

08.14.14 Iron Dome Military Site Gaggle

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: ...Second of all it has given the Israeli government the ability to make the decisions; it makes our lives easier as a military force. We have this huge shield of two “iron domes” which is enabling us to operate out of a clearheaded, very well thought out group process, and enables us to make the decisions that need to be made.

Governor Cuomo: So the “iron dome” is a series of these interceptor missiles that can deploy literally within seconds to determine where the missile is coming from, the trajectory of it, and it makes a determination of whether or not to shoot it down and then if it shoots it down, it will shoot it down over an uninhabited area so it doesn't do any damage.

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: It has the operator that carries out the mission and he or she has two to three seconds to intercept the missile.

Governor Cuomo: Wow.

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: It has about thirty seconds of flight, the average flight of the rockets coming out of Gaza are about thirty seconds. So that is the framework of what our soldiers, the boys and girls and the men and women that fill that position have as a responsibility on their shoulders. When they have to decide, “Are we going to intercept before it hits the town or community within the surrounding areas.” It is all the way up to three-fourths of the country under threat.

Governor Cuomo: How long has it been in development, this system?

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: In development it has been some time, operational, we have had it since 2009 in the beginning but, it was first really incorporated in 2012 with our operations in Gaza. Even then it proved extremely successful and now it is unbelievable.

Governor Cuomo: It is a game changer. It really is.

Question: Have you received requests from other countries and other governments about the possibility of sharing this?

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: That isn't something that the military really is involved in, we deal with solving the problems here and now and not the distribution or that type of thing but of course it is something that has been a huge success for us, it's saved hundreds of lives.

Governor Cuomo: It is incredibly expensive to operate, even with the financial support from the United States?

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: The financial support is indeed a component that enables its upkeep and enables its further development, because every time we launch an interceptor then there are

lessons learned and there are changes that need to be made to make it an even more efficient mechanism.

Question: So there is a financial support component. Was it originally developed by an Israeli industry?

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: It was developed by the Israeli industry, the military industry, and financial support...

Question: We have heard something about a laser dome or something in development that can shoot down rockets.

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: There are all different types of other things, we the military, the IDF, are happy with the idea that the current system is 90% satisfactory, and hundreds of lives have been saved it is a huge success.

Question: What is your name?

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: Lieutenant Colonel Peter Lerner, I am the IDF spokesperson.

Question: How many of these are there?

Governor Cuomo: Absolutely amazing.

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: We have nine systems.

Question: All right here?

Lt. Colonel Peter Lerner: We have nine batteries.

Governor Cuomo: And what thousands and thousands of rockets that are being shot at Israel? And this is the innovation that has allowed them to save thousands of lives, it really is amazing. When you think about how fast this happens, they launch a missile from Gaza and in a couple of seconds the determination is made whether or not to shoot it down, the way they shoot it down, so it really is an amazing, amazing development. Supported by the United States and it is a wise investment by us.

Question: Do you think we will ever have something like this?

Governor Cuomo: Let's hope not, let's hope we never need it.