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Ballistic logistics

Iran's strike on US forces exposes challenge Pentagon faces stopping missile attacks

BY DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

For more than an hour, the missiles knifed in with a whoosh, explosions bursting in the night sky. It wasn't clear when they'd stop, or what they'd hit.

U.S., coalition and Iraqi troops hunkered down for the Iranian attack in Iraq on Tuesday night had prepared over several days for such an onslaught following the U.S. drone strike in Baghdad that killed Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian general with involvement in the deaths of hundreds of U.S. troops, according to U.S. officials.

But the attack highlighted an ongoing challenge for the Pentagon: For all its might, the U.S. military had little ability to stop such a missile attack once it was underway.

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U.S. Army Spc. Justin Wittig stands in front of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, last year. There were no THAADs positioned to defend against Iran's attack in Iraq on Tuesday.

ADAN CAZAREZ/U.S. Army

Army to send unit to Pacific to aid efforts to counter China

BY TONY CAPACCIO
Bloomberg

The U.S. Army will expand efforts to counter China by deploying a specialized task force to the Pacific capable of conducting information, electronic, cyberspace and missile operations against Beijing.

The unit, which Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy detailed at an event in Washington on Fri-

The pivot includes greater Army participation in regional war games like the "Defender Pacific" series and deploying a "Security Force Assistance Brigade" in the Indo-Pacific theater next year.

day, also would be equipped to hit land- and sea-based targets with long-range precision weapons such as hypersonic missiles, possibly clearing the way for Navy

vessels in the event of conflict.

The Army task force would help neutralize some capabilities China and Russia already possess that are intended to keep

U.S. carrier groups away from the Asian mainland, McCarthy said in an interview. It's not clear how quickly the unit, which likely would be based on islands east of Taiwan and the Philippines, can be deployed.

The move is designed to "neutralize all the investments China and Russia have made," McCarthy said. It would be bolstered by a new agreement with the National Reconnaissance Office

that develops and manages U.S. spy satellites, he said. Under that accord, Army tactical units will be better able to tap into information from existing and future low-Earth-orbit satellites, he said.

The pivot would help Defense Secretary Mark Esper achieve a long-sought American goal of shifting more forces from Europe, the Middle East and Africa

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