

Re: ICBM warheads

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Date: 12/02/04

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

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 2004 13:19:21 GMT

"George" <Geodanah@yahoo.com> wrote in message
news:7c28d4ba.0411222210.7bd78b23@posting.google.com...
> "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 accellerations that the warhead
undergoes,
>> and
>>> working out the position from these accellerations.
>>> 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.*

That might make sense, but I was always told by folks inside military & electronic circles, that ICBM vehicles were specially designed to take a "fail safe" command to "disarm" to the last few seconds of final descent arc were imminent to the target GZ – that it was possible to either block the initiating charge or U 238 block from being sent towards the core of the device to initiate its burst. These people seemed adamant that they would not have any problem in sending a counter–command of the "fail–safe" type to the ICBM vehicle en route. I can understand that someone could try to block such a command, but the same counter – command would effect the burst of a small nuke munitions device (a.k.a. "Samsonite" bombs), as it takes a Presidential authorisation for both to start.

John :Locke.