



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on August 18, 2026

Entangling Alliances Hollowing Out U.S. Military Arsenal

The United States has burned through a majority of its missiles in less than one year. Six months into a war Congress never declared, the U.S. military is running low on the weapons it needs to fight it — and, more critically, on the weapons it would need to fight anything else.

[CNN](#) reports that senior U.S. military commanders have privately warned that the Pentagon’s munitions stockpiles are now “dangerously low.” The U.S. Army has used nearly half of its global interceptor stockpile, and “virtually all” of its highly accurate, long-range, surface-to-surface weapons during the conflict.



U.S. Army/Wikimedia Commons
A THAAD interceptor being launched

Sobering Numbers

The numbers from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) are sobering: Before the war, the United States had approximately 2,200 Patriot interceptors and 452 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) interceptors. The United States now has fewer than 827 Patriot interceptors and fewer than 278 THAAD interceptors. Also, inventories of Army Tactical Missile System missiles, Precision Strike Missiles, and Tomahawk cruise missiles have been significantly reduced. Replenishment rates are strikingly inadequate. The Pentagon is currently receiving roughly 15 new Tomahawks and 20 new Patriot missiles per month, and analysts estimate it could take at least three years to restore THAAD inventories to prewar levels.

Already Having an Effect

The stockpile crisis reportedly influenced one of the war’s most consequential decisions. Depleted stocks were “enough to convince some of Trump’s most hawkish advisers that there was reason to call off planned operations” — meaning the limits of the arsenal have already begun shaping military strategy in real time.

What makes the interceptor-depletion story strategically incoherent is the profoundly asymmetric application of American air defense across the theater.

On June 8, [Middle East Monitor](#) reported that the United States did not intercept any Iranian ballistic missiles launched toward Israel the previous night, marking a departure from previous rounds of the conflict in which U.S. forces used missile-defense systems to help defend Israel against Iranian attacks. Israel’s chief of staff held two conversations with Admiral Brad Cooper of [U.S. Central Command](#) during the operation. The U.S. military was in close coordination with Israel, but chose not to engage.

Affecting More Than Israel

Meanwhile, American bases in Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, hosting thousands of U.S. service



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on August 18, 2026

members, have been struck by Iranian missiles due to insufficient air-defense coverage. Gulf allies have raised fresh concerns about how a shortage of air-defense systems could impact their ability to ward off potential Iranian retaliation. Jordanian public figures have [demanded](#) the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the cancellation of military agreements, in part because the American presence has made Jordan a target without providing adequate protection. Additionally, U.S. troop casualties in the Iran war have surpassed 600, according to [Stars and Stripes](#).

Furthermore, the same Patriot systems being consumed in the Iran war are being supplied to Ukraine for defense against Russian missiles — a dual demand that the production base cannot satisfy.

CSIS concluded that the greater risk is not sustaining the current conflict, but responding to another high-intensity contingency before Patriot and THAAD inventories can be rebuilt. If China moves on Taiwan, or events continue to degrade in Sudan, or a new crisis erupts anywhere else, the United States would enter that conflict with a fundamentally degraded air-defense capability — the direct consequence of a war Congress never authorized, whose endpoint remains undefined, and whose costs have never been publicly itemized.

This article is part of The New American's weekly online newsletter Insider Report, which is emailed to TNA subscribers each week. [Click here](#) to subscribe to The New American to receive the Insider Report and access exclusive content.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.