

Re: ICBM warheads

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To: sci-military-moderated@moderators.isc.org

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"john-locke" <john-locke@ntlworld.com> wrote in message
news:<5iRnd.478\$%92.427@newsfe1-gui.ntli.net>...
> *"Ian Stirling" <root@mauve.demon.co.uk> wrote in message*
> *news:419df3f7\$0\$557\$ed2619ec@ptn-nntp-reader03.plus.net...*
>> *Dirk Bruere at Neopax <dirk@neopax.com> wrote:*
>>> *How are the warheads of ICBMs triggered for an air burst?*
>>> *Presumably they are coming in at several thousand mph and are plasma*
> *sheathed so*
>>> *radar won't work.*
>>
>> *Inertial navigation.*
>> *Basically just measuring the accelerations that the warhead undergoes,*
> *and*
>> *working out the position from these accelerations.*
>> *Because of the short time that the warhead is in the atmosphere,*
>> *(10-20 seconds?) this bit of guidance does not need to be very accurate.*
>> *I suspect even a \$2 car airbag type sensor (50G +-0.5G) might do, with a*
>> *LEP of around 1Km.*
>> *That's probably a bit much, but you're only looking at maybe an order and*
>> *a half of magnitude better than that, nothing challenging compared to the*
>> *navigational accuracy needed for the bus.*
>
> *This is all very well, however, with fail-safe measures such a presidential*
> *counter command facilities, I would have given some thought that this*
> *detonation or device burst would have been implimented via satellite relay*
> *through GPS sats to the missile warhead on-board computer to greet it, then*
> *give it correct orders. I would have thought that sats would have more*
> *input, than in previous (Cold War era) times.*
>
> *John Locke.*

Satellites are too vulnerable, especially in a nuclear war. A high powered laser, Soviet ASAT satellites, high altitude nuclear bursts, there are a lot of ways to kill them, so you don't want to depend on them for your doomsday weapon like an ICBM.