THE U.S. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE (NMD) PROGRAM

Purpose: Shield the U.S. from attack by a few intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) carrying nuclear warheads.

Current Form: Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system.

30 Ground-Based Interceptors deployed; 26 in Fort Greely in **Alaska**, and 4 in Vandenberg AFB in **California.**

Effectiveness: GMD intercept tests have failed about half the time; its performance has been getting worse. Since 1999, GMD interceptors had failed in 9 of 17 flight intercept tests. Since 2004, 6 of 9 tests failed. And since 2010, 3 of 4 failed.

New site: DoD has said it has no military requirement for another missile defense site; existing sites would provide adequate coverage of the U.S. if the GMD system is proven effective.

Expansion: Some members of Congress have called for expansions to the program, including a new site on the East Coast and a missile defense system in space.

Cost: So far the GMD system has cost about

$40 billion.

Consequence: Building a 3rd site by deploying more of the same unreliable hardware will not improve U.S. security. The current system should be proven effective before any costly expansion.

Space: A space-based system would require thousands of interceptors deployed in Earth's orbit. Experts have expressed serious concerns about the technical feasibility of such a program.

Feasibility: Even if viable, a space system may not be affordable. The National Academy of Sciences estimated a limited space-based system would cost at least $300 billion. A full-scale system could cost $1 trillion or more.

To learn more about the U.S. National Missile Defense program, visit www.armscontrolcenter.org

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