

Failing to Confront Iran

An Interview with Dr. Stephen Bryen

by [Jerry Gordon](#) and Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant (December 2019)



Iran Proxy in Gaza. Palestinian Islamic Jihad fired 450 Rockets into Israel, November 12 and 13, 2019

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to breach the 2015 JCPOA nuclear deal by [ramping](#) up uranium enrichment at the Fordow and [stockpiling](#) of heavy water at Arak. Those violations may enable Iran to produce enough fissile material for multiple nuclear weapons within a year. Successful strikes by Iranian cruise missiles in Saudi Arabia [prompted](#) Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and IDF Chief of Staff Kochavi to

warn of credible Iranian threats to launch precision missile strikes against Israel from Yemen, Syria and possibly Gaza.

On November 12, 2019, the Iranian proxy in Gaza–Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)–[launched](#) a two day barrage of over 450 rockets against targets in Southern and Central Israel. Israel retaliated with air strikes [killing](#) PIJ leader Baha Abu al-Ata and several others in Gaza and destroyed PIJ offices in Damascus. Many believe that the PIJ was following the orders of the IRGC. PIJ can acquire precision rockets and missiles from Iran via smuggling by sea with delivery by small boats and from the Sinai through tunnels into Gaza.

Hezbollah receives such missiles via Iranian air deliveries to Damascus airport, despite frequent Israeli air and missile attacks. Hamas did not participate in this latest rocket attack on Israel. That was followed a week later on November 20, 2019 with a massive IAF air assault [destroying](#) 20 IRGC and Assad regime targets in Syria.

There were unconfirmed [rumors](#) by a Chinese news agency about Russia possibly obtaining an Israeli [David Sling](#) air defense system Stunner interceptor missile in Syria. The Stunner interceptor missile, jointly developed by Israel's Rafael Advanced Systems and US partner Raytheon, is equipped with sophisticated digital radar, embedded software and electro optical systems enabling it to discriminate decoys from targets at a range of over 190 miles. These Stunner interceptor capabilities makes it a valuable standoff air defense system for Israel against Iranian cruise missiles and drones. It is far superior to the US Patriot Missile air defense system that failed to intercept a swarm of ground hugging Iranian cruise missiles with advanced detachable

warheads that made precision strikes on oil tanks in Saudi Arabia in September.

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Noted Israeli missile defense systems expert, Uzi Rubin, [said](#) that these Iranian precision cruise missiles with detachable warheads were equipped with optical homing systems with infrared capable of attacking fixed civilian or military targets. Israel must assure that it doesn't lose deterrence against such threats. Given this sophisticated Iranian missile capability, Israel has three options: 1) shoot down incoming missiles; 2) attack launching sites; 3) conduct a general retaliation war against Iran and proxies in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Gaza.

These Iranian threats present a significant challenge to both Israel and the US, especially as neither is interested in a [war](#) with Iran. Instead, the Trump Administration is engaging in a campaign of "maximum pressure" including ratcheting up sanctions against key IRGC officials and controlled institutions. Despite this Iran has doggedly pursued its nuclear program and regional support for terrorist proxies, [estimated](#) at \$16 billion annually.

November 2019 saw the [eruption](#) of violent protests throughout Iran triggered by a 50% increase in gas prices and rationing. The IRGC and paramilitaries launched brutal repression against

protesters resulting in an estimated 400 killed, more than 4,000 injured and several hundred arrested. The Islamic Regime shut down [access](#) to the internet for Iranians for more than 113 hours during the peak of the protests. Trump's abandoning the Iran nuclear pact and the maximum pressure sanctions campaign cut off Iran's oil revenues contributed to the current economic unrest.

The US is not supporting regime change in Iran despite a large opposition in the country. Former US national security adviser John Bolton left because he was at loggerheads with Trump as Bolton's advice on these issues was not valued.

As evidence of a large pool of anti-Islamic regime opposition, Dan Diker of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in an Israel News Talk Radio – Beyond the Matrix interview cited Iranian protester cries in Farsi of “No Lebanon, No Palestine, No foreign wars.” Diker noted the prediction of the late Uri Lubrani, the last Israeli Ambassador to Iran, “that popular discontent would lead to regime change rather than an external attack.” That the Iranian people are fundamentally democratic and opposed to living under an Islamic terrorist supporting regime. Diker cited a US former official suggesting that it might cost less than \$100 million to foster regime change in Iran; a lot less expensive than a full-throated kinetic war.

The rise of violent protests in both Lebanon and Iraq against Iran were in effect pushback against Iran's regional hegemony intentions in both countries. However, Hezbollah still has sway in Lebanon questioning continuing US support for Lebanon's military that amounts to training terrorists.

Northeastern Syria in the wake of President Trump's withdrawal abandoning the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Force, amounted to giving Turkey and jihadist proxies control of 120 kilometers long and 30 kilometers in depth "safe zone" inside northeastern Syria. That action by Trump has given Russia more influence in the region. One irony was Russian forces occupying former US bases in the Orwellian "safe zone." Russia is involved in joint patrols of the "safe zone" with Turkish forces. Some consider Trump's withdrawal of US forces in Syria, a "blunder." That has given rise to reports of war crimes against Kurds, Christians and other minorities. More than 200,000 have fled the "safe zone" inside Syria occupied by the Turkish-jihadist forces.

Trump sent a US armored force to protect oil facilities in eastern Syria may have been a ploy to trade with Russia and Assad who needed revenues to pay for the War in Syria. Instead, Dr. Stephen Bryen of *The Asia Times* believes what the US should pursue seizing IRGC general officers in Syria to exchange for release of captive Americans in Iran. One such US hostage in Iran is former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who went missing in March 2007 on what some alleged was an unauthorized CIA mission meeting an American Shiite convert and assassin on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf. Iran recently acknowledged that Levinson had gone "missing."

With this in mind, Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant and Jerry Gordon of Israel News Talk Radio- Beyond the Matrix held this wide-ranging interview with Dr. Stephen Bryen.

Rod: I'm Rod Bryant and I'm with Jerry Gordon my great sidekick and impeccable researcher-producer.

Jerry: Thanks, Rod.

Rod: We have an interesting topic that we would like to introduce. We are bringing back Stephen Bryen. We are asking a fundamental question. What has happened with United States and Israel's posture toward dealing with Iran?

Jerry: It is not only vague it's absent now, especially in a face of Iran's ability to create nuclear weapons which is a danger to Israel and to U.S. interests in the Middle East. The question is why isn't the U.S. and Israel confronting Iran?

Rod: It almost seems like a foregone conclusion that they have decided there is nothing we can do about Iran's threat besides trying to contain them. Would you introduce Stephen Bryen for our listeners?

Jerry: Stephen Bryen is a former Reagan era Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. He is a noted military technologist and he is a closely followed columnist for the *Asia Times*.

Rod: Once again we have Stephen Bryen to discuss what is going on with in the Middle East. We are immediately concerned about a report about an Israeli David's Sling missile that allegedly went missing that may have fallen into the hands of the Russians. An episode, if confirmed, some experts in Israel were saying was not a big deal. What is your opinion, Steve?

Stephen: I don't know if it's a big deal or not because we're not sure if the Russians really got it. I mean that was an assertion that was made in a Chinese news outlet that hasn't been confirmed by anybody, not by the Russians, not by the Israelis, not by the Syrians. However, we must work on the assumption that in fact they got it. That is what I would do because I don't know we have any alternative but to assume that was the case.

Rod: Do you think if they have it are, they going to find out something they already don't already assume about the missile system?

Stephen: Well it's not clear to me. They are certainly going to find out that it is a hell of a good missile. They are going to be impressed by the electronics, by the built-in radar, by the electro-optical features of the missile because it's quite sophisticated.

Jerry: Steve, why don't you tell our listeners what we are talking about?

Stephen: We are talking about the missile that is part of the David Sling System which is an Israeli anti-aircraft, anti-missile system that is called a Stunner, the name that's been given to it which was developed jointly by Rafael and by Raytheon in the United States. The David Sling is an interesting system. It is really the replacement for the Patriot and the older Hawk Missile Defense System. Hawk is very old now. Patriot is old too, but it keeps evolving. However, it has not performed well. That is why the Israelis

went ahead and the David Sling.

Rod: Well I mean obviously Raytheon has had the Patriot system on life support for a long time trying to provide the upgrades. It did have a role during the Gulf War. However, I think it was also time for the United States to find a different anti-missile system.

Stephen: The Patriot system was used by the Saudis to try and defend against Houthi fired ballistic missiles, drones and cruise missiles. However, it has not performed. It has some shortcomings. The biggest one I which gets the least attention is it really doesn't intercept until the final terminal part of the flight when that missile is practically on the ground. You see that in the video because you see them hitting the missiles very much in clear sight without any telescopes or binoculars. They are right there in front of your eyes. The problem with that is if you don't get it a hundred percent it gets you.

Rod: Especially if it drops down in a populated area. I was in an air defense a unit during the Gulf War when you could see it explode at 2500 feet which is scary.

Stephen: Yes, because there may collateral damage, even if it's hit properly. What the Iranians did in supplying the missiles to the Houthis is they made a modification so that the missile warhead detaches from the third stage of the missile. That makes it very hard for the radar system of the Patriot system to detect. The radar of the Patriot as it is today is incapable of discriminating enough to pick up the

warhead as opposed to the body of the missile, so it tends to hit the body of the missile rather than the warhead. The warhead still may tumble but it's still going to explode, and we have seen pictures of that.

Rod: One of the big concerns that they had in the past is if hostile missiles had a chemical weapons payload it would pretty much be useless knocking it out of the sky as it just still going to shower the target area. Thank God that has never happened.

Jerry: Steve, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu warned about Iran preparing precision missile launching pads exactly in the location you were just talking about in Yemen so does Iran really have precision missiles capable of reaching Israel from Yemen, Syria and Lebanon?

Stephen: The answer is probably yes. We are talking about cruise missiles. We are not talking about ballistic missiles. That is what the Prime Minister of Israel was talking about, cruise missiles. The attacks in Saudi Arabia were a big eye-opener for everybody. If you remember the photos of the three gas tanks, the huge gas tanks that were hit, they were all hit in the same spot at the same angle of attack. That was quite a feat. I have a friend in Israel who is probably the world's best missile defense expert, Uzi Rubin. Uzi told me that what they used were optical homing systems probably with infrared optics because these missiles were fired at 4:30 in the morning.

These missiles and drones with fitted with pattern recognition

capabilities. That means that if they prepared the right scene for the missile or drone well ahead of time, a picture of those Saudi oil tanks, for example, and designated where they wanted it to hit it would go ahead and do that automatically. That is new because as far as we know they never had that level of sophistication before. That is what the Israelis are concerned about. Iranian technology is effective against fixed targets, not moving targets. That means important military locations could be directly targeted. Up to now most of the missiles that have been fired by the Houthis and by the Iranians through their proxies Hezbollah, Hamas and others are what we call sort of terrorist weapons designed to intimidate people and kill civilians. The idea is to create havoc. However, with these new Iranian missiles and drones, as the attack in Saudi Arabia showed, they could do precision targeting. This means they have accurate weapons that can be used against military targets. This is what concerns the Israelis. They must decide what needs to be done about this new threat.

Jerry: Israel's Chief of Staff and Operations Director warned that just one miscalculation might cause

the outbreak of a precision missile war with Iran. What is the IDF doing to prepare for such a possibility particularly considering what you just discussed?

Stephen: You must ask them that question, not me. It is not a question that I can answer. In my judgment they have three different options. One is to try and shoot down the cruise missiles and drones. That is what David Sling is for. The second one is to go after the actual missile launching sites and take them out before they launch an attack, which may or may not be possible. The third is general retaliation. That

is, when you punish them for attacks against your territory, by taking out some of their high value targets. I don't mean in Syria. I mean in Iran. Those are the three levels of escalation and consideration of which I'm sure the Israeli military and any other military would have to consider. I don't think they want to be in the position of the Saudis which was to do nothing. I think that's a bad position. That is when you lose your deterrence. If you lose your deterrence, you lose the game.

Rod: Do you know if Iran's proxy in Gaza, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad appears to be able to at any time fire these missiles into Israel. How are they receiving these missiles supplied by Iran?

Stephen: I understand the missiles are coming either by sea or they smuggle them in at night on small boats offloaded from larger vessels offshore. Or they are coming through the Sinai area and through tunnels into Gaza. That is how the PIJ is getting them from Iran. The ones Iran ships to Hezbollah are coming in mainly through the Damascus Airport.

Rod: I know that Israel has a very rigorous interdiction program. However, obviously they are not able to get most of the missiles that are being shipped and received.

Stephen: I think they are getting the vast minority.

Rod: Oh, really?

Stephen: Yes, I mean they are not getting much at all. I mean these guys have thousands of these things. My comment was sarcastic.

Jerry: Steve with that in mind, Hezbollah and Houthi have, as you said before, access to a new kind of missile that detaches the warhead and essentially makes it difficult to pick up on radar.

Stephen: Right.

Jerry: How is Israel going to combat that threat to prevent that from occurring? Israel has been conducting a “whack-a-mole” strategy with its Air Force hitting those precision missile factories where they pop up in both Syria and in Lebanon.

Stephen: The short answer is the David Sling. It is a sophisticated system which can discriminate targets and deal with not only with warhead separation but also with decoys. It is a very sophisticated system that combines digital radar with electro-optical capabilities. It is very smart, and it has a long standoff range. I think that we will see the David Sling as Israel’s primary air defense system.

Rod: Could the David Sling Stunner missile that supposedly the Russians may have, be reversed engineered in such a way to develop a countermeasure?

Stephen: There is a difference between reverse engineering and countermeasures. Reverse engineering means they are making a copy of the missile. Countermeasure means you found a vulnerability that you can exploit and defeat the missile. Of course, it's possible but is it likely? I don't think so, because I think the technology in this missile is so advanced, especially the radar and the electro-optical sensor and software that you can't really dig out very easily somewhere inside the missile. I just don't see that likely to happen. I think it's a setback because they will understand some of the things, they need to do to improve their capabilities, but that will take several years. In any war scenario, in any conflict scenario you put your weapons out there and the enemy is going to get some of them. That is the bottom line. Then they would do what we call exploitation. We attempt to understand what that weapon is and whether you want to copy it or whether you want to exploit certain aspects of it.

Jerry: Iran has thrown down a gauntlet with its pursuit of uranium enrichment with the loading of gasses into centrifuges at the heavily protected Fordow facility near Qom in Iran. How rapidly can Iran enrich uranium to produce weapon grade fissile material. Has Tehran essentially abandoned the 2015 Nuclear Deal?

Stephen: I never thought they were adhering to the nuclear deal anyway. From my point of view, it's irrelevant. They are going to have highly enriched uranium in significant quantities that is what they are after so they can make multiple weapons. Because anyone that has a nuclear weapon also must protect it to some extent or at least have enough of them around that it provides a major problem for their enemy

to try and take them out. So yes, can they do it? It is only a matter of time; the only question is how much time? I would say within the year.

Rod: Can we expect a response from the United States or Israel to preclude this from happening? Or is it a foregone conclusion that they are going to have the capabilities and there is nothing that we can do about it?

Stephen: Well there's a lot we can do about it if we want to, but it means general war. So, it would be very difficult to do. It is a major challenge. A lot of these are far underground sites and we don't know where all of them are located. There would be a lot of issues in terms of taking them out. It could be done. However, I don't think there is any will to do that. I think that maybe the Israelis want to do it, but they are not going to do it by themselves, they want help from the United States and the United States isn't interested. This has been going on for a long time, but they had opportunities to do this in the past and when the Israelis wanted to do, and Obama didn't want to do it. Trump doesn't want to do it. Nobody wants to do it. At the end of the day we are going to have a nuclear armed Iran

Rod: I don't even know that the maximum pressure that we are putting on them economically while hurting them, but somehow, they are still able to hold up under that campaign.

Stephen: The regime still survives if that is what you mean. I mean that is true although it's getting dicey there from what I understand. They are not going to stop what they are doing

because we are putting pressure on them, that's clear. They would have stopped before. However, they have supporters in Europe and in China, North Korea, even Russia so they are going to pursue nuclear weapons. I think it's very dangerous and don't know where it will end up. It is a very difficult problem.

Jerry: Steve, you are telling us that a long-range kinetic strategy to take out Iran's nuclear facilities is not in the cards, the question is what about regime change in Tehran?

Stephen: That's been off the table rather than on the table. Even Trump said we are not doing that. We haven't supported any of the opposition in Iran. There is quite a lot of opposition in Iran, but we are not supporting it. That is a tragedy because it would be a lot better to get rid of the regime than to have to face the military consequences of a nuclear armed Iran. I don't understand why we really didn't try doing it in Iran. Of course, in Syria it didn't work. But we did it in Iraq, it did work. I just don't know why we are not fomenting revolution so to speak in Iran. I mean these people aren't happy with their government. Things are tough for people there. The regime is spending a huge amount on military which they could be spending on making life better for its own people so there are opportunities. However, they are not being exploited.

Jerry: Was that one of the reasons why John Bolton resigned? He was an advocate for regime change in Iran.

Stephen: Yes, he was. However, you would have to ask John Bolton that question. I think the reason that John gave up and the President gave up on John was they were really loggerheads

on a lot of things. Basically, I think Bolton didn't feel like his advice was valued.

Jerry: Wow.

Rod: Are massive protests in both Iraq and Lebanon aimed at Iran and its proxies? Does that pose a significant threat to Iran's regional ambitions?

Stephen: Yes, that is pretty good news in the sense that it does slow them down at least for the time being. There is popular unhappiness with having the Iranians operating in their own countries. Especially in Iraq and in Lebanon we are seeing that and eventually we may see it in Syria.

Rod: Basically, has Iran worn out their welcome in those countries and is that a good sign for us?

Stephen: I don't know if they have worn it out but, yes, they have certainly do have problems.

Jerry: Steve, does that mean that Hezbollah in Lebanon is on its back foot now or has it still got swagger?

Stephen: It depends on whether these protests, especially in Beirut, continue and whether they are enough to knock off the government on a permanent basis and force Hezbollah into a

corner. So far it is not that far advanced. But it is a good sign. Hezbollah is a southern Lebanon movement and they are controlling the Beirut government. By the way and just while we are talking about it, I don't understand why the U.S. is supporting the Lebanese military the way we are since a lot of them are Hezbollah people. Well they have known it forever. I mean, instead of the argument that will be made by proponents of military aid to the Lebanese army that we are doing giving aid and training because if we don't it's going to be the Iranians, or the Russians providing aid and training. I mean there may be some truth in that. However, I think the real bottom line is we are training the bad guys.

Rod: I wanted to ask you for a quick update about the northeastern Syrian region where we withdrew.

Stephen: Well I can't because it's a mess. You don't know whose side everybody is on. The Russians are on the Turkish side, the Russians are on the Kurdish side, the Russians are on the Syrian side, the Syrians are on the Kurdish side. It's chaotic. What I think the bottom line is the Turks are going to take over that northern strip and try and hold it for who knows how long. They have been invading another country and taking territory. People are complaining that Trump wants to keep the oil fields, isn't that terrible? The Turks are taking twenty percent of Syrian territory and nobody objected. We are fighting Erdogan, who is coming to the United States to put a crown of peace on his head. I mean what is he doing here?

Rod: I do not understand that relationship. I just don't understand it at all.

Stephen: The Russians have had ideas about the Kurds and tried to work out something with the Assad regime to create a kind of autonomous Kurdish sector inside of Syria, but still part of Syria, to which Assad objected and refused. I think the Russians have had an interest in finding a way of stabilizing that area if there is any way of stabilizing it. However, they haven't succeeded in achieving it. I think it is just chaos.

Rod: Well we are going to find out whether the withdrawal from Syria that the President made was either brilliant or wrongheaded. It is going to take some time before we can figure that one out.

Stephen: The consensus in the world is that it was a blunder.

Rod: Yes, it seems that way and there are a lot of people in the military that feel the same way.

Stephen: A lot of dead of people too.

Jerry: On the cusp of abandoning the Kurds in northeastern Syria came a US armored column coming out of Iraq of about five hundred plus Americans protecting "oil wells" in eastern Syria that the Kurds had been protecting for a while. Is this a possible set-up for shooting war between the U.S., Russia and Assad for control?

Stephen: No, I don't think so, I think that Trump wants to trade that oil for some deal that he can get out of the

Russians but mostly from the Syrians.

Rod: The art of the deal?

Stephen: Yes, the art of the deal I mean that is his thing isn't it? You need to have some leverage in the situation. You can't get much leverage with eight hundred troops, but you can get leverage with millions of dollars' worth of oil because the Syrians need it, they need this revenue. The Russians need it to pay for the war and the Syrians need it to pay the Russians back for the war. They need it in the future for reconstruction in Syria. Trump thought he would grab the oil, so he did. I would rather grab some Iranians especially high-ranking Revolutionary Guard Iranians and trade them for people the Iranians are holding. Some they won't admit that they are holding but they are holding and then make a deal with them. That is what I would rather do instead of holding oil. However, that is not what Trump is doing, playing a chess game.

Rod: I think he would rather play a chess game with oil than humans. However, we have the capability to seize these Iranian generals that are in countries like Iraq and Syria.

Stephen: I think we should be more aggressive on these matters and not just let the Americans rot in an Iranian jail.

Rod: Right.

Jerry: One of those Americans rotting away in a jail is a US citizen from Florida, ex-FBI agent Robert Levinson. I have followed that episode for several years. I noticed Trump said it might be a good thing if Iran released him. Your conception of seizing an IRGC Senior General and trading him for Bob Levinson would send a star rocket of thanks here in the state of Florida, especially from his family in Coral Springs.

Rod: A big message.

Stephen: I'm really surprised nobody has raised the possibility. People are just taking it on the chin on this sort of thing and I don't think we should do that. We should be more proactive; I don't like that word. However, that is the term of art. We should be more proactive and aggressive and say look, you do to us we do to you, come on, let's stop playing this game and get serious.

Rod: For the audience who may or may not know about Levinson supposedly he was over there that he was visiting this island on unauthorized CIA mission. Steve, do you know what the details?

Stephen: Yes, I have read the stories, but I don't know if any of them are true. So, I'm not going to comment on Levinson's actions.

Jerry: Having some knowledge of the families' predicament about it, ostensibly Levinson was on Kish Island in the middle of the Persian Gulf meeting with the American Islam convert

who was the assassin in 1980 who took out a former opponent of the current regime in a mail package delivery in Bethesda, Maryland. That perpetrator escaped courtesy of the Muslim Brotherhood to first Switzerland and then on Iran Air to Tehran. Levinson was trying to meet him on some "alleged unauthorized CIA investigation" when he was seized at that time. The question is why 12 years after his disappearance does the idea of trading something for him to with Iran surface?

Stephen: That is my idea. What the Iranians have done now they're apparently doing now is listing him as a missing person. How did they know that?

Rod: Unless he's dead. Is it possible that he died in custody and now they are listing him as missing?

Stephen: Who knows? I think we are just in total speculation at this point.

There is a recent report of the Pentagon ramping up a development of lasers to destroy cruise missiles, drones, etc. How far has military kinetic laser development progressed?

Stephen: The concept has been around for a while using lasers not only for cruise missiles but using them as a weapon. The railgun, for example, is a laser gun that the US Navy has some of those now. Rail guns present a lot of problems. First, you need a lot of electrical power for them. Secondly, they are bulky, and they are hard to deal with. I don't know if it's a solution or not, I think it's not. I think the first thing is to find have a weapon that works.

Rod: The technology can help further along the progress. Right now, as you said I know the navy was talking about putting one of those on a ship.

Stephen: They did it, they have it on a ship.

Rod: And they tested it right?

Stephen: Yes.

Rod: Yes, I could see it on a navy ship because you have the power plant to be able to control it. I couldn't imagine seeing that on a mobile vehicle out in the desert somewhere.

Stephen: The problem is that you know you take your laser shot and then you have got to recharge your capacitors to use it again. That takes time. I much prefer rapid fire guns with high accuracy.

Jerry: Steve, Israel and the U.S. held a meeting in Washington in late October regarding collaboration on artificial intelligence applications. How significant is that development and what security threats would that joint U.S./Israeli collaboration address?

Stephen: I think that we are increasingly going to artificial

intelligence driven weapons and defense systems in the future. Whether it is autonomous robotic devices that are using artificial intelligence or whether it's an aircraft that can discriminate and understand targets and make decisions about that that must be made quickly. That is where Israel is very good at software development and AI is one, they are ahead of the pack on. The Chinese are getting into this business very rapidly; the Russians are trying to get in it. It is going to be everywhere as an adjunct to the current generation of systems. Its development is very important.

Rod: AI has also played a pivotal role in intelligence as well and that's you know, being able to do millions of volumes of digital analyzing millions of bits of data it's just incredible what they can do now.

Stephen: Right. Artificial intelligence is a hard thing to define. Basically, it is a system that can really make decisions based on not so apparent variables that it can select and decide. That is what it should do and adjust those decisions in real time quickly. It needs a lot of computing power. Part of the game is going to be using small parallel processors that can be mounted on systems that are not here yet, but that will come.

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Rod: We know the capabilities of missile systems that they

have developed over the last fifty years are mind-blowing. Can you imagine when they are able to put those small processors inside of weapons that will be amazing.

Stephen: I think even that Stunner we have talked about earlier is an example of a system that's very sophisticated and can shift between its radar and electro-optical capabilities and make decisions about which is the right target. That is not trivial. To do that while you are flying at Mach 5 is amazing.

I didn't mention earlier but Raytheon is now equipping its Patriot systems with what they call SkyCeptor interceptors. SkyCeptor is a Stunner variant with an AI format and they have sold it to the Polish government for its Patriot System. I think they will use it to upgrade all the Patriots in existence. However, they are going to have to change the radars for Patriot to make them more effective.

Rod: I used to keep track of the different Patriot Pac's that they were developing upgrades.

Stephen: Maybe the Stunner makes a Pac 4 because it really is a very significant improvement. I think that you can get a 190 miles range from the Stunner missile. The Patriot equipped with the Stunner becomes a standoff air defense system much more than a terminal air defense system which is what Patriot is today.

That is a huge improvement. That is where the Russians are trying to go as well with their S-400 and S-500. The difference is that this is a much smarter missile than the

Russians have.

Rod: Thank you Steve Bryen for this wide-ranging discussion. You are listening to Beyond the Matrix here on Israel News Talk Radio. Shalom until next week.

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