

Canisters containing Patriot missiles to intercept missiles fired at Saudi Arabia. (Photo: GettyImages)



Sanaa, September 20 (RHC)-- U.S. and Saudi military forces and their networks of advanced air defenses never detected the Yemeni drones that were launched on Saturday to strike oil facilities deep inside Saudi Arabia, proving futile the billions of dollars that the Riyadh regime has spent on them to protect its territories.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who is in Saudi Arabia to discuss a possible response to the strike with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, had to admit that the U.S. missile defense systems had failed to stop the attack.

“We want to make sure that infrastructure and resources are put in place such that attacks like this would be less successful than this one appears to have been,” he said, when asked why the Patriot missile systems deployed across the kingdom didn’t do anything to stop the Yemeni aircraft.

Pompeo sounded surprised by the vastness of the operation, saying: “This is an attack of a scale we’ve just not seen before.”

Saudi Arabia has bought multiple batteries of Patriot missile system which are meant to shoot down hostile aircraft or shorter-range ballistic missiles, providing what in military terms is called “point defense,” meaning they are not suitable for covering wide swaths of land. It’s not yet clear whether any of them had been positioned close to the oil sites at the time of the attack.

According to The Washington Post, U.S. weapons maker Raytheon charges up to \$1 billion for each Patriot battery. The U.S. also uses an array of powerful spy satellites and aircraft flying in the region to gather intelligence and share it with the Saudi military to help the kingdom with its ongoing war against Yemen. That system, however, proved futile when it was needed the most.

“We don’t have an unblinking eye over the entire Middle East at all times,” Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters in the aftermath of the attack.

Russian President Vladimir Putin also pointed to the utter failure of the U.S. defense systems during his recent trip to the Turkish capital of Ankara. Standing next to his Turkish and Iranian counterparts, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Hassan Rouhani, Putin mockingly suggested that maybe Saudis will be better off buying Russian-made S-300 or S-400 missile defense system, as Iran and Turkey have done.

Iran, on its own, has developed missile defense systems that are far more superior to S-300, an achievement they best displayed in June by shooting down a stealth US drone over the Persian Gulf using the home-built Khordad 3 missile system.

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