

Mr. Riki Ellison:

(Silence) Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, from a rainy day here on the Potomac River in Washington, DC. I'm Riki Ellison. I'm the founder and chairman of the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance. I've been advocating for Missile Defense since 1980, I think 40 years, and created the company or advocacy group in 2002 after the ABM Treaty was let go to move on missile defense. And our sole mission is the deployment, evolution of missile defense and the development of it, because we believe it makes the world and our nation safer. We are seeing that right now in the first month of this year.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

This is about a very historic event, an event that probably hasn't been picked up the way it should be. But this is a celebration of recognition of the THAAD system and its first combat intercept that happened two Fridays ago in the UAE by the UAE Air Force, as they manned that system and hit that missile with that system.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Lot of respect and gratitude to the UAE for doing that at that feat. I think we have a lot of respect, and we'll shout out to Goui, the AFCENT Commander, Colonel Dave Stewart of the 32nd double MDC, and the 144 Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall. So what a historic event. And we're here today to talk about the implications of this historic capability. I've been involved a little bit with THAAD, THAAD's had a resilient story. It struggled when it first came out in the nineties, it struggled with test successes, and didn't have any for a while. And they had to re-shoot and intercept. And from then on, they were undefeated in their test intercepts against live targets. So good that president Obama, and Secretary Gates, put that system on 2009 on the state of Hawaii, to defend Hawaii against alarm range ballistic missile threat from North Korea.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

That's an amazing position of credibility for that system. And then a couple years later, we deployed it to Guam, to defend Guam from North Korea. And that was also another tremendous statement of the system. And then two years later, or so, we put it in Korea. And that system in Korea right now is phenomenal. It's this integrated with our Patriot capability, MSC capability, and it is keeping peace in that region. The system has been deployed, and we have some of our guys here in Israel. In 2019, it's been deployed in Romania, of all places. It's been deployed in Saudi Arabia. And we have seven THAAD batteries. This country has seven THAAD batteries, and we have two of them deployed forward, and we have five of them right here in the United States. So remarkable capability. And from my perspective, it's a linebacker capability.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

It fills the gap, it hits the gap. And what it does, in and above space, it hits the seam below Aegis BMD that hits up in upper space, and it also hits below in the lower atmosphere above Patriot. So it fills that gap there, it's mobile. It can be placed anywhere in the world. I think you've seen it save lives. It protected 1.5 million people two Mondays ago, in Abu Dhabi. That's phenomenal. And it's able to shoot further obviously than the Patriot. So it gives you more range. It's able to filter out debris and stuff as it goes through the space layer, and pick up what's left underneath that. And it's coordinated with the other capabilities that we have in the system. So today we're going to have a great discussion, I believe, in putting different perspectives on the implications of what THAAD can do, or it's going to go on that. And we're going to have an OSD policy perspective.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

We're going to have the first ever THAAD battery commander, or brigade commander that was there. We're going to have the first commander that put it in Israel, and put it in Romania. We're going to have a commander that's seen its leverage for deterrent in the Pacific and in Europe. So that's where we're going to go today, and we're going to open it up for questions. And we hope you enjoy the discussion. So our first speaker, great friend, fellow board member, John Rood, the former Under Secretary for OSD Policy. And he can give you a great perspective on the thing that we're not talking about is the partnership nations and the foreign military sales aspect of it. But John also, before he was the Under Secretary, was the senior Vice President of Lockheed Martin, was the senior Vice President of Raytheon. Both those companies make the THAAD. Raytheon makes the radar, and Lockheed makes the shooters and the system. So it'll be a great perspective to hear from John. John, the floor is yours. I'm look forward to hearing from you, sir.

Mr. John Rood:

Well, thank you, Riki, for that introduction. It's great to be with so many people that have played a key role in the THAAD program. And as Riki said, just last month, a couple weeks ago, we witnessed a major milestone in missile defense, when the THAAD system conducted its first intercept of a missile in combat. According to Defense News, the successful intercept was conducted by the UAE Armed Forces on January 17th, and in publicly commenting about the attack later, the UAE ambassador to the United States, Yousef Al Otaiba, talked about this attack by the Houthi militia that occupies much of neighboring Yemen. And he said, "Several attacks, a combination of cruise missiles, ballistic missiles and drones, targeted civilian sites in the UAE, several were intercepted. A few of them weren't, and three innocent civilians, unfortunately, lost their lives". In an op-ed earlier this week ambassador Otaiba said this was the third attack by the Houthis in three weeks using ballistic and cruise missiles and drones.

Mr. John Rood:

Some of these missiles reportedly targeted areas near Al-Dhafra airbase, which is a major hub for US forces. As op-ed ambassador Otaiba said, UAE and US air defenses had intercepted most of the missiles and drones in the attacks. In one attack on January 24th, UAE crews reportedly intercepted two missiles, and US forces he used a Patriot to intercept another. In his op-ed ambassador Otaiba pointed out that some of the missiles that got through in one attack landed at or around Abu Dhabi's airport, as three civilians were killed as mentioned. But the tragedy really could have been much larger. The ambassador points out that more than 32,000 international travelers passed through the airport every day. For those that have been to the UAE, there are a lot of American expats who live there, 65,000. And there are eight million foreign residents in that small country. Of course, those attacks also as mentioned, were in the area of Al-Dhafra. And if you can imagine the damage that could have been done should they have struck the base, striking facilities that house American service members living and working there.

Mr. John Rood:

The frequency of missile attacks and intercepts in the Middle East by US allies, I really think has been under-reported in our media. Although there have been some press articles like a Wall Street Journal article from December 7th of last year, which described the high volume of attacks, and said, "Over the past several months, Saudi Arabia has been attacked by nearly a dozen ballistic missile and drone strikes launched each week by the Yemen based Houthi rebels. US and Saudi officials said the Saudi military has successfully fended off most of the barrages with its Patriots surface-to-air missile system. But its arsenal of interceptors has fallen dangerously low". The article in the Wall Street Journal went on to say,

"The number of attacks against the kingdom has grown significantly. According to a Saudi government official, drones struck Saudi territory 29 times last month, and 25 times in October. The country was struck by 11 ballistic missile attacks last month and 10 in October". But Tim Lenderking, who is the US special envoy for Yemen, has stated that the Houthis conducted 375 cross border attacks into Saudi Arabia alone in 2021.

Mr. John Rood:

I just want to pause and say, this is a huge volume of missile and drone attacks. And I think it's just not well understood by most people following events in the region. The Houthis who are conducting these attacks are backed by Iran, and it's with Iranian assistance that they have developed and received these weapons. After all, the missile industry that the Houthis run, and the Houthis engineering experience is not exactly a widely renowned around the world. They've received help from Iran to do this, and shipments of these weapons. Large volumes of Iranian weapons have been seized by the US and other international forces on route to the Houthis, including missiles and drones.

Mr. John Rood:

I know this very well because during my tenure at the Pentagon from 2018 to 2020, when I was the Under Secretary for Policy, my staff was responsible for overseeing a program where we maintained a warehouse at Bolling Air Force Base here in the Washington area. And we displayed these seized weapons to reporters and others. And again, this included missiles, combat drones, all nature of systems. So there's some key implications that come from this first combat intercept by THAAD. At first, missile attacks really are occurring in large numbers with great regularity and conflicts. And the thinking of much of our national security and military organizations is behind on this point.

Mr. John Rood:

A number of these of people in our establishments still think that missile attacks are envisioned to be rare, in small numbers, and easily deterrable by the threat of retaliation by offensive strikes. And that's simply not supported by the facts and data on the many missile attacks that are occurring with regularity around the world, particularly in the Middle East. It's not recognized that in these conflicts being conducted by US allies in our America's own experience, the missiles are a primary method of warfare by adversaries. I've witnessed Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE's experience.

Mr. John Rood:

And I would say the US experience in the Middle East, where we've all faced missile attacks. And of course this isn't just a threat in the Middle East. For example, North Korea conducted seven missile launches last month. And China continues to rapidly build up its arsenal of cruise and ballistic and hypersonic missiles. And obviously, I could go on. Advances in the ability of smaller countries, like the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and their ability to produce large numbers of increasingly sophisticated and accurate missile drone systems, shows how commercial advance is in computing, electronics, even the ability to know precise locations on things like your cell phone and so on, that has revolutionized the ability of adversaries to make effective missile and drone systems in ways that were reserved for much more advanced military powers in the past. Thirdly, in the United States we're really under investing substantially in efforts to counter the missile threat.

Mr. John Rood:

And we're not allowing organizations like the Missile Defense Agency, or MDA, to rapidly develop and fill the capabilities needed to counter the growing threat. We need to return to MDA the rapid development authorities that allowed it to field a national missile defense system within two years after its founding in 2002, and the president instructing them to proceed. Two years. We need to spend a substantially larger part of our defense budget on missile defense. And yes, this will mean we need to spend less on other missions and capabilities. Offense-defense integration needs to be done much better than the US and allied forces currently do it. And that offense and defense needs to operate seamlessly and rapidly to deter, to defend and suppress, and defeat threats with offenses. Missile defense also needs to address the volume, diversity, and complexity of today's cut missile combat, which means far greater requirements for command and control.

Mr. John Rood:

We need to recognize that we're behind dealing with the complexity and magnitude of the missile threat, and that will require much greater capability for things like radar tracking, processing, decision-making for command and control, automation, including for firing air missile defenses in some scenarios, given the timeframes involved, and higher volumes for defensive fires. Sixth, I want to mention one of the major implications of this intercept, is it underscores the importance of allies. The United States is not doing enough for our allies like the UAE and Saudi Arabia in the region, who are facing these attacks. And the United Arab Emirates, as an example, has been a very good partner to the United States in several conflicts, sending troops for example to fight in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and around the Middle East in the fight against Al-Qaeda with US forces.

Mr. John Rood:

We need to be much more supportive of selling advanced weapons and standing with our allies when they face these kinds of threats. Now, it takes a long time to do that. For instance, the UAE bought the THAAD system in 2011, and in 2015 their first contingent of 81 soldiers was trained in the United States. Yet the decisions to sell THAAD to the UAE came much earlier before the first battery arrived in that country in 2016. For example, during my tenure years acting Under Secretary of State for international security from 2006 to 2008, we made a series of decisions to authorize the technology release and the sale of the system via the FMS, or Foreign Military Sales system to the UAE.

Mr. John Rood:

Sales and cooperation with allies is critically important. First of all, we fight together in coalitions with our allies. It's highly rare that the United States will conduct operations of any magnitude over a sustained period where we're not as part of a coalition with our allies. Our allies capabilities are a direct component of our success in combat. Second, the funding that the United States receives from exports reduces our costs, and in some cases drives our modernization to improve our systems.

Mr. John Rood:

Third, our allies typically provide for the security of our forces when they're based in their country. We really only need to look at the UAE and the successful THAAD intercept and attacks on areas near Al-Dhafra Air Base, and the way US and UAE forces together defended the area to see why this is so important. The process for foreign sales and exports can be long, taking several years. And we need to as an enterprise, understand the importance of making this faster, having it cost less, and understand why it impacts the capabilities for protection of our forces, and the ability of our coalitions with allies to deter, fight, and win.

Mr. John Rood:

The recent intercept test in the UAE demonstrates why these things matter so much in terms of really the ability to protect civilians, military forces, industries. Missile defense saved lives. It also helped stabilize the situation. General Thomas, who's going to speak later, pointed out to me in the call earlier before our session here, that if those missiles had gotten through to Al Dhafra Air Base, just imagine the potential impact and the number of American service members' lives who might have been lost.

Mr. John Rood:

I think on our news right now, we would see reports of president Biden and his team struggling to know what to do and how to manage that situation, how involved the United States should become. And yet another conflict in the Middle East, and the war in Yemen, and what to do in response to the Houthis taking that many American lives.

Mr. John Rood:

Lastly, I want to point out that the THAAD intercept shows why you have to be determined, humble and patient when you're developing new technologies. Right now, we're celebrating the first combat intercept with THAAD. But recall, the THAAD program came within a whisker of being canceled. At one point, the deputy Secretary of Defense, John Hamre had signed a directive calling for only one of either the Aegis BMD system or THAAD to be continued. And he made the round briefing senators on why THAAD was going to be canceled, and the funding would be used for something else. I worked on the hill at the time for Senator John Kyle and Senator Thad Cochran. And in response to that move to cancel the system after early intercept test failed, a dozen senators rallied to defend the program and key staff. People like Mitch Kugler led the charge.

Mr. John Rood:

It worked, but just barely after a very tough fight, and legislation and funding to keep it going that was provided by Congress and direction provided by the Congress. THAAD, as I mentioned, had experienced setbacks in these initial tests, and some of the results in the initial tests were really ugly. There was cost growth, there were other problems, but we stuck with it in a long list of champions and advocates for missile defense stepped up to save the program, and put in the countless hours of determined, innovative work required to finish development, produce, field, train, and maintain this great system. I don't want to underestimate just how hard those times were. And the critics were brutal in saying the system would never succeed, didn't work, and missile defense was not...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Mr. John Rood:

The system would never succeed, didn't work, and missile defense was not feasible. For example, Rick Reginato, who led the THAAD program, at one time describes how the stress he'd strained from working such long days. And through the weekends caused one of his eyebrows to turn white. Fortunately, it returned to its natural dark hair color later after he left the program. So he is got two eyebrows that are the same color now, but it shows what stress can do to people and what stressed folks were under at that time. A number of other leaders like Colonel Lou Dieter, who was the program manager through tough times before turning over leadership to the program actually about a week before its first successful intercept played a key role. And there were so many others, whether it was Matt Joyce at Lockheed Martin or the teams at Raytheon who designed and produced the TPY-2 radar, and so on,

whether there were many leaders in the MDA, Army, Congress, and so on, who really worked to complete the program.

Mr. John Rood:

And to show you the difference, by 2019, according to defense news, THAAD had conducted 16 successful intercepts. And by then the voices of those harsh critics were just a whisper and history shows how wrong they were, but this is why we need organizations like MDAA and leaders like Riki, frankly, to educate and advocate for missile defense, because missile defense has saved lives and they're needed for stability, for security, for deterrence benefits. For proof, you only need to look at what happened with the first THAAD intercepting combat. So thank you, again, Riki for inviting me and I really look forward to the Q and A in today's session.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thank you, John. And just that resilience, that American resilience that you spoke about, that's what makes our country great. I'd like to just ask you a question because we're always talking about rapid acquisition within our own struggles here of getting things out fast. How are we going to... Can you apply that? What is your best strategy to do rapid foreign military sales much faster than what we got today? When you have a system like this, that could go to Australia, could go to Japan, could go to Europe because Europe does not have an upper tier system. How do we, what are the barriers keeping us from, a what 10-year cycle, how do you break that?

Mr. John Rood:

Well, first of all, I think we have to stop treating foreign sales like an aftermarket; for example, my wife and kids love to go to the outlet malls. And when you go to the outlet mall, that's an aftermarket after the item's been in the regular department store or something years later, then it's exported to the outlet mall and it costs less. Well, that's the way we as a government, we as a country and the United States approach foreign sales after it's been in the US inventory, after our services have made all their decisions about what items they need, what kind of gear and capabilities, then years later, we typically allow the export. So, number one, we need to stop that because what that does is when an ally wants a system and when they're willing to pay for it and field it to fight alongside us; many times, the first barrier is, "Well, that's not the US programmer record, or that is not the time."

Mr. John Rood:

I recall visiting a flag officer in his office to explain when I was in industry, we have a customer who's willing to invest billions of dollars to purchase more THAAD and to modernize the system. And when we got to the part about, or modernize a system and purchase a new one, that's a follow on an improvement for Patriot. This is a common refrain that you'd get. He very correctly said, "Mr. Rood, I manage programs of record. What you are describing does not match my program of record. Therefore, I do not manage that and I cannot help you." And I said, but you're the person in charge of the entire program. And this is just a derivative of it. And people want to spend billions of dollars with us to help improve this system in ways we can use. He said, "I understand that, but that is not a program of record. I therefore may not assist you with this because that is not a program of record."

Mr. John Rood:

I said, well, these people in the other country tell me, they're going to meet with you. He said, "Yes. And I'm going to inform them that is not a program of record." I see. So, barrier number one, we have to get

past this notion that everybody is a derivative of what the US plans are. And therefore we can only help them years later because we have to understand the sooner our allies have advanced capabilities that benefits the United States directly, both in cost reduction, industrial base, and the ability to fight and win together. And then secondly, when that FMS process comes into play, we have to, I think, begin to approach that differently as well, which is the goal here is not to sort of only manage risk and only identify ways.

Mr. John Rood:

There could never be any cost growth to the United States or ever be technology issues, but more akin to the risk-reward balance that we apply to our own program management. And so that alone and empowering centralized organizations like the DSCA or others to have the authority to say that each of the services, we don't want you all to have tailored differing FMS systems because many times the package of capabilities that the ally wants involves several services. And so if you can think of a system of systems where there's one system across and several stove pipes under it, at times conflicting with each other or not timed, there's an issue there. And also many of our reviews for technology release, release of information, and so on, also operate with different systems. So think of this visually like different gears in a system spinning independently, and then you put them together and sometimes those gears hit each other and that can cause delays measured in years. So there's a number of things we could do as a nation, but it comes down to me, leadership prioritizing this as an improvement.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks, John. And just to quickly follow that up for the basic American, you tax these foreign countries on the sale, and what's the percentage basically that the taxpayer saves if you've got a Saudi Arabia, which you do, or a UAE that's buying foreign military sales, does that reduce our cost by 10%, 20%? I mean, what is that?

Mr. John Rood:

Sometimes it's even more than that. And the reason is the way that we do foreign military sales is the US government manages it. But the foreign partner pays for not only the cost of the system, but the cost of the development and other modernizations. So, for example, in missile defense, the UAE has at times purchased something or improvements to the radar that were better than what we in the US military were operating. They paid for the development to create that capability. We later than bought it. So all of that money that would've been required in the R&D is covered by the foreign partner, and then the unit cost, depending on what you're doing can be reduced very substantially, just think of the Saudis want to purchase or in the process of purchasing roughly equivalent size THAAD force to the US army. What happens when you double the quantity of something going through a production?

Mr. John Rood:

It very substantially reduces the cost. And it's hard to pick a percentage because so much of that depends on how you sequence the production and the delivery and so on. But believe me, it's a lot more than just five, 10%. I mean, this is a very substantial capability and at times makes it possible for us to afford a capability, not in a missile defense example. But when I last served the Pentagon, as an example, the secretary of the army approached me and my team in policy to say, can you help us persuade these other countries to buy these army systems? It was a certain type of system protecting the confidentiality, because if I don't get them to do that, I can't procure that for the US army. I'm going to have to reduce my buy because I have to reduce the... It will increase the unit cost and this is going to

impact my units. So there's a direct relationship, many times this is not just a business commercial endeavor.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thank you, John. I know we went a little bit over, but those were great points to come across. So I really appreciate your articulation. Next, ladies and gentlemen, we have just one of my favorite charismatic leaders. I've seen him in action. And one of our most prestigious air defense army brigades, probably the most prestigious one, the 11th Imperial brigade, and Alan was the commander of that back in 2008. And he was the first brigade ADA to bring in the first four batteries underneath him as an operator. So it's significant, and he's great. He works for the El Paso School Systems today, but his 26 years of being one of our best of the best in combat with air defense gives him just tremendous credibility with all of us that have been around him, Alan. So it's all yours, Alan.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Thank you, Riki. You're very kind. And as you know, I've been out of business for a couple years now, and as you mentioned, I work for a school district here in El Paso, Texas. But when I heard about the THAAD and Patriot engagements in the UAE a few weeks ago, by both Emirate and US forces, it really brought me back to reflect on all the work over the past few decades that we as a community have accomplished to get to this point. And for me, this is really personal. So thanks again for inviting me today. Thinking about where we are today. I was reflecting on my earliest days as an army air defense officer in our initial schooling, the basic course, we learned about the principles of air defense and the importance of terms like early warning and early engagement, balance fires and defense, and depth.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

And those tenants are as critical today as they everywhere. And today we finally have a more robust, layered defense from the very high altitude to the lowest terminal altitudes. And we finally have more weapons in our quiver. And to me, no weapons' system in that arsenal is more important in missile defense than the THAAD. You mentioned in the late 1990s, the system was a punchline but through a lot of hard work the MDA, the army and the US government very quickly turned things around. And I wasn't the first brigade commander at 11th brigade to have THAAD, that was Joe D'Antonio, but I was very privileged to commend the 11th ADA Brigade at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, where the first four THAAD batteries were fielded. And before the first THAAD battery was even declared fully operational, there were already requirements for its employment in various combatant commands around the world, specifically CENTCOM, PACOM, and EUCOM.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

And what we saw at Fort Bliss is that you had these four batteries. And I always had to remind everyone that use units are very small. There is only about a hundred soldiers in each, and they're commanded by a captain who's maybe 27 years old. And these small units carried a tremendous responsibility that matched the awesome capability of the weapons that they controlled. So from the human aspect, it really wasn't hard to motivate them to be at the very best, from their tactical and technical skills, to their fitness, just their overall readiness, because it wasn't a matter of if, but when would these units. And I can tell you that when the most senior leaders from the army and the other services came to Fort Bliss, they may have come under the guise of seeing the first armor division.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

But I know that they really came to see the THAAD batteries and their message was always very consistent. "You're critical to the national defense strategy. You will be deployed worldwide and you have to be ready for your moment of truth." Well, since those days, as you mentioned, we've re-stationed two THAAD batteries from Fort Bliss to Guam and South Korea. And we've had multiple deployments and deployed units throughout PACOM, CENTCOM, and EUCOM for critical exercises. And the bottom line is that the THAAD units were ready for their moment of truth, but we always recognized the fact that the US couldn't just go it alone when it came to air and missile defense. It has been a longstanding strategic priority for the department of defense to build partner capacity, as it relates to air missile defense. We just passed the 31st anniversary of the first Patriot missile engagement in combat, shooting down a Scud missile, January 18th, 1991.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

So 31 years ago, almost to the day from the first Patriot engagement in combat to the first THAAD engagement in combat, but 31 years, it was only the US army. Now, today we have 14 partner nations in the Patriot family, and more than 70% of the Patriot units in the Arabian Gulf today are with our partner nations. And this is an incredible accomplishment, but with that a 100% of the THAAD capability, combat capability in the Gulf is with the UAE. I know the title, this round table is the implications is the first combat intercepted THAAD. So I'll finish with a few thoughts on that. No doubt. There are consequences for failure. And Mr. Rood mentioned, everyone would be talking about this if there were hundreds of people killed, but there should also be benefits of success.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

And I just don't hear anyone talking about this tremendous accomplishment. So I really thank you for bringing this to light, Riki. I'm hopeful that this recent combat success helps propel us to what I've always seen as the necessary growth and expansion of the foreign military sales THAAD system to our international partners. When it comes to the need for layered missile defense, the demand has always outweighed the supply, and I think it probably always will. We've made significant progress on the lower tier with Patriot, but we still have a lot of what, I guess, what I'll call potential for the upper tier. Riki, you've lived a life tracking wins and losses, so let's call this what it is. The combat intercept by THAAD was a victory. This is a victory for the Missile Defense Agency, for the US Army, for the US government, and for every one of those soldiers in my old THAAD batteries over the past many years. Many of them who, when they weren't assigned to the US THAAD batteries, they were stationed in the UAE.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

After the FMS sale went through, they were stationed alongside their MRR partners. So they could be ready for their moment of truth, which they were. So for nearly 30 years, I trained and deployed units around the world to defend strategic assets from the threat of missile attack. And for the last half of my career, I worked just as hard alongside our air defense partners and countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Japan, and the UAE to build their capacity and their capability. And what happened on January 17th is a success story. And it's something our entire community should be very proud of and talking about. I know I'm extremely proud. So thank you for bringing us to light, Riki, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thank you, Alan. And you had mentioned it. We've all noticed that that premiere job for a West Point cadet or an ADA soldier was a THAAD battery. I mean, it was the, and I think it still is, the number one

want to have an operation or serve out there. Alan, from your experience here we have, right? We only two of our seven deployed forward. And, it looks like that's a lot of great capabilities sitting here in America and not being out. And I know there, if you can just sort of understand why we have so many here when we're not rotating in both Korea and in Guam, why those shouldn't be out, and possibly where the next two, I think we have two more, or there's one coming and there's another one maybe coming, but that's a perplexity that maybe you could clear or give an opinion on.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Yeah, thanks, Riki. So we have seven units employed in the US Army right now. There's always a requirement for nine, and I understand that there's now funding for the eighth, and there's always been a philosophical debate in defense policy about whether we should retain strategic assets like that in the continent of United States and deploy them as necessary to whatever combat and command or whether we should have them in foreign stations. I think because there are only seven and because they are such a high demand strategic asset, I think having them in reserve at Fort Bliss, so to speak rather than commit them to a combat and command, because once you commit them, they'll be there forever and it limits their flexibility to deploy them to other contingencies around the world. I think the answer to the problem, really, Riki, is that we don't stop at nine. We just keep building the capacity. So we don't have to make a choice of either, or you can have them both forward stationed and in reserve. And I think that's what we need.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

And from an outside perspective, this is such a powerful tool in deterrent, and that putting something forward in the first island chain, putting something in Europe, strategically, which is not all of them, but at least two of them is something that, from an outside perspective, would look to make this world a stabler place and our country safer with doing that. But I-

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Yeah, like I mentioned before, it really takes the burden off the US military service member in some ways when you have it forward deployed because the air defense force over the last 30 years, at least speaking for the US Army, has been on a constant nonstop rotational deployments. First, just to the CENTCOM area of responsibility, but now really everywhere they're in demand. And there's a huge difference to a soldier and a family to being forward stationed versus being deployed away from your family years and years on end until you retire or quit. So I really think there's a lot of... That's maybe for another discussion about where we should have these units stationed, but I will end with that thought with this idea that the THAAD units have proven their ability to rapidly deploy worldwide in a matter of hours, not days, multiple times.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

So this is an extremely mobile system. A lot of times people think that they're stuck on air bases somewhere and they just sit there forever. I've seen them be very mobile through the mud in the mountains of white sands and the McGregor Range outside of El Paso and out at Fort Hood, Texas. These are mobile units and they can be employed anywhere.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thank you, Alan, that was great. We have another former air defense Colonel with the army. He's been involved with air defense all the way back in 2012 as the 143 ADA commander out there in CENTCOM.

He's been very well qualified. He was in command of the 10th, last couple years. 10th AAMDC in Europe, where he oversaw the first deployment of THAAD into Israel, and also saw the first deployment into Romania to replace or to hold while Aegis Ashore and Romania was getting upgraded. So it's great. Great to have him here, Colonel Dave Shank, retired expert on this, and we look forward to hearing your viewpoints on this day.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Hey, Riki, and good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for having me, Riki, having me back. It's always a pleasure to participate with some of the best in our community. And I'd be remiss if I didn't state that it's always difficult to follow Alan Wiernicki, when speaking, because he's a phenomenal speaker, able to articulate his thoughts clearly and concisely. I'll try to be brief, Riki. I just want to hit on a couple of points and appreciate the introduction, but an old friend of mine, he once said, he said it constantly, actually, "Nothing says deterrents like the forward positioning of a THAAD battery." And he was absolutely spot on. And you talked about some of the instances, and I'll come back to at least my personal experiences with Israel and Romania. But, I mean, you talk about hitting the nail on the head with that statement.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

He's absolutely right. Something we haven't talked too much about here in the last 45 minutes or so or at least in detail. I know John talked about it a little bit, but the threat and the adversaries around the globe, whether state or non-state actors, they're not slowing down. I think we would all agree that when you talk non-state actors, and as we saw just a couple weeks ago with the Houthis, but pick a non-state actor; Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and so on. If they could get their hands on a ballistic missile, their goal is to kill Americans and to kill anyone who works with Americans. And so what an incredible feat there by our partner nation, the United Arab Emirates with the THAAD engagement first one ever in combat. And then of course, some would call it a complex or attack with multiple enemy threats.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

So that the participation with both the Emirate and the US Patriot battalions and those engagements clearly demonstrates the integration that I'll also come back to. But again, as the adversary continues to move forward, pick a layer, hypersonic is on everyone's mind. And so obviously a concern with hypersonics; the precision, munitions, and those threat capabilities that they can bring to bear. And the last thing I would talk, not so much about the threat, but about all domains, we haven't really talked about space much. And so cyber specifically those two, which we know of an adversary has that capability. They will leverage that to the fullest extent. I wanted to talk a little bit, as you mentioned, some of my personal experiences as a soldier and as a commander at a couple different echelons.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

And first thing I wanted to talk about is the TPY-2 radar. So the actual radar component that supports the THAAD battery, some may recognize that we have a few TPY-2 forward-base mode radars deployed around the globe. So that's just the radar itself, which truly provides, it sounds cliché, but the eyes and ears on the battlefield. Now, I'm talking, looking deep, very deep thousands of kilometers, and they are tied in and integrated into a network architecture that can help share that air picture, both through space, satellite capability and all the way through Link 16, and then back to command and control knows that provides as John alluded to the CFAC, the senior ranking airmen in a theater, the deputy area air defense commander, usually the army air missile defense commander who supports the CFAC and

pushes that information all the way back to NORAD and NORTHCOM as an example. And so working with the-

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COL (Ret) David Shank:

So working with the TYP-2 radar and a four base mode, it's more designed and focused on the boost and the ascent phase of a threat. Now, when you talk about a THAAD battery at large, it possesses the same radar, but it's in a terminal based mode, focused on the midcourse and terminal phase. So it can conduct that engagement. I think Ty said it earlier during our early discussions, search, acquire, track discriminate and engage.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

So working with those tip those TPY-2 radars in the four base mode. That brings me to my time as the 10th NDC commander and the first THAAD deployment to the state of Israel under the direction of then secretary defense, Mattis, he developed the concept and a program, the dynamic force employment, and the THAAD battery out of Fort Bliss, Texas, that Al talked about was the first army dynamic force employment.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

There were others that were being conducted B 52 bombers, global strike packages, things of that nature, but in the army, the THAAD battery led the way. And hats off to the state of Israel and the Israeli air defense forces and the Homeland defense, because while there's a... As you would allude to Riki, there's a play to be called in the huddle. Okay? And this was a play to be called and they were prepared and ready and had that site prepped and finished by the time numerous C 17 aircraft, takes numerous to move an entire THAAD battery. And in placed on that site, in the state of Israel for that dynamic force employment.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Few months later, as the Aegis Ashore site in Romania was scheduled for, for maintenance and an upgrade, a second battery was forward positioned to provide those defensive fires in the event, they were required based on the Iranian threat that also came out of Fort Bliss, Texas for a greater than three month requirement.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

And again, just what the Romanians did and from their highest levels of defense down to their air force and army level services and the preparation to... And the US Navy for that matter at the Aegis Ashore site. And what they did to receive the THAAD battery, get them in place, get them tied in, integrated into that architecture, where they're able to pass information to the nodes where they need to do just that.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Riki, last thing I'd talk about, and it goes back to some of the FMS cases is, I served as the acting ADA commandant as my last assignment. And not just daily oversight of what American soldiers are going through in 30th ADA brigade with THAAD training to build these soldiers and these experts that then go

forward as alluded under the command of a captain and serve as a THAAD soldier, but also our FMS partners. In this case, specifically the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Royal Saudi air force personnel, as well as United Arab Emirates and their service members that rotated through receiving that training from the THAAD institutional division at Fossil, Oklahoma. Riki, I'm going to pause right there. I had more, but I'm just going to stop based on the time.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

We're going to extend our time a little bit, because I want to make sure Ty gets a good opportunity here. But Dave, I do want pinpoint you a little bit back where I think the THAAD is excellent and that is, the coverage, the launch on remote, the engage on remote with MSC missiles in the South Korean peninsula that we have done and put forward. And it has forced multiplied the defense there, like no other place in the world. Can you just tell everybody what basically that is? And I know it's slow to get to everyone else, but that is something that's from a Patriot and that perspective, what happened at the JUON real quick.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Yeah, so just briefly, and I'm going to take it one step further if I may, Riki. So the joint urgent operational need statement, the JUONs and I believe it was submitted by Sean Gainey, your last spokesperson that you had just last month when he was in command in the INDOPACOM area of operations. But in a nutshell, it's leveraging all missile defense capabilities, in this case in Korea, whether it's leveraging a THAAD radar to support a Patriot engagement, whether it's a launch on remote or an engage on remote, based on a THAAD MSC inner sectors, you stated receiving that THAAD sensor data to conduct that engagement.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

And so my point about taking it one step further, and again is alluded to the title of this virtual, but you have what's coming on board IBCS, the Integrated Battle Command System, and the guys behind all of that is any sensor best shooter, all conducted... All integrated through a fire control network, and so now we're not just talking about an army, army platforms. Now we're talking about joint services and where it really needs to go as John alluded to also was, the US, isn't going to fight alone for a long period of time. And so now, how do you tie in allies and partners? And in this case, as I talk about IBCS.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Now, Dave, you're on it that IBCS is the future. It's where we got to go. But the reality right now is we've got seven THAAD batteries. We've got a JUON system that works right now. And if you have to play right now, as you say, really well, that this is the Army's biggest or the force multiplier to go forward to deter you bring it, you bring what you... You got to play with what you got until you get the new step coming in. So, that was just a thought process there. Thanks, Dave.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Our final speaker, he is the advisor to MDAA. He is for us on integrated air missile defense system, he's well accomplished, brilliant, I would say. And Ty, I like the title that he had the director of operations for strategic deterrents and nuclear integration headquarters, US Air Force, Europe. So that's one of his titles. The other title he had was the deputy commander of PAC air.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So I was saying, and I think the facts are that every THAAD is on an air force base. I just wanted to point that out. And I mentioned that to you and how you see that and how it links us, Dave said into other systems and the commander control. And if you can just talk about the bigger implications of commander control with that in your air bases on that specific system would be great, but up to you, Ty?

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay, great. Thanks, Riki. And really appreciate the opportunity to join for another one of these virtual CRTs. It's really fun to be on with under secretary Rood, and Al nice to meet you and thank you for joining us and Dave, we spent a little time at Ramstein together, so it's good to see you again. And I remember those deployments that you mentioned.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Hey, Riki, first thing, just kind of from the airman's perspective and certainly from the CFA, happy to host those THAAD batteries on the air bases for the very reasons we're talking about, they are so capable. But the other thing that I would make very clear and I think not well understood possible by the rest of the audience is the level of integration between the soldiers and the airmen in the area of defense commander roles and capabilities that are fielded is as seamless as anything I've seen in the joint force.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Seriously. I mean, it is... When you walk on an air operation center floor, there are soldiers and there are airmen and there are sailors on that floor. And the soldiers, particularly for area air defense are just... I mean, they're a key part of the team. And they're the only difference is that they're wearing an army uniform instead of an air force uniform, but otherwise they fit seamlessly in. And they're... To your particular question, whether it's Colonel Shank talked on the role of the TPY-2, just in terms of, as a sensor, enabling all of the other things that the area a defense commander has to be able to do, it's critical and key. And that's just one part of the THAAD system.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So really, really important that the places that Dave mentioned where we have it for deployed in forward based mode, just in and of itself, we have to have those. And we have to, I think, agree more of them, the effector, capability that's presented by the Talon interceptor, need more of that. And the JUON, I'm going to talk a little bit more on the implications of the JUON from a slightly different perspective as I go through the comments.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So that kind of on the front end, but let me... In terms of thoughts, I'll group it into three categories and then I'll try to keep it brief because I know we have some questions teed up, but first of all, let me just put a gigantic footstep on what Colonel Wiernicki mentioned. This is a huge, huge event. The first time a major system developed actually proves itself in combat. We all need to kind of go, woo yes, high five, and then move on to the question that this CRT is about, which is what are the implications? And so I'll group those into three things. I think there's some very encouraging implications. I think there's a few discouraging implications, and then there are some opportunities.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

And so starting with that, what's encouraging? Clearly the performance of the entire system demonstrated in combat from detect track, engage to assess it worked as intended. And all of the positive contributions or implications that come that that were mentioned previously about, no casualties, no major damage that... Other than the civilians that were lost in the UAE, those are all consequences from this successful systems intercept. It provides a combat use case. So it's great to be able to go, Hey, it worked in test and development. It worked in training. We're really confident, but now we can actually say it worked in combat. What does that mean? So that'll provide evidence to support if there are doubters out there about, well, maybe we need to get system, THAAD eight on the line and get the funding for THAAD nine.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

We can point to these engagements now and say the system works. Okay? That's an important thing to be able to have in a conversation when there's doubters about your resourcing. And it's also important because... So it's awesome that the UAE has been one of those foreign countries that... Foreign partners that has brought the system on. Well, there are probably others that are, at least have thought in mind, should we do this? Well, now they can look and go look, here's an example of a foreign partner that's successfully used it in combat. Again, important and encouraging.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

What's discouraging? This was touched on by John and Dave as well. The continued proliferation of the ballistic missile threat. Okay. We all know that there are four pillars of integrated air missile defense. Okay. And that is, if you don't operate on all four of those pillars, you got a hole in your swing, but in a sense, there's a fifth pillar, that fifth pillar is counter proliferation.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

It's not necessarily a DOD mission to be able to do. Okay. And if you look in the DIME construct of, executing... Supporting your national interests, all of this has got to be in the D in the I and the E, the diplomatic, the informational and the economic, but we have to get after counter proliferation or else we're going to be working through the catchers mitt of receiving inbounds a lot more often than even we are now. And it's a lot more now than it was in the past. So, I think that's a discouraging thing to see, Houthis lobbing MRBMs into Saudi Arabia and UAE and holding other areas of threat.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Here's the opportunity. And it's not Ty Thomas' idea. It actually has been articulated a while, but very articulately presented by General McKenzie, Frank McKenzie, the commander at CENTCOM, just as recently as an article that came up on the net just a day or two ago, and it's theater wide C2 coordination. So meaning that particularly for integrated air missile defense, and particularly for ballistic missile defense. So, and it gets to the discussion that we just had about South Korea.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

So there is a capable set of sensors and effectors and commander control systems that exist in the Middle East right now. In the UAE inventory, in the Saudi inventory, US assets that come in and out of the theater, depending on what it is I'm talking about Patriot, and THAAD in particular, the Qataris have some capabilities, but what they aren't doing right now is feeding each other, sharing tracks, even to the point of, Nirvana could be engaged on remote with a track that's provided maybe from a UAE radar, but

that happens to be inbound to another country. And there's enough trust and confidence between them possibly facilitated by a role that the US would play to be able to do that.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

The systems can do that. We know that, but right now, for other reasons, besides technical, we don't have a system like that set up. That's what general McKenzie... And I think what this set of intercepts open up is the opportunity for everybody to go, "Wow! We can make this even better." And it doesn't really require any technical development. It requires trust, understanding, and an agreement to put it into place. Take years, understand that, but that's a great opportunity. Can you extend that opportunity for further theater wide cooperation to EUCOM and INDOPACOM, for example? Well, quite frankly, in EUCOM much of that is already happening. NATO is the structure under which that happens.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

There's also cooperation that we have with bilateral defense of Israel and in the Pacific, it's more like that it's bilateral defense. But even there, South Korea, Japan close enough, there are some things that we're doing already, but we could probably do more. And so that opportunity, at least in that particular part of the Pacific. The big difference between the Pacific and CENTCOM, for example, and EUCOM is just the problems of time and space. So even if you have contributing sensors and capabilities in the Pacific, but if something you have in Australia versus something you have in the second Island chambers, something, having it, it's three different IMD fights.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

And so the actual compactness relative compactness of the theater in CENTCOM, I think enables to some extent general McKenzie's idea, but that is... There's a lot of opportunities that come from, but that's one that we haven't talked about is this, they really got a lot of chances to... because the other thing... Let me... Before I wrap up, it's a multi access threat in CENTCOM. Okay. So the access of the threat in EUCOM, fairly predictable. Okay? Iran. Okay? We knew where that was coming from.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

In the Pacific, it's North Korea or it's the PRC. We can kind of... But if you think... So if you're in the UAE, the threat could come across the Gulf. Okay. It could, the Saudi saw come from Iraq and then obviously these most recent ones came from Yemen. So that even more suggests that if you've got multiple sensors, make sure that you're looking optimally and you're sharing the data to make the absolute most out of what you have, because your threat is multi access and STRATCOM. So I'll stop there and turn it over to you. And if you're ready, we can roll into Q and A. Over to you, Riki.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks Ty, can you keep moving a little bit on the integration between offense and defense specifically THAAD, how does that fit with long distance fires? Are we going to do it with a service first or we're going to do it with a big command and control where everybody's adapted, how do you grow that? And when do you grow that, that would look like one today. Where's that going on? That offensive integration now with defense in the regions, not strategically back home, but in the forward based regions and how do you see THAAD fit into that part of it and how fast could we integrate offense into this?

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Well, the way that I think of offensive defense integration, Riki is quite frankly, that's simply another layer of the overall IMD construct. So, if we out in the Pacific, in his CFAC role, not his area, defense commander role can produce effects that thin out the volume of fires that are coming into a second Island chain location. And we do that via offensive ops or defensive counter error with, particularly with it applies to cruise missile threats. Then that is the first layer that's further out there, at least in the air domain, we can talk about cyber and we can talk about producing effects on their sensors and command controlled space.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

But to your particular question, that's the relationship, because then once you thin out the herd that your threat represents, you're making less targets that you're going to have to actually engage with the THAAD itself as well as the other elements, whether it's Patriot, whether it's in the lower tier systems. And so if you don't do that, you're going to get overwhelmed. We know that, and we're not going to... As much as we need to put national treasure into this. We're not going to be able to buy enough if we don't thin the herd before it comes at us. So to me, I think that's the most important linkage on offensive defense integration is understanding that offensive ops in all forms are purely another layer of IMD, over.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Right. That's a great point. Okay, Ty, go ahead and open it up for questions that are coming in. If you have questions please, on the YouTube or email defense advocacy alliance questions would be great.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay, great. Riki. So the first one is a combination of about three. Well, let me tell you that first for a listener out there, one of them was already addressed and it was about THAAD and Patriot integration and the JUON discussion covered that. But the next one is really three that ask about increased capabilities or planned capability improvements in THAAD itself. And so I'm going to kind of open that up to the group here and see if there's some answers on that. How deep we can go in it got to be up to you, but what can you tell the audience about plan THAAD improvements going forward? Over.

Mr. John Rood:

Well, let me... I'll start and others can obviously join in. There are planned THAAD improvements around a variety of areas, but I would argue, we need to do more in that area. There have been concepts and there have been foreign partners to include the UAE who have been willing to fund real step increases in capability for THAAD and been willing to invest. When I say substantial amounts of money, I mean, billions of dollars to fund that development. And it would be a system that would be employed not only by the United States forces, obviously, and those partner forces, but eventually exported to others in the world. It's the concept. But some of those improvements that have been visioned, but not yet funded would substantially increase the engagement altitude, the battle space that THAAD has and make it more capable against things like hypersonic weapons.

Mr. John Rood:

And that would be a real improvement in the capability. And there are some things also that THAAD would allow you to do in terms of defended areas and the integration with other capabilities that would make your overall defense substantially greater. There are other improvements needed to improve the ability of things like TPY-2, that radar was meant to be very quickly deployable as Alan and David and

others pointed out. But when it is deployed in a fixed configuration, it sits in a place like Guam and elsewhere. The radar was really not designed and engineered to be operating over very long periods of time. Improvements have been made to make it more sustainable, to allow for maintenance while it's on duty, but more needs to be done in that regard, in my opinion, and sort of peak cube, die product improvement to reduce the operating cycle.

Mr. John Rood:

Because again, the asset was meant to operate for say, 90 days in a fight and then go down, have refurbishment done and other things. It wasn't meant to sit duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through month after month, after month. And that's where I think we could see some more improvements in the capability.

Mr. John Rood:

And then lastly, Patriot THAAD integration has gotten better. I think there's so much more we can do for improvements to make that a system and its components enable the broader fight and the arrest of the air defense and missile defense systems to be even better. And that's where I talk about command and control and integration, and we just, haven't given as much benefit to that kind of linkage. We have all sorts of studies and we've done demonstrations to prove it, but we're not deploying it rapidly enough to the force in my view.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay. Thanks. Thanks John, Dave or Alan, anything to add on that one before I move to the next?

COL (Ret) David Shank:

If I may very briefly, the cybersecurity aspect of it, I think is extremely vital, not just to a THAAD system, but any of our systems, but definitely continuous efforts towards that. Thank you.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay. Awesome. Thanks guys. So the next one is actually one that came in during the session and it is... Well it's related to the Ukraine. And so there's a little bit of an operational element to it, but I think it's relevant. So the question was about based on the current tension that we've got and the fact that NATO is moving some forces into Eastern Europe, particularly some about 3000 US soldiers, either repositioning within Europe or coming from CONUS. But what are the opinions of the panel here on would a THAAD battery be an important contribution here or is the IMD assets, particularly the missile defense assets that are already in place sufficient for the situation as we have it. Let's go ahead... Alan, let's go ahead and start with you on voicing a response to that question.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Thanks. I'll give it a shot, but Dave Shank with his experience in Europe maybe a better position to do this. But when I look at any conflict that arises around the world, the motto of our force is first to fire for a reason.

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COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

The motto of our force is first to fire for a reason. We're typically the first to be deployed to set the defense and allow the power projection that may be necessary. I think you alluded to it earlier, General Thomas, that there's not a huge appetite to get into another massive conflict in the United States. And, if the deployment of a THAAD or Patriot battalion helps us prevent getting mired in another conflict, I think that's something I think the public would support. But at this point, I honestly don't see THAAD being repositioned, given the limited number of soldiers the President has committed.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay. Thanks. Yeah, and to the former 10th double-A MDC commander.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, I got to respond to this thinking through the three levels of war fighting. At the strategic level, we all know Ukraine is not part of NATO. So we, now we're talking to our allies. And so, but we have several European countries that are members of NATO that are extremely powerful in their efforts to procure missile defense capability. Let's talk about them, you've got Poland, right? You've got Romania, right? You've got the Dutch and several other countries. But the first two that I mentioned, I mean, they have clearly demonstrated that they're willing to improve their, let's call it what it is, their Soviet capabilities of missile defense. So that's, at a strategic level.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

At the operational level, AI kind of pegged it. Ukraine is a huge country. As a commander of 10th double-A MDC, in support of, alongside USAFE and then in support of EUCOM, we dispatched two assessment teams, one under General Walters at the time with USAFE and then the second under General Harrigan, and conducted those assessments. Ukraine has capability, is it the same type of capability that the US military possesses? Maybe, maybe not. But it goes back to the four pillars that you talked about, Ty, and ensuring that they're clearly understood and being leveraged.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

And then the last piece, from the tactical mindset, AI said it, do we really want to put a THAAD battery in the Ukraine? Probably not. I think it sends a signal. Some would see it as a positive signal. Some would see it as a negative signal. It puts US troops in harms way, ultimately. And then going back to, we only have seven and two are already committed. So there's a tactical challenge there as well.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Here we go. Okay.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Hey Ty? Can we hear John's perspective? I'd like to hear what...

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Yeah. John... [crosstalk 01:15:11]

Mr. Riki Ellison:

...a former trusted policy guy would say about putting a THAAD into Europe right now.

Mr. John Rood:

Well, into Europe, yes. Into Ukraine, I would not be recommending that in my other position. And there's some fundamentals, I think, that have to be found at play here, which is the Ukraine is a friendly country to the United States. Although, and we have had nice dealings with them, they're not an ally, they're not a member of NATO. And we haven't enjoyed the kind of close relationship we have elsewhere. So what are the US interests there? Well, the US interests are, we don't want to see a country like Russia commit aggression towards a democratic, friendly state.

Mr. John Rood:

And remember, it's sort of funny, President Putin says he feels threatened by the Ukraine, by Ukraine and others. But what he feels threatened by is they are democratic. They're forming friendly relations with the United States and Europe, and they appear to want to run their own country free from Russian interference. Hardly the type of offenses that would threaten the lives of Russians there. And his other excuse, which unfortunately has a lot of echoes about the statements Adolf Hitler made prior to World War II, I'm acting in defense of German speaking people, as you recall Hitler said, that were residents in other countries.

Mr. John Rood:

Here, Putin says there are Russian speaking nationals. There are Russians who are being mistreated in Ukraine, and therefore I have to protect them. So, I mean, it's number one, I don't think we should offer any assurances, offer any concessions, make any things. I'm a little concerned about some of the press reports hearing the United States or our allies potentially offering things like, well, perhaps we need to scale back our defenses to protect elsewhere in Europe. Maybe NATO shouldn't be as forceful in defending member states. I think all of that is, candidly, appeasement and is not going to work. But it's another matter and said to say you're opposed to something economically, politically, that the United States will provide military assistance and advisors to Ukraine, to saying we're going to mount an active defense and be willing to put at risk and potentially lose the lives of America's sons and daughters.

Mr. John Rood:

I think that's another level where we have to have a vital national interest, has to clearly be something an ally, a treaty commitment, a major interest to the United States, such that we must stand and fight and we're prepared to do so. Because I don't think you want to cock that and not throw it. You got to be prepared to stand behind those things. And so I do think we should be supportive of Ukraine. I do think we should be sending them armaments. I do think we should be prepared to sanction Russia and politically oppose it, but that's another matter that's short of, if necessary, we will go into combat to protect the country.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

And gentlemen, can I now put it into a national security interest, of putting THAAD on the first island chain, putting THAAD on Japan, where you have Patriot units, you have US force projection, you have an ability to deter. We've done it in Korea. We've done it in Guam. We have an ability here to leverage that position right now with one of those THAAD batteries. What are you, what's your position, or what's your thoughts on putting a THAAD battery on the first island chain for deterrent reasons and national security interests? Ty, I'm...

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Yeah. I'll start on that one, Riki. So, I think there's two elements to the answer to the question. One is at the operational level. So I can't remember footprints and defense designs and all that, but you got to look at that for, what are you contributing by putting THAAD forward on Japan versus having it at some other location? And quite frankly, at the operational level, you want it where it's going to have the most effect. And there's a difference between sensor and shooter, I get that. And so you can even disaggregate your sensor from your shooter, but wherever you're going to put those talon interceptors, I want to get them as the AADC, I want to get the most defended area out of that and defend the most critical assets I possibly can. So that's at the operational level.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

On the strategic level, it's the question of what message are you trying to send and to whom? Okay. And this is kind of like the discussion that we just had about Europe. The forward, and maybe it was a quote from Alan or Dave, but nothing sends a message of deterrence, like a THAAD battery being deployed forward. Well, you're doing the same thing at the strategic level there. You may make a compromise between the operational gain because you get this large strategic deterrent gain, not in the nuclear sense, but in the, just, higher level of strategy sense. And so you would make that decision. So I don't know that you get the best footprint out of a full deployment of everything forward to the first island chain, but you may get the strategic benefit of that by doing so. I'll stop there.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

So Ty, what about the regional, with the high amount of short range, ballistic missiles North Korea is getting better at, and certainly all on that first island, certainly in Japan's threat. And is that now looking at it in a different way or...

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Well, I mean, for the SRBMs, I mean we have other systems that can engage them. There are some things that only THAAD can, THAAD and Aegis quite frankly, can uniquely do. And so from the defense design perspective, I'm going to want to use THAAD for the things that only it can do. And if I can rely on lower tier systems to address that SRBM threat, I'm going to use them. Over.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Who else would like to answer the first island chain THAAD?

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Yeah. I'll take a stab at it, Riki. [crosstalk 01:21:21].

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Yeah, pass it around here now.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

...from a double-A MDC, put my hat on, tactical mindset. The war plans are continuous and I'm sure options are being presented to the right echelon at the right command to have this exact discussion. I'm just not sure, as Ty alluded to, by positioning, you want any weapon system, you want position them where they have their greatest capability against the threat. Not necessarily a known threat, but a threat in general and, are there plans to position other assets along the first island chain? Command and

control nodes, logistical packages, force projection type assets, if that is, and most likely is in the war plans, then there's probably a discussion of putting missile defense assets such as a THAAD along the first island chain.

Mr. John Rood:

I mean, my perspective would be, first as a general comment. I would like to see us as a nation, as a military, have more of our forces forward based, closer to the threat. I think if you look at a progression over the, since the end of the cold war, we've unfortunately become a much more home stationed military. Why is that a problem? If you work in individual scenario where you're saying, for example, a Patriot or THAAD battery, one, and it happens to be in Fort Bliss, Texas, and you want to move it to Japan, does the United States have the ability to do that within X hours? You'll get an answer. Yes. However, bear in mind during a conflict, particularly if there's a, if it's a large one, not a contingency involving a small number of the American units that would need to be deployed, but a large number or an execution of a war plan, many things are in motion at the same time. And the volume of airlift required, the volume of sea lift begins to choke down on key areas where it's insufficient for of the whole force or most of our plans.

Mr. John Rood:

One of the things that's very, very difficult to plan for is if more than one thing is going on in the world at the same time and there's demand for those resources that are crippling it. And so, if it means a one week delay, if it means a 10 day delay in bringing a capability to a region, there's an issue there. And I think we just need to be in a peace time posture, which doesn't create such a back foot balance, if you will. I think we need to be more like the boxer on the toes of our feet, able to move forward, able to move back and shift where we're a little more agile. And so I think a little more forethought.

Mr. John Rood:

And also to the degree to which you can have benefit through your peace time stationing, where you're closer to a level of readiness, the better you are. So take for example, deploying THAAD or other things in Japan. That's one of the biggest concentrations for US forces for a contingency on the Korean peninsula or elsewhere, take a China scenario. Well, the ability to go and activate a system like that in defense of the local area very quickly without all of the readiness raising and deployments of it, is one of the things that I would, I think we need to spend more time thinking through.

Mr. John Rood:

And our posture, where we are based, and particularly in the Pacific, is largely where we stopped fighting at the end of World War II and units are kind of in the same locations where they were and we've grown up and developed it. I mean, there are noteworthy exceptions like in Korea, but if you go to Okinawa, why are certain things where they were? Well, that's where the Marines came ashore in World War II and they're still in that spot. And so, is that how we would do it today? No. Is it very difficult to change? Enormously difficult, but I think we need to be adjusting our posture.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Riki, I'd like to just answer the question maybe from a little bit of a different perspective. We talked a lot about foreign military sales earlier and the many benefits that it has to the US military. And I think we all agree that it would be to the US's interest to expand foreign military sales with THAAD. But it not only reduces costs and allows the United States military to benefit from the investment of other countries,

but I mentioned that the growth of the Patriot force and, and the CENTCOM region, and one of the main reasons I'm convinced that we have such a robust Patriot force in the CENTCOM AOR is because we've had units for, deployed there for so many years. And our partner nations get to see, as General Thomas said, that we have the first evidence of a combat proven engagement of THAAD, and that means something to people.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

But it also means something to people to see the weapon system employed, to visit it, to walk through it, to touch it and feel it, and to talk to people who are operating it and to talk not just about the operational capability, but about the sustainability and the logistical capability of it. So, because we have so few assets, I think retaining them in a strategic reserve, in CONUS, I think is, is probably the best thing right now. But I would support operational deployments or exercises like we've seen from Wake Island to Romania, Israel, all the places are that we've talked about, because I think it is important to demonstrate that capability and for our partners to see it in action.

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Okay. Riki, for the purpose of time, I'm not going to throw any more questions out there. I'm going to hand it back over to you for wrap up or whatever you like to do. We're about... 94 minutes in.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Great discussion, [crosstalk 01:27:34] that was a great discussion. I'd like just to have a summary real quick and we'll just pass it around and then we'll close. So, Dave, do you want to go first on this, please?

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Sure. Thanks, Riki. And thanks again for having me today and letting me sit on the Hollywood Squares with some real heavy hitters. Riki, I'll close it out with three comments. One, this is about a network architecture that you've got to have an integration across all layers. You've got to be able to share that early warning. And I think it was Ty that said it, you've got to be able to trust the bedrock. You've got to be able to trust units on your left and on your right. And what do I mean by that? I'm talking about one nation trusting another nation. A great example is the Middle East.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

Number two, leveraging allies and partners, whether it's through the FMS program or whether it's just individual nations improving on their missile defense capabilities. I said a few, I did, I am remiss that I didn't mention Sweden, a non-NATO country who is also improving upon their missile defense capability as well. But again, how do you now leverage those nations and their capabilities? We just saw it. We've seen it in Saudi Arabia. Now, now we just saw it again and observed what just transpired in the United Arab Emirates.

COL (Ret) David Shank:

And then lastly is the interoperability aspect of it. And really, not even to get into the technical discussions of interoperability, that is extremely challenging, but I'm talking about the people. And I can only imagine the high fives after that THAAD and those Patriot engagements, and in the area of Abu Dhabi and Al Dhafra. And all those years, as Al said early on, all those years coming together for that one event. The enemy only has to get it right once. So, not to advertise this, this is a big deal. It's not just a

big deal in the missile defense community, but this is a big deal for our nation and for allies and our partners. Riki, thanks again for having me. This is always fun. I enjoy doing it. Thanks.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks, Dave. Alan?

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Yeah. We're talking about implications here and we talked a lot about challenges and opportunities, but on January 18th, 1991, there were a lot of challenges and opportunities and we learn from them. The US military is a learning organization and we are in a much better position on January 17th, 2022 with our first THAAD engagement. And I just look forward to the next 30 years because the threat is going to continue to evolve, but no doubt, we're going to use this latest combat success story to catapult air and missile defense operations for the US military into the future. It'll have the same impact.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Hey, thank you, Al. It was great to have you come out of retirement here and give us your insight. It's awesome. Really appreciate it. Thank you for joining us.

COL (Ret) Alan Wiernicki:

Thank you.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Ty?

Lt Gen (Ret) Jon Thomas:

Riki, all I would add is, because I totally agree, huge event and of historic proportions. And we'll look back at this 30 years from now and we'll go, wow, look at that. But I would, I want to add my congratulations. Everybody that's involved, been involved in the THAAD program from day one to January 17th, 2022, congratulations. Your work, your commitment to excellence that got through some really tough times, produced a capability and that capability saved lives and made an operational and strategic difference. So well done. That's all I got.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thanks, Ty. Great to have you with us. John?

Mr. John Rood:

Last thing I'll say, Riki, it's about the team and this team that was involved in missile defense to create the THAAD system, develop it, produce it, maintain it, train the soldiers, teach others how to operate it, work with others, transport it, look what they accomplished here. That's remarkable. So, A, that needs to be celebrated, but two, that team, and that's one of the things that I, again, I think is so important about MDAA, educating in its mission, advocating, explaining this. It's so important we carry that forward, and just, we've had a tremendous success and we should pause to celebrate it as a team.

Mr. John Rood:

But this is a little bit like, we were talking about the NFL playoffs before we came on air. All the teams that were in the Super Bowl last year are sitting home this year. The champions are sitting home last year. Pretty quickly in the missile defense world, you got to perform again. And so, I would leave the audience with the point that so many of them play a role in industry, and on the hill, and the army and missile defense agency, and so many places that have a role or commands in this, don't forget our team needs to keep operating at that level. There's no, sort of, given right to success on the battlefield and so we've got to continue to operate as this high performing team. And so many people have a role, but thanks for bringing this together, Riki.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

Thank you, John. And you're referring to the playoffs, that's what we would want to comment. Obviously, the defense did win the games on both those games. But interestingly, the decision maker, the most important decision maker didn't make the decision for the team. He chose to do it his way and not throw the ball out of bounds and let the team play for him, both cases. So this has been, this effort for THAAD has been a tremendous team effort all the way back to 1990. All the way up till today and to everybody that's in the field today, vastly, people matter. Winners matter. This is a winner and we're very fortunate at the MDAA to have gone to Abu Dhabi and have honored those war fighters from UAE that made that thing happen on January 17th. We were honored to go for six years or so in Guam for our THAAD guys.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

We also went right in when they went in, we also went right into Korea to honor those soldiers that don't get the honor, that don't get the recognition. And certainly the developers, the industry team, the government team, they don't get the recognition. And so this is a celebration, and this is inside the locker room, inside the community. Well done. And as you all said it, a deterrent. This is the most deterrent punch that's keeping our world safe and that's not going to conflict. We're not going to war against Iran because of this. We're not going to go to war against North Korea because of what we've got in South Korea. So this is one of the greatest tools that the taxpayer has. All I question was we don't need five of them in the US.

Mr. Riki Ellison:

We need to get them out. That's where they should be. As you said right, John, they need to be out and about, and we need to get the nine, or we need to get more, because it works. And we got to, and it's going to go, you got to play with what you got. This is what we got. And we'll integrate it all with the newer systems as it goes forward, but let's play with what we got and put those guys on the field and not leave them on the bench back here in the US. But, what a great discussion. I really thank each of you for taking the time to help educate our public and Congress and everybody that listens to our program. So thank you very much, gentlemen.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:35:49]