

Re: Chinese ASAT strike was third try; had mobile element

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Allen Thomson wrote:

The entrails seem to be saying that the ASAT is based on the DF-21, which is basically a road-mobile system. That said, it can probably be loaded on heavy flat cars and moved by rail to different deployment areas.

<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/theater/df-21.htm>

Think of advantages one accrues with a rail-mobile ASAT system – the whole kit-and-kaboodle can travel around in one piece: missile, launcher, command center, the sensors required for terminal guidance and target destruction confirmation.

And by having pre-surveyed sites marked out on the rail system for its launch, it would be possible to take that train to anywhere on the entire Chinese railway network and know almost literally to the inch where the ASAT was launched from on its mission, which would take out a lot of variables in regards to its intercept trajectory, as well as allowing it to engage targets at various orbital inclinations that are within the latitudes of the Chinese mainland.

If we are going to deploy a operational ASAT system, this might be a *_really_* good concept to emulate. It certainly simplifies the software used on the interceptor.

Delta-V requirements for terminal guidance on the interceptor as it approaches its target are vastly reduced by getting almost directly below it, and the less that shift is from its launch trajectory to target impact trajectory equals lower on-board thruster weight and thruster propellant weight versus overall launch weight for the interceptor, and therefore higher potential intercept altitude for using the same launch vehicle.

Pat

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