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<b>Title</b>	<b>DEBATES ON THE ROLE OF THE US THEATER MISSILE DEFENSE IN REGIONAL DETERRENCE OF RUSSIA AND CHINA</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Studies on missile defense, both in Russia and abroad, have been traditionally focused either on capabilities of the US national missile defense system to parry Russian or Chinese strategic nuclear forces, or on regional deterrence of North Korea and Iran by means of regional missile defense (theater missile defense, TMD). However, the 2019 Missile Defense Review (MDR) emphasized the role of the TMD systems in the regional deterrence of the Russian Federation and China. So far, this issue has received little attention and this paper aims to fill that gap.</p> <p>The first section identifies the key points of the MDR concerning the capabilities of regional missile defense for regional deterrence of the major nuclear powers. The author also examines the views of different representatives of the US Department of Defense on this issue, and concludes that the US military-political leadership has a generally positive assessment of the capabilities of the TMD systems to contain Russia and China in case of a regional crisis. In particular, planners emphasize the role of the regional missile defense in countering the ‘anti-access/access-denial’ capabilities and the concept of ‘escalate for de-escalate’ ascribed to Russia. At the same time, US policymakers express in that regard serious concerns about Russia’s and China’s progress in the development of hypersonic missile systems.</p> <p>The second section examines the ongoing debates in Western expert society on the role of the regional missile defense in terms of deterring Russia and China. The author concludes that in this respect experts can provisionally be divided into two groups. The first group generally supports the arguments of the US military-political leadership and is optimistic about TMD capabilities for regional deterrence of Russia and China. The second group is more critical of these capabilities. They point out the lack of accurate data on the combat capabilities of such systems in active warfare and criticize questionable theoretical assumptions of their opponents. The third section provides a critical analysis of the arguments presented in this debate. The author concludes that the current concepts of deterrence based on the use of regional missile defense systems do not fully address possible implications for regional security and strategic stability. The Russian Federation and China possess significant nuclear arsenals, which already make nuclear escalation involving these countries and the United States possible. Adding yet another variable (TMD) into this equation only aggravates the</p>

	situation.
<b>Keywords</b>	regional missile defense, theater missile defense, strategic stability, regional deterrence, hypersonic weapons, Missile Defense Review, 'anti-access/access-denial'.