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This month, the LeMay Center highlights Patriot air defense at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.



Three days after the US successfully bombed Iran’s nuclear sites during operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER, Iran launched a retaliatory missile barrage against Al Udeid Air Base. With missiles inbound, recently deployed U.S. Mobile Interceptor Missile (MIM)-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile batteries executed the largest single Patriot employment in U.S. history. The systems successfully intercepted nearly every incoming missile, preventing casualties and avoiding significant damage. This historic, and vivid demonstration of counterair doctrine underscores the enduring value of integrated air and missile defense.

Patriot has been a cornerstone of U.S. and allied air defense since the late Cold War, evolving over the years to meet growing ballistic and cruise missile threats. Its most recent employment in the defense of Al Udeid Air Base powerfully demonstrated Patriot’s modern capabilities as an integrated layer of the joint force air component commander’s broader defensive counterair (DCA) strategy, acting in their capacity as area air defense commander. By creating decisive DCA effects—detecting, engaging, and neutralizing enemy fires before threatening critical assets—the Patriots demonstrated air and missile defense is a crucial component of joint operations. The engagement reinforced the importance of rehearsing mission-type orders and autonomous execution under established rules of engagement. It also demonstrated the necessity of sustaining Patriot units globally, including during rapid deployment and reload capability. For commanders and command and control (C2) architects, it validated delegated engagement authority and agile networks.

Why it matters today: At Al Udeid, Patriot showcased the doctrinal principles outlined in Air Force Doctrine Publication (AFDP) 3-01, *Counterair Operations*. Patriot's operational success underpins U.S. credibility, reassures partners, and complicates the adversary's calculus. In addition, the mission reflected disciplined readiness and the ability to operate effectively under pressure with a lean footprint—key considerations for the future fight in contested environments. Finally, the Patriot employment highlighted the agility of C2 structures described in AFDP 3-0.1, *Command and Control*, where mission command and rapid decision-making enabled assured defense.

The June 2025 defense at Al Udeid wasn't just a tactical success – it was doctrine in action. It embodied the principles of DCA, agile command and control, and integrated sustainment. Above all, it showed how disciplined readiness and clear authority combine to generate operational and strategic effects—even under the most intense pressure.

For more on the Air Force's approach to air and missile defense, see [AFDP 3-01, Counterair Operations](#), and [AFDP 3-0.1, Command and Control](#). You can also explore our doctrine podcast library on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music, or at www.doctrine.af.mil.
