

America is building an impregnable Pacific island fortress against China

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A Standard Missile-3 Block IIA is launched by the Aegis Guam System, December 2024 – DVIDS

The US island territory of Guam, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean 1,700 miles from Taiwan, might be the most important real estate in the region for US and allied forces intervening in any future Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

Far enough from the likely locus of the fighting to be relatively safe from the most intensive Chinese attacks but close enough to function as a staging base for US and allied air, sea and ground forces, Guam could be the

fulcrum for US leverage in a war over Taiwan.

Given the diversity and density of potential threats to the island fortress, the hinging missile launcher alone is insufficient. The ***ultimate Defense of Guam architecture, set for completion as early as 2026***, includes radars, several Mark 41 launchers as well as an array of US Army surface-to-air missile batteries positioned at a dozen or more sites mostly on the China-facing side of Guam. US Navy and allied warships, sailing to or from Guam could contribute to the island's defence, as could any resident fighter squadrons.

It's an impressive system. But that doesn't mean it's sufficient. After rapidly expanding and modernising in recent years, the Chinese rocket force could, if it was so ordered and didn't mind expending most of its munitions, lob a thousand rockets at Guam. Would there even be enough missile interceptors in the magazines on Guam to target all the incoming rockets?

Probably not. It's important to note that Guam's best defences, its hinged vertical launchers, fire the same SM-3 and SM-6 interceptors ***that are in high demand – and short supply*** – across the US armed forces.

Raytheon builds just a dozen of the latest SM-3 Block IIA missiles every year for \$28 million apiece. It's not for no reason that at least one key legislative body, the US Senate Armed Services Committee, has been urging lawmakers and the White House to ***significantly boost missile funding*** – and buy triple the number of SM-3s.

The race between China's growing military might and America's reinforcement of its Pacific positions continues.