

U.S. Army to Expand Air Defense Force by Thirty Percent Amid Rising Threats

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The U.S. Army is set to expand its air and missile defense force by 30 percent in response to growing global demand and heightened threats from adversaries. Acting Under Secretary of the Army David Fitzgerald confirmed the plan, citing the increasing reliance on air defenders across multiple combatant commands.

The decision follows recent high-profile missile defense operations, including successful intercepts during attacks on U.S. bases in the Middle East. According to Fitzgerald, air defense units have become some of the most requested forces in the Army, prompting leadership to prioritise growth and investment in their capabilities.

The force expansion will include the addition of new Patriot battalions, increased production of PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhanced interceptors, and greater recruitment efforts to meet the Army's operational requirements. Fitzgerald described air defenders as the "new tip of the spear," highlighting their frontline role in protecting forces and infrastructure against missile and drone attacks.

The Army's plan also involves relieving pressure on overstretched air defense units by bolstering personnel numbers and modernising command and control systems. This includes deploying next-generation platforms like the Lower-Tier Air and Missile Defense Sensor (LTAMDS), the Integrated Battle Command System (IBCS), and prototype Indirect Fire Protection Capability (IFPC) units.

These new systems are being integrated into joint and coalition operations to better prepare for complex, high-threat scenarios in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Army leaders have underscored that the pace and volume of modern threats require a shift from reactive defense to proactive, layered protection strategies.

The move complements the Army's broader modernization agenda, which is focused on multi-domain operations and rapidly deployable technologies. With missile threats from actors like Iran and China

evolving in sophistication and scale, the expansion of air and missile defense forces is viewed as critical to national and allied security.