

China Circled by Chain of US Anti-Missile Systems

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Washington appears determined to surround China with US-built anti-missile systems, military scholars have observed.

According to US-based Defense News, Taiwan became the fifth global buyer of the Patriot missile defense system last year following Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates and Germany.

Quite a few military experts have noted that Washington's latest proposed weapon deal with Taiwan is the key part of a US strategic encirclement of China in the East Asian region, and that the missiles could soon have a footprint that extends from Japan to the Republic of Korea and Taiwan.

Air force colonel Dai Xu, a renowned military strategist, wrote in an article released this month that "China is in a crescent-shaped ring of encirclement. The ring begins in Japan, stretches through nations in the South China Sea to India, and ends in Afghanistan. Washington's deployment of anti-missile systems around China's periphery forms a crescent-shaped encirclement".

Ni Lexiong, an expert on military affairs with the Shanghai Institute of Political Science and Law, told the Guangzhou Daily yesterday, "The US anti-missile system in China's neighborhood is a replica of its strategy in Eastern Europe against Russia. The Obama administration began to plan for such a system around China after its project in Eastern Europe got suspended".

Tang Xiaosong, director of the Center of International Security and Strategy Studies with Guangdong University of Foreign Studies noted that the ring encircling China can also be expanded at any time in other directions. He said that Washington is hoping to sell India and other Southeast Asian countries the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile defense system.

Analysts say that China is closely monitoring US-India missile defense cooperation since any integration of India into the US global missile defense system, would profoundly affect China's security.

However, according to former Chinese Ambassador to India Pei Yuanying, India is unlikely to be part of any such US scheme against China.

"New Delhi needs to develop relations with the US, but it wants to be an independent international power on the international arena," he said.

Pei said it was necessary to take multiple aspects of China-US relations into consideration. "The US has followed the policy of engagement plus containment with China for a long time and that overall policy will not change during Obama's term," he said.

Defense News quoted John Holly, Lockheed's vice president of Missile Defense Systems as saying the outlook for the missile defense market remains sound.

Pointing to missile programs in Pyongyang, Teheran, Moscow and Beijing, Holly said "the world is not a very safe world and it is incumbent upon us in the industry to provide (the Pentagon) with the best capabilities."

Beijing has frequently criticized US missile-defense development and has been making efforts to restrict missile defenses through the United Nations forums.

Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told a UN disarmament conference in August in Geneva that "countries should neither seek for absolute strategic predominance nor develop missile-defense systems that undermine global strategic stability."

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