

Missile Defense of America

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, from a snow-on-the-ground Alexandria still. I think it's been there for a month. It's warmed up.

The sun has lit up our town here. I am Riki Ellison. I am the founder and chairman of the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance.

I've been advocating for missile defense for over 40 years. And our organization is mission-focused on advocating and educating for missile defense to make our nation safer and the world safer. This is our 67th roundtable, and it's the first of 2025.

And we've had a big month. It was a huge month in January already. We recently did our 15th Missile Defender of the Year Awards here in Alexandria for all our services.

The phenomenal combat Awards that we gave was spectacular. And we also had our Shield Program here this past week in briefings with the Pentagon and the United States Congress. But obviously, the big month of January 25 was the inauguration of the next President of the United States.

And that has happened for the world, for our nation. And we've got a new Secretary of Defense. This is now our eighth presidential administration we've been through on missile defense.

And we, as an organization, play as hard as we can for each administration, no matter who they are. We play and give everything we can for this. We are certainly excited about the momentum shift that has happened for missile defense, the energy that's being applied to it, and the political power that it has.

Look at the statement by the Secretary of Defense in his written testimony. And on his first day, when he got sworn in, their top priority is to reestablish deterrence by the defense of the homeland. That is the vision of this administration.

And from our perspective, or from my perspective, we're going to have a presidential directive. That's going to happen. The last time we had a presidential directive on missile defense was under four administrations ago under George W. Bush that put forward ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California to defeat and defend against North Korea with policy to do

so. And that presidential directive gave authorities to the Missile Defense Agency to accomplish that mission. And that mission was done in three years within that time frame.

So this looks to be another watershed moment. And it could even go back to the grander 1983 speech by President Ronald Reagan on SDI, where now the president will most likely or likely give a national speech on this with a vision and a directive to defend our nation. And why is this?

Is that some sort of PR movement or political thing? The reason is, our nation is being threatened today, 360 degrees in all domains, and our nuclear deterrence does not deter that. So it's great.

Our nuclear deterrence policy is great against countries that got nuclear weapons and are threatening to use nuclear weapons. But it has failed now. Over the last couple of years, we've seen this in all the theaters around the world.

And we certainly have seen this in the United States, with Chinese balloons, with Chinese drones, hundreds of them in Langley Air Force Base, with thousands of drones and stuff coming across the Mexican border, with air infractions on our air with Russia-Chinese deals. So the threat is here. And it's even greater than that.

So I don't spend too much time on it. From FOBs all the way down, that's there. It has to be addressed.

We're going to see it on Homeland. I believe it is going to be addressed. We live with outdated policy, and I hope John Rood is going to go through this a little bit.

But we have policy basically to defend the U.S. from North Korea with missile defense. That's about it. And everything else is just ambiguous, with nobody defining any country or threat on what's going on.

So policy has to be addressed. And it can be. It can be done in two weeks.

It can be done in six. It's not a hard thing to do. Well, it's a hard thing to do.

I'll talk to John on that. But it has to be addressed, because we have to define who we are defending the United States of America from. Who is it?

Is it Russia? Is it North Korea? Is it everybody?

I don't think you can do everybody. And then, what are we actually defending against? Because right now, we're not allowed—some people are not allowed—our combatant commanders are told to defend against certain weapons, and nuclear deterrence is told to defend against other weapons.

And then, what are we defending in the United States? Are we defending our public cities? Are we defending our nuclear deterrent?

Are we defending our capital region? Are we defending our financial community? What are we going to defend?

Because if you don't answer those three things, you don't have an ability to do the architecture for it. You have to create a tasking order from that. And that tasking order has to have an agency or a service or someone that's given full authorities, which I think that's going to happen with the presidential directive, to enable that to happen.

So we're here today, and we're right on the front of this. This is exciting for us. We're right on the front of this, and we've got experts.

John has been here with the presidential directive for George W. Bush that made that happen. We've got Jamie coming in from the Army, from the Indo-Pacific region.

We got Mark coming in. So we've got the experts here, and we're not here to give you solutions. We're here to probe the ideas.

We don't have a perfect solution yet, but we got to get moving on this, and we got to get ahead of it. So I'd like to introduce our first speaker. John's on our board.

Like I said, he's been all the way back, worked at the CIA way back 30 years ago, I think. I don't want to date you, man. But on the North Korean threat, he's worked in the State Department.

He's worked with George W. Bush in that movement. Like we said, he's worked for all the contractors, and he's been President Trump's former OSD policy undersecretary.

So that's a lot of weight, and I'm going to hand it off to you, John. Great picture in the back. Thank you.

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]

Well, thanks, Riki, and thanks for bringing us all together. This is perfect timing for a discussion like this. The picture in the today, I run a small space company, and so that's one of our products.

That's a satellite that we produced, and this is just an image taken from one of the cameras on board. It never gets old to me, looking at this stuff. But what I want to talk about a little bit is I think we're at a key juncture here in missile defense, and the environment really brings that to a head.

And the environment, of course, has many different aspects, but let's start with the threat environment that I mentioned at our Defender of the Year dinner. Last year was the biggest year in the history of missile defense. We had enormous use of missiles, more than 10,000.

Missile, drone, cruise missile, hypersonic missile, rocket attacks in several theaters in the world, and literally hundreds of missile defense and other intercepts of drones and other things consummated successfully by the United States and our allies. You had literally Russia since the start of the conflict used more than 10,000 missiles, drones, cruise missiles, hypersonic missiles, ballistic missiles, and nightly almost waves of drone and missile attacks in Ukraine. And the Israelis, of course, going through very large-scale attacks, two of them from Iran with 300-plus missiles, drones, different types of missiles, ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and different varieties within those categories that the United States and the Israelis, of course, taking the principal role in the defense.

And there were strikes elsewhere in the world. It's not long ago that the Iranians launched a ballistic missile at U.S. troops and the UAE for which they had to be defended. And so, missile defense is a very lively act because missiles have surged to be one of the primary instruments of warfare in these conflicts.

Missiles, drones, and rockets, all kind of increasingly conflated and used together in multi-pronged attacks. I think the other thing that Riki mentioned, but that the previous administration was reluctant to publicize very much, is I personally believe we've lost control of our airspace. The Chinese surveillance balloon brought that to the public's attention.

But since then, in the drone and other incursions that we've had over sensitive military bases in Virginia, the ongoing situation in places like Ohio and New Jersey, where we're seeing that, and incursions overseas, not so much U.S. airspace here, but over our sensitive bases in places like

RAF Mildenhall, RAF Lake and Heath in the UK, over bases in Germany. And this is just a persistent issue. And our adversaries are not respecting the same boundaries and the same sort of rules of the road that existed for a long time.

And that's hardly surprising. They are not respecting boundaries in other areas either. And in some ways, that's the nature of the regimes in places like China, who are trying to remake the world order.

So that's something that is a big occurrence, which has not received, I think, the attention it should. There was a time in the 50s when the United States and Canada formed NORAD in 1957 because of a concern about, can we control our airspace? Can we successfully defend against a then-Soviet attack on the United States or on Canada?

And so NORAD was created and exists all these years later. There's also been this big strategic alignment with China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran working together, and working together on missiles, not just in general, on missiles and drone technology and supplying each other, and working intimately together in the conflict in Ukraine, and frankly, elsewhere. So I think that is going to accelerate the threat that we see.

And you're going to see that strategic realignment become, frankly, the defining threat of our age about, are we back to a situation where the great powers are forming alliances to confront each other? I think the other big change, Riki mentioned it, political. President Trump being elected, campaigned on a promise to establish a, quote, Iron Dome for the United States.

Now, sometimes I think people literally interpret that, that it'll be deployment of the Israeli Iron Dome system. I don't think that's what he means. I think he's speaking to the American people at large, that he wants to create a national defense, and to control the airspace, and to control, develop the ability to defend the United States against missile and drone attack much more effectively.

And that includes cruise missiles and other things. Secretary of Defense Hegseth went to work today, and first day of work at the Pentagon on a regular workday on Monday. And one of the things he remarked about is there would soon be an executive order signed by the President on an Iron Dome for America.

And what I expect it will be is, like most executive orders, explaining the rationale, but then directing the Secretary of Defense and others to do the detailed planning to create such a thing.

Now, that's on tap anyways. There is a requirement to do a missile defense review, which is a review of all the capabilities that we have.

What are the threats? What's the policy we need? And good Lord knows, it's needed to have a refresh.

But remember, Trump, some people have forgotten, this is a special interest area for Trump. He came to the Pentagon in 2019 to put out the missile defense review, which I and my team took the lead in developing in the Pentagon. And he gave a major speech.

This was the first time he'd given a speech at the Pentagon. And that was the subject. And the big change there in that missile defense review from the Obama administration's policy was to, because as Riki mentioned, I worked and I was the lead author on a presidential directive in the George W.

Bush administration to, for the first time, say we're going to defend the United States against missile attack and establish a national missile defense and establish the criteria and the time frames and give specific direction to the government to establish that. And three years later, we had our first missile defense system working. And all of that as a result of the president's leadership and guidance at that time.

Well, here in the missile defense review, the big change that Trump announced in 2019 was we would defend the United States against not just North Korean and Iranian missiles, but against Russian and Chinese. And that we would defend against missiles launched from all sources against the United States or our bases abroad. Number one.

Point two, that it would be all types of missiles. Ballistic missiles were the focus in the Obama administration. And frankly, we reverted to that in the Biden administration, that there was a focus only in the Biden administration and guidance given to the commanders defend against North Korean, Iranian missiles, but not others, and not all types.

And so Trump in 2019 announced it would be ballistic cruise hypersonics missiles from all sources against the United States or our troops or locations abroad to include our territories like Guam. And so I expect you'll see a return to that. And it's needed because from these what seem like basic policy decisions flow hundreds of subordinate decisions.

And that's what I really hope that we will see like an effort to recapture control of our borders, that there will be an effort to recapture control of our airspace and to defend the nation against

the contemporary threats. We do need this broader definition because once you decide you want to defend against things like a Chinese or Russian attack, like in 2019, the then President Trump, who is now president again, of course, announced that we would expand where we did that, because you needed to. You could not simply rely on ground-based and sea-based defenses.

There was a call in that missile defense review to use air-based defenses, which are, by the way, are being used in heavy effect in places like Ukraine in the defense of Israel now. But at that time, that was an unusual new decision that we put forward. And then you also need to go to space, because there are tremendous advantages to doing missile defense from space.

It's always been difficult to do, but the technology has advanced by leaps and bounds to make it much more affordable. And so that's where in 2019, President Trump directed a study of the correct architecture, the most efficient architecture to do that. I think today, with Elon Musk's involvement and others, you're going to see a much more aggressive approach to utilizing space for the defense.

But you're going to have to have policy decisions on what are the end-state objectives and what do you protect, how do you do it, and then a defended priorities list that sets clear priorities, because the reality is we can't defend everything against all threats at all times. It's simply too overwhelming of a cost to do that. So you do have to set priorities, and they're very difficult ones.

In my view, the correct prioritization would be you got to, in order to deter China and Russia from strategic attack, you have to be able to function as a coherent command and control, a coherent government and military response. And so you're going to have to set some priorities for that. And then secondly, you've got to defend the American people.

After all, that's the reason the military exists, to defend the American people. And it will never be defensible to say, well, look, we didn't want to defend a city of 10 million people because we wanted to protect an airbase in North Dakota. The American people will not accept that, and nor should they.

And so we're going to have to prioritize defense of the American people. And I think we also have to prioritize control of our own airspace, and that will involve looking at domestic authorities and the ability for the Defense Department and military assets to operate in the skies above the United States, and what their authorities can be. And those are tough decisions, but I think that that has to be done.

And then you've got to bring in the allies. I think for any defense to be effective, it's simply not realistic that the U.S. can do this alone, nor should we want to. Now, that's been our core strength in working with allies.

And that's what set us apart and will give us our biggest advantage in confronting this emerging alliance with China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. So that's probably enough for me to set the table, Riki, but just wanted to put that out there.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

I've got two questions for you. I think you need to explain to everybody the difference between an executive order and a presidential directive. That's one thing.

And then where are the resources? You can't policy those things in there, so you got to think about that. But more importantly to you, I say that this Iron Dome, what you said is a layer defense, but this Iron Dome is space.

It is satellites and capability in space to take out stuff and send stuff. So that means you're going to have to break the space policy or create a new space policy to allow us to defend the United States homeland with everything available at every domain but space. And we've been trying that since Reagan.

It has never worked, but now you've got the House, you've got the Senate, and you've got the President. So thoughts on that would be great.

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]

Well, first of all, an executive order is the President using his executive authorities to establish something. Now customarily, they're fairly short documents, one page, two pages, and they're mostly policy statements. In some cases where the President's exercising his authorities to change something like treatment of immigrants or other matters, then those can be done through executive order.

And they are orders from the Commander-in-Chief, the President, to executive department agencies. And to a certain effect, they can, if they're involving other legal areas, affect the way other people outside the executive branch are required to behave because it's sort of a rulemaking authority, if you will. It's not law, but it is something where the President's supposed to, when done right, is using his legal authorities derived from some other portion of law or the Constitution itself to establish practice.

A presidential directive is to the executive branch only. And customarily, those are much more detailed documents setting forth. Sometimes they can be 25, 30 pages. It depends. Sometimes they're shorter. In the case of the one that I worked on, on missile defense in the George W. Bush administration, in my recollection, that was under 10 pages. But it established the key things that we wanted the Defense Department to do, when to do it, what the character of those defenses had to be. And we worked very closely with the Defense Department to create that.

But the thing that a presidential directive did there is it organized this vast bureaucracy and set guidance that was from the top as to the prioritization. And when you do it right, where you're working collaboratively, so that it's practical, it's implementable, it's resourced, then those things can be powerful in terms of motivating the system. And we took the unusual step there of writing that one in an unclassified fashion.

Typically, presidential directives are classified.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]
You gave authorities to MDA. You gave authorities.

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]
Yes, we directed the creation. And this was an idea actually born out of the Defense Department to create a missile defense agency with special authorities that could operate more rapidly than the traditional acquisition system. And it worked brilliantly.

So I think what we'll see is more of an executive order in keeping with those that President Trump has released recently, which are more high-level objectives. And that's customary. Those are very powerful in their own right for executive orders.

And I think the specific details still need to be worked. I mean, after all, the Secretary of Defense only started work really here in the last day or two. So the new administration is still forming up, I think, in that regard.

On your other point about going to space, I think clearly you have to do that. That's the high ground. And there are just inherent limitations on what ground-based systems can see.

And even if they're maneuverable, how survivable they can be in space offers tremendous advantages for sensing, seeing. And in the case of what you mentioned, fractional orbital

bombardment, basically putting weapons in space by our adversaries to then bring down through the atmosphere at a time and place of their choosing, there are just enormous advantages to being based in space in order to counter those things. So for those reasons and for affordability reasons, I think you're going to see application of space defenses where there should be, in my opinion.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Thank you, John. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Our next speaker, we're very fortunate to have a very accomplished man, a Special Forces guy, our elite Army Special Forces doughboy. He was J-3 of Special Ops. He was the Deputy Commander of Indo-Pacom Army.

So just, Jamie Girard, he's just retired. And we would love to hear your perspectives from an Army or service perspective. Everybody, mostly everybody thinks that, you know, it's an Army mission in the U.S. homeland to do this. But your experience on the islands, et cetera, in adding to this conversation of where we're going with Defense for America. Jamie?

[Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamie Jarrad, Deputy Commanding General for the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)]

Thanks, Riki. And always a daunting task to follow Mr. Rood there. So I'm very cognizant of the level I've got to perform at today.

But it's always good to be with you. And I think, you know, John laid out all of the threats very well. And he also mentioned a couple other words that I'd like to double down on.

First of all, the new Secretary has talked about deterrence and making sure that all of our adversaries understand that we have a very clear ability to deter any threats toward the United States. And so I do think that homeland defense is obviously going to be a, it's always talked about as a number one priority. But I definitely think that the President and the new Secretary are laser focused on that one.

And then the other one, the other word is prioritization. And, you know, as we were talking a little bit earlier today, we have a very difficult time of defending the U.S. homeland from all the threats around the world. And for the past 20 years or so, we have talked about defending forward to prevent strike threats to the homeland, but that's been predominantly focused on counterterrorism.

And I think that that was a good way to look at that problem. But now we have missiles from various actors that are not necessarily just able to reach our territories or our islands that are not on the continental United States, but also all the way to the continental United States. And so we need to rethink our deterrence posture and the prioritization of how we're doing that.

And as I've been in the Pacific for the last several years, I think, John, also point on allies and partners, we've got to think collectively about how to do this. We can't just try to solve this problem ourselves. The three things that I'm thinking about as we talk about the capabilities are building the capabilities and how we do that, commanding and controlling those capabilities in an operational context, and then who's actually manning those systems day to day.

So when they get the word from the command and control authority to do something, there's somebody there that is competent enough to do it. I think you've had a session, and I can't remember how long ago, maybe a year now on the command and control pieces. And I think we can figure that out.

I don't think that that one is terribly complex. We probably need to refine it a little bit, but we can get there. The capabilities, and this is one that I think we've all discussed, you all have discussed numerous times, but the Department of Defense doesn't have a good process by which to deliver joint capabilities.

And the problem is the services deliver capabilities, but the services have their own parochialism and their own agenda almost all the time. And so there's always a little bit of bias every time they are creating something that is going to be a joint capability used by the joint force. And so I don't think we do that.

And I do, I'm trying, I was trying to think ever since John talked about MDA, I've been trying to think how to couch this, but watching MDA try to deliver a capability on Guam over the last several years, when they're not a command, even though they do have special acquisition authorities, has not produced a result in a timely manner. And I appreciate all the folks at MDA. I think there's some great folks there, and I think they were doing God's work to try to do that, but they weren't commanders.

They weren't in the chain of command. They weren't an operational commander or a service command that had a lot of authority to deliver capabilities. And so I think we've spun our wheels a little bit over the last several years with respect to Guam and Hawaii and some of the other locations.

And so I think we really do need to look at the joint process. There were some designations by the Office of Secretary of Defense to put the Army senior acquisition personnel in charge of that process. And still early that may be a way to do it.

But we need really, as you talked about just a minute ago, both of you, if we're going to throw space into this, then who really does have the authority to pull all of this together and to drive the acquisition process to deliver a capability that will sufficiently defend the United States of America and our territories worldwide. And I think we've a good bit of work that needs to be done so that that is moving with a little more alacrity than it has over the last several years. And then again, how are our allies and partners helping us do this?

I'm specifically thinking about the Pacific, but when it goes to prioritization, we've got a lot of capability in the Middle East. Is that the right place for it? I just finished or I'm still listening to General Frank McKenzie's book, *The Melting Point*, which by the way, gives accolades to Mr. John Rood and his performance as the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. And I remember a session in the tank where he was the director before he went to take over CENTCOM and the current Indo-Pacom commander, Admiral Papparo, was the J3 at CENTCOM arguing for more assets for Iran. And General McKenzie, as the director, basically told him, thank you for your interest in national security. You're not getting anything.

And it wasn't six months later when General McKenzie was now the CENTCOM commander that he was doubling down on more capability for the CENTCOM region to deter others in that region. But in that region, we're helping really focused on our allies and partners. And that's not unrighteous, but where is that in the prioritization of our homeland?

And so are we going to continue to do that? Are we going to pull back and focus on our homeland and territories in the Pacific? And then the last thing I'll speak about is the capability.

How do we man these things? I don't think, you know, all of the services have had tension with their recruiting goals over the last several years. The Army did meet theirs last year, which was good, but the first time in several years, but we're not going to grow the services quickly.

So when we create these new capabilities, how can we man them effectively and efficiently? And I think we've got to look at the National Guard to do that, especially in places like Guam and potentially in Hawaii as well. We need to double down on the National Guard and get them into the missile defense capability arena.

And I think there's interest there in the National Guard. I know that at least in my discussions, I think that there's, in Guam specifically, there's interest from the civilian leadership there. So I think there's plenty of interest.

We just need to work hard toward determining what that is and then start the process. Because once you determine that's what you want to do, when you're talking about people, you're talking about years and it's not going to develop overnight. And so we need to start the process, make some decisions, and then start moving in moving in that direction quickly so that in two or three years, we'll have the manpower needed to man those assets, whether it is, and I'm talking, I'm thinking specifically about Guam and other places like Hawaii, but that could be other locations like Alaska.

The Alaska National Guard could help us up there and other locations. So Riki, I'll stop there and hopefully that was helpful.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Yeah, that was great. And obviously one of our capstones is Space National Guard. We are 100% behind the National Guard owning the homeland mission.

They almost already do with air-to-air, with GBIs and so forth, and with NCR. I have just two questions, two questions if you could help a little bit. So you're talking about a major shift from resourcing forward funding for these COCOMs outside of the United States to a COCOM that doesn't have much money.

That seems to be a heck of a challenge to do that. And you got one NORTHCOM commander versus all the rest of them, looks very, very hard to do. So I just wanted to have you process that a little bit.

And then you said, I agree with you on the command, is that a four-star? Is that a three-star? Or is that equivalent?

They got to be in the tank to be able to do this massive project that you're talking about with the authorities to do so. Is that MDA or would MDA fit under that four-star commander? In your vision, how does that work?

[Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamie Jarrad, Deputy Commanding General for the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)]

That's a good question. And so I don't know that I have the best answer. I have a answer, I think, I've thought about this after we talked here last week.

But I go back to my special operations experience, and there is a standing joint task force for counterterrorism. And that joint task force has the ability to work for multiple combatant commanders at the same time. And so I think that we could have a three-star commander that owns at least the mission to, because again, when you get into command and control and operational control, I think that we probably are pretty close and we don't need to yank that a lot.

But when we're talking about building capabilities, we could put a three-star commander in charge of it and give him the requisite responsibility with the authority to actually feel the capabilities that would protect our homeland, wherever that homeland is, and that's going to stretch across multiple COCOMs. And so that is a way that I think about it. But we need a operational commander and MDA could form the nucleus of that. They could be the acquisition arm of it, because acquisition has very, I'm still a little bit naive on some of the acquisition authority and the legal authorities required there.

But again, in special operations command, they have their own acquisition authority. So you could potentially give this command their own acquisition authority somehow. But that would be how I would think about it.

But we need a commander that has the responsibility and the requisite authority to deliver, to drive this change or, and drive the services, the various services. And that would potentially include Space Force to create the capabilities needed to do this. And we can't just create them for the continental United States or the continental United States and Alaska.

We've got to do it for all of our states and all of our territories. So hopefully that helps.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Jamie, just the last question is, you got to take resources from your forward operating COCOMs or capabilities. Is that what you're suggesting? Or are you suggesting we get some brand new money to come in to do this?

[Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamie Jarrad, Deputy Commanding General for the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)]

It's all prioritization. And if we're going to defend the homeland and we're going to talk about it, then we've got to put our money where our mouth is. And we were talking earlier, I think Mark may mention it here after I do, but you got to have money.

You got to have the resources to deliver this stuff. And that comes at a cost to something. Everything has a cost.

But if we're going to deter and we're going to defend the homeland, we got to have the resources to do it.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Thank you, Jamie. All right, Mark, you're the grand slam here. The batter's up.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mark Montgomery, he's our board member, MDA, former J3 at Indo-Pacom, cyber, etc. Mark, all yours.

[Rear Admiral (Ret.) Mark Montgomery, MDAA Board of Directors Member, Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies Former Director of Operations, U.S. Pacific Command]

Thank you very much, Riki. Great to follow after John and Jamie. Look, I think we go back to the beginning here.

And every president has said since 9-11 that defending the homeland is my number one mission. In his first term, Donald Trump supported a national security strategy that John, I'm sure, contributed to. He stated his first responsibility was to protect the homeland and the American way of life.

Now, he's taken office now eight years later, and I'd say the homeland has never been less secure than it is today. And America's greatest vulnerability is not its poorest borders, which sometimes you hear from the administration. Rather, I think the number one threat is you know, the top two threats are really cyber-attacks and long-range missile strikes by Russia and China.

Both of them undermine that historical assumption we've had about the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. I'm not going to get into the cyber, you know, I spent a lot of time with it, but I'll just say we are getting our ass kicked in cyber. And while those cyber attacks are demonstrating how an enemy can stop America from rallying forces to prevent a war overseas, Russia and China's long-range conventional missile capabilities are demonstrating how these same adversaries can bring the fight right to the U.S. homeland in a way we have not planned for. The

Chinese balloon escapade two years ago kind of exposed some of the worst detection challenges, but the issue is much more complex than just the embarrassment of the balloon. Russia and China are both sprinting to build a long-range cruise and hypersonic missile that can strike the U.S. mainland anywhere with conventional weapons. Both Republicans and Democrats talk about the return of great power competition, but the United States has failed to use the last two decades to build a defense architecture to detect, identify, track, and engage inbound cruise or hypersonic missile threats to the homeland.

So as things now stand today, the only U.S. airspace that's protected from cruise missiles is a stretch of downtown Washington between the Capitol and the Pentagon, and the entire country is vulnerable to a hypersonic threat. So my thoughts were that for a robust missile defense, the Department of Defense is going to need to design and build a comprehensive architecture that mixes satellites, dirigibles equipped with sensors, and long-range ground-based detectors to detect and track threats. So that's long-range ground-based radars along with the dirigibles and satellites to detect and track threats.

The Pentagon then needs to integrate this network of sensors with a mix of engagement systems to shoot down the incoming missiles. The cost of this homeland defense mission is going to be significant. I do think, however, we're going to be able to mitigate it with some innovative solutions, and John mentioned one of them, maybe engaging in and through space and developing sensors that operate in the near-space region.

I think in the past, presidents had the luxury of thinking about how to handle the threat from the adversary state over there in the adversary's backyard. Things are different for Trump. He's looking at a lot of different security challenges, but none are more serious than this missile threat to the homeland.

So investments are going to be made. Just a few thoughts that I'd have based on what I heard earlier. I agree largely with what Jamie said.

I would disagree on one thing. The architecture that's going to have to be done by MDA, the cluster F that has been the defense of Guam, there are a lot of people responsible for that. MDA is only partially responsible.

I would put first and foremost OSD, not listening to MDA. MDA had a plan. It isn't the one that we've heard about.

They had a plan for ages of joy. Number two, CAPE was the tool that OSD used to be stupid, so I put a lot of blame on CAPE. I've got to say some GIAMDO officers got in there and fueled stupid, so get them in there too.

The Navy had an absolute solution, could have given it, and said, we're not playing. We took our tools and went home under some crazy logic that sailors don't want to be stationed in Guam. I just want to disabuse you of that.

We have four, five, six submarines at a time permanently stationed in Guam. We do not have trouble with that. We have other facilities there.

We have a metric butt ton of Aegis enlisted sailors in Japan who would love to be stationed in Guam and they're disassociated to or from a ship. That was complete bullshit from the Navy. The Army did the opposite way.

They looked at this as opportunity and promised things that probably couldn't deliver in a reasonable amount of time. Whenever you have a problem this stupid, there are going to be four or five authors. There's not one like E-8 or E-4 at the bottom of that firing chain.

There are two services in the Army and the Navy, two organizations, CAPE and GIAMDO, working for OSD. Look, do I think MDA needs a lot of work? Yes, but I'm going to tell you, if we're going to build this big architecture, I'll go back to Jamie's point and say he's absolutely right.

You're going to have to test Northcom as the head man or woman in charge. They're going to have to come up with a description of the challenge with the help of the intelligence community, including times, because it's coming fast. Then design a requirement.

Say, here's what I need, but then the architecture is going to have to be built by MDA. That's where our engineers sit. SDA might be, the Space Defense Agencies might be part of it as well.

Service components will help with that service engineering on Aegis and particularly Army. I think they're going to be deeply involved with this because despite the Air Force trying to command every missile defense thing, they don't provide crap in terms of equipment. It's all Army and Navy.

Those two services are going to have to contribute to it. Overall, this is going to be a really complex thing. It starts with telling North Com, SDA North Com, you are head dude or dudette in charge.

You are going to design, you're going to describe the requirements. MDA, you're going to build his or her requirements. You're going to build the architecture to that.

Then services, you're going to service that architecture. I do want to mention innovation. We've got to drive down the costs.

It's going to be hard with the interceptors. I'm going to tell you right now, in this kind of defense system, you're looking for an intercept at 600, 1,000 miles away. There's not a cheap version of that.

There is not some magic fuel somewhere that makes that a cheap version. Those are going to be expensive, the engagement things. We're going to have to drive down the cost of sensors.

I think the way to do that is dirigibles, aerostats, whatever, something up at 40, and not the Jaylen's 10,000-foot one for the defense of the National Cavalry region. This is the big ones. We had one we were designing called ISIS, admittedly a bad name.

Something up in near space, 60,000-80,000 feet with a TPY-2-like radar that's providing firing quality track data at high hundreds to 1,000 miles. You'd only have to have a few of them up in certain positions to really get a good picture of the US airspace. Then you can surge more when things go to crap.

We need to militarize space. I'm sorry. Eventually, we're going to get the cheap stuff by shooting from space.

We're going to get to reasonable cost solutions, rods from God kind of future, or as John and Riki would say, back to the future. Finally, we've got to acknowledge the Cal-Dal disconnect. Northcom will write a Cal.

That's the guy that says, it's everything. I want them to defend New Hampshire, but whatever. They've got to defend everything, countervalue, counter-targeting.

The Dal, what they'll actually defend, not we wish what they would defend, is infinitesimally small at the problem start and will grow over time. Our goal long-term is to make the Dal look

more like the Cal, but we're a long, long, long way from that. We're going to get there with innovation.

We're going to get there with good architecture. Most importantly, we're going to get there with good leadership by Northcom under the direction of the Department of Defense. Riki, that's how I look at this.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Thanks, Mark. Let me just ask you clarity, because how do you bring in the whole counter-UAS drones into that architecture? Do you separate that?

That adds to the whole thing. Is MDA the person to do this with cruise missiles, all of it, or do we have two separate things here, or do you combine them?

[Rear Admiral (Ret.) Mark Montgomery, MDAA Board of Directors Member, Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies Former Director of Operations, U.S. Pacific Command]
I think Northcom is involved in counter-UAS, to a small degree, at military bases. The stuff I'm talking about is stuff that crossed an ocean to get to you. Do we have a counter-UAS problem?

Yes. Do we have a domestic terrorism problem, an espionage problem? Yes.

Do I think those are the tools China and Russia are going to do to take us apart? No. Do I think there could be some fifth element stuff?

Sure. What we're talking about here, and I don't want to confuse this issue, this is about developing defenses against a clearly emerging technology of long-range cruise missiles and hypersonic missiles launched from aircraft or other vehicles that will be able to reach the U.S. homeland in three to four to five years. That is maybe four to five to six years, but it's not that far away, and it's way inside our OODA loop for building stuff.

Different mission.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Give us what you think that cost is to do a basic, not the whole thing, but the minimal thing we can do that would have the capability to negate that, and how quickly can we get these systems in? Next four years? Eight years?

[Rear Admiral (Ret.) Mark Montgomery, MDAA Board of Directors Member, Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies Former Director of Operations, U.S. Pacific Command] This is a multi-tiered answer. The cruise missile hypersonic one, this could easily, because it's the number of interceptors that can drive your cost, but this is in the \$20 billion plus range. It could be much plus, like between \$20 billion and \$60 billion.

Before we start to have a heart attack, the Ohio-class replacement is going to cost us \$130 billion. The Sentinel replacement just jumped from \$70 billion to \$140 billion when we turned our head, turned back, and they said, the Air Force is like, we messed this up. It's not \$70 billion, it's \$140 billion.

The B-21 is another nugget that approaches \$100 billion. I would just say, we're already spending \$300 billion, \$400 billion on the offensive weapon systems for nuclear weapons. This is not an unrealistic assessment.

If we have to spend \$40 billion, \$50 billion, \$60 billion on this, that may be what has to happen over time, and it's not delivering fast-breaking.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Where would you take the money from? Would you get new money, or would you take it from the other services for it to operate?

[Rear Admiral (Ret.) Mark Montgomery, MDAA Board of Directors Member, Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies Former Director of Operations, U.S. Pacific Command] I don't know where you take the money from. From my point of view, I could clean sheet a better defense budget, you bet, but that gets into service equities, congressional equities. It's not a realistic discussion.

You're going to have to add into this. By the way, here's what I would say. When you're going to be a global power with near-peer adversaries who dislike you, you spend 4.5% to 5% of GDP on defense. That's the whole Cold War, 4.5% to 5.5%, which in today's dollars would be \$1.3 trillion, \$400 billion more than we're spending right now. Where would I do? I would do what Senator Wicker is doing.

I'd say that reconciliation needs a \$200 billion ad, and that we have to increase the base budget by \$40 billion a year minimum alongside that. That's how I'd get at it.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Thank you. Thank you, Mark. I'm going to pass it over to our board member, JD Ganey, to bring in the questions from the public and questions for each of the participants here. JD, all yours.

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

Great. Thank you, Riki, team. A few questions I kind of scattered from tech and policy and then command and control.

Mr. Rood, we'll start off with you, sir, and give us some of the comments that we've heard about the mission set, either fallen under the Space Force or fallen underneath the National Guard. From a policy perspective, what are some mechanisms that need to be addressed to get the ball moving toward that direction?

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]

Well, I think this is a complex problem, and it'll be a complex answer, but the short answer would be you have – within the Defense Department, you have different roles and responsibilities. And sometimes people get confused at the scale of that. It really is like a country-size scale.

Previous secretaries of defense have sometimes impressed me with statistics showing the Defense Department is the size of other countries, both in terms of its budget, the number of people working there, the complexity of the challenges, and it's global. So that is a kind of preambulatory comment. I think where you're focused on a problem, whether it's missile defense or cyber or counterterrorism, it's traditional to – sometimes the whole world is too complicated to think, well, I'll just create a stovepipe that works for my problem.

But where that can become very difficult is if – whether it's the counterdrug mission or other things, you end up optimizing for a single mission and ignoring the rest of department activities. And so it doesn't end up working that well because you can't have essentially a different organization structure for problem A, for problem B, for problem C, problem D, and so on. But I would say in missile defense, you've got to be able to, one, operationally provide clear policy and clear guidance that the commanders, whether it's Commander NORTHCOM or other operational commanders, can implement.

And that sounds easy, but in practice is actually very hard to do. For instance, is the guidance to the force? Defend the United States against missile attack to allow for the functioning of the government, to function of our economy.

How far does that economy take it? Does that mean you're defending switching units and data centers? Does that mean you're defending the power supply to the New York Stock Exchange?

Where does that begin and where does that end in terms of – is that the ports? Because after all, we're a nation that trades extensively. Is that our rail system?

I mean, what are you defending? Because if you don't operationalize that, there's always the case in any theater, there are too many threats for too few defenders. You've got to prioritize.

And you've got to have that be flexible enough because the adversary's adaptive. You've got to adapt as they adapt with the speed of relevance. But I think here you've got to send clear guidance and you have to have guidance to the force for the operators who operate it.

That's the combatant commands. You also have to have in the service roles, what are the roles of the services in terms of providing the forces, whether that's the Army, Navy, Air Force, National Guard, Space Force, what are the service roles there? And then you're going to have to have the development and the acquisition, which gets very complex in its own.

All of those things are going to have to be in the broadest of categories adjudicated and decided. And we've struggled with that in other complex areas. Sometimes we appoint a lead service, tends to lead to the other services withdrawing and not being as committed.

Jamie talked about a joint task force type approach. That can be done, but you've got to be, it's got to be something that is enduring and continues. And see the Missile Defense Agency is principally a development organization.

They should be, in my opinion, focused on, and I think we need a single focal point in the department, whether it was called Missile Defense Agency or something else, that can be the systems architect for something that complicated. And right now their charter doesn't include all of the things that I think it should include. And I'm not sure we got the right resourcing in terms of personnel there or the right culture at the moment.

You've become very bureaucratic, unfortunately, a lot like the rest of the department, instead of revolutionaries that have been given special authorities to go change the world. So I think, but you've, outside of development, then a lot of what Jamie was hitting at in Guam and elsewhere is you have to have operational commands. And typically the services have done a lot of that spade work, but here, each of the services have been reluctant partners.

So I think it requires some strong leadership from the Pentagon. I mean, I have some views of my own that I would do some turnover and rejuvenate the Missile Defense Agency in the acquisition side. I'd either appoint a lead service or I'd appoint someone from a lead service to lead a joint command.

And you got to have the civilians in the Pentagon invested. And usually it's the Deputy Secretary of Defense who's got a ride heard over that programming, budgeting, and financial management system, which is vast and difficult and typically resistant to any new initiative or any new idea, good, bad, or other. And so you've got to have somebody at a senior level that truly drives it and probably somebody at the assistant secretary level and deputy assistant secretary level that thinks this is their full-time job and that really wants to implement the change, but has top cover from above.

And a presidential mandate typically can give you a sword to cut through a lot of that red tape. But the organization is important because architecture, just like with a building, in a lot of ways architecture defines the outcome. So you've got to structure it right, and you've got to put a lot of time and attention into the seams between authorities.

Where does one begin and where does...

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

We're back on.

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]

Can you still read me, JD?

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

I got you. Yes, sir. The last thing we heard was architecture drives the outcomes and the position to people that understand architecture and how to execute and send out the right messaging and the directives to be able to fulfill it.

It's going to have to be driven from the Pentagon. That was like the last topic, sir.

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]

Yes. Yes. That's all I had transmitted.

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

Thank you. I think you touched on about three other questions that are in the queue. One, General, this is for you.

You see an emergence of the quote-unquote tech bros and the software developers coming into play and getting more involved in fulfilling requirements and providing resourcing support to the services. What role do you think they're going to play with respect to evolving and advancing a missile defense, just from your perspective? Because you've seen tech in action.

You've seen rapid acquisition of support from the Special Forces world. Is there some lessons learned in that area as we look at what rapid software development can provide for missile defense?

[Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamie Jarrad, Deputy Commanding General for the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)]

Well, thanks, JD I was sitting here and I was listening to John talk and Mark as well, but some of the key words they were throwing out there, flexible, adaptable, solution. You know, Riki said, hey, when can we get this done? In the next four, five, six years, Mark was throwing out some timelines of when the threat was going to be increased.

But to your point on that question, we absolutely have to involve the tech bros, as you said, because they are absolutely on the cutting edge of innovation. And when we start building something today, it may not be what we need in six years. And so, whatever capabilities we build, they've got to be flexible.

They've got to be adaptable. We've got to have the ability to innovate inside of a very quick decision cycle with these capabilities. They've got to be open architecture so software can make them better every other week if we need to get that fast.

But we absolutely need them because the Defense Department's bureaucracy is never going to be that flexible and that adaptable. I say never. Maybe it will in 15 or 20 years, but it's going to take a long time to change our culture.

And so, we've got to get the commercial industry involved, the civilian industry and the tech industry involved with this. So, whatever solutions we do field, we're able to adapt them at the speed of war that we need to so that they're relevant. I mean, the amount of innovation that's going on in Ukraine and Israel is mind-boggling to anything we've ever seen in our history.

And so, our solutions need to remain on that cutting edge.

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

That's right. Thank you. You know, Riki, that pretty much sums up all of it.

There's some other questions that we'll hit on in future ones, like Indo-PACOM implications, more technology modernization stuff, but we'll be able to pick that up in the future.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Hey, JD, just so you can get a chance to, if you can be real quick, love to hear your input on this discussion today. Real quick. That's your thought.

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

Yeah. Where we need to be to count these threats, we're not going to get there with small incremental changes. A significant emotional event has to occur somewhere to create that change agent, preferably it comes from the top down.

And there's people in place that understand not only how to utilize missile defense as a deterrent, but also open the aperture to other participants to evolve on a rapid timeline to bring in more capability. And we can't do it with small brushstrokes. We got to go after holistically.

So, we're talking like major significant shifts on how we execute and how we implement some of these changes.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Thanks, JD I want to thank everybody, but I want to just go around real quick, just summary on the discussion today, and I'll go to Jamie and close it. But go ahead, John, what are your thoughts on the discussion we had today?

[Mr. John Rood, MDAA Board of Directors Member]

I think we got a unique moment here with a lot of energy, some of it very raw energy, admittedly, from the new president and new administration to focus that and guide it towards what I think can be a terrific leveraging of all that energy, which is the United States is at a period where we're very vulnerable, and we've got to make some hard decisions and some hard prioritization. And so, I'm looking forward to seeing some of that. And I think all of us, to the extent we can help and shape that and focus that in ways that are going to protect the country more effectively, I just encourage everyone to pitch in to the extent you can to work towards that end.

But I'm looking forward to seeing the movement here in the next year or two.

[Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamie Jarrad, Deputy Commanding General for the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)]

Thank you, John.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Jamie?

[Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamie Jarrad, Deputy Commanding General for the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)]

Yeah, I think I'll align myself with Mr. Rood's comments, everything he said. And, you know, JD mentioned a catastrophic event. I just hope that we do get aligned and moving on the same azimuth as quickly as possible, so we do not have a catastrophic event with a missile incursion into the homeland, something akin to 9-11, that would absolutely drive change.

But hopefully, we don't need that, and we'll see the problem for what it is and start moving to solve it quickly. Thank you.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

JD, any remark?

[Mr. JD Gainey, MDAA Board Member]

Nope, nope, just a lot of good excitement and having you part of the team. That's good effort.

[Mr. Riki Ellison, Chairman and Founder, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance]

Hey, it reminds me of the sleeping dog on the nail. The dog's figured that out and getting up. And we have to go big.

We are going to go big. We have no choice. And this, to me, I believe we're going to have an SDI moment where this president and this administration and this Congress is going to move out on this because we're not deterred.

We're not deterring people on it. This is leadership, and this brings the entire community together, from Elon Musk, from innovation, from our big companies, to work on something that I think is more important than anything else. Now, we can talk about foreign operating bases, but this is homeland, and we've never had that movement like this since World War II.

All our wars have been away, and I think you've got it. We've got it. It's just making sure the leaders can pull this and bring in the diversity of great minds in this country, services and everything, to get this thing done.

And it is worth far more than \$20 billion, far more than \$20 billion. You can go to the taxpayers right now on that. We're only spending less than 2% on our DOD budget for defense.

We've got to have it. It's coming. You can't stop what's coming.

So hey, thanks for participating today. Great session, and I appreciate all of you. Thank you.