Virtual CRT Guam Defense System

[Riki Ellison]

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, from a sunny Northern California day, right off Sand Hill Road, up in Woodside, California. I'm Riki Ellison. I am the Founder and Chairman of the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance. This area brings back fond memories of 40 years ago with Ronald Reagan and my introduction to missile defense. So it's a really pleasure speaking to you from here.

We've just come from Tokyo and spent some time at Yokota Air Base. We spent three days, last week, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in the island of Guam and had the opportunity to tour and visit and brief site A, which is the U.S. Army's composite battalion that they are building for ADA. And the Aegis Guam site on Anderson Air Base, the spectacular constructions that I've witnessed since I haven't been back there since 2021, but it was phenomenal on the activity and the depth of what we've done since 2021. We were also there with the Governor, Governor Lou Guerrero, in honoring our Missile Defenders of the Year at Guam and also in Japan on that.

When we look at this discussion we're going to have today on Guam, we need to stand back a little bit and look at the strategic purpose before we get down into the details. And I think the strategic purpose, and we recognize this, four of our past 4 U.S. Combatant Commanders from INDOPACOM have told us, that there is a window between now and 2030 that China may challenge, it may go to war with us over Taiwan. And we have to do everything we can to deter that decision by China. And one of the critical things to do is to defend the island of Guam for that specific reason, to deter China, to have a gapless missile defense capability that questions their ability to try to do this. So that's number one.

I think number two is our Army Air Defense are developing this new composite battalion of air defense. Our air defense is legacy systems built, I think the first intercept was 91. So, they have moved to create a much more efficient, effective capability and reorganize their composite battalion. And they're doing that in Guam. So that's happening in Guam.

And I think the third point is this Aegis Guam opportunity. It is not Aegis ashore in Romania or Poland. It is a variant that is there. And the sole reason why we're doing this in Guam is to release our $2 billion ships that are on tether that should be doing other missions. And we do two, you multiply that by three or four more for that. So that's what we're doing here. We are trying to make the world safer with what we're doing."

So going back in history a little bit, we were invited or we led the advocacy to put the first THAAD unit in play. And that was controversial. Back in 2013, China was completely against it. We were driven by the North Korean threat to do it. And we put a THAAD unit on the island to defend Guam from North Korea. As the years have passed, like I said earlier from Davidson, Admiral Davidson, Admiral Aquilino and today Admiral Paparo. So we have to have a missile defense capability in Guam. That also concurred with U.S. Congress. Mark Montgomery was the head chief of staff for the Central Armed Services Committee in 1819 where the Congress allocated the first six or 7 billion to doing a missile defense capability by 28 in Guam. So that precedent happened.

But when I got there and I said, just me, we don't have anything else out there that is an effector besides the THAAD today. We don't, that's five years. And that's not right. When we know that you have an empty VLS capable of firing SM-3s, SM-6s sitting there vacant. We know we've got a THAAD launcher with six launchers. And we know the M903 launcher, which is being used in other AORs in this world today to be able to fire an MSE missile and a Patriot-3 missile is not integrated with that. And you don't have to wait for IBCS for that to happen. We all know that. So here we are frustrated. And I think a lot of this is not to do with the acquisition people. A lot of this has to do with the DMAG and CAPE who created some crazy architecture of multiple moving radars, multiple moving trucks on the one for four years and we threw it away and started all over again. And so that consensus is frustrating. And we're frustrated right now because we wanna see our capabilities be real and contribute to making this world a safer place and contribute to preventing China going forward.

So we're not the experts. We got a couple here that are the experts that are the program executive office. And I wanna thank Major General Frank Lozano for letting his people and his best leaders talk about this with us and be open and upfront with us on this. I think all of us have a different perspective and I think it's awesome to be able to put that out. I also wanna make sure we have the opportunity to question or challenge our podcast two weeks ago on what is IBCS. So I think we have the IBCS program manager here to answer any of those things around because this is about communication. This is about education and we need to understand this. And this is such a vital point of us going forward on that. And I'm keeping Golden Dome away from it. This is not Golden Dome right now. This is long defense, right? So that's where we're at.

Okay, so our first guest is Jeannie Sommer. And she is the expert and she is the program director, integrated fire director for all the programs. Massive job and she's well, well qualified. So Jeannie, welcome. Good morning from California.

[Jeannie Sommer]
Thank you, sir. And thanks for having me. I'm get really excited to talk about this capability because like you, I've had the opportunity to visit Guam a few times. And sir, I'm pretty sure you found the same thing that I did that the people of Guam are eager to have our support, our equipment on their island. You know, there's a mixed bag between some of the National Guard and the servicemen and then some of the locals. But in general, the Guam people I found to be very open and eager to have support from our capabilities from the United States homeland.

But just to reset everybody, as you stated, you know, the development of the integrated air missile defense architecture for Guam was initiated by Congress. The 2023 NDAA directed that we develop this architecture. Later, the army was designated as the lead by OSD ANS and which led to establishing the joint project office, the GDS joint project office. We talked a little earlier about General Lozano, Major General Lozano, who has been recently promoted as of Friday to Lieutenant General Lozano. He has now assumed responsibility for the Guam defense systems delivery and delegated that job to me to lead the JPO on his behalf. So really excited to speak to you about where we are and from the material developers and the acquisition perspective in delivering this capability.

So as the JPO, we are responsible for synchronizing the deliveries for each of the services and organizations to include the Army, Navy, Air Force, and MDA. And so we will realize the capabilities into the overarching IMD architecture. Our initial delivery is scheduled for FY27. And what we will do is deliver the initial capabilities and we will incrementally improve over time to realize the full operational capability just a few years later.

The JPO's acquisition strategy actually aligns very well to Secretary Hegseth's message that you all heard on Friday. We're transforming how we do traditional acquisition to a wartime footing with the speed, flexibility, and efficiency as the tenants of delivering the GDS architecture. For example, as PEO Missiles in Space over the years, we've conducted annual integrated fires test campaigns in order to execute developmental and operational testing in order to assess and field the system of system capabilities to the Army. And we do this on an annual basis. IFTC 26 begins in second quarter of FY26. And this is where we will test the architecture that contributes to the GDS overarching architecture.

Another thing that the acquisition community is being challenged on is to create early learning opportunities where we can inspire industry to achieve speed and increase volume. In response to this cry for speed, the Army delivered prototype units to Guam and USFK in FY25 in support of the Chief of Staff's Transformation and Contact Initiative, or we call them TICs.

The Guam TIC, as you saw when you visited recently, involves soldiers rotating in theater to conduct familiarization training on prototype equipment. The feedback that soldiers provide during this training is then incorporated into the design process, which results in us being able to more rapidly deliver capability to the warfighter. The Guam TIC allows us to assume acquisition risk in order to decrease operational risk as we deliver these components to GDS.

So, learning in an operationally relevant environment versus a controlled test environment is paying enormous dividends already, even though the capability's only been there a few months. We've learned a lot, and it will enable us to successfully deliver the critical joint capability. Over to you, sir.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you. Jeannie, you're done? You good?

[Jeannie Sommer]
Yes, sir.

[Riki Ellison]
Okay, 100% with you on Guam and the people there. They are 100% supportive of us, unlike they were in 2013, which was difficult. So you won their hearts out.

What is the capability? Is it IFPC? Is it, what's gonna happen in 20, are you gonna have a shooter, or are you just gonna have LTAMDS? What is actually gonna go on that in full

operation? And why aren’t we doing that M903 launcher? Why is that taking forever to get over?

[Jeannie Sommer]
So the architecture that will be delivered in FY27 does include the IFPC. And it is the IBCS with the IFPC launcher, Sentinel A4, LTAMDS. We will also, we already have an ALPS radar out there, as you've seen. And then we will have the RIG-360 to help ensure that we get longer legs on the PAC-3 MSE.

[Riki Ellison]
You wouldn't put the launcher, the 903 MSE launcher there?

[Jeannie Sommer]
Yes, yes.

[Riki Ellison]
Is that part of it or not?

[Jeannie Sommer]
Yes, sorry, overlooked. Yes, M903 launchers as well.

[Riki Ellison]
Okay, so that's all going in. I was there and it looks like you're doing a missile field and a sensor field. And it looks like there's a possibility that you might put an Aegis VLS on the missile field there as well.

Are we integrating with the Navy? With MDA, not the Navy. With MDA on this to fight? Because the layers above that are very important to do. And certainly Aegis has an SM-6 capability to counter hypersonics terminal.

[Jeannie Sommer]
So yes, so what I'd like to, so from my perspective, so we're the material developer. And so what we've done is our models and Sims that represent the capabilities that we're delivering is being integrated into a joint SIL or systems integration lab so that we can analyze the capabilities from the system of systems to include all of the services and determine the best way to emplace the equipment across the island to defend against the threat. It is up to the warfighter to determine what the defense design and the lay down looks like. So we're supporting with analysis based on our capabilities and the warfighter gets to determine where the capabilities go on the island.

[Riki Ellison]
Just one quick thing. One of the reasons people said everything's slowed down is because of mission assurance and the requirements that are so high. Are we lowering that? Are we able to move quicker? Can we reduce that or reduce the PK or reduce that risk?

[Jeannie Sommer]

So I would say, sir, we are going as fast as we possibly can and we are not being hindered by mission assurance or any other requirement. As we stated earlier, we already have prototypes in both USFK as well as Guam. And so these prototypes really under traditional acquisition would be sitting at White Sands Missile Range undergoing continuous testing there, but we're getting them into the hands of soldiers early. And so the combatant commanders are willing to assume the risk of having prototype units in the hands of soldiers and we are doing everything we can to get the capability there as quickly as possible.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you, Jeannie. That was great. All right, we're gonna go over to Paul Mann, the former executive director for all the Aegis Systems for MDA that he did. He led, he was there when they made a remarkable construction of putting a VLS on Guam on Anderson Air Base and putting it AN/TPY-6 radar up and shooting an SM-3 Block 2A out of there in less than three months. It's amazing what you did, but it's empty and we're not using it. I don't know what's going on here, but it doesn't seem to be in the plans going forward as solid as what Jeannie has said with the US Army. Paul, it's on you.

[Paul Mann]
Yeah, hey, thanks, Mr. Ellison and a great segue from Jeannie taking the hard questions. Hey, look, here's what I wanted to share a little bit of perspective on what we did, why we did it and why it was so valuable. And I appreciate Mr. Ellison, I would never debate you, but we worked on the defense of Guam system more than three months. And so it was an evolution that went, but we were converging on the final details pretty late in the process. So it was an extremely critical window for which this test was conceived and ultimately executed.

I need to really shout out two key themes that will be useful in the rest of this discussion. One is a test and evaluation and live fire demonstrations have to be planned and executed with dramatically more speed and a lot more risk aversion. It doesn't mean something bad won't happen on a range, it probably will, but the theme Jeannie explained, implement, iterate and learn is alive and well in Guam. And quite frankly, it was perceptibly so successful strategically that they wanted to, instead of removing all of the gear from the island, they wanted to make it actually operational. That's a real feather in the cap of the leaders seeing what's possible.

At the same time, everybody's focused on Guam. You have to understand in the world what else is going on. And so for the first time in the history, we've been shot at in great numbers and raid sizes. I wanna say shot out, we've supported the defense of Israel against the hostile enemy. And so, all of that's going on really over the last year while we're kind of trying to figure out, hey, do we need to show China that we can actually set up fast, attack Guam with a relevant operational threat and defend it? And that was the unrelenting demand from the Indo-Pecan at the time, it was Aquilino, Admiral Aquilino and he was direct, I would say unkind, it wasn't unkind. He just, he would not take no for an answer. We had to deliver and he removed anybody that would rationalize any delay of any kind and said unacceptable, that's not good enough.

So, Mr. Ellison, what I wanted to emphasize is that, and it was all of nation effort within the Missile Defense Agency. It wasn't just the Aegis BMD, there was environmental work that needed to be done, cement to be poured, but all the while we had to leverage that which has already been engineered. And people forget about the LRDR that was activated in Alaska to defend. We had already built some antennas for Japan and the new version of their, I say it was gonna be Aegis Ashore, or, you know, in Japan, Aegis Ashore in Japan, it became ASEV. And because we had done engineering work associated with those systems, it actually became practical to take portions of all of those things and smash them together in a very extraordinary way. It seemed very strange to decentralize and de-aggregate the computer from the launcher, from the sensor, from the people, but which is, you know, that's not what we did in Aegis Ashore, we kind of built a ship on the land.

But I wanted to tell you, it kind of put a spark in everybody on just what is the industrial innovation possible when the nation demands, you gotta do it. It was like, you can't take no for an answer. And I think the smart strategy was inserting new technology where it was appropriate, but also leveraging on the history and the experience that we have and all of that engineering rigor.

And so that's the second piece that I wanted to say. And, you know, I'll give John Bier, he was the leader of Guam in our place. So he was the big orchestrator. We were focused on the kill chain. But I think it's pretty extraordinary on how much innovation actually happened to reimagine an Aegis land system and make it operational in less than, you know, it was less than a year by the time we started in shipping and installing the gear.

By the way, we didn't have a land-based instantiation of any of this. This was really first time ever, the system in its current design physically was actually tested in a very compressed time. We had like two months before over Thanksgiving to get it ready.

Break, break. This is kind of a key point and I know I've only got a couple more minutes. Hey, look, the humans on this American team, whether it's Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, you go pick it. We have extraordinary talent everywhere. And if we remove the breaks and we empower them and give them a little bit of freedom to do their work in the field, there's nothing we can't actually do. Is it the end state? I would say, no, it's an implementation and it'll iterate. But there's a lot of utility to the INDOPACOM commander for having something that's operational and something you can talk about that's not PowerPoint. And we didn't just aim and shoot at a incoming threat, we intercepted it to everybody's surprise.

So hats off to everybody that was willing to stick their neck out and take some risk. I think this is just the beginning of a lot of architecture iterations that are gonna happen. And what we have to learn as a team is that the processes have to support going fast, the logisticians have to support a dynamic supply chain. And we used actual engineers sitting at consoles for this particular event, but we need operators to credibly be confident on how to use their system and to maintain their system while we're in the business of deterring China.

I'd be remiss if I didn't give a shout out to our beloved Admiral Williams. I gotta tell you, everybody said his schedule was unexecutable and he just drove them into an impossible state of you gotta come back with, yes, yes, and this is how we're gonna do it. And I think

this relentless execution is something that has total application for Guam and other things that the nation's gonna need us to do. And God bless the Standard Missile folks for producing a weapon on short notice that wasn't on the docket to be delivered, put it in the launcher and launch it on time. Mr. Ellison, that concludes my perspective about the Aegis Guam system, over.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you, Paul. And I'm with you, 100% credit. And you gotta give some to Heath Collins, Go Fast, Think Big.

[Paul Mann]
Oh, absolutely. Yeah, he’s the hero.

[Riki Ellison]
And Beir. They brought, to my understanding, you're gonna put 64 cells up there by Anderson and put 64 cells back down by the naval base to be able to play and you're gonna move that radar to the edge. And that's gonna be done because you're confident in doing that.

[Paul Mann]
The systems work and we know how to deliver them.

[Riki Ellison]
Yep, yep. How are we bridging integration into the Army system? That seems to be a problem with an MDA bridge. How do you see that? How do you see we get through this?

[Paul Mann]
Yeah, I'm probably, I'm removed by at least six months at this point. So, I'm not gonna speculate, but here's what I can tell you. All that has to be said is direction on what is required, and our engineers can solve any of this. So, it is not unsolvable. I know Jeannie has the broader role and responsibility of where the integration is going, but I'm convinced that the American ingenuity in our industry, both in the primes and the non-traditionals are all equipped to make dramatic progress on delivering this capability. It can be done. And so we ought to just demand like Aquilino did and just stop taking and rationalizing why you can't do it. Stop listening to everybody who says you can't and just start focusing on doing it. And that'll answer all the questions.

[Riki Ellison]
That sounds like a D-bag and cape to get through that. All right. Thank you, Paul.

Chris, it's great to have Chris here, Colonel Hill. I've been with him numerous times over in Europe. It's great.

He is the program manager for, I believe, IBCS and Patriot C2-3 or Patriot 3C2. Chris, it was awesome. You reached out to have us listen to your voice and your expertise.

So welcome and thank you. Chris.

[COL Christopher Hill]
So first off, I really appreciate it, Ricky. We're gonna run this post-plant right now. We're gonna take this one to the house.

So there was a very good discussion last week that you guys were having on Golden Dome and you were referencing IBCS. And of course, we know from an Army perspective, IBCS is a key component of the overall mission set that is contributing to what Ms. Sommer is leading there from a JPO perspective. When you think about IBCS, we've always talked about it as a system of two halves.

We've talked about a software half of the system and a hardware half of the system with the software being a suite of software algorithms that would be able to take data from disparate sensors, fire control level data, pass it to the best effector in order to prosecute the threat. But I think we're at a place now where there is a convergence that is happening right now. So we looked at the history last week of IBCS and it started way back in 2004.

And we're like, wow, this took 20 years, but really and truly it was 2021 when the Army made a pivot to IBCS starting iterative capability from an agile software development process. So that's really only been about four years since we made the decision to say, hey, this is a better way of doing business that allows us to really take the best of what industry can do for us as an Army. I was fortunate to come on board in 2022.

So the decision to go agile was made the year before I arrived. But what I mean by a convergence standpoint is this, there were a lot of things done in the past that slowed us down. I think there are some opportunities right now that are going to help us accelerate.

When we start talking about the reform that's going on in acquisition right now and with General Lozano moving into the role that he's in and the rest of the senior leaders within on the acquisition side of the authorities that they're going to have. Based upon the job that I'm doing right now, I'm currently working here in Europe with the Army Service Component Command supporting General Donahue for the Eastern Flank Deterrence Line. And everything that we're doing is how do we get industry to move quicker and faster to get kit in the hands of soldiers?

But what that's going to do for us as an Army is we're driving requirements from the bottoms up. We are informing the process based upon what the ASCCCGs believe they need in order to win. I believe that same mindset will start matriculating into some of our larger PORs.

We talked, you talked last week about the 90% solution. That's not what we need to win. We need to go after the 75% solution, the 80% solution because at that point, you broaden your perspective from an industry standpoint.

But the convergence that I'm talking about is speed, risk tolerance, technology, doctrine, requirements, and the willingness to put go-to-war type prototypes in the hands of soldiers

while we wait on the enterprise to do some of the larger scaling type activities. IBCS is moving from a POR standpoint. It's moving about as fast as it can.

We are fielding right now in Germany with 5-7. We're fielding in Korea with 6-5-2. Ms. Sarman mentioned the two TICs that we're doing, one in Guam. We're doing a second TIC in Korea with IFPC. And that's because there are two things happening at the same time. One, the Army has to replace Patriot.

So the legacy Patriot capability, those 16 or 17 battalions have to be replaced. We fielded Patriot in 1980 and here we are in 2025. So number one, IBCS has to replace Patriot as the system that we go to with for our Patriot battalions, our air defense battalions.

While at the same time, that architecture has to help support what's going on in the counter-US fight. So IBCS maneuver that's out there. So how do we start bringing in Sky Fortress? How do we start tying in some of the things going on with our NATO partners? That won't happen necessarily with the larger POR because it has that mission. But the underpinnings of that architecture are absolutely at play.

So we did a TIC in Guam. We did a TIC in Korea. Let's take the next step and take that architecture and send it here to Europe so that we can start iterating with some of the capability that the program office isn't touching yet so that we can help inform them and get ahead of them to give them the knowledge that they need in order to move faster when it comes time for the bigger dollars to move into the program.

So I think there's a convergence of what's happening forward with some of the innovation efforts alongside what's happening within our POR. And I just happened to be at a position where I'm still the PM for IBCS. And at the same time, I'm working the front piece from an innovation standpoint.

So the Army is starting to look at how these two things complement each other. They're not diametrically opposed. They're actually complimentary of each other.

We just have to follow through at the big Army level to say this is where my requirement really starts. How can I then allow that to move into our larger PORs to give them the speed that they need? Because the commanders are already saying we are willing to accept the risk. You give me the kit and let's iterate the capability. I don't need 100%. General Donahue will say it every day of the week.

We're not after 100%. You give me 70 and let's continue to iterate. I spent last week in USARPAC with General Clark and General Vowell and his staff.

We're getting ready to do the exact same thing out in USARPAC. So ASALT's calling it the Global Tactical Edge Acquisition Directorate. And essentially what we're doing is we're taking the enterprise and we're moving it to the tactical edge.

All the things that we're doing on a grander scale, let's get that into the hands of the warfighting decision makers so that they can help vector us in the right decision. And the

last point I'll make is while I was in Hawaii, we were talking about a capability that we're currently putting in the hands of US soldiers and NATO partners here in Europe. And the very first thing that was said to me by the 94th AAMDC CG, General Parker, was, “hey, we just had this happen on Guam.” “I need that system to support Guam.” Well, in the big scheme of things, that system is not a part of the Guam architecture, but the discussion and the conversation of what may be happening in another theater can now happen because we're looking globally and not just at each theater in a stovepipe. So this is information from forward that we can bring back to the Ms. Sommers of the world, bring back to General Lozano, bring back to the PMs to say, hey, there are things you're doing in one theater that we're doing in one theater that absolutely can support what's going on in another.

So I think the innovation efforts tied to what we're doing with some of the larger PRs can help in other areas. And specifically, I think Guam can be one of our first use cases.

[Riki Ellison]
Chris, thank you. Hey, I'll be with you out there with CD next week when we do that.

[COL Christopher Hill]
The flytrap.

[Riki Ellison]
As you said, he's leading everybody and Ukraine's forcing that to make the adjustments that you're making to lead. That's the one to go. We got to follow that.

[COL Christopher Hill]
Absolutely.

[Riki Ellison]
I want to just go back to IBCS real quick because when I, it seems to me, the IBCS has got to work one system at a time to get all the kinks out before it then goes to the next system. And we got three or four systems to plug into it. It's not doing it all at the same time. So it's just taking a long time to make this happen.

[COL Christopher Hill]
Yeah, so the way the integration works with IBCS, so people have mentioned over time, there's what we call a one-to-end list. And essentially what it is is the Army tells us as a material developer, it used to be signed off by the AFCCG that would say, hey, here are the 10 or 12 things that we need integrated into IBCS. And then there was a second page to that document that had joint requirements that also needed to be integrated into IBCS.

Now, from a agile software development standpoint, if you look at it, let's look at it like a balloon. When you start integrating efforts, every time you integrate something, it fills a portion of that balloon. So at some point, you don't have enough room to integrate anything else.

Now I will say there are always typically about six or seven, maybe even eight things being integrated at any given time. So we're never just focusing on one thing. Where we have to get the Army really to lean forward is, Ms. Sommer mentioned IFTC-26. When we come out of IFTC-26, we just came out of 25. When we come out of IFTC-26, we're gonna have a capability. From a risk tolerance standpoint, the question is, is the Army willing to feel that capability knowing that we're gonna iterate every quarter and we're gonna do an operational assessment every year?

So if the answer is yes, then you will start seeing capability a whole lot sooner. But the reason the answer isn't yes right now is, we're aiming for the 90%. And every time you integrate something new, you potentially affect what that plus 90 that you need to get to.

So it's a risk tolerance thing. It's an understanding that no system is ever gonna be perfect. We're always going to iterate.

And that way you never are looking to get one thing or two things or three things. You may get four, five or six, but each one will be at a different state of readiness based upon the amount of integration time you've had from a software perspective.

[Riki Ellison]
Hey, Chris, let me go one more perspective here for you. The Patriot system, the new composite battalion is a air-based defense system, point defense system. We may in Guam be expanding to the 35 miles of that island, but essential it is that.

And now we've got, as with CD and with all your commanders, you're maneuvering force vulnerability. Where's the Army dealing with that? That seems to be a huge potential movement that you have to get in front of, because our maneuvering forces are not gonna be able to operate without a county UAS, without an ADA that's in depth on this as well.

[COL Christopher Hill]
So—I'm sorry, go ahead, Ricky.

[Riki Ellison]
No, no, I'm good, I'm good.

[COL Christopher Hill]
So I will say one of the things that IBCS looks to do from a requirement standpoint that's different than Patriot is, Patriot is a point defense system. IBCS by its nature is an area defense system because you're not relegated to a single radar with a single field of view. So any sensor on the network gives you the ability to have area versus point defense.

But specifically to answer your question, here in Europe, one of the things that we're seeing is we have to look at different ways to see and acquire the threat. So when you start talking about sensor packages, when you start talking about acoustic sensors, when you start talking about all types of other passive sensors, things that are not in the Army inventory right now, a lot of these things, some of these things are a part of robotic systems that will be on the battlefield that can move as soldiers move. Because you're right, some of these

larger, more exquisite systems will not have the capability to keep up with maneuvering forces.

So as you look at the Eastern Flank Deterrence Line, it has a very well described portion of it that absolutely is robotics run. And within that, it's not just sensors, it's not just effectors, but it's both. And that is what will give us the ability to have that counter UAS.[Seems Wrong – 39:03] capability, aside from the things that we're gonna actually put in the hands of the maneuvering forces. But that's what gives us the capability to move that as our maneuvering forces have to move or matriculate the battlefield.

[Riki Ellison]
Okay, thank you, Chris, that was great. All right, I'm gonna flip it over to Jamie, former DECOM for Army PAC, Army Pacific. And Jamie, I like, because you've lived the cultural difference.

Jeannie talked about it, I've talked about it. Well, between the Navy and the Army, specifically in the Pacific. And we're seeing still some of that remnants of that.

Well, I saw it, it's there, it's real. I'd like to see if you can address that kind of thought or if I'm wrong, say I'm wrong and we're all kumbaya over there.

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
Yeah, so I guess, Ricky, one of the points I'd like to start off with is I'm in violent agreement with what Paul said earlier. Since I've been associated with Guam, at the worker level, everybody that is interested in delivering a capability to Guam is working hard and trying to do that to the very best of their ability. There's no doubt, no doubt.

The frustrating thing for me listening to this conversation is the same frustration I've had throughout. Not one time has anybody mentioned one person's name associated with some element of command. I am a commander who owns this problem, not once.

And so, we'll go back through it a little bit and I'll go backwards, start with Chris. Chris is talking about CD in Germany saying, hey, I'm good with 70%. Well, who needs to direct that we're good with 70% on Guam with IBCS and say, this is a priority, everybody get in line and let's fix it.

Who is that person? Chris, can you tell me who that person is?

[COL Christopher Hill]
So sir, I can't, I can speculate who it is, but I can't would certainly tell you exactly who the person is that would make that decision from a risk standpoint.

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
And they're in as part of the problem. I mean, that's part of the problem. I would tell you right now that if you ask various folks, if you ask Admiral Paparo, “yes, I'm good with 70%, go.”

You ask General Clark, “yes, I'm good with 70%, go.” You ask General Lozano, “are you good with 70%,” “yes, go”. But yet nobody is asking and nobody is telling, let's go, let's get this done.

And so that's part of the problem. I mean, Chris is infinitely smarter on IBCS than I am. But what I took from his conversation is that Chris has multiple bosses across multiple continents that all think that they're the priority.

And so where is the Army's priority for IBCS? Is it Guam? Is it Fort Bliss, Texas, where we're gonna continue to try to innovate in CONUS and try to get the 100% before we filled it?

Or is it in Europe with CD? Where is it and who is directing the prioritization of the Guam defense system to get this thing solved? And then I go back to Paul and Paul's point was, hey, he is fully confident that our engineers in the United States of America can solve this problem.

I 100% agree with him. So somebody needs to demand it. Somebody needs to direct it to happen. Who is that person? Who is that person? And Ricky, I think he's talked about a DMAG or going back to the Secretary of War.

Again, we're changing the acquisition process apparently and we absolutely need to, because this is a Exhibit A on why we have a failed acquisition system is the Guam defense system. And so we've got to have, who is that person? Paul, can you tell me who the person is that needs to demand it?

[Paul Mann]
Yeah, hey, so in my past life on the MRAP experience, it was the Secretary of Defense and Gates and he demanded of his undersecretary, undersecretary demanded to everybody and everybody got online on what the secretary did. Can it happen lower in the organization? There was clearly service leaders that carried out the duties, but the direction on something really important on that case was set by the Secretary of Defense.

Alternative answer is as long as the Secretary of War is aligned with the INDOPACOM commander, there's your two right there, but they have to be aligned. If Aquilino then and now Paparo's direction comes in and gets debated by DMAGs and panels inside the building and altered, then it's no good. So in summary, Secretary of War, commander of INDOPACOM, those are my two that I would say, ready, go.

Over.

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
Yeah, thanks, thanks, Paul. And so now I go to Jeannie a little bit and Jeannie, you talked about the war fighter. You said the war fighter directs.

I'm assuming that war fighter that you're talking about for this capability is Admiral Paparo at INDOPACOM. Is that accurate?

[Jeannie Sommer]
Yes, sir.

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
And is there clarity with General Lozano and your team with what INDOPACOM wants on the island of Guam with respect to who's going where and what they're doing and the capabilities that need to be there?

[Jeannie Sommer]
I would say the answer is no. Then, you know, having taken on this job just a couple of weeks ago, that's one of my initial initiatives as we do stakeholder engagements very soon, as soon as I can travel, I'll just say that, is to try to start connecting the dots. Because if I talk to USARPAC, I get one answer. If I talk to the 94th, I get another. If I talk to PACAF, we get another. And it's not that I think that everyone's disconnected.

I just don't think they're coalescing as quickly as they need to for us to deliver the capability on the timeline that we've been given for FY27.

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
Yep, thanks, Jeannie. And so there's another huge problem right there. And, you know, what I heard you say was USARPAC, 94th, PACAF. I didn't hear you say anybody at INDOPACOM.

And INDOPACOM owns this problem. They are the war fighter and it needs to be somebody in that headquarters who is managing it or either they've given that authority to one of the components. And so unfortunately we don't have—and I don't know who the J3 at INDOPACOM is, so this is not a disparaging comment about him—but we don't have Mark Montgomery as the J3 of INDOPACOM who can drive this thing into creation here. And I'm sure he'll provide some comments.

But Riki, I think that those are kind of the points that everybody really made for me, is that we really do need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of everybody in this.

What are the roles and responsibilities of INDOPACOM? And are they fulfilling those? What are the roles and responsibilities of the Joint Program Office? And are they doing everything?

And then have we got the right direction and guidance from the Secretary of War, the Undersecretary of War, so that everybody is aligned and they understand what they're supposed to do. And they understand the prioritization of what they're supposed to do as it pertains to everything else that everybody else is doing, whether it's the Army, Navy, MDA, et cetera.

And until we do that, we're still gonna have a disjointed effort. And the thing that scares me to death about all of this is the fact that the world has changed in the last five years. And so we used to live in a world where we could take our time and develop this exquisite capability over 20 years, and then we would be reigned supreme for a period of time.

That world does not exist anymore. And so it doesn't matter what we do, the capabilities that we field in FY27 will not be sufficient. Hopefully they'll be sufficient for 12 months. They may not be.

And so we've gotta be able to iterate and improve at a very tight decision cycle so that whatever we create, when our adversaries counter, we'll be able to be one or two or hopefully three steps ahead of them. Riki, back over to you.

[Riki Ellison]
Hey, thanks, Jamie. I know we've got a little bit of time, Mark. But just, you hit the elephant in the room.

The elephant in the room is that DMAG and CAPE. And what we've done with it is Mike Guetlein and Golden Dome. We've given authorities specifically to beat that and to do that command because you can't get anything done. You haven't been able to get anything done.

You've got CAPE forcing a economic thing that's forcing policy. It's crazy. So that has to be addressed or somebody has to take the risk at the SecDef level and just go forward without it being a discussion forever and ever. And all the enemies in the room will never agree. So thank you for opening that up. I'm going to go right to Mark because I know he's got to leave in a little bit.

Mark, welcome. It's been a hell of a conversation. So thank you.

[RADM (Ret.) Mark Montgomery]
I was going to get my uniform back on, head back to INDOPACOM and help Jamie out from the J3. Listen, look, first of all, I want to solidly agree with a lot of what I heard today. And again, I'm going to agree with Paul that everyone was working hard.

This isn't a problem. Like, I don't think anyone's like sitting there with like $100,000 in his pocket going, don't know how this happened. You know, I think that everyone's been working hard doing everything. But I will tell you, Defense of Guam is going to be a textbook case a decade from now on how a lack of leadership—and I don't mean like *a leader* failed, I mean a lack of assigning roles and responsibilities of leadership—and a lethargic atrophied acquisition system came together to make what was an executable mission unexecutable.

And a special starring role, Academy Award, will be given to the U.S. Navy for being the most lethargic service ever and walking away from what was an obvious solution. Because in the end, Paul, you're right. The Navy was happy to quickly demonstrate and then take down as much as they can an Aegis Intercept capability.

But when asked upfront, “well, you put an Aegis Ashore here,” they had the temerity to say, we think it's a workforce challenge. And I would just say gently, look down to the submarine base and tell me that you have trouble getting four or five thousand U.S. Navy sailors to live on Guam. This is not Poland, it's not Romania, but the Navy had battle scars from Poland and Romania that caused them to make the wrong call on Guam.

So I'll say that those three things—leadership, a challenging acquisition program and service lethargy—really put us in this. And I'm gonna tell you, and look, I think we were slightly harmed by the Army's ambition, like their aggressiveness, which was good, you want that in a service. But sometimes we tried to take a maneuver solution and apply it to a fairly small island.

So from my point of view, if you go back, I'm gonna hammer away on the leadership issue. Someone's gotta be in charge. And if defense, so Riki, you asked, "what's the lesson for defense of the homeland?"

Someone needs to be in charge. And look, Mike Guetlein's in charge of the acquisition, but I mean, someone needs to be in charge of operating this system who is going to agree to the architecture, agree to this. So that has to happen simultaneously with it.

Maybe it's, for the time being, it's Mike Guetlein, I'm not sure. But historically, it's been a weapons-releasing authority like a co-combatant commander. And so I just, we're gonna have to very quickly understand, do you understand the architecture you're in? You're obviously gonna need Mike Guetlein to lead the development of the architecture and the acquisition of it.

And that gets into the acquisition thing. Look, there was a lot of great words said on Friday by Secretary of Defense Hegseth. I was impressed. I'll be a lot more impressed when great words equal a change in how we actually do things.

Now, look, I've seen hints of this. Anyone who's watched how we procured some things for Ukraine, I don't mean things that we pulled out of the Army stock room. You get no credit for stealing something from a stock room and mailing it to Ukraine. I could do that. We actually designed some weapons, the extended range attack munition.

I emphasize this because I think the extended range attack munition is basically a JASM, a 0.8, to get at Paul's answer, an 80% JASM at 15% of the cost, a JASM-ER at 15% of the cost. That's a big deal. That means on the offensive end, we've begun to bend the curve on lower cost acquisition for interceptors.

Now comes the biggest problem we're going to have. As you look at the defense of Guam and try to scale it for defense of the homeland, the most obvious thing staring you in the face is the cost of interceptors. Our cheapest interceptors, I'm going to assume for a moment IFPC's working.

And as you know, I believe IFPC's the Phoenix Suns of missile defense, and it's two years away from being two years away. But I push the button, Ricky, it's two years away. And it's going to be $800,000 to $1,000,000 a shot.

Patriot is, on new Patriots, is $3 to $5 million a shot. THAAD I think is getting right up towards eight digits, you know, in the $10 million. SM3, Block 2A, you don't even want to know, I believe it's $28 to $32 million a shot.

GBI is $95 to $100 million a shot. We've got to figure out how you bend the curve. It's harder to bend the curve on defensive interceptors than it is on offense, because at the end of an offensive thing, you can be, you don't, you're not stupid, but you're not a brilliant guy.

But for defensive intercepting, and obviously this is the opposite of football, for defense, you've got to be a lot smarter, you know, and you've got to, that's a joke for you, Riki. You know, you've got to teach something at Mach 4 to see something else at Mach 5 and go, I've got to come left a little bit, right, you know, that's hard. Hitting that lat long with a little bit of jamming support, not hard.

So bending the cost curve on defensive acquisition, Riki, that is the absolute lesson. For me, defending Guam is about the missile count, the effector count. And if you can buy enough effectors, you can defend Guam long enough to get whatever you need, you know, the first three to five days of war off, which is all we ever need in Guam.

[Riki Ellison]
Well, you don't have any effectors, we don't have any cheap effectors.

[RADM (Ret.) Mark Montgomery]
Well, that's right, no, I got it. That's what I'm saying. There's an if in this.

And then, so you need leadership, you need this acquisition reform, and it needs to drive effector reform. And then finally, you need to have services that do what they're told. When the Navy's told “you're going to do this,” shut up and do it.

And Aegis Ashore could be built by now on Guam with 48 to 96 interceptors, your choice how many fields you want to put out there. You know, the SM, I don't want to get into it, but the Mark 41 VLS is probably 38 million a copy when it configured for land base, you know, for the cooling and everything for land base. Easily executable.

But the Navy opted out to its shame. Or at least my feeling about it: shame. So that's what I think. So I agree on leadership, agree on acquisition, service lethargy and drive down the cost.

Riki, we got a ton of questions in here, but you got five minutes and five smart people. Go ahead, you got a question for me?

[Riki Ellison]
Mark, just finish up on IBCS because you focused on Army, just focus on Navy. Let's go back into Army. Is this thing doable to have capability in play by 28? I mean, to have an effective defense of Guam, are we, are we just?

[RADM (Ret.) Mark Montgomery]
I think to have an effective defense of Guam in 2028, you would have to like step back and build an Aegis Ashore there to really have it. Now look, that's, and I then have to have IFPC in there. How you bring IFPC in?

Because the Navy is not going to be good at a low E cruise missile defense of like the sub base and Anderson from its fixed field. So you're going to need to have IFPC integrated in. You might want to have some Patriot integrated in.

The THAAD's already there. However, the Army brings that together. And if IBS is the system of record, it's a system of record.

The important part there is: how do we do the IBCS to Aegis? What we call in Israel, high altitude theater court, there's a different word for it, but the theater coordination we do there. By the way, rumors I hear is that did not go smooth as can be between us and the Israelis during the 12-Day War.

The de-confliction at that, between THAAD, Aegis and Arrow. What we really love is highly automated systems that allow data transfer, decision-making and target assignment to be well-coordinated. And so I don't know where the Aegis IBCS, at what point in the modernization plan that happens.

But if it's late in the plan, that's going to hurt a little bit on Guam. I don't think it hurts too much on a defensive Europe module because the ships aren't in play there. The Aegis isn't, except for one land-based system isn't–

[Riki Ellison]
Do you want to talk about that dirigible, the 71-meter dirigible?

[RADM (Ret.) Mark Montgomery]
All right. And you know, I'm a big fan of dirigibles. I think, look, the last thing I'd say is General Gibson, who's a two-star, I think it's Army General at Space Command, is the smartest guy I know on dirigibles.

I'm pretty sure he commanded one that got underway. And he knows that what I know, which is that we 100% need, that we want to own the area between 20,000 feet and 100,000 feet, that kind of high altitude and low space with high quality, firing quality track data radars in there. I think that's how you get your right level of cruise missile initial detection and tracking for the defense of the homeland.

You have land-based radars, dirigibles, I think, managed by the Army. I think they're the best service to do this. And it integrates everything into a better space-based solution, a better terrestrial-based solution.

I think that's a long-term thing. I think the Israelis have learned that. I know one of theirs got hit by a mortar. By the way, I don't believe it was up when it was hit. The Poles are buying them. You know, I think we need those.

So yes, Riki, you know I believe in dirigibles, aerostats, and the higher altitude you can get them at, the better.

[Riki Ellison]
All right, do you want to take some questions?

[RADM (Ret.) Mark Montgomery]
No, I want you to get a wrap, get a wrap from everybody, I think.

[Riki Ellison]
Anybody here want to talk?

[Jeannie Sommer]
Hi, I've got one more thing. Yeah, just, I want to follow up on what General Jerrard said about, you know, the warfighter and the communication out there. I think the heart of the issue of what I'm seeing just as you said, Riki, earlier about the D-MAG and CAPE, is the external forces.

So you've got CAPE influencing, you know, different organizations with INDOPACOM, J8, J36, and it creates challenges. I work very closely with the 94th and General Parker, who's doing a great job of trying to coalesce and bring everything together and work closely with General Clark and General Snyder. But there's a lot of external forces that are at play here that create unnecessary challenges that we have to overcome.

But with that said, you know, we are all on board. We're going to deliver, Riki, and FY27, come hell or high water, we're going to be there, sir. So looking forward to continuing this conversation at another time.

[Riki Ellison]
Hey, Mark, how do you neutralize CAPE? He might have left. Anybody want to answer that question?

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
Well, Riki, I was trying to read through the articles out of the Secretary of War's discussion on Friday to understand some of it. I think some of that got to a little bit of it. CAPE was not mentioned in any of them.

The requirements process and the resourcing, looks like they're going to try to drive those together a little bit. And so, obviously the Secretary of War can direct how that changes, but they did use the Golden Dome as an example of, they're getting outside the process to establish the Golden Dome because the process doesn't work. And so that was one of the impetuses for changing the process.

So we'll see. I don't know if anybody else has a little bit deeper understanding of what all he talked about, but, and I'm not sure there was that much specifics, but we got to get clarity on roles and responsibilities and who's supposed to do what and then the appropriate authority to do it.

[Riki Ellison]

This has been a great discussion. I think we pointed out that leadership, number one, if you step back and look at what we've discussed the last hour, how important that is. I think we can go around the room real quick and just do your closing remarks and call it a day.

Paul, you want to start?

[Paul Mann]
Yeah, thanks for including me, Riki. The bottom line is when we align—and you've talked about all the points, I don't need to restate them—but when you align the senior leaders who are appointed to have that authority and they direct it and everybody works to execute that direction, we're unstoppable. There's plenty of cases throughout the United States where we've proven that.

We just need to get some practice at redoing it at multiple scales, but the Secretary of War has set the stage for us to go gangbusters full on, including with Congress and the citizens of the United States. So I think we're going to get aligned and be dramatically more productive than we've been, over.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you, Paul. Chris?

[COL Chris Hill]
So Riki, definitely appreciate the opportunity to come on here and talk IBCS, to talk Guam, to talk some of the innovation efforts that are going on. You know, I think the, you know, to put it simply in football terms, this is about winning. You know, sometimes we get caught up celebrating first downs, you know, celebrating field goals, but at the end of the day, we got to win.

And we understand somewhat based upon what's going on in Ukraine, we got to take lessons from every theater. It's not just a specific, not based on a specific theater, but there is a part of the industry that is hungry to work with the government. We have to provide an avenue for them to get in, to help us solve some of these hard problems.

We're going to continue to work the integration piece. My friend, Ms. Sommer, running the JPO now, congratulations, ma'am. But, you know, the whole JTMC bridge and how we're going to talk to the other services, those things are coming.

But specifically from an IBCS perspective, I think we can do a better job of how we inform the types of integration efforts that we do. And that's by linking it to what's going on at the edge from an innovation standpoint. So again, very new to the Army right now.

Going back to General Giroir's comments, the Sec War didn't put out a lot of details the other day, but I think we kind of understand where we're going from a realignment standpoint. But it really boils down to what authorities will those leaders have? What type of, you know, from a funding standpoint, from a requirement standpoint, from a testing standpoint, all those things, if they really and truly give them the tools necessary, we can be

more responsive. We can be quicker and we can make those risk-based decisions to go after that 75, 80% and not spend 80% of the time trying to go from 90 to 95%.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you, Chris. Jamie?

[LTG (Ret.) Jamie Jarrard]
Hey, thanks, Riki.

I think everything's been said, so I'm good. Appreciate you letting me have the opportunity to talk and appreciate everybody else's comments today. Thank you.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you. Thank you, Jamie. Jeannie?

[Jeannie Sommer]
Yeah, thank you, Riki, for having me. And just from a material developer's perspective, I'd like to echo what was said earlier about the willingness to work hard and go fast. There is nothing short of miracles that we create every single day as I watch the engineers overcome challenges to deliver capability.

What you see in Guam and USFK right now from a prototype perspective is an example of that. So I'm excited about Secretary Hegseth's comments. I believe that the change that's coming can remove some of the barriers so that we can be successful without all the red tape.

So looking forward to delivering this capability very quickly.

[Riki Ellison]
Thank you, Jeannie. Thank you, everyone. It's about invincibility.

It's about invincibility. And it's about making the other side take a knee. And we've got everything, right?

We all know. We got the talent. We got everything.

But we don't have the courage or leadership to be able to lead this thing and get after it big time. And I think Guam is the place over anything else that's going to be the key determinator if Taiwan is going to be invaded or not. If we can protect that big time, that changes the game.

That changes the world order. It keeps the world order with us. And you've got everything here. We're all here. Navy's here. Army's here. We're in Guam. But we lack that leadership. Aquilino tried to do it. He couldn't do it. John Hill tried to do it. He couldn't do it.

So that's where we got to go. And it's not Mike Guetlein's job. Let's not put Mike in this. He's got the Golden Dome.

We have to step up and lead on this. And whether it's the SecDef, the secretary of war has got to make this a priority. And I think he will. Because the team's there. The talent's all right there.

But we don't have the leader to force it at the high, where you have to play, where you have to be forced to integrate, where you have to be forced to play with everything and not pick things out. Because it's still dysfunctional right now. It is.

You can't have two different cultures out there. You can't have empty platforms. We're close.

And as an advocacy group, we are going to drive that leadership to find that leader and enforce that leadership to happen. Because it's the best thing in the world to do. It's going to make our world a safer place.

So I just want to thank all of you to educate everybody in the different areas of expertise that you provide all of us to understand this complexity of this problem. But I think it's a promising thing. But we have to drive it.

We cannot settle. Cannot settle for anything but the best. Cannot. Right? That's invincibility. And you'll be part of that.

So thank you for the time and effort to spend with us today. Appreciate it. Thank you.