



What Role Can Land-Based, Multi-Domain Anti-Access/Area Denial Forces Play in Deterring or Defeating Aggression?

Timothy M. Bonds, Joel B. Predd, Timothy R. Heath, Michael S. Chase, Michael Johnson, Michael J. Lostumbo, James Bonomo, Muharrem Mane, Paul S. Steinberg

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Land-based, multi-domain anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) forces can play a role in deterring or defeating aggression. This report highlights growing Chinese and Russian A2/AD capabilities and potential scenarios for conflict in the Asia-Pacific region (centered on China) and the Baltic Sea (centered on Russia). Ground-based capabilities offer an affordable way for U.S. allies and partners to deter or defeat aggression.



RESEARCH QUESTION

- How can land-based, multi-domain anti-access/area denial forces be employed to deter or defeat aggression in the western Pacific, European littoral areas, and the Persian Gulf?



KEY FINDINGS

The United States and Its Allies Can Adopt Several Strategies to Counter an Adversary's Aggression When Shielded by A2/AD Capabilities

- A proven approach is to establish regional bases from which to operate land, air, and maritime forces projected from the United States, but it would be very difficult to successfully employ a similar strategy against peer or near-peer military forces.
- Imposing A2/AD challenges on enemies would allow allied forces to contest maritime areas without exposing U.S. forces to easy attack.
- A2/AD capabilities might be a particularly effective way to raise the costs for aggression. U.S. allies and partners could field a mix of anti-ship, anti-aircraft, and surface-to-surface missiles to impose the same problems on adversaries threatening them with attack over water. The U.S. joint force could provide support—and potentially reinforcements—to its allies.
- A2/AD concepts shift the primary responsibility for defense to U.S. allies and partners.

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Ground-Based A2/AD Missions Include Anti-Ship Missions, Surface-to-Surface Missions, and Short-Range Air and Cruise Missile Defense Missions

- Threats in the Pacific theater clearly demand that the United States and its allies and partners possess anti-ship capabilities.
- Surface-to-surface strike is a critical capability to conduct counterbattery fires against enemy anti-ship missile batteries, long-range anti-aircraft missile systems, and adversary air and sea bases.
- The demands for air and cruise missile defense are great in the western Pacific, owing both to the threat posed by the large Chinese investment in cruise missiles and to emerging joint operational concepts that geographically disperse air bases. The same is likely true to an even greater extent in Eastern Europe in potential operations against Russia.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Army should organize and field a prototype multi-domain fires battalion to develop, test, and exercise joint and combined defensive concepts.
- Long-range intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and targeting capabilities should be provided by existing U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and allied systems.
- For the anti-ship role, an initial capability should be established by building a combined battalion incorporating existing anti-ship missile batteries operated by selected allies, such as Poland and Japan. Additional allies should seek to join as they develop the requisite capabilities.
- If current development programs succeed in building versions of the Army Tactical Missile System or the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System with a terminal guidance package for anti-ship operations, the multi-domain battalion should incorporate a U.S. Army anti-ship battery capable of operating them.
- An existing High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System battery should be assigned to provide surface-to-surface fires.
- A short-range air and cruise missile defense battery could be assigned from the forces being formed to operate the Indirect Fire Protection Capability–Increment 2.
- To provide a capability that can operate in small numbers, the U.S. Army should develop and deploy minimum engagement packages for exercises and demonstrations with allies and partners.
- After an initial set of joint operating concepts has been developed, the Army should work with key allies and partners to build combined concepts and tactics, techniques, and procedures.



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