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Military Intelligence Report

THAAD Missile Defence System





Overview

The recent deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to Israel by the United States marks a pivotal moment in the region's defense architecture. This development underscores the growing strategic partnership between Israel and the U.S. and reflects heightened concerns over Iran's expanding missile program, specifically the threats posed by the Shahab-3 and Fattah-1 ballistic missiles. THAAD, a critical asset in the U.S. missile defense arsenal, is expected to bolster Israel's ability to counter these threats.





Key Capabilities of THAAD

- The THAAD system is a high-end ballistic missile defense (BMD) platform, designed to engage and destroy incoming missile threats in the terminal phase of their flight trajectory. THAAD uses kinetic energy to neutralize the target without deploying an explosive warhead, providing a safer alternative for intercepting missiles over populated areas.

A typical THAAD battery includes:

- 6 to 9 launchers, each equipped with 8 interceptors, totaling up to 72 interceptors.
- AN/TPY-2 radar, one of the world's most advanced missile tracking systems, capable of detecting threats from up to 870 km away.
- Command and control units, providing integration with other defense systems such as Iron Dome and David's Sling.
- This deployment significantly strengthens Israel's multi-layered missile defense strategy, complementing existing systems designed to intercept short-range projectiles.





The background image shows a THAAD missile battery on a truck, tilted upwards. In the foreground, several Israeli and American flags are flying. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

Strategic Implications

- **U.S.-Israel Defense Synergy:** The deployment reinforces the strategic defense alignment between Israel and the U.S. at a time of escalating threats from Iran. The THAAD battery not only enhances Israel's missile defense shield but also symbolizes the depth of U.S. commitment to Israel's security. Washington's decision to station personnel to operate the system further cements this relationship, ensuring Israel's protection against long-range ballistic missile threats from Iran.
- **U.S. Military Asset Allocation:** The U.S. has limited operational THAAD batteries, and this deployment showcases the increasing demand for missile defense assets globally. Currently, the U.S. has seven active THAAD batteries worldwide, with significant commitments in Europe (due to NATO's defense needs) and the Indo-Pacific (focused on China and North Korea). Sending a battery to Israel risks overextending the U.S.'s air defense capabilities, as operations in Ukraine and the Pacific continue to escalate.

- **Iran's Perception and Regional Escalation:** Tehran is likely to view this deployment as a hostile move, further straining diplomatic efforts to de-escalate regional tensions. Iran has warned that additional U.S. military assets in the region will provoke retaliatory measures, possibly escalating to missile strikes, proxy attacks via Hezbollah, or cyber warfare. This deployment could push Iran towards more aggressive actions, potentially destabilizing the broader West Asian region.
- **Implications for U.S. Global Posture:** As the U.S. faces multiple global military engagements, from the war in Ukraine to rising tensions with China, the allocation of THAAD systems may place strain on U.S. strategic flexibility. With growing opposition to U.S. military entanglements among the American public, there may be limited political will to support further interventions in the Israel-Iran conflict.





Operational Challenges

- **Resource Overextension:** The U.S. military's limited inventory of THAAD systems has already been stretched thin, with commitments in Europe and Asia. Deploying a battery to Israel strains operational readiness, with potential consequences for responding to other missile threats globally.
- **Risk of Missile Saturation Attacks:** Iran has the capacity to launch coordinated missile barrages using advanced ballistic missiles, which may overwhelm even THAAD's robust defense. In the event of such an attack, the THAAD system, while effective, may struggle to intercept all incoming missiles, especially if combined with drone swarms or other asymmetrical threats.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The deployment of THAAD in Israel strengthens Israeli defense capabilities, particularly against Iran's growing missile arsenal. However, the operational challenges facing the U.S., combined with the potential for escalated tensions in the region, necessitate a careful balancing of military commitments.

- Recommendation 1: The U.S. should consider expanding its missile defense capabilities to prevent overextension of its assets, ensuring it can maintain readiness in multiple theaters.
- Recommendation 2: Israel must integrate THAAD into its multi-layered missile defense system (with Iron Dome and David's Sling), optimizing its response to potential missile saturation attacks.
- Recommendation 3: Diplomatic efforts should be pursued to manage Iran's perception of this deployment, mitigating the risk of escalation while maintaining a strong defense posture.





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