

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE**

SECOND SESSION, 119TH CONGRESS

ON MISSILE DEFENSE/MISSILE DEFEAT

APRIL 15, 2026

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairman DesJarlais, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the Department of War's missile defense and defeat programs. It is an honor to appear with my colleagues, General Michael Guetlein, Direct Reporting Program Manager for Golden Dome for America; General Gregory Guillot, Commander of U.S. Northern Command; Lieutenant General Heath Collins, Director of the Missile Defense Agency; and Lieutenant General Sean Gainey, Commander of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command.

The United States is facing intensifying strategic competition in the security environment. Our rivals are expanding, diversifying, and increasing the sophistication of their arsenals of missile and aerial weapons. They are integrating offensive strike capabilities and integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) systems into joint operations to strengthen their ability to deny access and impose costs. They seek to hold our Homeland, military forces, and national interests at risk and are sharing weapons systems, technology, and know-how. The risk is compounded by the prospect of simultaneous conflicts, where adversaries could act in coordination or opportunistically across multiple theaters.

The pace and scale of the threat is unprecedented. By threatening America's safety, territorial integrity, and economic prosperity, rivals aim to undermine our political will, societal cohesion and morale, and ability to project power.

Consequently, fielding and operating a comprehensive, next-generation Homeland air and missile defense as well as regional missile defense systems are necessary to strengthen deterrence, defend the Homeland, and ensure freedom of action for U.S. and allied military forces. The Department is therefore focusing investment on maintaining our technological edge and operating modern systems that enhance the capability and survivability of our forces.

China is our pacing competitor. Its military modernization is rapid and comprehensive. China is rapidly expanding its nuclear and missile forces, developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with nuclear and conventional payloads, hypersonic glide vehicles, and other advanced systems that can threaten the U.S. Homeland and our forces from multiple vectors. Furthermore, China's networked systems are designed to track and engage our mobile forces in the Indo-Pacific region. This offensive buildup is paired with a sophisticated, layered IAMD system to protect critical assets.

Russia possesses significant missile and IAMD capabilities. The primary strategic threat remains its large and diverse nuclear arsenal which is central to its military strategy. Russia's nuclear threats and use of advanced conventional missiles in Ukraine provide a real-world testbed of its capabilities.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with its growing nuclear, missile, and aerial weapons, also poses a direct and increasing threat to our Homeland, forces, and allies. Its theater-range missiles hold U.S., South Korean, and Japanese territory at risk, and its ICBMs are capable of striking America.

Iran developed a significant arsenal of missiles and unmanned aerial systems and proliferated them to its proxies and state actors like Russia. Iran's air and missile attacks against U.S. forces, allies, and partners demonstrate its threat to regional stability. The decisive military actions conducted under President Trump through Operations MIDNIGHT HAMMER and EPIC FURY are necessary to address the threat from Iran's nuclear ambitions and its malign activities.

As articulated in the 2025 National Security Strategy, our approach is to restore American strength to achieve peace. The President directed the Department to secure our vital interests by defending the Homeland with the Golden Dome for America (GDA) against peer, near-peer, and rogue adversaries. The 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS) builds on this principle, prioritizing a common sense, America-First approach to peace through strength. Missile defenses are central to this strategy.

The Department's highest priority, as directed by the President and the NDS, is defense of the U.S. Homeland. The President's GDA initiative is the cornerstone

of our Homeland defense posture. It is an essential and pragmatic response to the growing threat posed by ballistic, hypersonic, advanced cruise missiles and other next-generation aerial weapons. As President Trump stated, this “remains the most catastrophic threat facing the United States.” With this committee’s support, the Congress codified the President’s policy to provide a comprehensive, next-generation defense of the U.S. Homeland.

Nuclear deterrence, complemented by GDA, remains the foundation of U.S. defense strategy. Combined with the prospect of U.S. retaliation, GDA will strengthen deterrence by denying adversaries the ability to achieve their objectives through coercion or aggression. A robust Homeland missile defense will strengthen deterrence by protecting our nation, citizens, critical infrastructure, and retaliatory capabilities against the most catastrophic threat, will reduce the utility of opponents’ air and missile arsenals, and will decrease the incentive for an adversary to strike first in a crisis or escalate a conflict.

At present, our Homeland missile defense is limited, and its effectiveness is eroding against increasingly advanced threats. It offers minimal defense against hypersonic weapons, advanced cruise missiles, or major ballistic missile attacks. GDA aims to rectify this by creating a comprehensive, layered, defense-in-depth of the United States. It will perform multiple missions including ballistic missile defense, hypersonic missile defense, and cruise missile defense.

The Department will field GDA capabilities as soon as they are ready, progressively strengthening protection for the U.S. population and other critical assets. The effort has already begun by upgrading existing sensors and terrestrial-based interceptors. GDA's capabilities will grow as new technologies are demonstrated and integrated into its architecture.

GDA thus will include both existing technologies and next-generation systems. It will integrate sensors and effectors across multiple domains, managed by an artificial intelligence-enabled battle management and command and control system. As Secretary Hegseth stated, GDA leverages “America’s strengths — bold vision, innovation, and cutting-edge technology.”

Multiple layers of space- and terrestrial-based sensors will provide global, continuous surveillance, launch detection, tracking, cueing, and fire-control data to target air and missile threats. Similarly, multiple layers of space- and terrestrial-based interceptors will provide capabilities to engage and defeat such threats across all phases of flight. Space-based interceptors aim to defeat longer-range missiles in the boost, post-boost, and midcourse phases of their trajectory. Terrestrial-based interceptors will defeat air and missile threats in the midcourse and terminal phases of flight.

In contrast to the current limited defense system consisting of a single layer of Ground-Based Midcourse Defense interceptors, multiple defensive layers will complicate adversary attack planning and provide more engagement opportunities to destroy incoming threats. Indeed, multiple layers will increase GDA's overall effectiveness by reducing the performance requirements of any individual layer or relying on a single layer of defense. They will also provide both area and point defenses as well as adaptive defense capabilities to address the mix of adversary weapons systems.

By providing multiple engagement opportunities across a wider range of threats, GDA will be far more effective than our current limited system to defend the Homeland. It will defend against accidental, unauthorized, rogue, decapitation, and coercive attacks. The cost of GDA, while significant, is a necessary investment to protect assets of incalculable value — the lives of our citizens and the territorial integrity of our nation. The cost of failing to defend the Homeland would be infinitely greater.

In the Indo-Pacific region, a denial defense along the First Island Chain is critical. Our regional missile defense posture, centered on Arleigh Burke-class Aegis destroyers as well as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and Patriot batteries, provides a forward-deployed, layered IAMD network. As

Operation EPIC FURY underscores, regional missile defense is essential to protect and defend our forces, allies, and partners.

Our global alliances will remain a strategic advantage if our allies and partners invest properly in defense. We require capable allies with the military strength and political will to take primary responsibility for their own regional security. This allows the United States to focus its finite resources on the most pressing challenges. The Department is pursuing robust IAMD cooperation. We are working with key allies and partners to transform disparate IAMD systems into cohesive regional defense networks.

The final pillar of the NDS is supercharging our Defense Industrial Base. To maintain our military edge, we must move faster than our rivals. This requires cutting bureaucratic red tape, empowering program leaders to take risks, and embracing a "commercial-first" mindset where appropriate to leverage private sector innovation. We must accelerate the development, acquisition, and fielding of critical missile defense capabilities at scale. Our investments in missile defense are aligned with these strategic priorities.

We are building GDA to provide a comprehensive, layered, defense-in-depth of the United States. Key investments include the Hypersonic and Ballistic

Tracking Space Sensor, the Next Generation Interceptor, the Glide Phase Interceptor, and Space-Based Interceptors.

We are also expanding and enhancing regional missile defenses by delivering additional THAAD batteries, significantly increasing production of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 interceptors, expanding inventories of other key interceptors, and continuing development of the comprehensive Guam IAMD system.

In closing, the Department of War is posturing its missile defense forces to achieve peace through strength. With the continued support of Congress, we will field the modern missile defense systems required to deter aggression, defend the Homeland, and protect U.S. national interests.