Virtual Event | Defending Guam: Panel 1

TRANSCRIPT

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- Bryan Clark, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Defense Concepts and Technology, Hudson Institute
- Matthew Costlow, Senior Analyst, National Institute for Public Policy
- Rebecca L. Heinrichs (Moderator), Senior Fellow and Director of the Keystone Defense Initiative, Hudson Institute

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A video of the event is available: https://www.hudson.org/events/2101-virtual-event-defending-guam42022

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Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Hello, and welcome to this event at Hudson Institute. My name is Rebeccah Heinrichs, and today we will be discussing the strategic importance of Guam and the threat to Guam in particular from the Chinese Communist Party, from China. And I have a wonderful group of panelists with me. First, this will be a two-part panel. Our first panel, we will be discussing the role of Guam and how we might deter the PRC and then when and if deterrence fails, and we find ourselves in a military contest with China. My first panelist is my colleague here at Hudson, Mr. Bryan Clark. He’s a senior fellow and director of the Center for Defense Concepts and Technology here at Hudson. He's an expert in naval operations, electronic warfare, autonomous systems, military competitions, and war gaming. You can see the rest of his biography on the Hudson Institute website.

And then I have my friend and colleague, Ms. Patty-Jane Geller. She is the policy analyst for nuclear deterrence and missile defense in the Heritage Foundation Center for National Defense. And my friend and colleague as well, Mr. Matthew Costlow. He is a senior analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy and his areas of expertise are in nuclear deterrence, missile defense policy, arms control, and Russian and Chinese nuclear doctrine. It is a great privilege to be able to moderate this discussion. I intend to just ask each of my panelists to please open with five to eight minutes of remarks, just to put some interesting things on the table, and then we will have a discussion about those. So with that, I’m going to turn it over to my friend, Bryan. Bryan, the floor is yours.

Bryan Clark:

Well, thank you very much Rebeccah, I appreciate you doing this event, and I'm going to share some slides here that go along with my opening remarks because I want to talk a little bit about overarching approaches to defending Guam and Guam’s role in our overall Pacific war plans. So first to talk a little bit about, what is China doing? China's the challenge that we face here, as you said Rebeccah earlier, and to set the stage if you will, here’s where we sit with China today. So if you look on the left-hand side, this is a chart that shows the relative balance of power, the correlation of forces between the U.S. and China in the Western Pacific on a day-to-day basis. You can see the Chinese forces are more numerous than the U.S. forces, increasingly starting to incorporate some fifth generation or more modern capabilities that are on par with what the U.S. has.

And the blue on the right-hand side is the capabilities that the U.S. brings to the table on a day-to-day basis. So obviously the U.S. military is larger than that, but the U.S. has global responsibilities. The difference with China is China can focus its efforts regionally on the Western Pacific, which allows it to concentrate its military power on places like Taiwan and bases like Guam. So we face this challenge where we’re the away team, they're the home team, we're playing on their field and they get to therefore plan things out to a degree that maybe we can't do because as an expeditionary force, we have to be more flexible and carry with us all of our own logistics and protection. So we're forced into a situation where we are dependent upon how they set up the fight, they take the initiative, and they get to drive the terms of the engagement in a lot of ways.

So for that reason, if you look on the right-hand side, China's planning process tends to be very deliberative. And so they've built up over time in what they call systems warfare, an approach to defeat what they expect to see in terms of the U.S. operations on our side. So how we intend to defend ourselves, how we intend to bring the fight to them, how we intend to interdict an amphibious invasion
of Taiwan for example, because they know as the away team, there's only so many ways we can organize our forces and sustain them in theater and protect them, because we are not able to leverage the same kind of internal lines of support and defenses that they have. So fundamentally if we want to be able to deter China, we need to think about how to erode this planning cycle’s confidence. If they're going to take a very deliberate approach to an engagement like invading Taiwan, we need to start introducing uncertainty, being able to create surprise, be able to do more unexpected things.

And a lot of the U.S. conceptual efforts recently have focused on that. Trying to create concepts like agile combat employment in the air force or distributed maritime operations for the Navy, that make the force operate in more unpredictable ways and give it more flexibility. The Chinese then operationalize if you will, this approach of systems warfare with a large mass of precision weapons they can launch from the mainland. This just shows in terms of payload, just the throw weight if you will, how many weapons they can put out at different ranges into the Western Pacific. And what it highlights is that this is not just a Guam problem. Guam is very central to a lot of U.S. plans because it's where a lot of the U.S. basing for aircraft is at Anderson, it's a lot of where our logistics reside, it's where really our only Navy repair facility is in the Western Pacific except for Japan.

So we really need Guam to be operational, but it's not just a Guam problem. Other bases like Singapore where we might intend to operate from, or get support from, are at risk. As well as places even farther out like Diego Garcia and potentially Hawaii. So we have to think about this as an overarching problem. So if we put too many eggs in the Guam basket, we open ourselves up to having to being too vulnerable there, because Guam may not be defensible at some level because of the number of weapons that China can throw at it, therefore we need to think about spreading our forces out over a larger area and over more bases. And if you think about how we might defend Guam... I’m not going to go through this in detail, but this is just one depiction of how folks have talked about defending Guam.

This very multidimensional, multi-faceted approach where you combine defenses on Guam with aircraft from the sea and from shore that are doing air defense patrols, doing offensive counter air sweeps to try to pick up bombers before they’re able to launch cruise missiles at Guam. Even places like in the Philippines up on the upper left-hand side, where we put Marines on the shore to interdict bombers as they cross the first island chain. So this very multidimensional, multi-service joint approach to dealing with the defense of Guam is going to be challenging, but it may be necessary to get the capacity in need to be able to deal with this kind of scale of threat. The difficulty though is how are we going to pull this together on the fly? Because one of the difficulties... The challenges the U.S. military faces is this, which is as this diagram shows. We start in the center with how the services develop their forces, they build their force structures, their force designs, they train and prepare them for deployment, and they eventually send them out to the combatant commanders.

Well, the first time that a service member, service unit, encounters a unit from another service generally is when you arrive at the combatant commander's theater, and now you have to work together. And we haven't trained together, we haven't really done any operations together, so that first opportunity for joint operations and joint integration is in the combat commander's theater. Which would be okay, except we provided the combat commanders very little tools to be able to integrate joint forces in theater. So this is one of the big challenges defense of Guam faces is, if it's going to be this multi-service, multidimensional approach to defense of Guam, how are we integrating that? Who's responsible for that? Technically, Indo-Pacific Commanders' responsible for it, but they've not been equipped
necessarily early with all the technical skills, the technical capabilities and the support infrastructure to do so.

This is a lot of what resides in this Pacific Deterrence Initiative investments that the Indo-Pacific Command has requested over the last couple of years. Those investments are really critical to enabling this joint integration to occur in theater, because we don't do it any other point in the force development or force preparation process. So that's going to be one of the big challenges we face in Guam defense, is integration. The other challenge we face is then balancing the investments in Guam defense versus investments in other parts of the U.S. facing infrastructure in the Western Pacific, at sea and ashore. So every combat air patrol we put over Guam is a combat air patrol we probably can't put over Okinawa or Kadena. It's an air combat, air patrol that we may not be able to deploy in support of a carrier strike group that's going to be able to do some kind of counter maritime mission against the Chinese.

So we're going to have to figure out how to divide our forces amongst multiple defensive locations in a way that maximizes the flexibility of the force, because fundamentally if we want to deter China, it's about creating that more flexible force. So one way to think about this is the current effort going on into Pacific Command under the last year's NDAA, National Defense Authorization Act, that established a pilot program for emission integration. And what that pilot does is it establishes a mission integration cell out in Indo-Pacific Command, supported by the Strategic Capabilities Office back in the Pentagon. And what that mission integration cell is charged with doing is addressing a key operational challenge in Indo-Pacific Command. So one of the ones they're looking at doing is addressing a key operational challenge in Indo-Pacific Command. So one of the ones they're looking at doing is resilient air operations from Guam.

So that is not just about defense of Guam though. So fundamentally Guam has to remain an operation to create uncertainty for Chinese planning. Well, then there's multiple ways you can do that. You have to defend Guam, but you also have to come up with a way to continue air operations from Guam in the face of enemy attacks that are successful. So you need ways to continue doing air traffic control, you need ways to do runway repair, you need ways to continue to provide fuel even though the fuel tanks might have been hit at Anderson. So all of those things are kill chains or effects chains that you need to be able to execute as we are presented on this chart.

So Indo-Pacific Command's going to have to send some of its forces over to this mission integration cell and allow that mission integration cell to come up with new ways to combine those units, to be able to deliver on these different effects chains that are necessary to support resilient air operations from Guam. Some of which are defensive, some of which are focused on continuity of operations rather than simply protecting against incoming weapons.

Then in terms of how they do each of these effects chains, one of the things they're going to have to look at is how do I try to come up with multiple ways to do each of those tasks? Whether it's defense against hypersonic missiles or one runway repair. So one way to represent that is here. If you think about the hypersonic missile threat, the second or the other panel's going to get more into the [inaudible 00:11:06] of this but I'll just say, one thing we need to look at is how to have multiple ways to execute each of the effects chains necessary for maintaining resilient air operations from Guam. So it's going to be a combination of... In this case, do we use multiple different satellite systems to get the initial detection of a hypersonic missile coming in? So the hypersonic ballistic and tracking surveillance system HPTSS. We also have the space development and agencies electro optical infrared sensor system.
Those two systems give you multiple ways to get the initial detection and tracking, and then you can come up with multiple ways to then... To continue to track that weapon through its glide phase, such as looking at AWACS, being able to do that and then you need to have multiple ways to engage it, which might be an F-18, or it could be an SM-6 coming from a ship. So having multiple ways to execute each of those effects chains is necessary not just for our own resilience, but also to create more difficulty for the Chinese planning processes that ultimately are the things we're trying to dissuade. So at the end of the day, what defense of Guam needs to be about is not just defending Guam per se, but also it's more about resilient operations in Guam. And then even more so it's about resilient operations from the U.S. force as a whole in Western Pacific.

And fundamentally we need to be thinking about undermining the PRC planning process. That's got to be the main goal. If we focus only on the war fight and trying to succeed in some theoretical war fight, we may guess wrong is what the war fight looks like, but if we try to create a force that's got resiliency and adaptability built into it, we're more likely to dissuade China by presenting them with enough uncertainty that their planning processes will be unsuccessful. They might choose to defer conflict and just wait until another day when things look better.

And so fundamentally that's about getting away from this idea of a forecast centric force, where we try to predict the scenario we're going to face and build a force to address that scenario, and instead build a force that's focused more on having a decision making set of options. So it's set of options available to us to do multiple effects chains, to execute each task, and then a way to execute those tasks across multiple bases in the Western Pacific, so that the Chinese don't have an easy way to get a one shot, one kill by taking out Guam. And with that I'm going to turn it back over to Rebeccah and looking forward to the questions later on.

**Rebeccah Heinrichs:**

Wonderful. That was a great beginning for us. And then I will get to some... You've just pinged three more questions in my mind that I want to have for you, but I'm going to put those on hold and turn to Patty-Jane to give us five to eight minutes of your remarks.

**Patty-Jane Geller:**

Awesome. Thanks so much Rebeccah for having me for the chance to talk about this. So I thought I'd start by outlining why Guam is so important to U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific, then talk about the utility and the necessity of defending Guam, and then touch a bit on the status of our efforts today to build out that advanced missile defense system that I think we so need. So to begin, China's goals in the Indo-Pacific are no secret. We know that Beijing is pursuing a force posture that would deny the U.S. from being able to operate in China's immediate vicinity. And that would also enable Beijing to project power beyond its coastlines as Bryan outlined well. And China's goal of unifying with Taiwan is critical to this effort. Taiwan is located right on the first island chain surrounding the Chinese coastline and would help China project power and become dominant in the region.

So how does Guam fit into all that? The U.S. is quite lucky to put it simply to have its own territory right along the second island chain, which lies to the east of the first island chain in Taiwan. And holding territory at this location is so important for U.S. strategy in the region, and I'm going to outline three reasons why. First, the ability to forward deploy forces on the island of Guam contributes to deterrents
of an attack on Taiwan. If the U.S. can send in forces to defend Taiwan immediately from Guam, like aircraft or ships stationed on the island, China may be less competent in its ability to achieve a fait accompli conquest of Taiwan before military response. With U.S. forces right along the second island chain, U.S. deterrents becomes more credible and China might calculate that the costs of invading Taiwan are not worth the risk of getting into a conflict or war with the U.S.

And I know Matt is going to talk about this point more in depth when he goes. So that brings me to my second point, that Guam is critical to conducting operations in the region. Guam is close enough to China to provide logistical support to war fighters forward deployed along the first island chain, as well as long range fires like maybe the Army’s future long range hypersonic weapon program. But it’s also far enough from China to be out of range of China’s big arsenal of short-range missiles and complicate any effort to attack it. And then third, the ability to project power from Guam, signals to U.S. allies and partners that the U.S. is committed to the region and bolsters their confidence in U.S. military assurances. And while we don’t explicitly state that we will defend Taiwan, the best way to demonstrate our commitment is through our capabilities. And with our own territory close to that potential conflict, we have a place to deploy our new capabilities without the need for host nation basing agreements.

So now moving on to the need to defend Guam. We know that China has ability to hold Guam at risk with its vast arsenal of ballistic crews and hypersonic missiles, most of which are also nuclear capable. And for this reason, since 2019, INDOPACOM has requested a permanent 360-degree missile defense on Guam by 2026, that can defend against any missile attack. An advanced missile defense on Guam would allow the U.S. to preserve those three benefits the island provides that I talked about, and there are two main reasons for this. First, missile defense can help deter an attack on Guam. Defeating missile defenses on Guam would require a more significant commitment of Chinese offensive forces than would otherwise be necessary. And as a result, missile defense would complicate China's planning, remove the option for cheap shot and perhaps make Beijing think twice before launching an attack.

And second, missile defense would minimize damage to deterrence fail. During a campaign in the Indo-Pacific where Guam is a target, missile defense would slow down the rate that forces on Guam are lost compared to the rate of replacement. That would forestall China's war effort and provide the U.S. more time to prevail. But on the other hand, if we failed to defend Guam, we risk allowing Guam to turn from this clear asset to a liability. If we leave Guam vulnerable, we might be compelled to pull our forces back outside of China's missile range. But failing to utilize that great location that we have with Guam would both diminish deterrents and make a war longer and more costly should deterrence fail. So that brings me to my last point of discussion on our progress in building this advanced missile defense system that has clearly been deemed so critical.

Unfortunately, we’ve been quite slow to move on this effort. Guam defense appeared on INDOPACOM’s unfunded priorities list for two years before funding was first requested in the president’s budget in fiscal year 2022. But even so, that in the initial request only included 118 million out of the 350 million initially requested that year by INDOPACOM. And then Congress only appropriated 192 million for this year, which is barely over half of that number INDOPACOM wanted, that 350. And this effort is far too slow considering the urgency of the threat. Former INDOPACOM commander Admiral Davidson has identified the next six years as a likely window for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, meaning that there's no longer any time to waste. Fortunately, this year's FY23 budget request would enable progress on Guam
defense. The request includes a total 892 million for the effort, which includes both funding for the missile defense agency plus Army and Navy components.

We don't have full budget documentation yet, but it seems like DoD is getting on the right path to procure that sophisticated defense system. And while that's certainly good news, China may not wait for us to build this system by 2026. The threat to Taiwan, the threat to Guam is already here today. So what do we do with that? Is not an easy question. They're the obvious things, Congress needs to ensure it provides appropriate funding for the project each year, and NDAA needs to make sure it uses the right authorities to procure components with urgency and try and speed the project up. But I also think DoD can get creative and find ways to build on existing capabilities to improve on Guam's defenses now. As just one potential idea, we could bring over a reduced status, Ticonderoga class cruiser slated for decommission and utilize its ballistic missile defense capability.

From there, we can use that ships' command and control core as we deploy those onshore radars and interceptors that we need, building defense capacity on the island until the full missile defense system is complete. I know that the next panel will get into this more in detail, but my main point being here is that I don't think we can be satisfied with this project moving along, but not until a 2026 completion date and the threat is here now. We should be finding ways to increase our missile defense capacity on the island before then and also before it's too late. So I'll stop my remarks there and I'll look forward to talking more about this in the discussion.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Wonderful. Thank you so much Patty-Jane. Matthew, floor is yours.

Matthew Costlow:

Great. Thank you very much Rebeccah. And thank you Hudson for shining a spotlight on what I believe is one of the great tasks that we are going to face in the upcoming decade here. I'm going to zoom out a bit from the previous two discussions and concentrate a little bit more on what is the deterrent value of Guam? How do you think about deterrence? And what Guam could contribute to that. So let me begin with what I think we should all recognize is the deterrence problem. If we don't get the deterrence problem right, none of our solutions will match. So the deterrence problem in my opinion is that we are not facing some theoretical, country X wants to invade island Y. The Chinese goal and threat perceptions are key to deterrence. If we want to make deterrence work, we have to focus on these unique characteristics of the CCP.

If we do not properly understand those, then our efforts to improve the deterrence function of Guam, will be misplaced or even counterproductive. So China appears to have driven itself into what my boss, Dr. Keith Payne has called a deterrence cul-de-sac. It's left itself little to no room to negotiate on the political status of Taiwan. The CCP for decades has stoked nationalism at home, and the basis for its sole ruling authority in China, in large part on reunifying Taiwan with the mainland from the CCP perspective: America is in decline, China is on the rise, it has the local advantage in the balance of military forces across the Taiwan Strait. It has other advantages in geography, logistics, and most importantly, the stakes involved. That is, the CCP proceeds and is simply willing to risk far more in taking Taiwan than the United States is willing to risk to defend it.
To make matters worse, the United States and its allies have no formal line structure with Taiwan. No history of fighting to defend it. Rather, it has a multi-decade effort to purposely assure China that the U.S. policies and capabilities are nonaggressive in this respect. Under these circumstances, deterrence is going to be very difficult and possibly impossible, but Guam will have to play an integral role as a territory that enables U.S. deterrents actions. So we've established that there's a deterrence problem, an existentially motivated China that seeks to overwhelm a militarily inferior Taiwan that lies 100 miles off its coast, while the United States is thousands of miles away. If the United States wants to deter an invasion, they must know what type of invasion China is planning. Chinese strategists as well as the department of defense have given us some clues in this regard, China would... And I'm quoting here from the annual DoD China report, China would attempt to delay and defeat intervention in an asymmetric limited war of short duration.

In the event of a protracted conflict, the PLA might choose to escalate to cyberspace, space or nuclear activities in an attempt to end the conflict. The keywords here I think are asymmetric and limited war of short duration. How do you deter an asymmetric or limited war of short duration? As Dr. Payne and I write in our latest report on the topic, we recommend a victory denial deterrent strategy. In essence, the United States must take what appears to be China's strongest motivating factor, and turn it back on them. That is China believes failing to take Taiwan is an existential threat to the regime. So a U.S. victory denial deterrent strategy uses that existential motivation and turns it around into an existential threat, existential fears. In short, the United States does not have to outright decisively defeat China, but it must deny China victory by taking China's hopes of an asymmetric short conflict, and demonstrate through its capabilities, that such a conflict would likely be long and with costs vastly disproportionate to any benefits that China believes it could have.

So how then does Guam, a little island in the vastness of the Pacific Ocean contribute to this victory denial deterrence approach? I argue it in three ways. First as Patty-Jane mentioned, Guam helps to reduce the twin tier in needs of time and distance for the United States. It allows a former deployment of significant number of military forces that could come to Taiwan's aid, and this helps counter the Chinese perceptions that they may be able to quickly end a Taiwan conflict before U.S. forces arrive. Second, Guam's location and U.S. surge capabilities associated with that influences Chinese perception about how many forces it will need to successfully invade Taiwan. That is, without Guam, China could perhaps get away with a smaller invasion force, meaning less logistical financial troubles. But with Guam, that forces China to commit a larger number of troops initially, and as we've seen with Russia, the more troops you commit, the larger the force, the more likely it will be to be detected.

That makes preparations easier for the U.S. and Taiwan, and when preparations are easier for the U.S. and Taiwan that will help influence deterrence in a positive direction. Third, U.S. forces on Guam will enable a potentially longer drawn-out conflict, which is one of China's worst nightmares. The prospect of a longer, more drawn-out conflict would appear to benefit the United States by allowing the far more distant United States to surge forces from its homeland, through islands such as Guam on to Taiwan. And finally, I think we need to be very careful to not allow CCP perceptions of Guam to be seen as vulnerable.

Bryan made a great case for the operational value of Guam, and I think lots of U.S. military planners would see Guam as extremely militarily valuable. And thus it should have a deterrent effect on China. But what concerns me is that some PLA writings indicate that they believe logistics and power projection
are the key vulnerabilities in modern warfare. Guam is nothing else if not a major hub for logistics and power projection. We must not allow the CCP to see Guam as a key vulnerability that a clever PLA Colonel can convince the CCP leadership is easily destroyed and the key to a quick victory in Taiwan. So I will stop my remarks there, hand it back to Rebeccah and I look forward to the questions.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Wonderful. Thank you so much Matthew, that was a great set of remarks. Bryan, I'm going to get right into it. Cause I think it actually goes well with what Matt just said. You have actually recently written a piece on campaigning as part of deterrence. And can you just talk to us about how everything that you laid out, what the United States should be doing, how we actually be sequencing that to fit into this idea of really communicating to the PRC about our intent and what this campaigning as part of deterrence might look like.

Bryan Clark:

Yeah, Rebeccah. So the new defense strategy which only has come out in the form of an unclassified fact sheet talks about campaigning, and campaigning is the set of day-to-day operations that a military force undertakes to try to generate specific results on the part of an adversary or specific responses on the part of an adversary. So campaigning is bigger than just a set of missions that you do in the near term. And it's really kind of militarily focused as opposed to being some larger hole of government effort, but it's intended to be how do you posture your forces? How do you demonstrate capabilities? How do you do experiments and exercises? And then how do you maneuver your forces around the theater in such a way that it's going to instill on the part of your opponent, a mindset regarding what you were likely to do in conflict, what you might be able to bring or surprise them with, they don't really understand yet.

So it's a way of undermining the confidence of your opponent in the likelihood of their success. And it's also a way to undermine in the near term, how they might try to coerce you your allies. So in the case of Taiwan, obviously we'd want to be mounting operations that start to undermine PLA confidence regarding their plans. And I think Matt was on to some great ideas about a theory of victory denial, which I think matches very similarly up with what we're talking about here in terms of creating uncertainty for the PLA that they're going to be successful in this short sharp war. So operations like putting troops into Taiwan, we need to have U.S. troops operating with the Taiwanese on a more regular basis. That creates one, a new dimension of the U.S. response to a Taiwan invasion or bombardment.

It also creates what I think is very important to this theory of victory denial in that, the Chinese forces are going to have difficulty once they get on Taiwan and trying to invade it, if there's resistance. The short sharp war theory depends on the Taiwanese government capitulating rapidly and giving up before you actually have the fight, which is sort of what the Russians had hoped to achieve in Ukraine. So if you can... If you're China and you can bombard Taiwan and then follow up with an invasion and get the Taiwanese government to give in, well then you get your short sharp war. If they don't do that, it won't be short or sharp, it'll be a long-protracted mess and every analysis, every war game, every modeling and simulation run I've done has shown that, and then the experience in Ukraine has validated it.

So campaigning is really this idea of we're going to create the conditions so that we guarantee... In Matt's terms, that this short sharp war they want to have, this victory theory they have is not going to
work out in practice. It's not just about putting troops in Taiwan though, it's about spreading our forces out making Guam less of a target. I was talking about trying to be resilient, which means maybe not putting all your eggs in the Guam basket, operating more broadly in the Western Pacific, taking advantage of new operating locations and then demonstrating new capabilities that maybe the Chinese didn't expect us to have necessarily in theater. Like hypersonic weapons, like unmanned undersea vehicles, like some of our other operations electromagnetic spectrum.

**Rebeccah Heinrichs:**

Just to put a finer point on that too because I think... In other words, a lot of this, you want it to be public. You want them to see what it is that we're doing because we are trying to influence them. So it really is a refutation of this idea that to put troops in Taiwan is provocative or to increase testing in a visible way would be provocative. You're saying no, that's exactly what we need to be doing to influence their calculations?

**Bryan Clark:**

Correct. That's a key element of campaigning is being able to do it in a way that you know your adversary is going to see and also that the public will see, so that your adversary can't ignore it. You're forced as the PLA and the PRC government to respond.

**Rebeccah Heinrichs:**

Great. Patty-Jane, you talked about the difficulty of defending Guam. Some of critics of the effort to defend Guam say, "Listen is just too hard, it's too expensive." What would be your response to that? In terms of the cost curve challenge and what it would take to actually defend Guam successfully on the cost point?

**Patty-Jane Geller:**

Yeah, I think that's a great question to consider. And the way that I approach this question is I think we need to consider the alternative of not defending Guam. Of course, we have to invest a lot of money into a strong missile defense system. But if we don't defend Guam, if we leave it the way it is, we'd be ceding this advantage to China. China is building ballistic missiles. The DF-26 is termed the Guam killer, would be saying, "All right China, you're right, you got this one. We're not going to utilize this island that we have right out on the second island chain." And if we decide that defending Guam is too costly, we might need to consider pulling our forces back from Guam, outside of the range of China's DF-21, DF-26 and that would only make deterrence more difficult and our operations a lot more difficult. We wouldn't be able to use in the same way the strategic hub we have in Guam, where we store a lot of ammunition and logistics capabilities. We wouldn't have that advantage anymore.

You mentioned the argument that we shouldn't waste our money on defending Guam, and people have argued that China will just build more missiles and be able to overcome those missile defenses. But to that, China is already building more missiles. Us deciding not to defend Guam wouldn't stop them from their aggression and from building out their forces, we would just be less better off or we'd have less of a chance of doing well and in a fight with China without missile defense. Also when it comes to costs, we have to think of the cost of defending Guam to the cost of losing more aircraft, more basing
infrastructure and other forces in a campaign in the region than we otherwise would have. So I think honestly, we're ahead and the cost curve, it's in our favor. Not only because it allows us to be able to preserve the viability of the island, in a strategic basing option but also, preserving more of our capabilities not wasting all that money on losing more forces than we otherwise would with missile defense. So I think it's certainly worth the investment.

**Rebeccah Heinrichs:**

Great. And this is really a question I'd love to hear each of you respond to because it is... Missile Defense Agency is coming up with the architecture for how we would go about defending Guam, though of course, the services are involved too. We already have systems that we're trying to integrate and use already for the sake of speed and cost, but one of the requirements is... I just asked you about this requirement that there can be no leakers. That the architecture we want, we want it to be so tight so that any kind of missile raid that the Chinese might have has to... That the architecture has to be able to get everything. As you all well know and Bryan really laid out for us really well, the challenge is to the entire island from all angles and from air and from sea and from land and missiles that are very difficult to intercept from the traditional missile defense system we already have had there for several years, which is the THAAD system.

This is why we need this more robust architecture to handle a variety of threats. So I'd love to hear you all talk about this standard of zero leak and why do you think that is either wise or unwise and how we should think about that. And Matt, I'll turn to you and then I'll go back around the other way and go to Bryan and Patty-Jane.

**Matthew Costlow:**

Sure, this is a really important question and it doesn't just relate to Guam, it also relates to Homeland Missile Defense as well, the same concept applies. I think critics of missile defense often impose on it this theory that it has to be 100% effective, there can be no leakers, if there's one leaker, missile defense has fundamentally failed. I think that's a very operational view, it's not a deterrence centric view. But even from an operational view 99% success rate is 99% success. That there is one leaker is what you have maintenance for, right? So I wholesale reject the idea that if we can't have perfect defenses, then it's useless, and I'll give an illustration as to why. I think there is a good chance that we could have very effective cruise missile defense, possibly from directed energy sources in the near to mid term. That could be very effective for Guam.

Ballistic missiles, it's going to be more difficult and hypersonic, even more difficult than that. But one of the advantages of layering missile defenses is that it forces the attacker to use different means in ways that they don't really know how effective they will be. We've heard some of these attrition statistics out of Russia and Ukraine, their missiles failing anywhere from 5% to 60%. You don't really know how well your force works until you start actually using it in a real conflict and that's one of the deterrent advantages of missile defense. They will have zero experience going against U.S. missile defense systems. So I think any active defense discussion on Guam is really going to be more than just missile defense. It's going to have to include concealment, mobility, hardening, there's a range of different active and passive measures we can take, and I think imposing a kind of unfair grade on missile defense,
that it has to be 100% perfect or no missile defense at all. That’s a relic of the Cold War and we should leave that behind.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:
Bryan.

Bryan Clark:
I agree with Matt. I think we’re not going to be able to achieve 100% effective missile defense for Guam or really any of the first island chain or second island chain areas. Because if you remember the chart, the challenge is not even the ballistic missiles, that's like a 10th of the throw weight that you're facing. It's the bombers, of which there's half dozen types that are launching cruise missiles of various types at your base. So that's what really gets you it’s the large throw weight that's available from those bombers. So you really have to accept the fact that some missiles are going to get through. A couple of ways to address that though, as you think about well, if it's the bombers that are the big problem, we should try to be intercepting those bombers, interdicting them before they're able to reach their weapons release point. That’s a traditional U.S. and even a Navy and Air Force approach to dealing with air defense. So doing defensive counter-air, doing offensive counter-air sweeps, those are ways to reduce that challenge.

So it's not just about what we do on Guam, it's also what do we do between China and Guam to try to prevent that threat from manifesting in quite the same capacity, so we reduce the challenge at Guam bases. I think the other thing to think about is your missile defense on ships. We traditionally try to take a zero-leak approach, because one leaker might take out... Generally will take out the ship at least for a period of time, if not sink it entirely. So you really have to take a pretty draconian approach to missile defense on a ship. But it's easier because a ship is a very small target, you can use things like directed energy that can give you quite a bit of capacity at a short range, but that's fine because the ship is only a very small target and you can defend it in a short range. Going to shore on Guam, you think about... Well everything is pretty... Even though it's a small island, it's pretty well spread out compared to what you would see on a ship.

So you can take advantage of the fact that the base is more distributed, you can be more resilient by allowing flight operations to happen from multiple locations, you can spread out your command-and-control capabilities. So you can make Guam more resilient even if you accept the fact that your missile defenses won’t be 100% effective. Then one last thing on that is there’s multiple ways to defend against missiles. Matt mentioned directed energy which is short range, can't shoot over the horizon, but it can give you a high capacity, you can put those around targets that are highly valuable like a fuel tank, fuel depot, and then you can use longer range systems like we’re talking about for Guam defense to try to address the more sophisticated cruise and ballistic missile threats that might be coming to the island more generally.

But we really need to think about making Guam more resilient to sustain operations rather than defending Guam as a target that has to be protected at all costs. And then we also need think about spreading our operations out in such a way that when Guam does get neutralized for a period of time, we're able to continue operating from other places.
Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Wonderful. Patty-Jane?

Patty-Jane Geller:

Yes. Well I’ll just add on. I agree that I don’t think a zero-leak requirement is necessary for deterrence. The goal in deterrence is to just have enough missile defenses to create a doubt in the mind of the Chinese that its attack will work. To elevate risk to the Chinese make them think more about what it will take to make this attack on Guam, make it more difficult. Then I’ll add even if deterrence does fail, and China is able to penetrate our missile defenses, that’s still not a failure of our missile defenses. Because if we have missile defense, we’re able to intercept at least some of what we have coming in from China and China is able to suppress our forces for less time and we’re able to stay in the fight for longer, which it just enables more uncertainty, enables more time for the U.S. to conduct other offensive operations.

And Matt outlined in his opening remarks, China does not want a protracted conflict. So even if we do have missile defense that China can get through, that would be a way to prolong the conflict, which is not the conflict China wants. It would be an advantage to the U.S.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Right. And it occurs to me too. We’ve talked a lot about how do we shape perceptions of the Chinese too. Admiral Davidson really pounded the table when he was commander of INDOPACOM about... He called Guam homeland Guam. I mean it was always Guam was homeland... Bryan I am curious to hear what you have to say about that. Would you say that he was clearly trying to convince the Chinese and maybe even convinced ourselves that we should understand Guam not merely as a place where there are some Americans and U.S. forces, but that it actually is a linchpin for U.S. force projection in the Pacific. And if we are going to remain a defender of our security guarantees in the region, to maintain free and open Indo-Pacific that we need to understand Guam as that vital to the United States. Do you think that’s what he was doing? And did it work? And should we be doing more of that? Both domestic communication and then also as part of how we communicate to our allies and to our adversaries. I guess I’ll turn that... I’ll let Bryan take that one first.

Bryan Clark:

Okay. Yeah, so I think part of what Admiral Davidson was trying to do is convey the idea that Guam is part of the United States. That's a message to the Chinese to say, "If you were to launch a bunch of cruise and ballistic missiles at Los Angeles, we would take that very differently, we might respond with even a nuclear retaliation potentially," because we've left open the possibility to large scale conventional [inaudible 00:46:32] could receive a nuclear response. So one thing he was trying to do was just convey that to the Chinese and to the region that we treat this as part of the United States. So we're not going to consider Guam to be some outside territory that could be destroyed at your convenience, and not really retaliate for that.

The idea that that China would mount a massive attack on Taiwan, or rather Guam, and that we would not respond by attacking China, he wanted to make sure that that was on the table, that we were not going to treat this as strictly a fight over Taiwan, this was now a fight between the United States and
China, or formally. So that was one part of it. The other part of it was to convey the importance of Guam, but to the United States militarily as well as from a national security standpoint say we need to put the necessary investment in here, because we would not think of leaving the West Coast of the United States undefended like this. If Hawaii was similarly threatened, we would not think of leaving it in an undefended state like this. So we would mount a much more robust defense if we treated this like part of the United States as it is. So it was a message both back to the United States and to China.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

I think that is so important. That gets back to what Patty-Jane was saying about the cost issue. If it really is the value of the United States, then you can understand that these investments surely make sense. And to look at what is the cost of the defense versus the cost of the offensive missile or... It's the wrong way to look at the formula.

Bryan Clark:

Right.

Patty-Jane Geller:

Then if I can add on to that quickly, it's not just a signal to China that Guam is important to us, but I think it's an important signal to our allies as well. Showing them that, "Look, this is part of our homeland that we have here in your region. We have a stake in the game, we're not necessarily going to sit this fight out against Taiwan because we have our own territory, our own citizens to defend as well." I think that's important.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

I think it would communicate exactly the wrong thing if we decided it's just too hard, or if it's not going to be a perfect architecture. Not just for the missile problem, but for all the other threats, then we're not going to do it. That really sends exactly the wrong message to our commitment to all the other security guarantees that we have in the region. I would like to talk just... We've got just about 13 minutes here. What are some of the lessons that you are... Everybody's watching what's going on with the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and how the United States and allies are responding to that. We know that China is also watching that and trying to learn some things the best that they can.

There's only so much we can know for certain with high confidence, but I would really love to hear all of you talk about some things that we should be looking at, some things that maybe you have noticed that maybe even challenged your own previous assumptions that you had before the Russians great aggression against Ukraine, because I think that all analysts and those inside the building are also looking to see did we get some things wrong? And how can we think about this in our approach to deterring Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific? I'll start with Matt, if you don't mind taking that one first. Just even a couple of points, doesn't have to be comprehensive, because then we can go through and then respond to one another's remarks.
Matthew Costlow:

Absolutely, I wanted to make one historical illusion in this case. We do have the precedent of China learning from a modern war and that was the Gulf War. The Gulf War was absolutely a paradigm shift for the PLA. But they didn't take the deterrence lessons away from that conflict that we wanted them to take. What the U.S. showed in the Gulf War was overwhelming, conventional power against a large army and we did it very quickly. That should have told the Chinese, "Hey, you don't want to mess with the United States." Instead, the lesson it taught them was that you need to be asymmetric and quick against the United States and go big and go early. Those are the lessons it learned, and the worry I have with Ukraine is that China is watching that conflict in a similar way that it watched the Gulf War and learning that they should probably make nuclear threats more explicit, much earlier, and do it against the homeland, perhaps Guam to start.

And Admiral Davidson's remarks in that sense help. But I do worry that the main lessons they are learning is you have to go big, you have to go early, and you may even want to do a limited nuclear employment, to really drive home the fact that U.S. military aid should not arrive in Taiwan. Because they're watching the effects of burning tanks all over Ukraine. That is the effect of U.S. military aid that's successful, and they don't want to see that.

Bryan Clark:

I guess a couple of things. One would be, it did confirm a lot of what we had seen in previous analysis inside the Pentagon of how well a fight on the ground in Taiwan is likely to go. Those analyses of all reveal that it gets very messy very quickly, turns into a slog and that if there's any resistance on the part of the Taiwanese, it turns into a protracted campaign. So that really got validated here by seeing a very sophisticated military in the Russian force come up against a relatively unsophisticated but well-equipped Ukrainian resistance. So you could see a similar thing play out in Taiwan, the difference being the expectation on the part of the PRC that the Taiwanese government will capitulate in a way that the Ukrainian government did not. I think to stiffen the backbone and stiffen the resolve of the Taiwanese government and military, that would be an area where the U.S. troops on the ground in Taiwan on a more regular basis training and working with them, could make a huge difference.

So it's one thing to say, we're defending you from Kadena or Guam, it's another thing to say I'm defending you from right next to you. I guess another big thing is for the Chinese, it gives them an opportunity to examine what's the toolkit that the U.S. can bring to bear in a non-military sense. So when we talk about integrated deterrence, they can say, "Well, here's the tools that are available to the United States in a maximalist approach to economic, diplomatic and information pressure." And they can say, "Well, we can prepare for that. We can prepare for getting the Russia treatment if we were to invade or attack Taiwan." Maybe that might give them some actual confidence that they can weather that, that they didn't necessarily have before, because they've seen it in action and can now measure what's the likely impact on them.

So I think in one way, it might give them some confidence in terms of non-military tools, but then it gives them a little bit of pause on the military side. I think what it could cause is trying to reevaluate what's the most likely scenario that they would want to use to bring Taiwan back into the fold. So it turns from invasion to bombardment or invasion to blockade or to quarantine. So we need to be prepared in terms of our force posture for multiple ways a Taiwan scenario could play out, not just the invasion.
Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Wonderful, Patty-Jane?

Patty-Jane Geller:

Yeah, so a lot of thoughts. I like the point that Matt made that China might be seeing from this current conflict that if it decides to make nuclear threats early on, then that would be something that would compel or deter the United States from getting involved. We've seen a lot of rhetoric from this administration about how we want to avoid World War III, we want to avoid nuclear escalation with Russia. I hope it's not sending a message to China that if they make nuclear threats early on we won't get involved either. But the key difference that leaves more room for optimism is that the US is more clearly not committed to defending Ukraine than Taiwan. We don't say explicitly that we will defend Taiwan, but it's ambiguous. We are deploying capabilities in the Pacific just to demonstrate our commitment.

So I would hope that the United States would be less deterred from a Chinese nuclear threat and what we're learning. Another concern I have, so China is clearly seeing the international support for Ukraine. Many countries are sending in forces to Ukraine and aid. So the concern I have is that China considers Taiwan part of its own territory, part of its own country, it's not quite the same as invading a completely sovereign nation that Ukraine was, so I would hope that the rest of the world will still see that as a violation of Taiwanese sovereignty and get involved in the same way. So that's a lesson that I hope at least China is getting away from this, that there should be an international backlash like there is in Ukraine.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

I would add to your point Patty-Jane, about perhaps inadvertently this administration overtly sending the wrong message is there's been some... The Minuteman-III test was now canceled, not once but twice. It was just already a scheduled long planned ICBM test that the United States had and explicitly for the reason that the administration gave was they didn't want to be sending the wrong message to the Russians, in-kind because the Russians are engaging in very irresponsible nuclear brinksmanship, and the United States didn't want to be perceived as doing the same, but perhaps it only confirmed the Russians' belief that we would be intimidated. Maybe it's a wrong interpretation but nonetheless, it might be the one that was sent that we are intimidated by that, therefore we won't even engage on the side of the Ukrainians, even on these very reasonable lower levels of conventional escalation for fear of what could precipitate after that.

Hopefully, the lesson is, you know, if we could do a do over, we would take a different approach to all of this. And I think Bryan's points about some of the things we should be doing for Taiwan are exactly what we did not do for Ukraine. Very visible troop deployments there for training purposes, very visible testing, operational movements and that kind of thing that would convey our commitment and that we're not going to be intimidated by threats. So those are some things. Then I would... Maybe this is just... I would though... One of the things that has been in quite a bit of literature after the Russian invasion of Ukraine is that our military misjudged the capabilities of the Russian military to engage in this fight.
Well logistical challenges, not very good command structures and the training wasn't as good as we thought it was, even the sophistication of their weaponry was lacking in a way that we didn't... Do you... I guess I'll turn to Bryan first because Bryan is very familiar with the kinds of weapon systems the Chinese have little bit more. Do you think that it would be wrong for the United States to get overly confident that we would be so lucky in the case of a Chinese attack against Guam or Taiwan?

Bryan Clark:

There's going to be a difference. So on the Russian side, we've seen the failures of our expectations come into play mostly in terms of the nuts and bolts of a military operation. So your Russian systems that are essentially fire and forget like the Kalibr missile and the Kinzhal hypersonic weapon, those work just fine. Matt brings up the point about some missile failures, those for all we know are going to be a function of U.S. efforts to try to undermine the effectiveness of those weapons. I'd expect on the Chinese side, we're not going to see that same level of missile failure. So the Chinese approach is very much focused on trying to remove the uncertainty that comes from depending upon effective leaders in the field exercising operational art. So they use a lot of precision weapons that operate at long ranges, that benefit from your long-range sensor networks that gave you the precision strike capabilities that they saw the U.S. use in the Gulf War.

So they wanted to replicate that for their own theater. That really takes a lot of that human element out, it reduces the logistical impact if your logistics aren't very good, it reduces the command-and-control structures impact on your effectiveness. So I think we would see a lot less of that in China, U.S. altercation, whether it's over Taiwan or some other target in the Western Pacific.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Very helpful. We have just two minutes. So I'm going to allow anybody, if you just have even 30 seconds, 45 seconds of something you wish you would have said, but you didn't have the opportunity to say, now is your time to do that. Matt, I will have you close yourself out here, at least.

Matthew Costlow:

Thank you. No, I only just wanted to re-emphasize. I think the more that U.S. officials can work with allied officials on this problem, the better it will be for the U.S. The U.S. working so closely with Japan, we've heard Australia, multiple other Asian allies that are talking about the importance of Taiwan to them, right? This is one of these variables that China does not have. China does not really have an allied network like ours. That is something we can leverage in a fight that's going to expand across the whole Pacific Ocean. So I think if we can really concentrate on that, really concentrate on integrated deterrence through that lens with allies, that would be to the U.S. benefit.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Wonderful. Patty-Jane?
Patty-Jane Geller:

Yeah. I'll just go back to your question Rebeccah and Bryan's assessment of the capability of China's forces compared to the lessons we're seeing in Russia. I just think bottom line, we don't want to wait for a war to find out how China's military will work, how they'll fight. I think we need to be ready now, building up defenses on Guam, for all the reasons we've talked about is the key part of that effort. The United States needs to continue preparing for the fight that we're seeing China interested in pursuing.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Wonderful. And Bryan?

Bryan Clark:

Yeah. I think a couple of things to think about are we need to have a more resilient force in the western Pacific. So part of that is defending Guam, but a part of that is just maintaining Guam as an operational location. So it's not just about defense, it's also about being able to sustain operations despite the fact you've been attacked. It's also about distributing our forces. To get to Matt's point about defeating their victory, the theory of victory, Kadena could be just as important. So if we could sustain some level of operations from Okinawa at Kadena, that could make a huge impact on Chinese expectations with regard to their likelihood of success in Taiwan because Kadena is so much closer to Taiwan than Guam is.

And then also other places like Northern Australia or the other parts of the Marianna. So it's not just about defending Guam, it's about having that resilient force which means you need IMDOPACOM to make that assessment of where they want to put their eggs from a defensive standpoint and from an offensive standpoint, which they are doing and I think that defense of Guam was part of that, but it's not the whole picture.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Great. Leadership. We need strong good leadership to get it done on the right timeline and that allowing the U.S. interest to drive the strategy and then to drive how we do this and how much we spend on it rather than the exact opposite, so that we can deter this conflict from happening and preserve peace for another day, for as long as we can. Thank you so much for joining me here at Hudson and I hope that those of you are watching will join the second panel to carry on this conversation. Thank you all so much.