



News Release

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Airborne Laser Successfully Completes High-Speed Tracking Test

Lt. General Henry A. "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today that the prototype Airborne Laser (ABL) aircraft successfully passively tracked a vertically dynamic target for the first time.

During a test on May 1, the modified Boeing 747-400 used its passive sensors to autonomously locate, acquire, target and track an afterburning F-16 jet fighter moving vertically at a rapid rate of ascent. This test represents a significant milestone in ABL's flight test progress, and demonstrates a number of key system capabilities that will lead to a lethal demonstration against a boosting missile in 2009.

The ABL is currently undergoing a series of flight tests that will demonstrate the aircraft's complex beam control/fire control system prior to high-energy laser installation, which will begin later this year. ABL is the Agency's primary boost-phase missile defense element, and is being developed to destroy ballistic missiles of all classes in their boost phase of flight using its megawatt-class high-energy laser.

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