

# Russian Ballistic Missile Defense: Rhetoric and Reality

Russia's ballistic missile defense (BMD) program has been a source of much debate and controversy. Critics argue that the program is ineffective and a waste of money, while supporters claim that it is necessary to protect Russia from attack. In this article, we will examine the rhetoric and reality of Russia's BMD program.



## Russian Ballistic Missile Defense: Rhetoric and Reality

by Paul Krassner

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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## The Rhetoric of Russian BMD

Russia's BMD program has been the subject of much rhetoric in recent years. Russian officials have repeatedly claimed that the program is necessary to protect Russia from attack by the United States and its allies. They have also argued that the program is effective and that it can intercept and destroy incoming ballistic missiles.

However, there is little evidence to support these claims. The US has not deployed any ballistic missiles that could threaten Russia, and the BMD program has not been tested against a live ballistic missile target. In fact, a 2017 report by the Congressional Research Service found that "the effectiveness of the Russian BMD system is uncertain." The report also noted that "the system has not been tested against a live ballistic missile target, and its capabilities are not well understood."

### **The Reality of Russian BMD**

The reality of Russia's BMD program is much different from the rhetoric. The program is still in development and is not yet operational. The A-135 anti-ballistic missile system, which is the centerpiece of the program, has been plagued by delays and technical problems. The S-400 and S-500 air defense systems, which are also part of the program, are not designed to intercept ballistic missiles.

In addition, Russia's BMD program is constrained by the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. The ABM Treaty, which was signed by the US and the Soviet Union in 1972, limits the number of anti-ballistic missile systems that each country can deploy. Russia is currently in compliance with the ABM Treaty, but it has indicated that it may withdraw from the treaty in the future.

### **The Future of Russian BMD**

The future of Russia's BMD program is uncertain. The program is still in development and has not been tested against a live ballistic missile target. The ABM Treaty also constrains the program's development. However, Russia has indicated that it may withdraw from the ABM Treaty in the future, which could lead to an expansion of the program.

It is important to note that Russia's BMD program is not the only source of concern for the US. Russia is also developing a number of other offensive and defensive weapons systems, such as the RS-28 Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile and the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle. These weapons systems could pose a significant threat to the US and its allies.

Russia's BMD program is a source of much debate and controversy. Critics argue that the program is ineffective and a waste of money, while supporters claim that it is necessary to protect Russia from attack. The reality of the program is much different from the rhetoric. The program is still in development and has not been tested against a live ballistic missile target. The ABM Treaty also constrains the program's development. The future of the program is uncertain, but it is important to note that Russia's BMD program is not the only source of concern for the US.

### **Image Alt Tags:**

- Russian Ballistic Missile Defense System: An A-135 anti-ballistic missile launcher is deployed in the Moscow region.
- S-400 Air Defense System: An S-400 air defense system is deployed in the Crimean Peninsula.
- S-500 Air Defense System: An S-500 air defense system is displayed at the MAKS air show.

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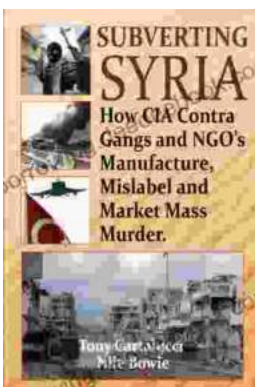


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