



Penetrating the Ion Curtain: Implications of Directed Energy Integrated Air Defense Systems in 2030

By Joseph A Thill

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Print on Demand *****. Since the first laser was developed in 1960, directed energy technologies have captured the imagination of civilian and military communities worldwide. Over the past four and a half decades, increases in power, quality and laser types have set the foundation for directed energy weapons (DEWs) to enter, then dominate, battlefield engagements. Given this hypothesized future, the scientific and operational communities need to address the implications of fielded DEWs at the tactical and strategic levels. The following paper addresses the question Can aircraft survive against a Directed Energy Integrated Air Defense System (DE-IADS)? This paper will use trend analysis to uncover the expected DEW capabilities in the 2030 timeframe. Trend data will then provide the foundation for a scenario analysis that compares three distinct scenarios. Scenario 1 juxtaposes an advanced conventional USAF strike force against a DE-IADS. Using the same backdrop, Scenario 2 pits a directed energy-equipped USAF strike force against the same DE-IADS. And lastly, Scenario 3 evaluates a directed energy equipped USAF strike force against an advanced, but conventional, IADS. The results will show that DE equipped...



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