

Riki Ellison:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. At the end of our summer this year, I'm looking forward to the weekend. Welcome. I'm Riki Ellison, I'm the founder and chairman of the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance. We founded this 20 years ago, and we founded it on the purpose and belief that having missile defense capabilities, evolving them, developing them and deploying them around the world, makes the world a safer place. And there's no more than you can see right now on how important and how vital having capability is out there today to save lives. Lives are being lost, wars are happening and we have certainly believed that we could help prevent those, we can obviously save lives with the systems. We were founded 20 years ago. And the guy behind me, that statue is at Vandenberg Air Force Base, and that's President Ronald Reagan. And he was one of our forefront leaders in coming up with the bigger concept of the Strategic Defense Initiative. That was in a similar situation you could say, with a peer challenging world order. And this was one of the solutions.

Riki Ellison:

That statue sits above our ground-based interceptors, and was put there in 2007 with Mrs. Reagan and myself, and he's facing west. He is facing the Pacific and there was a reason for that. There is an elephant in the room, and there is a dragon in the room that we need to discuss and talk about. There's a Chinese proverb that says, "If you ignore the dragon, it will eat you." So, we see some of that unfold as we look at the world today. We know back in 1955 and through 1970, we deployed 30,000 American soldiers on Taiwan, and we put 200 nuclear weapons on Taiwan. And we had stability, we did not ignore the dragon and we created a containment strategy that was successful. President Nixon in 1970 wanted to ride the dragon. You can ride the dragon, the Chinese proverb, "you can gain its might and power". And nourished China brought them back into the international world with the United States, developed their marketplace with the United States, withdrew our nuclear forces in Taiwan and created a relationship that flourished as we've seen it.

Riki Ellison:

But now we're back in a situation where today we are challenged to even put our nuclear carriers in the strait. We are challenged by China. And China's policy with the strategic aspect of being able to own and control open international seas, airways, in particular the First and Second Island Chains, for their control and power. That has come to heights in the first of this month. With the Speaker of the House visiting Taiwan and we've seen the reactions from that. We at MDAA were out there in Hawaii, and we were honoring the Indo-Pacific missile defense units. That says a lot about a COCOM commander, [Admiral Aquilino], and his component commanders who found the time and the importance and priority of the missile defense mission for vendor INDOPACOM aspects of it, and to be able to balance China.

Riki Ellison:

So, we are here today on our 44th virtual congressional round table, to be able to bring in, we'll have about 120 years of experience that we're bringing to the table for you today. We want to present the policy history of it and the challenges of what we see facing it. We want to present

the military challenges that we see with them. We want to present the current solutions that our government is putting forward for the defense, missile defense of that arena. And we want to look at the allies' solutions to that. We also want to look at the crossover on U.S Homeland defense, because it is the U.S homeland with Guam at the forefront. So that is the discussion that we're going to have today. And it is very important. It is of national, vital importance for our country and for the world. The world order is being challenged.

Riki Ellison:

So ladies and gentlemen, we're going to start with our first presenter. Great friend, John Rood, former Under Secretary of Defense and Policy. He was with me when we founded MDAA way back 20 years ago, he's been in government in the missile defense aspects of it, both industry and government for over 32 years. And John's sitting on the Pacific. I would say that John out in the San Francisco Bay area in Santa Clara facilities, right next door to the San Francisco 49ers. I always have a fondness for that. But John's been great. And John, thank you for taking the time to come out here and express your thoughts on the current situation that we're in. Thank you.

John Rood:

Well, thank you, Riki. It's great to be with you. And for those that haven't been to the 49ers new stadium in Santa Clara, and the 49ers museum there, there's few videos there where you can see Riki in action back in his prime. But thank you Riki for inviting me and thanks for convening us on such an important topic. When you look back at the history of China and Taiwan, we reflect on the 1940s and in most of our history as World War II, and U.S military involvement in Asia focusing on the defeat of the empire by Japan's forces. In the China Taiwan context, after World War II, and fighting Japanese forces on the mainland, a civil war emerged between Chinese communist forces led by Mao Tse-tung, and the nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-shek. And in 1949 is when Chiang and his forces retreated to Taiwan.

John Rood:

And when I look back on the 73 years between that time and now, there's been a lot of tense times. Like in the 1950s during the Eisenhower administration, where the Chinese forces shelled small islands off the coast of China that were held by Taiwan. But when I look at what's happened in the last 30 days, I think this is the most concerning time in a tense relationship that's occurred since then. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of course visited Taiwan on August the 2nd. And that touched off seven days of intense military drills that the Chinese People's Liberation Army conducted. And it was really punctuated by the launch of 11 DF-15 ballistic missiles near the waters of Taiwan. Now, it was interesting to look at the areas that China chose to exercise in, where they chose to launch missiles, and the scale and the types of capabilities that were featured.

John Rood:

It's not just the fact that the People's Republic of China decided to make an issue, it's that they were sending a message with the type of military capabilities that were being employed. And of

course, the reason this is important is that the Chinese leadership sees themselves as in an ideological competition with the United States. Taiwan is not just in a flashpoint or a crisis issue between that government and the United States that dates back to the 1940s, but rather as part of Xi Jinping, the leader of China's ambitions to replace the United States as the preeminent global power. And so if you start with understanding the policy context and the ambitions of China's leaders, it helps to understand why the Speaker of the House flying to Taiwan would touch such a nerve. So Xi Jinping of course is now the eternal leader, the leader for life of the Chinese Communist Party and therefore China.

John Rood:

But he has very ambitious goals such as the China 2049 plan by the founding of the Chinese Communist Party's 100th anniversary. That is in 2049, 100 years after 1949, when they were founded that China will be recognized as the unsurpassed global leader in the world. And backing up from 2049, there are key milestones that he has also laid out for the party. Such as by 2035, to have the world's unsurpassed military power. In China 2025, there are 10 sectors of the global economy in which China wishes to be the dominant player. And part of that ambition is to reclaim territories that Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party in their telling of history, which by the way, doesn't always follow what we would regard as the accurate telling of that history. But in that history to reclaim Taiwan, having now reclaimed Hong Kong and other territories. So when Riki mentioned that the United States had supported Taiwan after the retreat of nationalist forces there in 1949, including the stationing U.S. military forces on that island.

John Rood:

But it was in the 1970s, of course, that President Nixon, in the famous opening to China, went to China along with Henry Kissinger. And the main objective of that was to split China from the Soviet Union at that time. The perception being two large great communist powers united, versus the United States and the West would be problematic, and that this would be part of the great strategic gain to split China from supporting the Soviet Union. But as part of that, there were a series of very complicated understandings in a so-called One-China policy that were adopted. Meaning the United States recognizes One China and recognizes the government in Beijing, but also recognizes that there is a government in Taiwan. Wants a peaceful resolution to the conflict, does not want either side to impose their will and change the status quo by force. And the Taiwan Relations Act was passed by the Congress in 1979, calling for the United States to support Taiwan militarily through sales of defense articles and support. And that's occurred since then.

John Rood:

But this wasn't as difficult to implement until recent years. Remember in 1980, China's economy was a tiny fraction of what it is today. At that time China made up just a small fraction of the world's GDP. But today China's economy has grown by some measures, including purchasing power parity to be larger than the United States. By most measures it's the second largest economy, and the United States being the largest. Militarily though, China has used that

growing wealth and that influence to fuel a substantial military expansion. Growth of China's military budget in the last 20 years of about 700%, according to the official statistics. And of course the official statistics really don't capture the full extent of that military growth. And it's been the kind of capabilities that were featured after Speaker Pelosi's visit. So after her visit, you saw 11 DF-15 ballistic missiles launched both to the Northeast of the island in the waters off of Taiwan, and to the Southwest bracketing the island. Also, those happen to be areas particularly in the Southwest where Taiwan's largest port Kaohsiung is.

John Rood:

And this is a message about the ability to disrupt trade in those areas. Now, China did large scale military exercises as well in six zones. So if you took a map of Taiwan and just picked six zones surrounding every quadrant around the island, that's where these exercises occurred. And in some cases, transgressed across lines, whether they be air lines or maritime lines where Taiwan would regard as part of their territorial waters, and that's internationally recognized 12 miles off the coast. China also conducted some of these exercises in areas that violate Japan's exclusive economic zone, with missiles landing for instance in those areas, also sending a message in the Northeast about the ability to resupply the island of Taiwan in a crisis. And as part of that, large numbers of aircraft, for example, one day yesterday, this is continuing 62 aircraft flown by the People's Liberation Army Air Force conducting exercises in and around Taiwan. In earlier exercises, 66 aircraft were operating at a given time.

John Rood:

Now, bear in mind, this is very large and also operates two aircraft carriers. China's both of their aircraft carriers being employed, substantial numbers in Naval vessels. To give you a sense of the scale, 66 aircraft would be a large percentage of the Canadian Air Force all in the air at one time. This is not a small series of exercises, but it's all meant to send a message that Taiwan is part of China. Efforts to support it diplomatically, economically, and militarily will be things that will raise the temperature for the Communist Party of China's leaders, and that they will seek to take steps, perhaps including militarily, to address the situation. Now, in the last six months to a year, you've seen Chinese military officials and others being much more aggressive in their statements and not ruling out the use of force to reclaim Taiwan.

John Rood:

I think Riki, we're in a real danger zone here in the next couple years, where the leaders in China who are very ambitious and believe that history, that they are writing a history for a new chapter, a new golden age in China's long, long centuries, long history, and they want their place in it. And reclaiming Taiwan would be part of that. And they have global ambitions, as I say, to be the world's preeminent power in return China to that central location in their minds. So we're in a dangerous period in the next couple years where they see the Chinese Communist Party leaders, I think, and Xi Jinping in particular want to change the status quo, and are testing to see whether they can use force. Now, missiles are going to play a very large part of any kind of conflict or any coercive activity here, and that's where I think it's very important for this group to focus for a couple minutes.

John Rood:

China has worked very hard to develop, and most importantly, to field the capabilities necessary to exercise this kind of coercion through missile forces. They've deployed over 1,000 short and medium range ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan, and are increasing their long range missile forces. And they don't disaggregate their theater forces from their long range forces. They're all operated by the People's Liberation Army rocket forces, and there, they see an integrated strategy to hold at risk targets in the United States, while also being able to coerce the Taiwan government and the neighboring governments in places like Japan. So we are going to have to have a much larger scale and more effective series of both defenses and offenses to deal with that. Taiwan has purchased Patriot missiles from the United States, PAC-2 and PAC-3 systems over the years. But the numbers are insufficient to deal with that kind of thousand missile advantage that the PRC has here.

John Rood:

Here I want to be blunt for a minute. There are some that would say, "Well, because you can't match the offense with the exact number of defenses, therefore missile defense is not feasible." I strongly disagree with that. I think you have to have enough defenses to provide time for you to attract an opposing force, for your offenses to come into play, for you to be able to protect critical sites, not everywhere. And remember, in a large scale conflict like we're seeing in Ukraine where Russia's featuring the use of missiles with well over 1,000 cruise and ballistic missiles fired, you have to be able to suffer some attrited losses, attrit your adversary, but continue to protect your ability to operate, your ability to maneuver, and to marshal forces where it's important, protecting your strong points if you will.

John Rood:

And so we have to adapt our thinking. We also have to create more of a deterrent effect, and that's why I really support the deployment of medium and intermediate range missiles by U.S forces that are being worked on by all three of our services, to include hypersonic missiles. Because if you have enough missile defenses to protect key assets, you can bring your offenses to bear and begin destabilizing an attacker like China. You can start to restore a level of deterrence that has been sorely lacking in the area for some time. And we're going to have to adjust our posture for our neighboring locations, and make improvements in neighboring locations in and around Taiwan and those areas, to give ourselves a better capability to preserve some deterrents. But it won't be done at the margins. We've got to be much more serious about it.

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John Rood:

And for those that might say "well, how important is this really to us"? Just consider the fact that the impact that the war in Ukraine has had on the world economy. A conflict between the world's largest economies would be enormously impactful. And in the case of Taiwan, a much larger economy than Ukraine, it's a very small country, the size of Maryland, roughly, but in terms of an economic strength, this is one of the world's strong economies, one of the top 20 economies in the world. And so we in the United States have a lot at stake. But most importantly, we have at

stake defending democracy and freedom in Taiwan, one of the freest societies, a functioning democracy, three successive presidential elections with peaceful changes of power. And according to Freedom House, one of the most free societies on earth.

John Rood:

And so we have an interest in supporting that and not allowing the Chinese communist authorities to impose their will through force, to crush a democracy and send a further message about the ascendancy of authoritarian communism and the demise of democracy and freedom. So with that, why don't I just pause there. I know there are other speakers coming and looking forward to the question and answer period, but thanks for inviting me to participate today.

Riki Ellison:

John, I'd like to follow up with you as we're seeing the escalation and it looks like Nancy Pelosi goes first, huge response from China. We just sent our two ships in there. We responded. As a U.S policy, do we keep escalating, or how does this resolve itself? And as U.S policy in the first and second island chains, what can we do to trump this, or we step away from it? What are the choices that you're seeing here to go forward or not go forward?

John Rood:

I think the US policy interest here is in promoting stability. I think that we need to be taking steps to create a greater deterrence, taking steps to promote cooperation amongst the countries in the region to create more diplomatic and political stability. And it's in our interest there to be of course economic stability. We have a, I guess I'd call it a "principled interest" in that we are supporting democracy and freedom, and we don't want to see the use of force, particularly by an authoritarian Chinese government there.

John Rood:

But this is a key point, I guess, in that sort of ideological struggle, and for those that don't realize it, we are in an ideological struggle with China. Xi Jinping very proudly proclaims the United States, the West, the idea of free economic commerce, free thought, speech, democracy, is in decline and that the communist model is superior and China is proving it. And through military expansion in Taiwan and elsewhere, it won't stop there. I mean, they do have a vision to exercise a preeminent role in the world.

John Rood:

So we have to decide, and I think we should decide that this is important enough to create a deterrent effect to stabilize the situation, and that's going to require use of military tools as well. So I think we have to be able to have a more distributed series of bases to operate from in the region. We have to be able to protect some of those in better cases. And I support the deployment of things like intermediate and medium range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles by the United States to our bases and our friends in the region. Because I think you can't think of this fight purely as a defense only fight. You have to bring the offense to bear, and we're not going to be able to operate in the same way.

John Rood:

Remember carrier-based aviation and other things will have severe limits when faced with this kind of threat, including ballistic missiles like the DF-21 that target our carriers. We have certain advantages and undersea assets and submarine capabilities, but we've got to think at a much larger scale. And that's the last point I'd make. We've got to think on a larger scale. You've probably read some of the articles like I have about US ammunition stocks in some key areas being depleted by the numbers of systems we're giving to Ukraine. We have to get into the mindset that these conflicts with large-scale adversaries like Russia and China are large-scale, and we have resources for them. We can't have niche capabilities and small numbers. We need to have much more robust capabilities, and that's going to require some sacrifice on our part, but it's worth it in my eyes.

Riki Ellison:

Thank you, John. That was great. Thank you. Our next guest is also coming from the Pacific. He's out in Oceanside where our Marine base is very close, our big Navy in the Pacific's very close and it's Ty Thomas. He was the former, just recently retired, deputy PACAF commander. And Ty's had over 32 years. This is his theater, he knows this game, so it'd be great, Ty, if you could help us understand the military challenges and where we need to go or should go from your perspective. Ty, it's all yours.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

All right. Hey, thanks, Riki. And good morning, everybody out there and glad to share the podium so to speak here with John and Mark, great friends and very intuitive and wise leaders. Yeah. So thanks for pointing out Airman's Heritage, even though I'm about a half mile from a whole pack of Marines there at Camp Pendleton, but yeah, they're at PACAF for about 18 months before I recently retired. So the bridge that I'd like to make here between John's very astute layout of the geopolitical landscape and the implications of the current events, is to focus on a key thing that John said about U.S policy.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

And that thing, that element that John mentioned was that it's U.S policy to ensure that whatever conflict exists in the Taiwan Strait is not resolved by the use of force. It could be resolved by some other means, diplomatic, otherwise, by the choices, positive choices of the parties involved, but not by force. So deterrence matters. Deterrence is a function of three things. We all know this, but I'll lay it out. One is communicating what it is to the party that you intend to deter. I think we're doing that right now. There's limitations on our lines of communication, but they understand that the U.S does have an intent to deter the use of force.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Second is an intent. That's articulated by our policies. Our policy has some ambiguity baked into them intentionally, but intent is the second element. And the third, is capability and particularly credible capability. And that's what I want to focus on here is that what is that credible capability that the United States particularly, and by extension allies and partners, bring to the deterrence

equation so that the PRC is deterred from using force to settle the Taiwan Straits question. That credibility is a function of being able to project force into the Taiwan Strait.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

The only way that the PRC would be successful is to be able to get large masses of forces across that 100 nautical miles of water. Okay. Well, where does the ability to project that force come from? I'm confident that some of it will come from the North. I'm confident some of it will come from the South, but a big portion of it will come from the West. And when I say East, I mean, Guam in the second island chain, okay. The ability for the U.S, and allies, if they choose to join us there in the second island chain, to project force from there is absolutely critical for us to present a credible military capability to support deterrents.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

That ability to project force is a lot of things. So John mentioned offensive ability to strike. There are going to be aircraft in the second island chain that have offensive striking power that will be generated, and they will go to positions where if they need to kinetically or non-kinetically affect targets, they will. There will be aircraft that rely upon the second island chain. They may not be flying out of the second island chain, but rely on it for logistics, sustainment, command, and control in order to be in a position to implement offensive force.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Even more critically I would submit, is that there's a defensive capability, defensive counter air particular that I would mention, that we have got to be able to set up along the ... in the theater, in the vicinity, or possibly sometimes over Taiwan itself, for us to be able to characterize the battle space to the extent that we can control the battle space, and then deny our opponent, in this case the PLA, the opportunity to maneuver and take advantage of key portions of the battle space and seize it.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

All of a good portion of that capability is going to come from the second island chain. All of that to lay out then that John spoke eloquently about the threat, it exists. It's a combination of a cruise missile threat and a ballistic missile threat. It's their IRBMs that can range Guam in the second island chain, but they're not inconsequential. They have them in large numbers, in hundreds, even of those IRBMs, and the cruise missile threats are measured in the thousands. We can be forward and we can do something about the cruise missile threat because those DCA lanes that I talked about can also hold off the PLA Air Force bombers, and that will help. It won't stop all of the cruise missiles because they can ...

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

So Guam and the second island chain remain at threat. We can disperse. We have plans for that, in particular PACAF but also MarForPac in terms of expeditionary air base operations, PACAF with agile combat employment, the Navy and Seventh Fleet and Third Fleet work and distributed maritime operations, that will all help. I will tell you that it will be insufficient unless we

actively defend. There has to be an active defense element to this, to thin the herd basically coming through. We're not going to get everything. We're not going to intercept everything, but if we can thin the herd and force the PRC to have to make hard choices, how many weapons are they actually going to expend to try to get through, to strike a particular designated point of impact?

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

If the answer is well, because of our defenses, both passive and active, they've got to put 10 weapons to be sure that they can hit one DPI. If I'm a commander on their side I'm thinking very carefully about whether I'm going to spend those weapons, because while they have a deep magazine, there's an end to that magazine and they're going to have to keep a strategic reserve, and I don't mean a nuclear deterrent reserve. I mean a reserve in advance, things don't go well for them in the Taiwan Strait. So how do you do that?

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

I think Mark's going to talk about that, but before I hand it off to Mark, the thing I'm going to tell you is that if you're going, "Hey, we're already doing active defenses on Guam," kind of. So yes, we have a THAD side on Guam, okay, and I won't go into all the details, but I will tell you that it has its limitations, and it is not the sole solution and never was intended to be the sole solution. Remember when it was put there, it was put there for a North Korean threat, not a PRC threat. Okay? So that's point one.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Second is that part of the solution as things escalate, of course you naturally go, "What about the Aegis BMD capable destroyers and other assets cruisers that might ..." Yes, of course they're part of that plan. And when they do that, and when we tether them to the defensive Guam in the second island chain, those multi-mission highly valuable ships are not doing the other missions that the Seventh Fleet commander and the INDO-PACOM commander need them to be doing. We need those ships to be doing other missions. And in order to do that, we've got to get better defenses on Guam in the second island chain.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

I keep mentioning the second island chain because as Mark talks through, I want everybody to bear in mind, as we disperse and operate, a decent portion of the dispersed in operating locations, depending on the range, the missile engagement zone of what we put on Guam, they'll also define some of those other locations. So it is really, really important for so many reasons for us to have a real capable element of active defense in the second island chain and particularly on Guam. And right now, we haven't done much and it's time to change that. And I'm excited about the fact that MDAA has had some impact on that. I'm excited that there's momentum, but there's still some really weird thoughts going on, and I hope Mark clears that up. And I look forward to talking a little bit more about that. So over to you.

Riki Ellison:

Thanks, Ty. Just following up with you, you talked run and shoot, you talked dispersal. When you measure it now, an investment that we are going to make in our military, is that more important than a hub like Guam to establish it, or is it more important to defend these mobile bases out there? And the second point I'd like to ask is because the cruise missile defense is such high volume, these are hard to detect, they're slow and maneuverable. Do we have enough sensors to be able to get over horizon capability to do what we can do to do that? And where does that rack and stack when you're looking at this big picture? We only have a limited amount of money to spend just ...

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Yeah. Yeah. So I'll address your second question first, Riki, which is that in terms of queuing to active defense effectors and our over the horizon or online site capability for sensors on Guam, it's limited to nonexistent in the sense of what the sensors are on Guam at present. Somebody can go, "Oh, but what about space? And we can see things from space." And I agree with you and we have really good OPIR, and that can give us some additional information. You're not going to get a tracking solution off of it. You're not going to be able to queue an asset that has an effector to be able to actually engage it using just the stuff we can get from space. So let's just dispense with that right now. Maybe sometime in the future, but not right now.

Riki Ellison:

Okay.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

To your second, so we need some form of elevated sensor, some form of airborne sensor, and there are a lot of options there, but we just need to get moving on it. To your first question, I don't think it's a choice between those. Here's why. Guam or Anderson Air Force Base is the major airfield on Guam. It's not the only one and it's not the only one that we might use, but it's the major airfield. We'll disperse off Anderson Air Force Base. It still must be defended because we're also going to use Anderson Air Force Base to maintain and sustain logistics and all the things that have to be done to keep a war fight going on.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Those dispersed operating locations though, if you go, "Okay, great. Let's focus on Guam and Anderson in particular and maybe Naval Base Guam," to leave the dispersed sites to only have passive means to defend themselves, puts them at more risk than any commander I think would be comfortable with. And so do you have to have, if you're outside the envelope of some defenses that could be set up on Guam, do you have to have the same type of setup with that and all?

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

No, but you need something. If you're sitting out on a rock somewhere in the Central Pacific and nobody else is helping you, you need to have something. There are solutions like that. I think Mark's going to talk a little bit about NASAMS, not a really ... I mean, it's a capability that's

available now. We don't even have it in the inventory except for some tiny fractions. I don't understand why we don't do that. And I think if the authorities that we've talked about, the US Air Force gets the opportunity to defend its own maneuver forces, this would be one way that I think they could do it. Over.

Riki Ellison:

Thank you, Ty. All right, Mark. I mean, we got both the policy and military out there. We'd like to understand very clearly, because we've been behind this tremendous amount of funding, over \$4 billion to have a defensive architecture on Guam, and is that the critical solution and what are the solutions out there to be able to follow what John said and what Ty said to support this effort? So Mark, it's all yours. Mark is former head of ops for INDO-PACOM, brilliant, brilliant guy. Go ahead, Mark.

Mark Montgomery:

All right, thanks, Riki. And I appreciate it. I stipulate I attach myself to everything John and Ty said. And so I'll build off of that. Look, we do have a plan. It's not 4 billion in FY22, '23, the money that we can kind of feel right now, but it's the starting of that transfer of authority. So what I'd say is it's a good news bad news thing. The good news is that we finally have a plan. After years of PACOM angst and OSD polling and pushing we have a plan and there's budget dollars, serious budget dollars being put against in '22, there was kind of semi-serious money, that kind of lead money you need, in '23, there could be good money there.

Mark Montgomery:

Of course the Senate in house has some questions because the bad news part of this is it's not a good plan, right? And I'm concerned because a plan that I think existed from the Missile Defense Agency, which might have been a traditional plan, has been morphed by an office called CAPE, the Capabilities, Assessments, Programming Office at the Department of Defense. And while they probably had an admirable idea, which is look, because of all the reasons Ty just mentioned, you want to distribute a lot of your defensive capabilities so it's not concentrated, because there's going to be a lot of inbound threats, I don't think it was properly implemented, this idea of distributing it.

Mark Montgomery:

And I'm going to give you a couple of examples and get right at some of the stuff that John averred to and Ty specifically named. We're really worried about the launcher. You and I have written about this. The army has a great new launcher coming on called the MRC. It is what they're going to do offensive strikes from, SM-6s, Tomahawks, potentially in the future some kind of hypersonic strike. I absolutely support the MRC. It is what's called an offensive system, which means it can hide and tuck away and drive. It's very mobile. That's fantastic.

Mark Montgomery:

The missiles are when they're down in the down position, not what the missile launcher, right, can get all their environmentals and everything. Of course, we're now talking about using the

MRC in this defensive Guam, about a defensive system, hence the word defense of Guam. And it turns out missile launchers in the fully erect position don't provide that same kind of consistent persistent environmental support that an SM-6 or SM-3 might need on a persistent ... when it's up 8, 12, 14 hours at a time.

Mark Montgomery:

So I don't know that it's the right system in general, but I'll say very specifically for the SM-3 I'm a little concerned because there's an implication, "Oh, you can get four missiles in here." I'm not sure any other missiles should be sitting by an SM-3 when it goes off in a launcher of the configuration that is. They'll have to do a lot of testing on that. The SM-3 has a booster drop zone which suddenly makes the positioning of the launcher very critical.

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Mark Montgomery:

And the governor of Guam is going to get a big vote, and I imagine his vote's going to be, stay in very limited areas because he doesn't want further votes by his citizens to put him out of office because he allowed the US military to create dozens or scores or even hundreds of booster drop zones. The MRC launcher, not the solution you want if you want anything fielded in 2024 or 2025, and I'm not sure they'd even be in the numbers we need by then. We've recommended, and I've seen that it's in the House NDAA, National Defense Authorization Act, that's passed only the House so far, one to three, Mark 41 Vertical Launch Systems.

Mark Montgomery:

These are 32 cell systems. They are targetable. They are definitely never, anyone who tells you their mobile is wrong, and they're relocatable in only the loosest sense of the word. They're relocated when they're on a ship and the ship moves. When they're on land, they're really where they're at. And they're certainly targetable. On the other hand, they will function to fire SM-3 and SM-6 missiles, and do that missile defense we need. Let's say I'm wrong and there's three consecutive miracles and the MRC works perfectly in 2025. That's not going to happen, but let's say it happens. The Mark 41s you bought just give you extra capacity and you can stuff the SM-3s in there, which you know can be fired from there because we fired from ships there. Really the first thing you gotta do is get the launcher right.

Mark Montgomery:

I think the radar, I wasn't there originally on breaking it up, maybe it'll work. It's rocket science to figure out because you got to pair the radar with launchers and all that to be perfectly aligned. And I remember doing it on a ship and the radar doesn't move much on a ship. It's on a panel on the side of the ship. It still was a pain and a butt to align, but I'll push the I believe button that MDA's going to work their way through that with either the SPY-7 or SPY-6. I believe they picked a SPY-7 variant that they'll call the ANTPY2. And I think some of those can be out there in '24, '25 so I'm on board.

Mark Montgomery:

The more they mention, in the C2 system they mention the IBCS, the less comfortable I get. The C2 of this is going to be Aegis and THAAD. They're both good systems. They talk to each other, and Thad talks to Patriot. We can have a good system here. It's more deconflicted and coordinated. We do this in Israel with what's called an upper tier control officer, we can do it in Guam. Here's something that's really good. We have really competent operators. We have really competent area air defense commanders. I'm not worried about that.

Mark Montgomery:

If you try to introduce or hold something up, which is the Army's favorite thing to. We're going to hold this up for IBCS, we'll be holding it up to 2028, 2032, 2036. And even then, on their own the Army had only thought about putting the scheduler system of THAAD into the integration. This would have to be the whole system and Aegis, that would be a cluster you-know-what. I'm really hoping they stick with the C2 systems they have and let the "Lung" Aquilino and his area, his pack half, whose his air defense commander, figure that out. I don't think that's going to be a problem.

Mark Montgomery:

I tell you what we're really missing, and John's talked about this in the past, Ty talked about it today. We're missing a cost effective, low altitude cruise missile defense system. And there is a Chinese threat. Believe me. If we somehow got other bombers, and I'm not even ready to push that button, they're getting to the point where they could actually launch ground-launched versions of this out in a couple thousand miles. They're getting there, plus summary launched and surface ship launched like Ty mentioned. Guam is going to be targeted by cruise missiles. They've got to hit that submarine base. That's where we reload. They've got to hit that air base. That's where we transition. Keep the fighters and refuelers, they're going to keep the bombers coming in with long range, anti ship cruise missiles. They've got to hit these places, so they're going to work on it.

Mark Montgomery:

The Army has struggled in this cruise missile defense mission since the end of the cold war. They had Slam Ram, they had MIADs, they had IFPIC, they danced with Iron Dome for a year. None of these have worked out. The good news is the National Guard has figured something out. It's called NASAMS, the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System system. It's so good that it protects the White House, Pentagon and Capitol Hill. It's so good that when Ukraine needed something, we bought two, four batteries from it, and now we're buying another six. If it's good enough for Ukraine, I'm going to go ahead and stipulate it's good enough for Guam, for Massawa, for Ramstein from Milton Hall. The United States needs to get smart and buy about 12 batteries, plus we got to defend some logistic sites in both USPAYCOM and EUCOM in addition to those air bases.

Mark Montgomery:

We've got to get purchasing this. If we have NASAMS, and there's different variants, where you can pay for an expensive AMRAAM, still much cheaper than a Patriot, or a less expensive A9-X.

I'd get a mix of those in there so that you can keep yourself reasonably cost effective but good. As you know, Riki, we're testing an AMRAAM ER version right now, so there's going to be two, three different versions you can put in here. Chinese don't have to know what's in there. We can control that.

Mark Montgomery:

And then finally, and I think Ty was dancing around this too, we do need to get ourselves a persistent aerial detection system. And what I mean by that is probably an aerostat with 360 degree surveillance radars, precision tracking system. Again, when Israel needed something to really improve their likelihood of countering Iran, the US Missile Defense Agency and the Israeli Missile Defense Agency built a system called HAAS, which is exactly that persistent radar. Instead of the old JLENS, which was two dirigibles up, it's one aerostat up, slightly larger, with radars that do both the surveillance and the fire control, support, precision tracking system.

Mark Montgomery:

You have that up there, that's going to make your NASAMS better. It's going to make your Patriot better. It could even help the standard missiles out of the Mark 41 VLS. If you happen to have a ship nearby, it'll help them out. It's just going to help. If you've gone crazy and you're trying to use an F-35 to intercept one of these missiles, it'll help that out. I wouldn't recommend that, but there's a whole lot of ways it can help. And look, is it windy? Can it get stormy in Guam? You bet. Aerostats have tethers. They can come down. We're not morons. We know how to operate these systems.

Mark Montgomery:

But that's the kind of investments we need, NASAMS, JLENS. And I want to say one final thing. We kind of dance around this, but the other critical element's hypersonic missile defense. We have got to get the Glide Phase Interceptor going. Glad to see \$225M in MDA's budget for that in '23. I know the Senate and House get pissed at how they're briefed on this. They need to back off and give MDA the money to do this. This is what MDA, the Missile Defense Agency's good at, doing the research and development, the core stuff to identify the weapon system we need, work with the contract, with the defense industrial base, and then turn that system over to services for fielding.

Mark Montgomery:

We have got to do that with a Glide Phase Interceptor. We've got to not muck about with that R&D money for MDA, because I'm telling you, the Chinese and the Russians are spending money like drunken sailors on offensive systems. You have got to get the defense. If you don't have defense and your authoritarian adversary has offense, his compellence can trump your deterrence very quickly. We need that investment, so that's where I'd leave it at, NASAMS, JLENS, hypersonic missile defense, and I'm on board with the DoD plan.

Riki Ellison:

Thanks Mark. When we look at that plan, we're seeing a test bed. And I think everybody wants to have a test bed and develop those new weapon systems coming forward. We're all for that. But the test bed's not an operational defense capability, nor it doesn't look like it will be until '28 or '30. And the original intent, or the requirement for the COCOM, is to release those ships from the BMD increased missile defense capability by '24, '25. Can we coexist? This is what we can coexist right now because that's a complete test bed. It's not a capability right now with real capabilities that we have, whether it's Patriot or THAAD or NASAMS, whatever's out there to bring in.

Riki Ellison:

And doesn't look like MDA is allowed to do that. They have to follow the plan, which is MRC development and the radar development. And we're not getting real capabilities right now to integrate, to hit those timelines that are so important in the '25, '26 timeframe. We're not getting it. So that's where I think that the issue is. Can we do both at the same time? Or do we have to ... Because I think they're scared. They're going to throw the test bed out and just do stuff that we've got, so how do we do this?

Mark Montgomery:

What I just described was absolutely executable in 2025. I do think SPY-7, because it builds on the defense that was being used in a missile defense—

Riki Ellison:

But Mark, every one of those weapon systems are not developed.

Mark Montgomery:

No, but SM ... Hold on.

Riki Ellison:

Every one of them.

Mark Montgomery:

SM-3 exists, SM-6 exists, THAAD exists. The THAAD radar exists. SPY-7 exists. That's one of the hardest ones. The Mark 41 VLS exists. I agree with you.

Riki Ellison:

But those are not in the plan.

Mark Montgomery:

Their plan is missing a couple elements that exist now that need to be put in, Mark 41 VLS, NASAMS and an aerostat. All three of those can be made available by late 2024, early 2025, if they begin the funding in 2023. NASAMS even faster. We're delivering the NASAMS to the Ukrainians, including a trading package and an English to Ukrainian translator in three to five

months. I'm pretty sure we can deliver this. My point is this. You're right, the plan as it is doesn't release the ships. The plan as I described does release the ships, and it's iterative. And Ty talks about this when he talks about defense of the Homeland. You got to field stuff you have, and then you build your aspiration. If you just wait for the aspiration, you're going to be very disappointed.

Riki Ellison:

Thanks Mark. I like to go back to Ty real quick. We had announcement last month of the Dep Sec giving cruise missile defense of the US Homeland, to the US Air Force. Guam is U.S Homeland. And I'd like to see what your thoughts are. Is there a migratory position where the Air Force can help with this situation on that? And how do you see that happening?

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Yeah, thanks Riki. And Mark teed it up well. You mentioned Guam. Yes, one of the things we didn't talk about, why Guam must be defended, is it is US territory. They're US citizens on the island of Guam and in the second island chain. And it's a fact that you just laid out. It's not even optional for the U.S Air Force to lay out the architecture for cruise missile defense of the Homeland. It's now their J-O-B. They don't have a choice not to do it. They have to do it.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Whether they get involved in the architecture associated with defense of Guam and elements of the second island chain, I think that's moving far enough along. And the discussion that you and Mark had, there is a near term solution with existing capabilities that can be supported by existing C2 capabilities that we can have in place. We need to do that. We can develop other better capabilities and tandem with that, but let's get it there. That architecture, using existing tier 09, mature technologies, if it can defend a large volume area like, Guam the island itself is not that large, but the portions of the second island chain that need to be defended, yeah, a pretty large area. And oh, by the way, that extended range version of the NASAMS missile, pretty darn good. And oh, by the way, even if we didn't have it in the hole, to Mark's point, SA-21 has several versions of effector on it.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

The longest range version of the effector is typically the way that we respect that system when the Russians or others field it, even though that Grindle missile may not be sitting in the hole, it may not be in the launcher. Well, they've got to respect the same thing for us if we field an effector like that, in the NASAMS at least, for part of the Force. All of that to say we'll develop architecture that can be fielded in 2024 or early 2025 probably, to defend Guam and the second island chain. Somebody tell me the reason why we couldn't take that very same model, and the U.S Air Force, now I'm kind of talking to my colleagues and talking to the senior Air Force leadership who this is now their job, why not just take that model and then apply it for cruise missile defense of key parts of the Homeland?

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

NORAD NORTHCOM has this huge critical asset list. It's pretty much the whole country and how you look at it and how you slice it, but it's large. They've got to turn that into a defended asset list. Let's talk about what our defended asset list looks like right now. Mark talked about it. It's the national capital region. We have to have more of a defensive defended asset list. That's the US Air Force's job now. If you take that architecture that we're talking about for Guam, can you defend the key military infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest? I think you can. And there's some really important assets to defend there. Can you defend the key military infrastructure in the Southeast United States, particularly along the Florida coastline? I think you can.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

I could go on and on about key parts of the United States that need to be defended. Commanders and all the way up to the commander in chief have to make the choices about what you're going to do. But as long as you make those assets transportable, and that's key, and as with everything except for the Mark 41 VLS I think that Mark described is transportable, you can have a capability that if it's a West Coast fight, you can focus on that. If it turns out it's an East Coast fight, and there's always going to be stuff in the middle of the United States that needs to be defended, this can be done.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

The Air Force has to have the resources to do it. Let's be straightforward here. There are so many hot potatoes that Secretary Kendall, Chief Brown are having to work to keep alive and keep going. And OSD has been supporting them with resources, but this is an added thing if they're expecting the Air Force to it. But the reality is this is a joint solution. We all know that. It's a joint solution. It's a layered solution. Everybody's going to contribute, but we need the Congress's help, and we need the leadership and a president's budget that says we're going to commit resources to cruise missile defense of the Homeland.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

The other thing that I would add on this, and what I'm really trying to lay out, is a very simple process to get this done in the timeframe we need it done. But the Air Force has to pick a leader to do this. To quote Chief Brown's predecessor, Chief Dave Fingers Goldfein, he learned early on there's three things you need: "You need to have a plan to do something, you need to have a mechanism to report back with progress on that plan and you need to have somebody to own that plan", a single individual, a single leader that owns that plan. I think it's going to take a three or maybe even a four star in the Air Force over the next three years to get this cruise missile defense thing done. But if the Air Force organizes to do that, they'll get it done. And it's so crucial.

Riki Ellison:

Yeah, Ty, thank that man is secretary of the Air Force right now, Frank Kendall. There's movement in that direction. And I think to add onto it would be the force operating air bases to take the load off the Army so they don't have to cover all those things. There is some

phenomenal opportunity there that's coming to the front here, and this is being forced. I'd like to ask John— go ahead.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Just on that last piece though, I agree with you that in MDA and the roles and responsibilities, the Air Force needs to have the authority to defend its forward expeditionary maneuver forces. But I would submit that that is a different task and a different, it may even include some of the same systems, but a different task than cruise missile defense of the Homeland. I think it's important to make that distinction, over.

Riki Ellison:

Clear, clear on that. Jon, you've been in that building. How do we end up with a plan that's not executable for the war fighter that we're going to spend this much money on? How does that happen and how do you correct that if it is indeed going in the wrong direction? And one more thing with you, John, is how do we bring our allies into the game here? Because this is not U.S versus China. It can't be. That's not what you want. You said it, to bring the pressure from the other countries, and how do we get them all to play with the common weapon systems and the integration and all that to force that deterrent that we would never go to war in the Taiwan Strait?

John Rood:

Well, to answer your first question, how did we end up in this place, there are a lot of times over my career in the Pentagon where you come to that conclusion, we're in the wrong spot, this isn't where we want to be. And sometimes people would throw up their hands and say, "How did we get here?" Well, the real answer is we got there one day at a time. We don't always work. We have different organs and organizations that are set up to play certain roles. Sometimes frankly, they're not playing their principal role. And I think that's an issue. And I see that here, and then in other areas, just plain old execution issues.

John Rood:

But on the first part, I think we've got to stay true to the organization structures and where some of the centers of excellence we've set up. The Missile Defense Agency has been set up and given certain authorities to be the center of excellence for how the technology and the skills to develop missile defenses works. We need to empower them. We need to, frankly in my opinion, give them more authorities and the ability to move faster. But when you fall away from that, for example, part of this debate has been about the role of the Cape, the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation organization, that's their role, cost assessment, program evaluation.

John Rood:

They're supposed to help the Secretary of Defense integrate all the different services and other activities being done across the department, not being that principal systems architects, because they don't have operational experience, not being the principal developers, because they frankly don't have development experience in the same way that others do. That's one of

the ways we get there. We fall out of understanding where our centers of excellence are and empowering people to do their jobs.

Riki Ellison:

John, just on that, the cost now of that architecture is more expensive than anything. The cost overruns of being able to maintain multiple trucks, that was even figured into the whole thing. It's more expensive now going into a solution that's ... I'll let you ... I get frustrated with, but go ahead. You got it.

John Rood:

Well, no, no. I'm agreeing with you, but cost assessment means assessing the expected costs of something.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:00:04]

John Rood:

Here again, if you stay true to what are your centers of excellence and what are people's strengths and allowing them to perform cost assessment is a valuable skill that the Cape provides an independent assessment of what a new aircraft or a ship is going to cost or a new missile system. And they've got a good track record at cost assessment. They don't have a track record, they have a lousy track record of alternate solutions, quite frankly. And it's an organization that in its initial instantiation, by Robert McNamara to be something that did program assessment and did systems integration and systems engineering really struggled even in those days. But it's clearly become, I think, outside its lane and we're suffering with the results. So on your second question about what do we do about this essentially and where do we go? I think, we have to one, I mean, some takeaways to me from today's environment, we have to devote a larger amount of resources to what the principal military threats are.

John Rood:

The primary weapon that's being used in Ukraine: missiles; primary weapon that the Chinese are featuring that we need to be able to counter: missiles. And usually this gets tied up in that building in a debate saying, well, there are other needs. We have irregular warfare needs. We have needs in the Middle East elsewhere. I would say it hasn't gotten much press attention, but there was an attack with an armed drone, an Iranian produced KAS four drone on American forces in Al-Tanf, Syria. That's a good example where a militia backed by the Iranians flew a missile from Iraq, a cruise missile in essence, to attack our forces. And our forces there have a 55 kilometer exclusion zone. They've built through a series of successive layers of defense, many areas, but where were they weak? Air defense, the ability to deal with cruise missile defense, in essence. And we've talked about that a lot.

John Rood:

We're going to need that in the theater for a regular warfare or small militias, we're going to need that in large scale conflicts like Mark was talking about in Guam, and we're going to need that in defense of the Homeland like Ty was talking about. So one, we got to resource it. Two, we got to put organizations in charge and empower them. Whether that's the Missile Defense

Agency, as we've recommended roles and responsibilities, as the main systems architect empowered to do their job. But then, we need services like the Air Force to be given the mantle to go defend the air domain. That's their principle, reason and expertise operating successfully, both for offense, and defense and the air domain. And that's why we recommended the Air Force play a bigger role in that area. The army will have to handle the ground fight, but the air domain is really in my view, the Air Force is and that's where we've got an expertise to take advantage of.

John Rood:

I'm hoping that the Congress also plays its role here and really looks hard at some of these decisions, because ultimately the Executive Branch makes proposals. But if the Congress sticks to its core competency and then makes judgments about what should be funded and how that's done, I think they'll play a really critical role if they step up to that plate. And can, we have people there staffed by very capable people that can do it. But again, people got to play their roles and we've got to stay with what we give us our centers of excellence. And it's when we don't do that, I think sometimes we end up in these situations saying, "How the hell did we get here?" And again, the answer is, well, one day at a time, unless you do something about it. And the same answer I would say is: it may seem overwhelming to put in place the kind of offensive missile capabilities we need, and defensive capabilities, missile defenses in the Pacific to deal with the threat that China poses, but we can do that and we're not alone. This is what I'd close with.

John Rood:

The Japanese government is substantially increased its spending on defense and in these areas. And they're willing to do more outside of the borders of Japan, Taiwan, government proposed a record defense budget, roughly 14% increase in last year's defense budget for them. They're also stepping up given this threat. We have to bring more of our allies to the fight and really make that a priority. And that's something, whether it's trying to work through and restore a more positive relationship with the South Korean government now after the election of their current leader, bringing Australia and New Zealand to the fight, cultivating a relationship with India and the region, and then new allies, whether they're in Indonesia, old friends, like the Philippines, there's a number of places we can go to try to cultivate more of an alliance structure and that's core to our way of fighting and core to our success for the future.

Riki Ellison:

Hey John, we're seeing these countries, we're seeing China try to isolate us in Taiwan. So, if they're any other allies trying to come into Taiwan or go into the streets is going to be harassed and they're not going to go in. We've seen it; France, England, Germany, they're not going in. So we have to create a flotilla, I mean, how do we get courage for them to confront or do we protect them? How does that happen? Because it looks like they're not wanting to engage with China directly and be peeled off the—

John Rood:

Yeah, we're going to have to work on that incrementally as well. Remember, China is the world's second largest economy, and they've used that in a coercive way, but you are seeing more countries recognize the limits and the danger of that. And so, for instance, in 2019, when I served in the Pentagon, we did more FONOPS through the South Pacific area, freedom of navigation exercises that had been done in the 40 year history of the FONOPS program to date at that point, by showing that we could fly, and sail, and operate in international waters. We don't have to have a flotilla, but it's more of a political statement that you're making. So for example, carrying ship riders from other countries, carrying 30 observers from 30 nations aboard a cruiser such as the two that went through the Taiwan Strait in recent weeks would be a cost effective way to do that and show a political level of support.

John Rood:

We got to explain to these countries why it matters to them. China may seem like the other side of the world, but in today's economy, and hopefully the pandemic has really helped us here, that's just not the case, the way people are integrated. And for some Americans who haven't been as attuned to the Asia threat, they may not recognize the shift in the global economy there. Today, more than half of the world's economy is located in Asia, 21 of the 30 largest cities are located in Asia, more than half the world's middle class lives in Asia. The bulk of our trade and our economy in the United States is tied to Asia. And we're a Pacific power. The United States always has been, we have more Pacific coastline than Atlantic coastline, and we should not shy away from that heritage and that knowledge about how important this is to us.

John Rood:

But I think for allies in Europe and in elsewhere, like say in the Middle East, showing the importance of the region to them and the need to stand up for these things, because otherwise they may not be very comfortable to see the results of a Ukraine-like conflict occurring in Asia. And it's going to be much bloodier in Asia and our history of fighting in Asia, those wars have been bloodier than the ones we've fought elsewhere. So, we need to prevent that, deterrence stability. We need to stand up for our principles.

Riki Ellison:

Thanks. Mark. We're a little over time, but we're going to go extra. Are there any questions that you can summarize from the outside that can come in quickly or before we wrap up? Can't hear you, Mark.

Mark Montgomery:

So yes, I'll take two of them, and I'll answer them and then you can pass the wrap up to John and Ty. So there's a lot of great questions and a lot were on Taiwan broadly, as opposed to the defense of Guam. It says, first question, "What's the current state of Taiwan's missile defense based on the current spending modernization, how will this change in three to five years?" And a related question was, "China needs to gain control of Taiwan's assets and infrastructure, would that not limit the size and form of China's missile attack?" And so, I'll take that and say, first Taiwan has spent their 2.4% of GDP. If their economy hadn't grown so much, they would've

made the 2.6% they were aiming for, but unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, their economy has grown aggressively over the last 18 months. So they're doing well for democracy to be spending well over 2% is a reasonably unique thing. The United States does that. Israel does it, it's a limited number of countries. Greece, and Turkey do it once in a while, but it's about each other. I'm not sure that's a good thing. So their spending's good.

Mark Montgomery:

The problem they got of course is capacity. The Chinese have so many... Everything we said about Guam, triple it, and you can say it about the island of Taiwan. So, they actually have to be investing in passive defenses; getting the things they really value tucked away in a place where it might not get hit, having dummies and decoys out, things like that. They're not going to probably solve the capacity issue through kinetics, through having that system. So until we have some kind of laser based system where you might be able to replenish yourselves rapidly, I have a feeling that they won't get to it, but spending 2.4% is starting to get into that issue, building the kind of systems that deter other Chinese action is probably the best way to stop the reign of short range, ballistic missiles that they're going to see along with cruise missiles.

Mark Montgomery:

And the second issue of, "Won't China not hit their infrastructure," I think while they have an insufficient capacity, they may need to use that logic. The Taiwans in developing their defended asset list. Don't defend the things that you think China wouldn't want to hit. I mean, honestly, that's where you got to be at. And defend your things that you need to defeat the invasion when it occurs. So, that's a tough issue for them. China's GDP is like 17 times Taiwan's. Military spending is another 10, 12 times Taiwan's. They're not going to compete with them weapon for weapon. Good questions in there. I think that's it, Rick, if you want to throw it for closeouts.

Riki Ellison:

Okay. All right. Well, let's start with Ty to wrap this up and what thoughts that you have from the conversation.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Yeah. So Riki, I think just two things. One is to touch on your question to John, and the discussion of, are others interested in the stakes associated with deterring the PRC that aren't necessarily in the Asia Pacific region? I'll give the Brits some credit; I mean, they there's partnership that has to occur for their carrier strike group to go out into the Pacific and be a presence. But they did that, okay? Queen Elizabeth's first cruise globally was to get out there into the Pacific. I was still in PACAF when she came through and that's a pretty big statement. And because of the nature of how the Queen Elizabeth strike group went out by its very nature, it was a multinational or a combined set of forces. So as John's comment about ship riders, well, in this case, it wasn't just ship riders, it was other ships that were part of that strike group that moved throughout the theater. I think that's a clear signal.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

Let's not forget, France is actually a Pacific nation in the sense that there is French territory in the Pacific. And again, they were present. We remember hosting a contingent of Rafale and some tanker assets, airlift assets at Hickam as the French came through, I think early last summer. The Germans are talking about sending some of their, limited, but some of their Naval assets into the Pacific as well. So the idea that others understand the importance of presenting capabilities to help collectively deter the PRC's attempts to overturn the current international order and change the rules to be their way, and one of that ways to do it is to demonstrate force across the Taiwan Strait or elsewhere, South Chinese Sea, East Sea, whatever. I think we've got some friends and partners from outside the region that are paying attention.

Jon "Ty" Thomas:

So, the other part that I'll just come back to our discussion, everybody out there, you're listening. If you got a role to kind of help with this, let's get it going. Let's get the defense architecture that we've talked about that can be implemented by 2025 on Guam and in the second island chain. And then, let's take what we learn from that and apply a simple solution to cruise missile defense of the Homeland. It can be done. It looks like all of the elements are lining up to get it done and let's treat it like the national imperative that it is. It is a national imperative and we got to get after it. That's all I got Riki, over to you.

Riki Ellison:

Mark?

Mark Montgomery:

So I've said my piece; we need to fund NASAMS, reconstitute an aerostat and put the money behind hypersonic defense. And then the Congress needs to follow through on a vertical launch on having a vertical launch system attached to whatever they have so that we can reasonably defend Guam in 2025. And I attach myself to everything else about the aligned structures to the defense of the Homeland.

Riki Ellison:

Thank you. Thanks Mark. John?

John Rood:

Well, first of all, just compliment Ty on some brilliant remarks there and I associate myself with all of them. The only other things just in closing I'd say is China is the preeminent security threat of our time. And we are going to be dealing with that for quite some time, point one: they're the preeminent security threat. Point two: we may wish to confront that threat in various ways, but China's leaders, I think, will make Taiwan the first test of that activity. And so whether we would like the current situation to lead to greater tensions, or to die down, I think some of those things we have to remember is out of our control. And so, if we want to deal with the preeminent security threat and the leaders of China are making Taiwan the first test of that activity, we have to focus our attention more and use this current crisis as an opportunity, really, to get ourselves

marshaled around what we need to do to work with allies, to put in place the kind of deterrence that we need to have.

John Rood:

And deterrence operates in a shaky way. You've got to restore it, but then you've got to work to maintain it, but it's a tricky, artful balance. But if we do that, we don't have to get into a large scale conflict. We don't have to face the adversaries, and China's leaders' plan to retake the island in five years might become 10 years. And so, one more day, one more week, one more month, one more year of peace is really what we're after here, but we can't do that by not being serious about this threat and putting in place real capabilities to deal with it.

Riki Ellison:

Thanks, John, those are significant remarks. I think we've shed a light on the big dragon, we've shed a light on where the country's got to go and we've got to face it like we faced it before and we've got to be very careful; it is not a service specific we're talking Air Force, we're talking Navy, it is a joint fight here and we got to come together as a joint team across all the multi domains, space, particularly to fight this. And the army plays a part, they play a part on this boots on the ground count. We saw what happened back in the day on how we contain China. And it's our people. It's our representatives that are going to be spending 4 billion plus on defending US citizens. They better make sure that's the right way of spending the money. There's no way that's accountability right now.

Riki Ellison:

You've got lives at stake, you've got deterrence at stake, you can't use that money for a test bed anymore. You got to be able to put real capability that can ramp up, scale up to fight the big dragon, to slay the dragon. We got to be able to slay the dragon or have the courage to slay the dragon. We're not talking abouts, slaying them, but we better have the tools to do it. Because he won't respect that if we don't have the tools to slay him and it is a joint group doing it and it's our country doing it. It is the right thing to do, it takes courage from our allies to be with us. It takes us courage to be out in front, because that market is so big that we're all affected by it. It takes courage to slay dragons. We got to do it. So thank you for a great discussion and shedding light. No fear, no fear. All good. Thank you.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:18:36]