

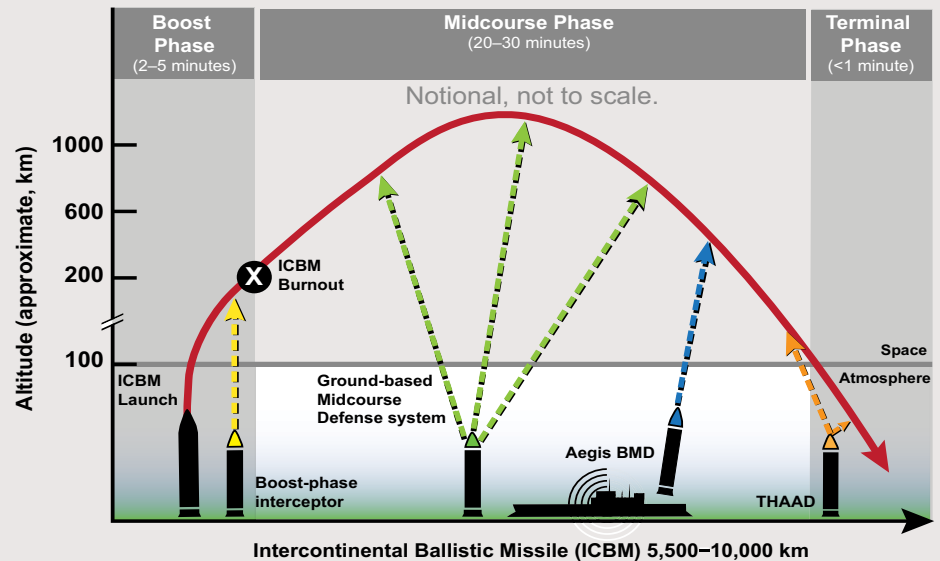
# US Missile Defense System is Unreliable Even in Idealized Testing Conditions

## ACTION

Members of Congress should require a realistic testing and assessment program for US Missile Defense (MD) systems, including ground-based mid-course defense, to help improve the reliability of these systems.

## Background

During the past 70 years, the United States has been the only nation to invest significantly in MD, which encompasses a variety of technologies that defend against potential missile attacks on the US, our forces, or our allies. A primary objective of US Ground-Based Mid-Course Defense (GMD) is to intercept any incoming ballistic missiles, preventing attacks on the US from rogue states such as North Korea.



## US Missile Defense Testing Has a Lackluster Record

US MD has an unreliable performance history, even under idealized testing conditions. Since 1999, the GMD has been tested 19 times, far less than standard military practice for a weapon system.

The US GMD system failed nearly half its tests despite unrealistically favorable testing conditions. Samples of testing conditions some tests benefited from include:

- preprogramming with information to locate the target;
- a predetermined intercept location; or
- a preplanned target launch time.

## Decision-making officials are working with unreliable data regarding US MD capabilities

*"I have 100 percent confidence. Literally, I don't say 100 percent very often. I have 100 percent confidence in those capabilities against North Korea."*

—General John E. Hyten, January 2020

*"The chances of any missile or missiles getting through in my calculation is .000001 —that's five zeros— percent."*

—George Charfauros, Homeland Security Advisor to Guam, April 2017

## Deploying an ineffective MD system is harmful for two reasons:

- Our strategic adversaries – China and Russia – are using US MD as a justification for enhancing their offensive capabilities.
- US government officials can mistakenly make decisions based upon the false belief that the US has a defensive capability that we do not have.

Therefore, we urge members of Congress to require a realistic testing and assessment program for US MD systems, including the ground-based mid-course defense.