

Mr. Riki Ellison:

(silence)

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, from Alexandria, Virginia, on a windy day. My name's Riki Ellison. I am the founder and president of the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance. It's an Alliance that I founded in 2002, that was founded after 9/11 happened and our country, our cruise missile defense attack, believed that we had to defend our country much more thoroughly with ballistic missile defense and air defense. And we withdrew from the ABM treaty and we moved forward.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

I've been involved with missile defense for 40 years, all the way back since 1980. Our core mission is that we believe that the deployment and evolution of missile defense makes our nation safer and our world safer. Today's a special day, it's a remembrance day, it's a reflection day, December 7th. And we owe a lot to that reflection. And our subject today is, are we ready to defend the Pacific from those lessons learned in the past?

Mr. Riki Ellison:

And there are similarities between 1941 and today. And if you look at the world today, we have aggressors in the Pacific indo-domain that are pushing those boundaries of international law, and we are in a similar place with Hawaii and Guam. Hawaii's now a state. It wasn't in 1941, it was a US territory. Guam is a US territory. We had most of our military forward presence in Hawaii to project power. We have most of our forward presence today to project power in Guam. Guam has around 200,000 US citizens. Hawaii, back in 1941, had 400,000 citizens.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So today, we're going to discuss having ability of why we need to defend the Pacific. If we are going to defend the Pacific, can we defend the Pacific? What's preventing us from defending the Pacific? And that is a discussion we're going to a lead. We are also acknowledging that the United States Congress today, and the NDAA act, has put forward language for the architecture and defensive of law.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

They have also put appropriations that double the presence funding request for the defensive law. So there is a public effort here that's in play that understands the significance of how important this is. So today, we have the great honor of having the deputy COCOM commander of the Indo-Pacific with us today, Lieutenant General Steve Sklenka, and he's coming from the 80th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor, from Pearl Harbor. So to give us that perspective is phenomenal and we thank him for doing it.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

But we also have got our team here in NDAA, and we think we have probably one of the best qualified experts in the Indo-Pacific region. We're going to let each one of them speak and present to you, and we'll have Steve present. And we're going to have a discussion covering the bandwidth of the issue here.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So I'd like to introduce our first speaker. He is our advisor to our board, retired Lieutenant General Ty Thomas. Ty was the Deputy Commander for the Pacific air forces. He was the deputy theater joint force air component commander to the commander of the USINDOPACOM. So Ty's going to give that perspective to us. Welcome, Ty. The floor is yours.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay. Thanks, Riki. It's great to be here. Appreciate the invitation and I'm glad to be part of the NDAA team. And I'm looking forward to a robust discussion today. I hope the audience is really excited about this as much as we are. To answer the question, which is: 80 years later, after December 7th, 1941, here we are in 2021. Are we ready to defend the Pacific? And I would put that question in the context of, let's remember what happened all across the Pacific, not just in Hawaii.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

We took a really hard punch from the Japanese empire at the time. And the result was that it took us pretty much a year, arguably even longer, to get on the front foot and take the offense to the enemy. So here we are, 80 years later. The scenario, a little bit different, and the player's a little bit different, but the question remains the same: if we were going to take a hard punch from the PRC, are we going to be able to get on our feet again and take the offense back to them immediately? Or is it going to take us a year, and that'll allow them to present a fait accompli at some really important places in the Pacific, particularly Taiwan.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So undersea warfare is one of them. Our opponent's going to try to get better at that, but we're still holding the line there. Cooperation with allies and partners, that's an advantage, and I would argue that we're getting better on that one. Taiwan is listening. It appears that President Tsai is advocating for and putting into effect a hedgehog strategy, rather than a conventional arms fight, that I think will make them a better opponent.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

And the services are all developing concepts to disperse forces to counter the expected approach from the PRC of a saturation attack, so those are positives. Here's the negatives, though, and the list just pretty long. Fundamentally, I think everybody probably would agree that first and foremost, this is a first island chain fight. A vast majority of the fight is going to be there, the key terrain is there, and the problem is, is that we are not matching at all their ability to execute offensive fires in the first island chain.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

We're going to have a hard time defending our operating locations there, and as a result, we're going to have to be able to think of, where can we operate from consistently and predictably besides the first island chain? Second is our air superior advantage is severely eroded. Let's be very clear about that. It doesn't mean that we can't generate localized air superiority where we need it, but the advantage that we have isn't there anymore. We need an air to air missile to match that which our opponents have, and we have a lot of work to do on that.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Our fifth generation fighter forces that are in the theater or in Alaska, now they can get into position, but that will take some time. The first crucial battle is going to be in the airspace over Taiwan and the airspace over the Miyako and Luzon straits, north and south of Taiwan, respectively. That is key terrain for this fight. So we also need to consider the fact that the magnificent US Navy is going to fight, and they're going to fight hard, but carrier aviation is going to be limited in terms of where the carriers can get into position at the initial parts of the fight.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

There's a threat to our carrier strikers, and that threat has to be respected. That's going to live the amount of carrier aviation that we bring in. So then the question is, where does the air power come from in the first phases of the fight? The answer to that question is, it's going to be the second island chain and some other distant bases maybe elsewhere in the first island chain.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So the air power that comes from the second island chain is going to have to get into position over Taiwan, over the Miyako and Luzon straits, and they're going to have to hold the line. They'll take some losses, but I'm confident that we will be able to hold the line in the initial phases of the fight. It's going to take a hell of a lot of tankers. We don't have enough of those, but we're going to be able to do it. But the question then becomes, after you've gotten those fighters into position, they're going to have to go back home and you're going to have to generate air power to replace the ones that were in position that are holding line.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Those bases are in the second island chain, the vast majority of them. If they hold the line, we're going to be able to put bombers into position, ISR aircraft, C2 aircraft, the tankers will be able to remain secure. So that makes those second island chain bases critically important to not getting put on the back foot and staying on the back foot. If we lose those defensive lines in the air over Taiwan and those two key straits, we're in trouble.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So the PRC knows this. They studied the American way of war, and they're going to try to execute saturation attacks. And we've got concepts that I've mentioned about dispersal and the Marines using expeditionary advanced base operations, air forces, agile combat employment, the Navy distributed maritime operations. Those are all good, but I would argue that they still need the element of some form of active defense, whether it's at the theater level, covering Guam and islands nearby, or whether it's also point defenses at certain locations, that's needed and that's where we have a lot of work to do it.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Can we defend Guam in some way, shape, or form? There's a plan. We have it. That exists, and General Sklenka may comment on that a little bit. But I would argue that the integration of that plan, there are some hooks in there that we need to be understood of. And also that it relies upon the use of multi role Aegis ships that have other missions elsewhere in the theater that are really important, besides just defending the second island chain.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So I'll close by saying this, and Riki, you touched on it. There's a great opportunity that lies before us. There is a plan to defend Guam. There is an architecture that's been laid out by the NDAA. The Congress is behind it. And so the question now is, can we get a decision made? Can the department of defense move forward, stop talking about it, and execute? And I'll leave you with this: We can spend another year debating what the exact right components of a system are for Guam and hand the PRC another year's worth of advantage, or we can make a decision now, in the next 60 to 120 days.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

The answer to that question will determine whether we have more December 7th, 1941-style havoc on US bases in the Pacific or not.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Great. Thanks, Ty. Thanks for the air force projection and perspective. It's good we got an ex-carrier strike group commander. He's going to speak to us next to give us that viewpoint from the Navy. Ladies and gentlemen, Mark Montgomery. He is retired Rear Admiral, Director of Operations for INDOPACOM. And like I said, a commander of strike group George Washington out of Japan. Mark's up on the hill right now. Congratulations on the NDAA movements that we've seen for missile defense, Mark. The floor is yours, Mark.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Hey, thanks. And appreciate Ty's opening comments. I attached myself to about 90% of it. He knows the 10% I don't. When we look at this, we have to think about, what is the threat risk? We'd like to see risk as consequences times likelihood, and that tells you what your risk is. The consequences of what's happening are getting more severe for us, and that's because the capabilities and capacity of the adversary are increasing. They're in the fifth year, the fifth five year plan, since they really put their mind to this in 1998. And it's having an impact. They now have a Navy that ... ship for ship, not in tonnage or capability necessarily, but in capacity ... is larger than us. And they do have some highly capable units in there.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

They're developing close to fifth generation aircraft. I don't think they're there yet, but they're developing ... They mimic us fairly well. And the other thing I'd say is, over those 25 years of procurement, they very explicitly looked at where we had asymmetric advantages or we had unique vulnerabilities, and they invested in both of those. So Chinese capabilities and capacities increasing, so the consequence of an action happening are going to be high on us.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

The other factor in that risk analysis is likelihood. And I think that likelihood's going up. I think, Admiral Davidson as all COCOMS commanders do in their final briefing to the hill ... all the guards are off, nothing can stop there from saying what they believe ... and he said, "2026 is a year that he worries about." I think that might be a little early, but I think he was reflecting the fact that that President Xi may want to resolve the Taiwan issue before he leaves office, if he does leave office after his third term.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

So the likelihood is increasing. And we think about Taiwan a lot. And certainly, I just mentioned some of these issues with Taiwan. But I also tell you, I worry a lot about the East China Sea. We have small ship,

coast guard, Japanese and Chinese coast guard, Japanese self defense force and PLA and ships in close proximity to each other, on what they believe to be sovereignty, affirming missions, which tend to make you act a little more aggressively, very close to each other.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

204's, Lieutenant Commanders of the navy, Majors in the air force or army, are making decisions that could easily lead to a collision. And I'll tell you, if the Japanese get the worst for wear, they'll have the maturity and discipline to do nothing, to talk about it and work their way through it, through the normal legal means. If the Chinese get the worst for wear, I could easily see an escalating event out of the east China sea as well.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

So we really do have to worry about the risk that's here now. And so when you say, "How do you get at that?" My response would be, first of all, President Biden says we're all about allies and partners. I'm not sure our actions over the last year affirm that. But I'll take him at his word and I agree with him. It is about interoperability with our allies and partners. So, number one, we've got to continue to improve the interoperability with the Japanese. The Japanese get the most you can get of it a \$50 billion defense budget. It's shocking what they do with that. If we were as efficient with our \$700 billion as they are with their \$50 billion, we'd have quite the military force.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

But in any case, they mimic our seven fleet and our fifth air force with very competent capabilities and capacities. We need to build that interoperability. And I think in the Navy, it's really moved from de-conflicted to coordinated, almost approaching integrated. I think with our air force, it's slightly lower, our ground force, it's quite a bit lower. I wouldn't worry about that. But getting the naval and air up into that fully integrated capability and capacity, with the command and control to work together when there's the political will, is important.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

I just described something that is nonexistent with Taiwan right now, and that should worry us, that despite high having similar capabilities, we don't have interoperability. So we've got to really work that interoperability with them. That's going to take political risk. So we have to do that. So building that interoperability. Second, we really still have to exploit our strengths. One of them is undersea warfare. I think that there's two ways that we detriment the Chinese threat. The first is through the air employment, which I'll talk about a little bit and Ty talked to already, air weapons employment. And the second is through submarines.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

The problem with submarines is it's a very slow process. The good news with submarines is, I guarantee our forces will be able to do it. It's just, I don't know that they can do it in a timeframe that's been laid out by our defense leaders for this and for changing Chinese decision making. But exploiting our advantage is important, so making sure we have the right investments and submarine procurement, and what's called T-AGOS ship procurement and our ADCAP torpedo procurement. Those are all important things. Good news is, on a bipartisan level for the last three or four budgets, we've gotten it right. And I think we're thinking about how we start even building three submarines every year, so that's important.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Now comes the most important and the one that I think that gets at the missile defense issue. It's our ability to impose costs through the air. And let's be clear, we have some very high quality weapon systems, particularly with the JASSM-ER and the LRASM, our long range, anti-ship cruise missile. It's so good the air force came back to shooting ships. So they put the LRASM on the B-1. That's fantastic. It'd be great if the B-1 ... if we get [inaudible 00:21:10] a bunch of B1's today, I'm not 100% sure that's true every day. So I'm excited that the air force is making plans to put it on the B-52. We have to accelerate that, probably faster than the pace that they did with the B-1, in a more aggressive manner. And then the air force needs to buy LRASM. I was disappointed in the administration's budget. It was for zero air force LRASMs last year. I think the air force needs to put that investment in there.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

The navy, the same way. We were slow on the F-18, but we're there now. We're buying LRASMs every year. That's fantastic. And we've just made the brilliant epiphany of putting the LRASM on the P-8. That puts the LRASM on 128 more flight platforms eventually, that can operate from pretty much any airfield in east Asia, and really complicates Japanese issues. But in the end, when you're talking about putting the ammunition, the aviation fuel, the air fields, it comes down to Guam, as Ty referred to, that second island chain airfield's critical.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

And that's where you get into missile defense and the idea of, can we defend Guam? I'd say, to a lesser degree, can we defend Misawa, Iwakun, Atsugi? I kind of give up on Kadena a little bit. Can we defend our airfields in Australia? Any expeditionary airfields we put up in the Philippines and in the compact states? But really, Guam is a centerpiece. It's a centerpiece logistically. And also, small note effect, it's American territory with American citizens on it, so we have to defend it.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

And for this, I'd make clear a few things. And it was really happy to see the NDAA language, I get, it's not law yet. I think what's in there is going to be law with 99% certainty. The additional money's important, but what's really critical is, it puts DOD on the spot to, within, I think either 60 or 90 days, 60 days, I believe, getting [crosstalk 00:23:04] the report about how they're stepping out to acquire it.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

And I'll tell you right off the bat, you need a highly discriminatory radar. I think if you were to put the INDOPACOM commander on a lie detector, it'd come back, you'd probably need about 36 DB, maybe more, but a highly discriminatory radar. If it's maneuverable, you can put it on a truck bed or something, that's great. But have some kind of maneuverability. You need vertical launch cells out there, and then the weapon systems to populate it. And there, you get into a mix of Navy and army platforms. That's fantastic. The army can play an important role in this.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

And then eventually, you need cruise missile offense systems. And I don't know how we're going to get there from here. Certainly the PAYCOM commander put end to the discussion of iron dome the other day as being that actual solution. But whatever the army ends up fielding IFPC, or if they're smart and come back with another gap filler, a NASAM, something out there, some supporting Navy systems, air force systems if they develop them to do air based defense.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

But the reality is, we have to defend Anderson, the submarine base, and more broadly, Guam. And that investment is clearly called for it in this year's NDAA. And I'm hoping that department of defense, as Ty says, one more year of delay. I'll tell you who's not delaying in their development of capabilities and capacity, that's the Chinese. And every year we delay makes the problem harder and the solution more expensive. So we really need to get on that this year. So with that said, Riki, I'll kick it back over to you.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Appreciate that, Mark. Thank you very much for that depth of explanation. Our next presenter, another advisor to our board, Joaquin Malavet, Major General retired. He was the Director For Strategic Planning and Policy at the J5 for INDOPAYCOM. So Joaquin, it's all yours.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Well, Riki, as always, thank you very much for this extraordinary opportunity. And quite frankly, on this historic day, to offer a few prepared remarks. I think first we acknowledge this: we all rightly recognize that we have much to be thankful for, for the World War II generation. We need to honor their sacrifices and we certainly remember their service. Those World War II veterans basically built America and the international order. It's quite a pleasure to team up again with Ty, Mark, and general Sklenka.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

The Indo-Pacific is certainly in our DNA. We all know that. And I think what I'd like to do is offer things a little bit higher, take a step back. There are a lot of lessons from the war in the Pacific, lessons that we're still learning in terms of one, strategic risk and vulnerabilities and the ability to recognize that. Two, taking concrete steps quickly to reduce the chances of strategic surprise and shore up our strategic-

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:26:04]

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

The chances of strategic surprise, and to shore up our strategic defenses. Three, putting into place the types of missile defense capabilities and systems that will offer guaranteed protection and defense of the homeland, most significantly out forward on Guam, and of course with our treaty allies, their homelands as well. I acknowledge the comments by both Ty and Mark, they're always spot on target. We'll probably have quite a bit to talk about from a joint perspective on the Q and A. I also know that General Sklenka, my good friend and fellow Marine, is going to hit some of the really high marks from his powerful vantage point, and certainly from his position of authority.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Again, I'd like to step back, maybe go a little bit higher, and take a few minutes to outline the core elements of the Indo-Pacific campaign, one that we all helped to build. It is perhaps the most sophisticated, technologically advanced, and comprehensive military campaign within the department of defense. That's the good news, yet the campaign strategy has to be resourced, and the Pacific deterrence initiative is a small step in the right direction. The Indo-Pacific campaign is complex, it has many components. At a high level, I would argue that there are three components: a geographic component, a functional component, and a strategic geopolitical component, all relative to strategies of deterrence, denial, containment, or erosion.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Guam is fundamental to all three of these components. One, the geographic component is linked to forced posture and positional advantage. The best foundational blueprint for the exploitation of strategic terrain was developed in World War II during the Pacific campaign. In fact, if you were to visit the American Memorial Cemetery in Manila, the Philippines, you would see our World War II military strategy of the Pacific theater on large murals outlined across that cemetery. When I last visited this memorial in January of 2020, interestingly enough, there were a few Chinese and Russians there photographing the murals and taking notes, and beyond studying the India, Burma, and Northeast Asia murals, quite a few were clustered around the murals on Guam, the second island chain, and Oceania.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Two, the functional component of the Indo-Pacific campaign includes operational arms across all domains, space, air, maritime, land, cyber, with kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities. If you look at a live map of the Indo-Pacific like a football field, and General Sklenka does this each and every day, you would recognize that offense, defense, special teams and trick plays are still in action every day. You would recognize that time, distance, space, forces, factors, interior and exterior lines of operations still matter, and both Ty and Mark touched on that. You would recognize that a complex combination of the geography and the geometry must be understood, and that force still equals mass times acceleration.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Mass is our military capabilities, and how we have arrayed them differently from World War II, postured and dispersed across the theater for leverage. Speed still matters, it's essential, there is much more that is concealed. We can't get into that today. Lastly, the geopolitical component is linked to our treaty obligations to South Korea, to Japan, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand, and collaborative and cooperative security frameworks that are being developed and strengthened right now with others tied specifically to advance in Indo-Pacific campaign and a free and open Indo-Pacific and international order.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

A few final thoughts: in so many respects, Guam is a linchpin, a cornerstone, and a crown jewel within the Indo-Pacific campaign. Guam must be defended, no more Pearl Harbors; here are three points to consider. One, the Indo-Pacific campaign is incomplete and at risk without comprehensive missile defense on Guam. Two, the broader theater strategic design is at risk if we cannot defend Guam. Three, recognizing that everything is and must be connected to theater strategic design, it is impossible to achieve effective and efficient integrated deterrence and defense without the defense of Guam, and at a much higher level, without Guam being fully integrated within a new grand strategic design and global missile defense architecture, you won't have that come to the level that we are trying to develop in terms of true grand strategic design.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

80 years later, are we ready to defend the Pacific for the aggregated threats of Russia, China, and North Korea? I think we have quite a bit of work to do. Again, thank you, Riki and the team for the opportunity. I know that General Sklenka will give us some more insights on the theater strategic design and beyond that.

Mr. Riki Ellison:



Thanks, Joaquin, that was great. I appreciate, we all appreciate the strategic high view of the defense of the Pacific. Ladies and gentlemen, we have the great honor to have the deputy commander of INDOPACOM, Lieutenant General Steve Sklenka with us today. He's been a great supporter of this cause for the defense of the Pacific, he's been out front. He has just gotten the job in August of this year, and he's a Marine, so it's great to see that. Steve, I'm going to pass it over [inaudible 00:32:39].

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Hey Riki, thanks. Hopefully you guys can hear me, and it is fantastic to be talking to and bat clean up with good friends like Ty and Kean and Mark, it was great to hear from you. For what it's worth, you're still a force to be reckoned with out here, man. I've got to tell you, I really enjoyed that UFC discussion that we had in October, [crosstalk 00:33:09] the students there really had some phenomenal questions that had me tossing around ideas through my head. As you said, I just got the DCOM gig this past August, but the previous two years, I had the incredibly challenging task of coming in behind Kean as the J5 out here and the director of strategy.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

I've been able to participate now, and today was my third onsite Pearl Harbor commemoration ceremony. I've got to tell you, Kean mentioned it earlier, this is really a tremendously important day not only out here specifically, but for our nation as a whole. It was 80 years ago today that the attacks on Pearl Harbor occurred, I just maybe 45 minutes ago just came back from [Pkeob 00:34:05] here in an incredible ceremony that, again, commemorated that really pivotal day in our nation, and really in the global history when you think about it.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

You think about it, 80 years ago and three hours, we heard that phrase, "Air raid, Pearl Harbor, this is not a drill." If the hair on the back of your neck doesn't stand up when you hear those words, "Air raid, Pearl Harbor, this is not a drill," then you need to check your pulse, because that one phrase set into motion a series of events that saw us, whether we wanted to be or not, pulled into the role of global leader. As we were sitting there at Pkeob here, those who have been here, I think everyone on the line that spoke have been there, you look right across at the USS Arizona memorial, which as we know, incurred 1,177 men killed and still represents the single greatest loss of life at sea in the United States Navy history.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

To say it was humbling to be sitting there and thinking about not only the challenges of that day but also the challenges facing us in the future and how those two challenges are interlinked, it's just really humbling, again, it's the best apt description. Our country was pulled into not only a decisive global war, but it really was pulled, I believe, into a decisive global leadership role. By the time World War II ended, the United States, we were not only just a global leader, we were the global leader. That's a title we didn't necessarily ask for, we didn't go looking for it, but it's one the world needed us to have. Despite all the sniping that we may hear on the sidelines, it's a role that I am absolutely convinced the world still not only wants us to have, but needs us to have as well.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Nowhere is that leadership role more needed than, I believe, out in this region, for a number of reasons. We know that the Indo-Pacific region is essential to the world's economy and the global security, and

our nation has been truly instrumental in ensuring the peace, prosperity, security, and stability of this region for the past 75 years. We've been doing it alongside of our allies and partners as well, which is I think an important point to remember. The region, and for that matter, the entire world, I think it recognizes how crucial stability out here is. It's what has enabled the extraordinary economic and financial development of well over half the globe's populace in this AOR.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Sustaining that peace and stability has become an expectation, even a demand of our country from other nations of the world. We have accepted that responsibility with equal parts dedication, focus, and humility, because we recognize the devastation that would occur if peace and stability were to give way to conflict. Our mission out here at US IndoPaCom, I don't need to remind folks, is to apply that military arm of national power, and to do so to sustain the peace and stability, and if necessary, to fight and to win. We do that by applying, as the secretary of defense terms now, integrated deterrence, which is all the elements of national power across all domains and the entire spectrum of conflict, and using the full breadth and depth of our nation's capabilities and capacities critically alongside those of our allies and partners, employing those forces, postured correctly and postured in a way to credibly deter, and in the event of deterrence failure, as I said, to prevail in a fight.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Because it doesn't do us any good to be out here looking good, we've got to be able to fight and we've got to be able to win, that's the expectation that our citizens have for us. It requires both defensive and offensive capabilities that provide competitive advantages against what we believe are the aggregated threats posed by the adversaries. Competition and conflict is going to occur across multiple domains, we know that, it's already happening now across multiple domains, and those aggregated threats continue to evolve and continue to demand our attention. Specifically, and I think I came in right when Mark's comments were going, he probably alluded to this, the hypersonic missile threats, the blurring of the lines between ballistic and non-ballistic missile threats and the rapidly developing adversary capabilities that necessitate a continued development of integrated air missile defense architectures, as well as intercept capability for what we're looking for, is that biggest threat of the hypersonic missile defense.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Out here in this region, the PRC and North Korea, they present the greatest threats from a missile defense perspective, those two nations we know are continually improving their capabilities. Hell, the PRC possesses an intermediate range ballistic missile, that DF-26 intermediate range ballistic missile, which could reach Guam. In fact, the PRC media has referred to this thing as "the Guam killer". Now, as you all know, Guam is United States territory, it's got over 168,000 American citizens. It's a point that we remind people, that America's day begins in Guam every single day.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

PRC possesses another hypersonic missile, the DF-17, it's a medium range ballistic missile, and they're working to perfect that. For us out here, and I think for our nation, Guam represents the region's most critical node for not just command and control, but also logistics and for our power projection, it's key terrain and it enables the success of our operational framework, and its strategic importance just can't be overstated. The department of defense has committed investments of over \$11 billion in military construction projects over the next five years, and providing for the defense of Guam against the pure

evolving threats provides what we believe is strong deterrence and combat credible defense, to ensure that US INDOPACOM can fight from Guam if needed.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Guam is a place where our combat power will aggregate and congregate, and from which it will emanate. From there, we send a powerful strategic message to our allies and our adversaries that the United States is invested in this region, we prioritize the Indo-Pacific. today's missile defense capabilities in Guam are, as we know, only sufficient to protect against yesterday's threats, and Mark is absolutely spot on when he said that iron dome is not the solution, I think the admiral pretty much made that clear in his comments inside defense the other day. To defend Guam against PRC's evolving capabilities, you guys know we require land based persistent 360-degree systems, there's no getting around that.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

The Guam defense system's got to be an architecture that fuses the most capable integrated air missile defense programs of record today, and those that they're developing into the future. Funding the Guam defense system remains our command's top funding priority, it's been our top priority for the last three years, going on four, and the past two successive commanders have gone on the record to state this. They've warned all that'll listen that the threat to Guam will only increase over the next five years. Those aren't idle threats, those are based off of events that we're seeing unfold around us right now. Riki, I'm happy to answer any questions that you and the rest of the team have, and again, it's an honor and a privilege to be here with all of you.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

[crosstalk 00:41:51] That's awesome, thank you for that layout, Steve. I'd like to start off with the first question, on why are we at this point? Where's the urgency coming to get this thing done? For those people that say, "Hey, we're going to be overmatched no matter what, why invest in a defense that we can't have 100% capable? Why in Guam? Why a rapid deployed force? Why haven't we done this? What's holding you, what's challenging you from getting this thing done, to get this base ..." which to me, the most powerful base in the Pacific region, where you've got bases in Korean and bases in Japan that have missile defense at least around them, "Why are we late to the game on this?" That's why I wanted to start with you, Steve, if you could maybe reflect on that.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

That's a really good question. I think that when I think about the other three panelists, they probably have a lot greater insight to that one than I do. I could tell you just what I've seen, I think the biggest challenge has been that the lack of a sense of urgency, it's a perspective issue. We have set the problem as around the latter part of this decade, with 2027 being a pivotal year, 2027 is when Chairman Xi enters likely his fourth term, I doubt very seriously he's going to push that one away. He's going to be good, he's getting up there in age, he's looking for opportunities to cement his legacy. The likelihood of PRC aggression, in my view, is toward the back half of this decade, I don't think, it's not a 2049 issue.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

There are people who I think are, and I think it's wishful thinking to look at the problem from that standpoint, that's a much deeper issue, I don't think that in that case. I actually believe that Chairman Xi is looking at his personal legacy, and in the end, I don't think he wants to be laid to rest next to Mao, I think he wants Mao laid to rest next to him. There's a subtlety there in how I phrased that, which was

deliberate. I think he wants to see himself as the final person who's brought and restored China back to what he views is their rightful place.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

To that end, there's all kinds of second and third-order effects that are associated with that. I believe that for us, Guam represents a significant part of that. The idea that we have to have defense, you've got to remember, when we first identified the requirement for the defense of Guam, hypersonics were nowhere near as evolved or as developed as they are now, so the rapid pace of PRC technological development in the hypersonic realm has also I think expedited the sense of urgency here. I think I've said enough, there's probably others who have other comments that will correct the mistakes that I've made on this point.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Steve, not a correction, I think just augmenting what you added and touched a little bit on what Riki said, I think the first part, you could maybe say that there wasn't a defined architecture up to this point, until recently when MDA, missile defense agency, got that task and they developed the architecture. The answer is now available, so there's no reason to further delay there. The second is, and it touches a little bit on Riki's point, about why defend Guam if it's going to be a pin cushion and subject to saturation attacks? I think that's a misunderstanding. What I mean by of that is, yes, Guam will get attacked, but Steve, you mentioned in your comments the DF-26 is the primary threat to Guam based on the ranges.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Some of the other systems that the PRC has in much greater quantities than the DF-26 are really going to be ranging first island chain and the approaches to the first island chain. Some DF-26s will get out there, and do we want 100% of them to hit their targets, or do we want some lesser fraction of that to hit their targets? If we prefer the latter, then we've got to defend. The second part is that, Steve, you weren't able to hear the initial comments that I offered, but our ability to defend the air approaches to the second island chain is a function of our ability to operate from the second island chain.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

If we can get and hold the key terrain in the airspace over Taiwan and in the Miyako and Luzon Straits, we will impede the PRC's ability launch cruise missile attacks against the second island chain. Make that connection, and I hope all the listeners are, that our ability to keep an H6 bomber from getting in a position to launch is a function of our ability to defend from the second island chain, and hold those lines in the air. Guam can be defended, it won't be perfect, but the idea that it's just a pin cushion and not worth defending is, I think, far misguided. Steve?

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

[crosstalk 00:47:32], that's why I'm glad you're talking here.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Steve, as you saw, it looks very positive that Congress is putting out an architecture to be delivered, as what we've talked about, to defend Guam. From our perspective, is there a hold up? Do we have to have a service take it, or can we enable MDA that's chartered to do ballistic missile defense, hypersonic

defense to lead on this? Because it looks like there could be a delay if we had to wait out and pick a service to lead it, instead of giving it to MDA to lead, to get this thing done as fast as possible.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

I'm laughing because you and I have had this discussion several times. We out here, I don't want to say we don't care, because that projects an ambivalence and isn't true, but our point is, we need somebody to lead this thing, whether it's a service or whether it's MDA. We don't see a reason why MDA couldn't lead the development of this. If it does, MDA is clearly going to need some additional ... Well, maybe not clearly, need some additional authorities, but they may need some additional funding, additional something out there, I don't know. I think Admiral John Hill has been pretty clear about his ability to do this, to take the lead if necessary.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

When I say we're ambivalent about who's leading it, our point is we need something, and we don't care whether it's led by Army, whether it's led by Navy or whether it's led by MDA. What we're saying is we need the decisions to be made, the architecture to be agreed upon, and to move out, because this is the problem, that we don't have the luxury anymore of waiting and analyzing and assessing. We've done all that stuff, we've done all the studies, it's time to move out, get this thing into action. If the best way to do that is to have MDA lead it, then let's figure out a way to give them the opportunity to lead it. I think that's the easiest way I could say it.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Mark, you want to comment on that a little bit?

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Yeah, so my feeling [inaudible 00:50:02] ... Sorry, I went on mute there for a second. My feeling is, there's a point now where we have to disaggregate the decision about who's the lead agency for acquisition and who's the lead agency for operations. We need to get out there now and understand that MDA is going to be the lead agency for an acquisition, they're going to run the architecture. I think they'll listen to the customer, who is [inaudible 00:50:25], the INDOPACOM commander, and deliver the radar he needs, the capabilities he needs. Then the question of who provides the life cycle operation of this, who's going to be the service lead, I think you probably start with the Navy, I know it's Aegis most likely, and Army for the Army [inaudible 00:50:49].

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Over time, we determine if we can transition that to another, maybe somebody like the National Guard or the Army for everything, or I guess in theory, the Navy for everything, I don't think they'll ask to invite them, but I think that this is an absolutely solvable conundrum. I just think we need get CAPE to release the hounds, so to speak, and let MDA do its job. The Congress provided another almost \$100 million in the NDAA, a on top of the 117 or 18 or so that were already set aside by the administration, so I think that'll get MDA jumpstarted. It would've been nice if they had added \$200 million, but beggars can't be choosers at this point, so we need to get that money and get moving.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks, Mark. Joaquin, does missile defense in Guam change the integrated deterrent of China, or is it going to accelerate an arms race? Can you talk to that a little bit? There are people that think doing this is destabilizing rather than stabilizing.

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Mr. Riki Ellison:

... is destabilizing rather than stabilizing. And how would you reflect that?

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

And absolutely. Thank you, Riki, for the opportunity. It was mentioned before [inaudible 00:52:13] captured it clearly and succinctly how we thought of Hawaii at the time just before December 7, 1941, US territory, [inaudible 00:52:23] capabilities there. On Guam, we have strategic capabilities all the way down to tactical capabilities. It really is that [inaudible 00:52:36] the deterrence across the Indo-Pacific campaign. As I said in my remarks, [inaudible 00:52:41] defended. It is a core component not only the Indo-Pacific campaign, but a core component of a grand strategy that America is developing not only for the Indo-Pacific theater but for globally. What we want to do is often a discussion, you rightly brought it forward, about the difference between provocation and deterrence. Provocation and deterrence. No matter that discussion, we have an absolute obligation to defend the United States of America and our territories. And that's the core principle. That's the highest principle that we must adhere to.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

And the others are right. Speed matters. Develop the architecture and ensure that it is joint compatible and capabilities associated with the architecture is something that will endure over time, decades ahead. Riki, to that point, there were a number of questions that came in and they range from the macro strategic to the tactical, but I think this one touches on your particular question to me. And I'll read it and then maybe offer it to the audience. The question is, "What is the greatest challenge in employing joint forces in the Indo-Pacific region? And how can that challenge, if there are challenges, be mitigated with synergy utilizing joint capabilities across all domains?"

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

I'd like to add to that question since... And General Sklenka might be able to address this, a few of the joint successes, and what we're really talking about certainly with joint operation is the potential shifting certainly in the missile defense arena of roles and responsibilities and how that might look like as we build it now for an enduring architecture that's going to be what we need for the decades ahead. And maybe offer this up for General Sklenka to kind of tee up the discussion. Greatest challenge to employing joint forces, maybe a few successes and then what he's seeing in terms of potential shifting of roles and responsibilities.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

If General Sklenka dropped off, I don't know. Mark, you can tackle this.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Go ahead and repeat that question then. I thought General Sklenka was taking it.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Yeah. No worries. "What is the greatest challenge in employing joint for in the Indo-Pacific? And how can those challenges be mitigated synergy utilizing joint capabilities across multiple domains?" Maybe some successes in the joint world. Mark, you were masterful at bringing the component capabilities together with operational designs that made sense. And then any indications of shifting goals and responsibilities that we may be seeing that could be advanced for missile defense out into the future.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Yeah. So first, I want to make clear that when I compare obviously the interoperability of our own forces versus, say, us with an ally, even a good ally like Japan or the UK or something like that, it's phenomenal. We have superb interoperability. But we are developing more and more sensors and shooters and systems that have to be brought together in a common site picture and a common decision making framework so that a commander can communicate his or her intent directly to those units in a timely manner that allows us to then get the rounds on target and then do an assessment of that event and then restart the planning process again. I mean, I just described the framework of JADC2.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

And so to me, success in developing JADC2, which I think all three services, Naval, air and ground, have to be fully committed to this, I hope the Department of Defense chooses a good model for leadership in that. And we have not had great success in previous kind of combined C2 developments and C2 networking communication developments, but I'm hoping that we end up with something that's probably like a joint office, like we have for the J-35. I think initially led by an Air Force officer to get it started, but then rotating between the services is the right model, and with each service pushing aggressively to make sure their systems are integrated. We know how to integrate sensor to shooter information in a phenomenal way. I mean, if you look at the performance in the Navy Cooperative Engagement Capability, or CEC, across the joint force with the data links that we're able to develop between the F-35s, I have a comfortable feeling that the services can do this intraservice and interservice and bring this together.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

But JADC2'S one of those things that really needs to come together. It needs to come together in the next two to three years. The only country that's going to know it's working faster than the United States is China. They'll be studying this closely. And so I think this really is one of those most important things to taking joint warfare from where we've all seen and operate in kind of mid and low level warfare throughout the Middle East to the kind of high-end fight we're going to have to have. We're going to have to have this both disaggregated and comprehensive Command and Control network operating in the Pacific.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Yeah. That's absolutely right. Ty, do you want to talk a little bit about JADC2? And I would even add that based on a couple other questions, folks are interested in, Mark touched on it, the types of capabilities and capacities that we need across the joint force and the investments now. And it would add to Command and Control the war fighting functions, Command and Control logistics, fires, force protection, those types of things, the investments that are required, but also the introduction of new technologies like artificial intelligence. Ty, I think the Air Force in some respects is ahead of most other services in Air Maritime Command and Control, but also some of the things that Mark brought out in terms of JADC2.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay. Thanks, Joaquin. And pause for just a sec. Steve, are you still out there? We see your icon and it's flashing every once in a while like you're trying to talk or you... We give one more voice check to see if [inaudible 00:59:49].

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Yeah. I actually am. I apologize. I'm on just a regular phone and I've been on mute. I'm being pulled in a couple different directions right now, but I'm listening in.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay, Steve. Well, I'll start talking, but if there's anything that you want to add and jump in, please do so. Joaquin, before... And I agree with you. I mean, the processes for Command and Control that have been built and supported the theater JFCC over the years have proven themselves in major conventional fights, as well as lower level activities that we've been doing, particularly in [inaudible 01:00:26] for the past 20 years. But actually this is one where I want to step back a little bit and kind of talk geo strategic for a sec, because the answer to the question that was posed by multiple members out there in the audience, I think the answer is making sure that there's not the aura of invincibility or inevitability associated with the PRC.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

We had to be really careful about that, because there have been times I would argue, in the last five years or so where there's almost been a trend moving in that direction. Now, whether it's either been PRC decisions and activities that have actually worked against them and we could go through a list of several of those or activities that we've done. And that's what I want to focus on particularly as it applies to INDOPACOM is our presence, our posture in the theater and then the accumulated activities that we are doing at various key spots within the theater and with various key allies. We have got to continue doing those and we've got to do that even if budgets and resources are getting tightening. And I think right now each one of the services is feeling the pinch, definitely the Air Force and the Navy. I think the Army's feeling that as well.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

And so the response to that can't be a, "Hey. We've got to pull back everywhere in the world. And so INDOPACOM and the Pacific, you're going to take your share as well." That is exactly the wrong signal that we need to be sending in the theater. That's the exact signal that others will key on and go, "Look. The PRC's right. They're pulling back. They're trying to be more efficient." And right now we just absolutely have to be effective. And effective equates to piercing that idea that the PRC inevitably will be able to prevail in a straits conflict or the PRC inevitably will be able to convince everybody that the South China Sea is actually historically PRC territory, when it's not and we all know that. So at that level, I think that it's across the dime challenge, but it is a particular joint challenge to maintain those activities.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

To get back briefly to your point there on AI, absolutely, Joaquin, you nailed it. There are opportunities at each phase of our joint war fighting where we will be able to inject parts of AI into it and whether it's closing kill chains faster or simply understanding our logistics and supply chains better so that we can either defend them better or optimize them where we've got to get AI into the system. And the Air



Force is doing parts of that. I've seen points of light. But we got a long way to go on that one as well. So pause there and then hand it back to you. And maybe Steve's got [inaudible 01:03:10].

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Hey, Ty. I do want to jump in with a couple things. One, when I travel around the region, one of the things I hear off on the sides from the PRC is you'll hear them talk about how keep Asia for Asians and the United States has no place here. I remind them "Look. We're freaking Pacific nation just like they are." This is our neighborhood. We just live on the east side. And there's significant historical life blood that the United States has in connection to the Pacific theater. And your point about how in the age of tightening budgets and all that it's going to cause us, and by us, I'm talking the nation, to make some very harsh decisions. I mean, I can't remember who said it once, but said, "Okay. We've run out of money. Now it's time to think."

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

And so we're coming up on the development of the national defense strategy and then after that, the national military strategy. And one of the points that we keep trying to convey out here to those who have the pen for those documents is that fundamental aspect of strategy, at least in my view, is a requirement to acknowledge and understand we've got limited resources. Even with the 714 or \$744 billion defense budget, we have limited resources to do all the things we want to do. So we have to understand and acknowledge we have those limited resources, and then we array, align and assign those limited resources most effectively against the ends that have been prioritized by our national leadership. What this requires in my view is a balance between both risk assessment and strategic discipline when determining whether a crisis meets a national threshold for response in terms of threats to our peace, prosperity, security and stability.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

The reason I say it like that is we can sometimes become beholden to the crisis of the day and live in the J33 world and the current ops world at the expense of really planning and looking forward into how you can best develop a truly impactful strategy that will enable you to harness the best that you've got in terms of capabilities within the country. And I'm not necessarily talking about the military aspects of it. We are woefully under-invested from our government standpoint in research and development. We clearly need to put greater investments into those fields, into the STEM fields. And it's to our peril that we continue to ignore those.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

And when you try to apply and peanut butter spread our resources, our limited resources, across every theater and treat every theater not necessarily equally, but even proportionally, I think you run into a problem where you de-emphasize too much. And so the old Sun Tzu phrase of trying to be strong everywhere makes you weak everywhere is [inaudible 01:06:41] falling into that trap. So the idea, for example, and I'll use... I'm not necessarily picking on the European command, but when you think about the two big threats that we've got out there, Russia and China, you've got United States and NATO, which is 30+ other nations out there. Taking away the United States, those 30+ nations of NATO in the aggregate spend four times the amount on their conventional military than the Russians do on theirs. So they're a capable force, maybe not individually, but bound together, they do have that capability.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

My point here is when the Russians start amassing on the border of Ukraine or when they start coming down the Baltics, there are other options out there besides the United States. When the PLA starts doing that swim across the strait, there aren't a whole lot of alternatives to us out here that can bow up against the PLA. Two of our strongest capable militaries out there, I'm talking about Japan Self-Defense Force and Australia, are still capacity and capability wise not even close to being able to, on their own, go up against the PLA. So I'm my point here in this is that when you're looking at arraying US forces where they will have the most strategic impact, the relative combat power needs to include not just what the United States offers, but also the regional allies and partners with whom we would be aligned. Over.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Let me jump in. I agree completely with what Steve was saying on. I would comment that for Europe to actually stand up to Russia, they'd have to spend four times the spending on the right things. I'm not 100% sure they achieve that if problem start. But I want to comment on the idea that... We have to be careful. First, the good news, Steve, you may not see in MDA yet. They got the extra 25 billion. And so it's an even higher number now for the start point or it's the higher of your numbers that you mentioned. So I think they're going to settle in the 740 range for the non-energy portions of the DoD budget.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

But Steve's exactly right. Smart people could write a defense budget for \$600 billion that handles China and stupid people could write a \$900 billion defense budget that doesn't handle China. So what you have to do is you have to spend the money wisely. And part of spending the money wisely is prioritizing your threat. And we've heard now consistently for about two and a half years that China is the principle threat, and that it's both the long-term threat and now a growing short-term challenge that we have to deal with both in Taiwan and the East China Sea. And I don't know that we've seen the big ship of CAPE and the rest of DOD infrastructure really and the services spend properly to take advantage of that. And until we see that the number one, number two, number three, priorities from each service is getting at that challenge, I think I'm not ready to say that we're spending that peanut butter spread, that Steve talked about, appropriately.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

So we really do have to hold CAPE to the task. The Pacific Deterrence Initiative is a perfect example of this, where the PACOM commander has laid out 27 billion worth of China specific spending over five years. Some of which was already accounted for in service budgets, but a lot of which wasn't. And the real question is when the commander on the front-line identifies things not in service budgets that need to be moved in service budgets over a two, three, five year timeframe, do the services adjust? Or do they hand wave that, "Ah, either we know smarter than the Pacific commander how to fight in the Pacific," or, "He doesn't understand our whammy dime thing. We'll do what he was asking for, even though his assessment was it won't."?

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

And until we get to the point where the services are responsive to the INDOPACOM commander's requests, specifically on the PDI, but more generally on all his integrated priority list requests, we are not going to be spreading that peanut butter wisely. So a really big challenge in front of us that really sit

in Washington with the service eights, with CAPE and with the OSD SPC, Strategy, Plans and Capabilities, office.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

If I could jump in and just acknowledge, one, the ends, ways and means discussion that General Sklenka so brilliantly brought out, and we're at that point now, and, two, recognizing the comments of Mark, we're very fortunate to have general C.Q. Brown as the chief of the Air Force and certainly General David Berger as the Commandant of the Marine Corps, because they were both component commanders in INDOPACOM. And we're starting to see some of the changes that they're making and as quickly as they can in terms of internal servers adjustments. For the Marine Corps, certainly the Future Force Design recognized that we weren't postured after 20 years of fighting a low-end conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and that principally our aviation capability in terms of F-35 and aviation Command and Control [inaudible 01:12:29] still part of the crown jewel of the [inaudible 01:12:32].

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

But General Berger, the Commandant, is really looking at our forces that are already within the first and second island chain, and the new concept of stand in forces, Marine Corps rightfully so believes that it can do some really unique, exotic and exquisite things within the first and second island chain with speed, decision making with the right Command and Control, the right fires, logistics, light logistics with our allies and partners, force protection measures, reconnaissance, counter-reconnaissance. There is a fever in the United States Marine Corps right now in terms of changing the ways within which we fight, but we're very mindful of doing it in concert with the joint force, and that will always be our strength. But to Mark's point in terms of making the right investments for the right reasons, theater strategic design is still the art and science of being ready and postured to fight tonight or in the Marine Corps's case remain the crisis response force that's amphibious in character and nature.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

The other question that just came in with regard to [inaudible 01:13:45] back to... Anybody wants to answer it, but General Sklenka mentioned this. We all know that J8 within INDOPACOM really, really out front in terms of matching new designs to capabilities that are out there now, future capabilities and really presenting them to the JROC in a way that would make sense. And there's always tension there with service needs and wants and perspectives and combatant commanders. But in terms of what capabilities and capacities that we can invest in right now and what are the top priorities, I think it's been articulated across INDOPACOM commanders, but there are some unique things that if we don't invest now in now that will always be behind this curb, and it does include all domains, the space domain, undersea domain. Can't rest on our laurels and being ahead of the threat in any one particular domain, because we've got to fight across all domains.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

So General Sklenka, just maybe perhaps the current thinking, top line thinking on the types of capabilities that INDOPACOM would like to see the Department of Defense and the services invest in right now. I think that would kind of fill in some of the comments that were made by Ty and mark. Certainly.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Yeah. Well look, I'm going to leave it to just our top three, which is, number one, we've been talking about this and you guys have the idea of having a persistent 360 degree defense of US territory is an absolute requirement. It's a now requirement. Another one is the mission partner environment. And I think Ty was talking about JADC2. And the way I look at MPE is it's not so much about the technological advancements and investments that are made in that. It's what MPE is designed to do, which is enable quick sharing and co-use of networks with allies and partners. We're able to have gates or methods of controlling how the information is flowing, but it enables us to share classified information with allies and partners, key allies and partners, throughout the region.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

This is something that it's much more than just like a centric Japan or something along those lines. It prevents swivel chair data, switching hard drives in order to be able to get or change classifications. And it looks like we're going to get that fully funded again at least in what we've been told from CAPE. And then the third one is PMTEC, which is essentially... PMTEC, P-M-T-E-C. It's the acronym. I forgot what the acronym is. I'll look that up. But it's essentially the networking of all of our training ranges in this theater that enable us to keep the joint force in the theater, not moving it off the pen, for example, to go conduct training necessarily or at least out of the theater to go conduct training and also brings our allies and partners into also work the combined force.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

Again, when I'm talking about these investments, please note that there are technological aspects to it, but the technological aspects are merely the means to the ultimate end, which is strengthening the joint force in this theater and keeping the joint and ultimately the combined force in this theater and bringing in... We can talk in all these strategic documents about how important allies and partners are. I got to tell you. MPE and PMTEC are... I think that's where... We're really putting our money where our mouth is when we're emphasizing those overall-

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LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

...those overall capabilities that bring in allies and partners, make them part of the equation and enable us to conduct exercises where we're networking, and not just live fire exercises, but also virtual training, everywhere from the ranges in Alaska to the stuff that we're doing down in Australia and all points in between. And if you're sensing that the mission partner environment that I was talking about, that MPE would have a connection with PMTEC, you're absolutely right. The two of them have a mutually reinforcing effect on each other. Over.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

See, I just [inaudible 01:18:49] the peanut butter on the missile defense issue of Guam spread so far thin and the dysfunctionality and inefficiency of roles and responsibility for missile defense on Guam, and I know we can move MDA to do the thing as fast as possible, but eventually it has to be operated by the right service. And is this US Homeland? Is this national guard position here? And what's the Command and Control? Because the Command and Control for [inaudible 01:19:18] pistol defense and hypersonic is what MDA does, but cruise missile defense has got to be the Air Force. And the [inaudible 01:19:26] of the airspace is outstanding. These conflicts that we have to be resolved before that product gets put out on the field. And what is the C2 for specifically this solution that we're going to get?

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So we get MDA so far ahead, like we do with GMD, no service is going to want to touch it, then all of a sudden MDA's going to have to man and operate this, not where you want to go, and you got to start changing the roles and responsibilities of integrated air missile defense that goes back to 1948. We've got to start addressing that. I think Guam shows that problem the most. And how do we through that? How do we lead through that? Is that the administration to be able to say, "Hey. This is what we're going to do. This is who's got this on it."? I mean, you know it. I think we all understand we've got Navy on the ground. We've got Army not there.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So we got to figure this thing out [inaudible 01:20:23]. We can't afford it. We can't move this. And I think the offense, defense integration has got to be part of this. MDA does not do offense. So this architecture and this integrated deterrence on Guam to be able to change the game a little bit, to change their calculus, has got to be everything in there. And where does this go? So we got to get this right to be able to move of it across the theater or across other theater.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Well, Riki, I think we hit either directly or tangentially a lot of the questions that were coming in, and this idea of roles and responsibilities and the opportunity to get it right now with the vision towards the future. And it goes right to the heart of the ends, ways, means, discussion.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

And you can have the best equipment, the best capabilities and the best technologies in the world, but if they're not used with operational art, they're not in the right position, the processes associated with decision making or the execution of those capabilities across all domains are slow and cumbersome, or you have the wrong force with some good capabilities applied against a threat that they're not really designed to deal with, all of these challenges, as you mentioned, within the ecosystem of roles and responsibilities and the synergy that's required from grand strategic designs with a global footprint all the way down to the Indo-Pacific theater, the most consequential theater on the planet, and then the service's application of the types of things that they're trying to acquire with the right operational designs and their current service roles and responsibility is daunting, but we've got to get that right if you're going to be able to execute a theater strategic design consistent with the grand strategic design over time to beat the aggregated threats that are [inaudible 01:22:33] against America.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

And you covered it beautifully. Over to you, Riki, because these comments that were coming in basically were covered by the answers given by Ty and Mark and certainly general Sklenka nailed it.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So you think that the Guam, is there a basis that we get it right in Guam that's going to be able to move that architecture to other places around the world if we get this right. And it sounds like to get this right is to get the C2 right first and then work its way down. But I-

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Well, I mean on that particular point, I think there's a distinction to be made between Mark's term is used, life cycle sustainment or whoever's going to operate and sustain a given capability. And I think for the defense of Guam, it doesn't necessarily have to be one particular service that's doing all of the capabilities. There are approaches where the national guard presents some of that capability. Maybe some of it in the interim or even long-term is presented by the US Navy. All those decisions still need to be made, but that is, I think, a discussion that is related to but still distinct from Command and Control. My point on Command and Control is that we do have a model. It's existing joint doctrine where the theater JFCC is also dual-hatted as the area air defense commander.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

And so as that area defense commander for the theater, so that's a role that Gen Wilsbach, for example, plays all four and executes on behalf of Admiral Aquilino. He's responsible for the whole theater. This fight though in terms of area air defense will probably be broken down into three kind of areas. You first island chain in kind of Japan, second island chain in central Pacific, and then there's probably a area air defense fight that's going to occur in the south Pacific and Australia. So they do that through a construct with regional air defense commanders. They have [inaudible 01:24:32] that support them. And so the question will be is that construct, would that also work for the Guam defense system and defense of the second island chain? If it is, I would commend us to stick with that doctrinal approach and make sure that we're creating the systems to support it. We don't have to start with the discussion of whole cloth new. We should try to work it into the existing system. That would be my thought on that.

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

And I agree. And I would say, and I said this in remark, probably mentioned Guam at least 25 times, but you could argue that the Indo-Pacific theater, because of the high-end threats and the aggregation of all three of the threats that we're facing as a country out there, is the most complicated arena and theater within which to execute integrated deterrents and defense and to fight. Some would argue that if you get it right across the Indo-Pacific theater and for the missionary of missile defense on Guam, that architecture and those designs could apply globally. And I think that's a good place to start, Riki, as you're alluding to, Guam for missile defense architecture, and as Ty mentioned, and Mark certainly addressed and Gen Sklenka, the applications across the Indo-Pacific theater are relevant to the rest of the globe in terms of grand strategic design for the military component.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

And one of the inefficiencies we have in Guam is that we're dependent on US Aegis BMD ships that have to be doing picket duty in front of Guam. And so yes, there is assets right now that can relieve those ships. There is VLS with SM-3 block IIA that can be put on the ground right now to relieve that amount of resources that can be better used than what they are today. And these are the decisions that from a taxpayer position, why are we not doing this? And why is there such a hold on getting that simple architecture in place to relieve those ships? And right now, MDA is the hypersonic defense capability with SM-6. And course, they need VLS on the thing too. So why aren't we... I don't understand how come it's taken so long to get this thing done to at least relieve some of the pressure and have some of the stuff in place quickly.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Yeah. It's time.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Okay.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

All right. It looks like General Sklenka is either off net or he got pulled in another direction. I'm sure he would agree with you, Riki, on that one.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Yeah. So I mean, that's where you go. And as Ty said, the cruise missile threat's not as daunting, I don't think, as with the basket as the hypersonic and the BMD threat to Guam.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Well, it is if we don't stop it. But there's a way to stop it. And that way to stop it requires us to be able to hold the combat air patrols over Taiwan and over those two key straits. And to do that, you got to generate air power. And that means have to be able to [inaudible 01:28:02] the second island.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Right. And you're going to have to Guam as [inaudible 01:28:05].

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Yep. Yep.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Well, good. All right. Any more questions out there, Joaquin, from the public? Are you good?

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

No, Riki. They came in and I think we've captured it with our comments and just kind of hit them. As soon as we were hitting them, I'm just tacking them off. So great audience and a great discussion.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Let's send around the room and have your closing remarks. If you'd like to go first, Joaquin, [crosstalk 01:28:36]-

MajGen (Ret) Joaquin Malavet:

Not just as always thank you very much for the opportunity. I think the past is prologue, I've mentioned this before, in terms of thinking about the threat in terms of a historical lens. Some would argue that we're closer to 1939 than 2049. But the key indicator is to really pay attention and recognize the threats first and foremost. I think the conversation covered those lanes. Again, we must recognize the service and sacrifice of our World War II generation who built America, built the international order. It's now our turn to do our level best to develop the types of grand strategies and the military strategies that will guarantee the peace and security and free and open Indo-Pacific and the adherence to the international rules, norms and laws out to the decades ahead. And the generations that will come after us are looking for us to think deeply about it and to execute very quickly. Thank you, Riki.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks, Joaquin. Mark? Just closing remarks.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

Yeah. So I want to pick up on something Ty earlier, which is it is, and which I reiterated, which is that we absolutely need to not delay any longer. A one year delay in a pursuing acquisition is more than a one year delay in fielding. All of us experience that in our military careers. We don't need to experience it again here. When we saw the threat from Russia after Crimea, the EDI got off the ground rapidly, was fully funded and was doing its job within two years. So if you go back three years ago to when we saw this problem, put out the first formal PDI, probably the fifth or sixth year of actual PDIs, we're already a year behind getting to serious money being dedicated to Pacific specific challenges. And another year's delay would really be consequential in a bad way.

RADM (Ret) Mark Montgomery:

So we need to get this done. We need Cape to step out and designate MDA as the lead agent. And then MDA needs to get about the work of doing what the INDOPACOM commanders asked for. And I think that's going to be a high discrimination radar, about 36 dB or more that can help us against ballistic, cruise, and as General Sklenka properly pointed out, hypersonic threats going forward. Action is required now.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks, Mark. Ty?

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So to tie those two thoughts together, one from Joaquin and Mark's point there, so 80 years ago, okay, we were punched hard and it was in Hawaii. It was Hickham Field. It was Pearl Harbor. It was other locations all across Oahu, but it was also all across the Pacific, I mean, naval bases in the Philippines, airfields in the Philippines, elsewhere where we were present in the theater. The Empire of Japan hit hard and they hit fast. Okay. And then Americans and allies that were working with us, some of them died, but the rest of them got up and we got back after it. And the legacy that Joaquin has mentioned several times, I mean, we think about that and we honor it today about how the post-World War II was... The world structure was set by those Americans and others that fought.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So on a day like today, 80 years later, what's the best way to honor that? It gets to Mark's point. Let's make a decision. Let's move out and act on something that is so critical to make sure that what they had to fight through doesn't happen again. And so I fully echo and we're all in agreement on this. Let's get the decision made, Cape, whoever it is in OSD that needs to do it. Congress is clearly acting on this. That's encouraging, but there's more things that need to be done. Let's honor those that went through December 7th, 1941 with a decision very soon on getting this done.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thank you. Thanks. Thanks, Ty. Steve?

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:



Yeah. First of all, PMTEC, Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Experimenting Capability. I've forgotten that acronym. I always messed that one up, but I want to sure I clear that one. Two points I want to bring up. One is Marcus is on target with his advocacy for a sense of urgency. I do believe that we have gotten some traction in that sense of urgency. Now, I haven't quite seen fully the video matching the audio yet, but the audio's pretty strong at this point. And I'm positive that the video's going to have to start matching it, because one of the things we have out there are testimony season. And commander's going to have to testify in front of Congress about and answer some questions from some Congressmen. They're going to have some questions that are similar to some of the questions that we've had today.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

And as we know, those questions can be pretty probing. And if the video does not match that audio, we're going to be asked about why it doesn't. We're going to be asked for our honest appraisal of that. And I think that that's... That's not trying to pick a fight with any particular organization, but I think folks are understanding that a defense department that is united clearly is a stronger defense department. And I'm telling you, I really just see a scent of a desire within the building to really make sure that we all have a unified approach and people... Admiral Aquilino's message about being postured appropriately in the theater to deter and then in the event of potential failure of deterrence to be in a position to win has resonated strongly.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

These are not novel concepts though. Just for whatever reason, they seem to be resonating with greater degree these days. So I'm really hopeful that I think we're turning in a good direction and that people are starting to see that the threat is not something out there as Quin said in 2049. It's closer. We're closer today to kind of a 1939 framework. People are seeing it that it's the end of this decade is... Not by the end of this decade, what I'm saying is between now and the end of this decade is probably some of our most strategically challenging periods that we're going to have with our primary adversary.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

And then I'm going to close it with this last thing is we have talked about this being the 80th anniversary of the attacks at Pearl Harbor. In my view, the best book ever written about that whole event is *At Dawn we Slept*. It's long, but it is absolutely fantastic in its treatment and the detail of not only the United States' side of it, but also the Japanese. And when you read that book, you cannot help but see some significant parallels between what was going on between, say, August of 1940 and November or December of 1941 and what's going on now. Some of it is pretty eerie when you're reading through it. Now I'm not saying that history's going to repeat, but it's... What is it? Mark Twain said it doesn't repeat but it sure as hell rhymes. And I think he's right about that. And learning from those lessons of history will help us do the things that Mark and Ty and Quin been saying, which is find a solution now.

LtGen Stephen Sklenka:

And Riki, you've been kind of like the main band leader on that one throughout this conversation is recognize the importance of acting now, because the threats are there and if you [inaudible 01:37:04] can down the road, the enemy doesn't care what our acquisition cycle is. Actually sometimes they look at it and salivate, I think, but our inability to come up with solutions is not their problem. If anything, it's their opportunity and they know it. So I am hopeful though that we're going in a good place. And I think that this next iteration of PDI is going to hopefully showcase that. Thanks, everybody. Out.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks. Thanks, Steve. Gentlemen, as Steve started that conversation of how we were propelled into world leadership by what happened 80 years ago, our resilience was able to lead the world from that experience. And I think this is also an experience that's going to create that same cauldron of leadership with our country to compete and win against China. And I'm with you that there is some unifying going on here with this threat. The public's behind it. Congress is behind it. We've seen our administration, as Steve pointed out. That [inaudible 01:38:20] integrated deterrent is there. It's right on the edge here. We've got good movement with Congress to get this thing first step in play, but we have to... It's all about action. It's all about action right now.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

It's not delaying, not studies, not waiting for the next thing and the best thing. It is to get movement on ground and make the decision to defend Guam. Make the decision to defend it and then defend it with what you've got in place today. And you can evolve that to whatever system you want, but make that decision to stand up and have an integrated deterrent against China, have them rethink and have them think that hitting Guam is like hitting the 50 United States. They won't do it. We got to do that. We got to put the money in. We got to put the defense in. So I think the conversation we had today opened up a lot of perspectives that normal people would not get. So thank you for articulating these different perspectives that do appeal to the public that are listening to this and are going to help influence and move forward the urgency of getting the defense in.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

And if they don't score guys, they don't win. It's all about that. We are strong on defense. You can't have none. You cannot have none to play in the game. You got to have some. So thanks. It was great to have all you guys here and appreciate the time and effort to make it important enough to present today. So thank you very much. Good night. (silence).

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:40:23]