against specific targets on that base. This report develops such a concept and applies it to the defense of Guam.