

Lockheed Martin-Funded Experts Agree: South Korea Needs More Lockheed Martin Missiles

By [Adam Johnson](#)

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Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

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As tensions between the United States and North Korea continue to rise, one think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), has become a ubiquitous voice on the topic of missile defense, providing Official-Sounding Quotes to dozens of reporters in Western media outlets. All of these quotes speak to the urgent threat of North Korea and how important the United States's deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system is to South Korea:

- “THAADs are tailored to those medium-range threats that North Korea has in spades—North Korea regularly demonstrates that kind of capability,” says Thomas Karako, the director of the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “THAADs are exactly the kind of thing that you would want for a regional area.” (**Wired**, [4/23/17](#))
- But [CSIS’s Karako] called [THAAD] an important first step. “This is not about having a perfect shield, this is about buying time and thereby contributing to the overall credibility of deterrence,” Karako told **AFP**. (**France24**, [5/2/17](#))
- THAAD is a decent option, says Thomas Karako, director of the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, citing a perfect intercept record in trials to date. (**Christian Science Monitor**, [7/21/16](#))
- Seeing THAAD as a “natural consequence” of an evolving threat from North Korea, Bonnie Glaser, a senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), told **VOA** that Washington should continue to tell Beijing “this system is not aimed at China ... and [China] will just have to live with this decision.” (**Voice of America**, [3/22/17](#))
- Victor Cha, a Korea expert and former White House official now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, played down the chances that THAAD would be rolled back. “If THAAD is deployed prior to the elections and given the North Korean missile threat, I don’t think it would be prudent for a new government to ask that it be walked back,” Cha said. (**Reuters**, [3/10/17](#))
- Thomas Karako, senior fellow with the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said China’s indirect, retaliatory measures over the THAAD deployment would only stiffen the resolve of South Korea. He called the Chinese intervention “short-sighted.” (**Voice of America**, [1/23/17](#))

The [list](#) goes on. In the past year, FAIR has noted 30 media mentions of CSIS pushing the

THAAD missile system or its underlying value proposition in US media, most of them in the past two months. Business Insider was the most eager venue for the think tank's analysts, [routinely copying-and-pasting CSISalking points](#) in stories warning of the North Korean menace.

Omitted from all these CSIS media appearances, however, is that one of CSIS's top donors, Lockheed Martin, is THAAD's primary contractor—Lockheed Martin's take from the THAAD system is worth [about \\$3.9 billion](#) alone. Lockheed Martin directly funds the Missile Defense Project Program at CSIS, the program whose talking heads are cited most frequently by US media.

While it's unclear how much exactly Lockheed Martin donates to CSIS (specific totals are not listed on their website, and a CSIS spokesperson wouldn't tell FAIR when asked), they are one of the top ten donors, listed in the "\$500,000 and up" category. It's unclear how high "and up" goes, but the think tank's operating revenue for 2016 was [\\$44 million](#).

None of these pieces mentioned that 56 percent of South Koreans [oppose the deployment](#) of THAAD, at least until new elections are held on May 9. The person who greenlit the THAAD deployment, former President Park Geun-hye, left in disgrace after a fraud scandal—throwing the legitimacy of the THAAD deployment into question, and turning it into a hot-button issue in the subsequent election.

In light of her impeachment—and, no doubt, the surprise election of a capricious President Trump in the US—most South Koreans understandably want to wait until the new election before making a decision on THAAD. Beyond a few articles making opaque reference to South Koreans having "mixed" reactions, or glossing over local protests, this fact was omitted from US media reports altogether. Trump, the Pentagon and US weapons contractors knew what's best and were coming to the rescue.

In South Korea, Women Are Leading the Resistance to US-Backed Militarization

Tired of their country's deference to the US, they're taking matters of security into their own hands.

By Christine Ahn

FEBRUARY 10, 2017



Unlike corporate media outlets, The Nation ([2/25/17](#)) felt a need to talk to opponents of deploying new US weaponry.

None of the 30 pieces with pro-THAAD talking heads from CSIS quoted South Korean peace activists or anti-THAAD voices. To find out the concerns of Korean THAAD critics, one had to turn to independent media reports, like Christine Ahn's in **The Nation** ([2/25/17](#)):

"It will threaten the very economic and social lifeblood of the communities," [Korean-American policy analyst Simone Chun] said....

"The deployment of THAAD will increase tensions between South and North Korea," said Ham Soo-yeon, a resident of Gimcheon who has been publishing newsletters about their resistance. In a phone interview, Ham said THAAD

would “make the unification of Korea more difficult,” and that it would “place the Korean peninsula at the center of the US drive for dominant power over Northeast Asia.”

None of these concerns made it into the above articles.

Five of CSIS’s [ten major corporate donors](#) (“\$500,000 and up”) are weapons manufacturers: Besides Lockheed Martin, they are General Dynamics, Boeing, Leonardo-Finmeccanica and Northrop Grumman. Three of its top four government donors (“\$500,000 and up”) are the United States, Japan and Taiwan. South Korea also gives money to CSIS through the governmental Korea Foundation (\$200,000-\$499,000).

Last August ([8/8/16](#)), the **New York Times** revealed internal documents of CSIS (and the Brookings Institution) showing how think tanks acted as undisclosed lobbyists for weapons manufacturers:

As a think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies did not file a lobbying report, but the goals of the effort were clear.

“Political obstacles to export,” read the [agenda of one closed-door](#) “working group” meeting organized by Mr. Brannen that included Tom Rice, a lobbyist in General Atomics’ Washington office, on the invitation lists, the emails show.

Boeing and Lockheed Martin, drone-makers that were major CSIS contributors, were also invited to attend the sessions, the emails show. The meetings and research culminated with a report released in February 2014 that reflected the industry’s priorities.

“I came out strongly in support of export,” Mr. Brannen, the lead author of the study, wrote in an email to Kenneth B. Handelman, the deputy assistant secretary of state for defense trade controls.

But the effort did not stop there.

Mr. Brannen initiated meetings with Defense Department officials and congressional staff to push for the recommendations, which also included setting up a new Pentagon office to give more focus to acquisition and deployment of drones. The center also stressed the need to ease export limits at a conference it [hosted](#) at its headquarters featuring top officials from the Navy, the Air Force and the Marine Corps.

CSIS denied to the **Times** that its activities constituted lobbying. In response to FAIR’s request for comment, a CSIS spokesperson “rejected [FAIR’s] assertion entirely” that there was any conflict.

CSIS’s consistent promotion of its funder’s missile system could, of course, be a total coincidence. The bespectacled experts at CSIS could honestly believe the majority of South Koreans are wrong, and Trump’s deployment of THAAD is a wise choice. Or it could be that think tanks funded by weapons makers are not impartial arbiters of whether more weapons are a good idea—and not useful sources to readers who are hoping for neutral analysis of such questions.

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Articles by: [Adam Johnson](#)

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