

# AI – lowering the cost per kill

3-4 minutes



Roy Donalson, CEO Raytheon MENA was also on the AI panel. Image: BillyPix

“We have pushed AI as far as we can in this generation,” said Lockheed Martin Middle East, CEO, General (ret’d) John W Nicholson, “but where are we now?” His Excellency Omar Sultan Al Olama , Minister of State for AI, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications in the UAE believes he knows: “We are at a phase in our evolution that we have never seen before, and that is going to bring with us all the promise and peril as this conference session title suggests.

“The promise in new technologies that we’ve seen over the last couple of months have generally been because of AI but this is the just beginning of a much bigger scope.”

Roy Donalson, CEO Raytheon MENA and another of the panel said: “We’re going to see its use in defence technologies, specifically the use of generative AI to design new aircraft and missiles.”

Donalson went on to give an example of the company’s AI work, where he believes there is great promise: “In my world, we spend a lot of money on flight tests, so we can try to decrease the numbers by using more AI ahead of that flight.”

He also spoke of how the enemy is training their personnel in hundreds of dollars, a fraction of the hundreds of thousands dollars that many developed countries are spending to train theirs. With AI, we have to look at lowering the cost per kill.”

Lockheed Martin’s John W Nicholson added, “Last month, we announced a first flight of an F 16 AI enabled, AI piloted flight in the VISTA X-62 Alpha programme, which flew a challenging flight pattern. We also announced in November, that a Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter had been AI piloted over an 80-mile flight route, evacuating casualties delivering supplies reacting to enemy threats. These are just a couple of examples of how AI is very rapidly being integrated into the defensive security sector by Lockheed Martin.

AI is helping asymmetric warfare. Machine learning is helping to make human make decisions. The Lockheed-Martin F 16 and a Black Hawk flying with AI are two examples of what can be done, and they were not short test flights but missions.

Lockheed Martin’s Nicholson summed up “It’s the next generation that will take AI and machine to the next level, those that are graduating from schools. To that end, Lockheed runs an internship programme here in the UAE, the Centre for Innovation and Security Solutions, which will be a big part of that future.

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