

Written Statement of Mr. John Hill
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House Armed Services Committee Strategic Forces Subcommittee
“Regional Missile Defense Assets – Assessing Combatant Command and Allied Demand for
Capabilities”
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Introduction

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. On behalf of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the topic of “Regional Missile Defense Assets – Assessing Combatant Command and Allied Demand for Capabilities.” I am honored to join Major General Sean Gainey from the Army Staff, Rear Admiral Douglas Williams from the Missile Defense Agency, and Brigadier General Clair Gill from the Joint Staff.

Evolving Threat

The ongoing conflicts in Europe and the Middle East underscore the centrality of missiles in modern warfare and global strategy. As the 2022 Missile Defense Review (MDR) emphasized, the rapid expansion in quantity, diversity, and sophistication of adversary missile systems – including offensive ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic weapons, and lower tier threats such as unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and rockets – increasingly threaten U.S. interests and those of our allies and partners. Aggressors have used these diverse forms of missile strikes to attack critical infrastructure, military forces – including U.S. forces in the Middle East region – and innocent civilian populations, with objectives ranging from gaining military advantage, to intimidating and terrorizing populations, to inflicting deliberate and unprovoked destruction.

Russia’s war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict demonstrate the employment of missile threats detailed in the 2022 Missile Defense Review. The Russian Federation has launched thousands of wide-ranging offensive missiles against Ukraine. These include close-

range and short-range ballistic missiles, air-launched ballistic missiles, and more advanced cruise missile threats. In the Middle East, we have seen a broad range of missile threats employed against Israel. Hamas and Lebanese Hizballah have attacked Israel with thousands of unguided rockets and mortars, and the Houthis in Yemen, utilizing higher-end, more sophisticated weapons, have launched cruise missiles, one-way attack drones, and medium-range ballistic missiles toward Israel. Hamas, Lebanese Hizballah, and the Houthis are each proxies of Iran, and all are known to receive Iranian military support in the form of rockets and missiles. Additionally, since February, the Defense Intelligence Agency released two comprehensive, unclassified reports with clear evidence proving that many of the UASs that Russia is using in Ukraine are, in fact, the Shahed-136 UAS designed and manufactured by Iran.

In the Indo-Pacific region, long-range precision strike systems are a key component of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) counter-intervention strategy, which aims to restrict the United States from having a presence in the PRC's immediate periphery and limit U.S. access in the broader region. The PRC has also used provocative and destabilizing ballistic missile overflights of Taiwan's main island in attempts to pressure and intimidate Taiwan's population. Likewise, North Korea continues to test, develop, and deploy ballistic and other missile systems in contravention of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. Together with this missile arsenal of all ranges, North Korea's constitutional adoption of an offensive nuclear force posture compounds the threat to the United States and our allies, underscoring the importance of U.S. extended deterrence commitments to both the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan.

As Israel's conflict with Hamas continues to unfold and Iranian proxies also target U.S. forces, the United States has expeditiously deployed several additional land and sea-based air and missile defense assets on a temporary basis to multiple locations in the Middle East. This

has bolstered existing integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) capabilities in the region – other nations’ systems and our own – and strengthened force protection for U.S. personnel and our allies and partners. Real-world examples of these U.S. systems in combat include the recent intercepts of several Houthi UASs and cruise missiles by the USS CARNEY and one intercept by the USS THOMAS HUDNER.

This month, the Department specifically announced the movement of Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) batteries into the Middle East region for increased missile defense and heightened force protection in support of U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria, and elsewhere in the region. For operational security, I will not discuss further the specifics of recent air and missile defense deployments. As with any deployment of low-density and high-demand capabilities, we closely evaluate the trade-offs and make risk-informed decisions. The Secretary of Defense adjusts the department’s posture globally to protect U.S. forces and to prepare for a range of contingencies. In doing so, he balances needs and risks across the Combatant Commands as threats evolve while maintaining the health of the force to meet future warfighting requirements as well.

U.S. Missile Defense Systems

For U.S. forces and U.S. allies and partners around the world, in this era of missile-centric warfare, active missile defenses have become an essential element of a credible military force posture. In the most basic sense, IAMD encompasses diverse sensors and shooters and the command and control systems that network them together to give battlefield commanders the optimal selection of interceptors to defend against a given threat. But in a broader sense, IAMD must also be integrated with other elements of military posture, including strike capabilities that can hold an adversary’s critical military capabilities at risk. Moreover, IAMD must also

incorporate passive defenses, including resilient critical infrastructure, and broader missile defeat options, such as electronic warfare and supply chain interdictions that disrupt proliferation channels.

In addition to the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System that defends the homeland against intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) threats from North Korea and – should it develop an ICBM capability – Iran, the United States fields a variety of land-based air and missile defense systems designed to protect our deployed forces and support our allies and partners in defense against theater-range threats. These include seven batteries of the THAAD system, with an eighth battery currently in production, which counters short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM), medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM) and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM), and 15 Patriot battalions to provide terminal defenses against SRBM and MRBM, cruise missiles, aircraft, and UASs. When fielded in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, the Army’s Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) will defeat cruise missiles, UASs, rockets, artillery, and mortars. In the maritime domain, the United States also has 49 AEGIS ballistic missile defense-capable destroyers and cruisers loaded out with a variety of interceptors: Standard Missile (SM)-3 Block IIA and IB for SRBM to IRBM threats; SM-6 to counter SRBM to MRBMs, cruise missiles, and crewed and uncrewed aircraft; and SM-2 and the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM) for shorter-range defense against air-breathing threats.

We are implementing our missile defense strategy today with the integration and partnerships of our allies and partners. U.S. missile defense contributions to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) include the SM-3 for Aegis systems, which is a key element of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). NATO adopted EPAA to defend against current and future SRBM, MRBM, and IRBM threats launched from outside the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System-Romania is the first operational Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System. In 2024, the next phase of EPAA, the Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System-Poland with SM-3 Block IIA missiles, will come online. An AN/TPY-2 radar in Türkiye provides additional support to the EPAA missile defense posture.

Regional Missile Defenses

Ukraine

The United States, Allies, and partners have donated large numbers of air and missile defense systems and munitions to Ukraine. These systems have enabled Ukraine to defend against relentless Russian missile attacks and, in doing so, demonstrated the critical role of missile defense in modern warfare. Ukraine has made the most of its inventory of Western and legacy Soviet equipment to create an air and missile defense network that continues to save lives and protect critical national infrastructure.

The United States stands firmly with Ukraine in its fight for democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity and is committed to continuing to provide Ukraine with the military aid it needs to succeed on the battlefield. U.S. security assistance has included a variety of air defense capabilities, among others. Nearly two dozen Allies and partners have also donated air defense systems and munitions to enable Ukraine to defend itself against Russia's brutal war.

The United States, Germany, and the Netherlands have donated Patriot batteries to Ukraine. France and Italy have donated their SAMP/T medium-range air defense system. Germany has provided the IRIS-T air defense system. The United States, Canada, Lithuania, and Norway have also committed over a dozen National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems to support Ukraine's air defense. Slovakia and Spain also provided air defense capabilities, among many countries.

The United States has committed more than \$44.2 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's unprovoked and brutal invasion on February 24, 2022. Allies and partners are also supporting Ukraine, having committed more than \$36 billion in security assistance to Ukraine. Around 50 nations participate in the Secretary Austin-led Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which continues to work with Allies and partners to ensure we meet Ukraine's urgent capability requirements. More than a dozen of our Allies – including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Netherlands, and Poland – have committed more to Ukraine than the United States as a percentage of their Gross Domestic Product.

Middle East

The Department continues to work with Middle East partners to outline near- and long-term requirements for desired and needed capabilities. For example, in the Middle East, U.S. Central Command continues to meet on a regular basis with regional partners to advance an IAMD architecture and help shape a collective response to threats. As part of that architecture, by FY2027, we expect allies to field nine partner-operated THAAD batteries in the region; two THAAD batteries have already been delivered to the United Arab Emirates, and seven batteries are to be delivered to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Additionally in the Middle East, supported by an annual U.S. allocation of \$500 million for missile defense and in cooperation with U.S. industry, Israel has assiduously developed its own robust air and missile defense capabilities – systems like the Iron Dome against lower-tier short-range rockets and projectiles, David's Sling against middle-tier SRBM and theater ballistic missile attacks, and the U.S. co-developed upper-tier Arrow Weapon System to defend against endo- and exo-atmospheric MRBM missile threats. Israel has utilized all three of these systems

to protect its sovereign territory in response to missile attacks originating from Hamas in Gaza, Hizballah in Lebanon, and the Houthis in Yemen. In addition, the U.S. is facilitating the temporary transfer of the U.S. Army's two Iron Dome batteries to the Israel Defense Forces.

Indo-Pacific Region

With our Indo-Pacific allies, the United States supports Japan's missile defense requirements against regional threats through Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Japan has SM-3 Block IA missiles in multiple AEGIS-class destroyers that can provide upper-tier defenses to counter SRBM and MRBM ballistic missile threats. The United States and Japan cooperatively developed and are acquiring the SM-3 Block IIA missile, which provides expanded operational areas for ships and weapons engagement against a wider array of missile threats.

Japan and the ROK have also acquired Patriot systems in addition to their indigenous capabilities. In tandem with U.S. deployments of Patriot batteries to both countries, and THAAD to the ROK, these allied capabilities support our shared interests in defending against SRBM, MRBM, and IRBM threats and in the terminal phase of flight as well as against cruise missile threats. Building on these capabilities, the United States, Japan, and the ROK are in the process of implementing trilateral missile warning against North Korean threat missile launches.

Contributions from Space

Space-based systems contribute to the nation's homeland and regional missile defense needs. The Department of Defense continues to advance defense and warning programs – on land and in space – to meet growing missile threats and challenges. With support from Congress, the Department is investing in developing and fielding new modernized and survivable space-based missile warning and tracking capabilities to complement the terrestrial Missile Defense System sensor network. These new space systems will provide lower-latency,

resilient, and modernized sensing for higher-fidelity mission data to counter and ensure custody of advancing missile threats.

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) began developing the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor (HBTSS) in 2018 to deliver low-latency, fire-control-quality tracking data for weapons engagement within the Missile Defense System. This includes the ability to detect and track hypersonic weapons, ballistic missiles, and raids in a high-clutter environment and through missile burnout. MDA will initiate space-based testing of the HBTSS in 2024.

Collaborative efforts of the MDA and the U.S. Space Forces' Space Development Agency (SDA), and Space Systems Command (SSC) have resulted in a space-based missile warning, tracking, and detection development roadmap to further enhance the ballistic missile defense overhead persistent infrared capabilities with a proliferated and resilient architecture by FY2031. As part of this roadmap, the SDA plans to launch four separate tranches of approximately 197 low-Earth orbit satellites by FY2031. Likewise, the SSC intends to launch three epochs of approximately 36 medium-Earth orbit satellites by FY2031. The plans for a more modernized and survivable framework include launching two Next-Generation Geosynchronous Earth Orbit satellites by FY2027 and two Next-Generation Polar satellites by FY2031. The associated ground force design for the future survivable and endurable ground architecture is scheduled to be complete by December 2024.

Conclusion

The IAMD efforts of the United States, our allies, and partners are robust and sustainable in the face of evolving and expanding threats. These efforts are advancing shared national security interests in the defense of freedom and common values. However, protecting national

security is a process of continual investment and funding. It is among the most fundamental responsibilities of any government.

As Secretary Austin emphasized last month, although the passage of another continuing resolution has put off the threat of a lapse of funding, operating under short-term continuing resolutions hamstrings the Department's people and programs and undermines both our national security and competitiveness. Further, passing supplemental funding can ultimately strengthen our national security, deter our adversaries, meet our commitments to Allies and partners, and ensure Israel and Ukraine have the military capabilities they need to succeed. I cannot stress this enough with regard to prosperity at home and greater security abroad.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and thank you for the role this subcommittee plays in supporting our homeland and regional integrated air and missile defense interests around the globe. I look forward to our discussion and answering your questions.