

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

GENERAL MICHAEL A. GUETLEIN, DIRECTOR OF GOLDEN DOME FOR AMERICA

BEFORE THE

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

SECOND SESSION, 119TH CONGRESS

**ON FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET REQUEST FOR MISSILE DEFENSE AND MISSILE
DEFEAT PROGRAMS**

15 APRIL 2026

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE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

Chairman DesJarlais, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the progress of Golden Dome for America (GDA).

This hearing occurs at a critical time for our country. The strategic environment has fundamentally changed. Today, our Nation faces a new generation of missile threats that are faster, more maneuverable, and more numerous than ever before. The threats to the homeland are not theoretical. They are real. Adversaries are rapidly modernizing their militaries and seek to erode our advantages to hold the United States at risk. New and emerging technologies create opportunities for attacks on the American homeland. Near-peer competitors and rogue states are aggressively developing and fielding advanced conventional and nuclear-capable missiles designed to evade or overwhelm our existing defenses.

We can no longer afford to rely on legacy defense systems, designed for a different strategic environment. Golden Dome for America is our Nation's decisive response to current and future threats and is a necessary step toward achieving peace through strength—protecting our homeland and deterring our adversaries.

The current National Security Strategy establishes our need to protect the homeland and maintain strategic deterrence, while the 2026 National Defense Strategy provides the direction necessary to implement those priorities. Golden Dome is the solution to achieve homeland defense and maintain deterrence against today's advanced aerial threats. The Department—led by the Golden Dome team—is accelerating work to expand our Nation's current missile defense capabilities and to integrate them with next-generation technologies to rapidly develop and field a cohesive, layered defense against advanced aerial threats.

THE THREAT IS REAL, COMPLEX, AND GROWING

Golden Dome is a direct response to a shift in the global security environment. For decades, the United States relied on a limited missile defense system, designed to counter threats from rogue states like North Korea and Iran. As this committee is well aware, our near-peer competitors, specifically China and the Russian Federation, are rapidly expanding and modernizing their strategic arsenals. The United States requires scalable defenses to meet the threats of today and to be postured for those of tomorrow.

China is conducting the most significant expansion of its missile systems in its history. It is on track to double its missile systems across the spectrum of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles, air-launched ballistic missiles, boosted hypersonic weapons, land attack cruise missiles, and fractional orbital bombardment systems (FOBS). Equally concerning is the qualitative improvement of their delivery systems. China is building hundreds of new solid-fueled ICBMs, providing them with a responsive and survivable strike capability. They have fielded hypersonic glide vehicles, such as the DF-17, and tested a FOBS, a technology that complicates detection and defense. All of these threats can be armed with conventional or tragically with nuclear warheads.

The Russian Federation continues to prioritize the modernization of its military forces, replacing Soviet-era systems with advanced weapons designed to penetrate U.S. defenses. They have fielded the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle on ICBMs, developed the air-launched Kinzhal ballistic missile, tested the Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile, and are advancing the Tsirkon sea-launched hypersonic cruise missile. These weapons combine high speed with increased maneuverability and are designed to challenge the tracking and engagement capabilities of our sensors. Similar to China, all of these threats can be armed with conventional or tragically with nuclear warheads.

Beyond our near-peer competitors, the threat from rogue states continues to grow. North Korea has demonstrated capabilities that threaten the U.S. homeland, Guam, as well as South Korea and Japan, both of which are U.S. allies. North Korea has repeatedly tested new solid-propellant missiles, which can be launched with reduced warning.

The Nation's approach to matching threats with solutions must reflect the speed, maneuverability, and complexity of today's threats. We must also adapt and scale for those of tomorrow. Adversaries are incorporating advanced countermeasures—such as decoys and penetration aids—and pursuing Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) capabilities to challenge defensive systems, all of which can be conventionally or nuclear armed. They are also increasingly pursuing an array of autonomous and unmanned systems that will continue to challenge our defensive capabilities. With evolving threats, we must move faster, scaling and innovating with speed and flexibility to defend our Nation, win wars, and support our warfighters.

A BOLD VISION THAT IS REALISTIC AND ACHIEVABLE

Golden Dome for America is a bold, once in a generation vision that is realistic and achievable. The technology needed for GDA exists today. The complexity lies in bringing that technology together in new ways while navigating the multiple organizations, agencies, and unyielding bureaucracies involved in its execution.

We are working closely with our counterparts across the Department of War and the Intelligence Community to ensure resourcing needs are met and prioritized. We are also leveraging every acquisition pathway to accelerate delivery, improve efficiency, and keep pace with mission demands.

Since the Golden Dome initiative stood up last year, the Department of War and Intelligence Community have united to establish the organizational, technical, and acquisition foundation required for this undertaking. We have aligned existing programs with the Golden Dome architecture to reduce integration risk and ensure a unified effort, building a robust architecture to be the blueprint for homeland defense.

A GENERATIONAL INVESTMENT TO PROTECT AMERICA

Golden Dome for America is not a single or static weapon system, but an integrated “system of systems” designed to be adaptable and resilient across all domains. In the years ahead, Golden Dome will deliver increased capability and protection to these domains. Every capability delivered, every sensor, interceptor, and communications path, improves the U.S. “homeland defense equation.” Each new capability adds another layer of deterrence and increases doubt in the minds of those who may seek to attack the homeland.

Golden Dome for America reinforces deterrence by demonstrating our unwavering resolve to defend the Nation. It forces our adversaries to question whether an attack could ever succeed, making them less likely to threaten or attack the United States in the first place. Should deterrence efforts fail, Golden Dome is the shield that will protect American lives, expand decision space, and ensure our Nation can fight back against aggression. This comprehensive effort requires significant national investment. To date, approximately \$22.9 billion has been appropriated in support of GDA. Looking forward, the total cost of Golden Dome through delivery in 2035 is estimated at approximately \$185 billion.

DELIVERING AT SPEED AND AT SCALE

The Golden Dome for America strategy remains centered on affordable and scalable capabilities. In the short term, we will leverage battle-proven technologies and systems to provide immediate defense against current threats. By improving, multiplying, and integrating existing systems, we can field a credible defense now. However, defeating an increasing number of sophisticated, lower-cost offensive threats with a limited supply of multi-million-dollar interceptors, is an economically untenable proposition in the long term.

To address this, Golden Dome for America is investing heavily in next-generation technologies and approaches specifically designed to reduce the cost-per-kill and increase magazine depth. With next-generation technologies that increase our magazine depth at a lower cost, we aim to fundamentally increase the cost exchange ratio in our favor. We will increase the number of threats we can defend against for a fraction of the cost, ensuring our defensive capacity can affordably outpace an adversary's offensive capacity. This is achieved by building a modular, layered, defense-in-depth "system of systems" where all components can operate independently and, therefore, can be replaced without having to rebuild the entire enterprise. This disaggregated architecture significantly reduces cost, allows for new capability to be delivered to the warfighter faster, and encumbers our near peers' decision-making capacity.

INDUSTRIAL BASE

The Arsenal of Freedom aligns with the urgency and warfighting needs of Golden Dome. We have a clear mandate to move at the speed of the threat, and the acquisition models of the past will not get us there. GDA requires sustained, cutting-edge contributions from the U.S. defense industrial base. This means partnering with industry in new and creative ways to tap into that innovation. We are implementing acquisition strategies that will emphasize speed, flexibility, accountability, and industrial base revitalization. We have structured our procurement strategies to encourage multiple suppliers, avoid vendor lock, reduce supply chain vulnerabilities, and enable production to scale as the architecture evolves and matures. It is a strategy that is mission-focused and outcome-driven.

As an example, the Space-Based Interceptor Program, in partnership with the United States Space Force, has implemented a prize-based acquisition strategy to reward industry for delivering capability. This structure creates opportunities for non-traditional defense companies

to compete in areas that were previously closed to them. Expanding participation strengthens competition and increases resilience across the industrial base while tapping into industry's innovation and momentum.

Golden Dome for America requires a secure supply chain and an industrial base capable of producing advanced systems in unprecedented numbers and timelines. To accomplish this, we are embracing new partnership structures, characterized by cooperative capability development, enhanced interoperability, and expanded operational cooperation. This means actively pursuing joint capability development initiatives, sharing expertise, pooling resources, and accelerating the fielding of critical defense capabilities, while diligently partnering to continue to secure our supply chains.

One area where we have seen significant success is the establishment of the Golden Dome Command and Control (C2) Coalition, which brings together industry partners, of all sizes, on a level playing field to focus specifically on building the GDA command and control capability by integrating new and existing technologies. We have created a collaborative and competitive environment where all members of the C2 Coalition are accountable to one another, ensuring we meet delivery timelines and demonstrate early capabilities together.

We are focused on outcomes, not just capabilities. Partnerships are more important than ever to deliver credible, effective capability to our warfighters so we can protect and defend the homeland.

PARTNERSHIPS

Golden Dome for America is fundamentally and primarily a social engineering and organizational challenge, integrating Services and agencies across not only the Department of War, but across the Federal Government and beyond. We work in close collaboration every day with our partners across the national security enterprise to include the Intelligence Community, the Combatant Commands, the Services, the defense industrial base, and more. We are integrating capabilities developed by these partners, and eventually by our allies, into a coherent homeland defense architecture. These entities bring experience developing complex defense systems and play a central role in advancing technologies that will support GDA.

Immediately upon standing up Golden Dome, we built a strong partnership with the Commander of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and the USNORTHCOM team to

ensure we have unity of effort. GDA is laser focused on delivering capabilities matched to USNORTHCOM's requirements. Additionally, USNORTHCOM has detailed a Major General to GDA and has embedded warfighters in the Golden Dome office, further solidifying the partnership. Similar partnerships have been established with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM), and U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM).

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is also a key partner. They are not only acquiring many of the Golden Dome systems, but they are also managing the integration of the full "system of systems" architecture. Additionally, the Department of the Air Force is delivering key interceptors and sensors that will support next-generation components and systems of the architecture, while feeding this data across the GDA enterprise. The U.S. Army, through the Program Acquisition Executive for Fires, is providing the production and sustainment of critical munitions that will enable GDA systems to defend the homeland. Through the Space and Missile Defense Center (SMDC), the U.S. Army is providing technical analysis and architecture optimization.

Golden Dome for America is unwavering in bringing these entities together to achieve a coherent homeland defense architecture capable of evolving over time.

CONCLUSION

Golden Dome is about changing the homeland defense equation—increasing resilience, strengthening deterrence, and providing the President with real options in crisis and conflict. With your continued support, we will deliver a capability that protects the American people, preserves our strategic advantage, and ensures that our adversaries never doubt our ability to defend this Nation.

We are steadfast in our focus on disciplined execution by aligning our resources, integrating capabilities, and maturing new technologies. While the effort ahead is significant, Golden Dome for America is committed to executing this initiative with transparency, technical rigor, and close coordination with Congress to provide affordable and scalable solutions that meet the threats to our homeland.

We are building the trust and momentum required to foster a new level of collaboration across the Golden Dome for America enterprise. With your help and partnership, we will meet

our objectives on time and on budget. I am always grateful to this subcommittee for your support and oversight of this vital program, and I look forward to working with you as we ensure our Nation's warfighting advantages and keep America safe today and in the future.