



08-NEWS-0071

June 25, 2008

Successful Missile Defense Intercept Test Takes Place off Hawaii

Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today the completion of a successful "hit to kill" intercept in partnership with the U.S. Army for the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense test element at the Pacific Missile Range Facility off the island of Kauai in Hawaii. Preliminary indications are that planned flight test objectives were achieved. This test involved the intercept of a separating target (mock warhead separated from the booster rockets) in the "mid-end atmosphere" (inside the earth's atmosphere). The target, representing a threat ballistic missile, was launched from a U.S. Air Force C-17 aircraft flying over the Pacific Ocean at 4:16 p.m. Hawaiian Standard Time (10:16 p.m. EDT). Approximately six minutes later the interceptor missile was launched from a mobile THAAD launcher on the range facility. This was the 35th successful hit-to-kill intercept of 43 attempts in the atmosphere and in space since 2001, and was the 29th of 30 successful tests conducted since September 2005.

This was the fifth successful intercept for the current THAAD program in five attempts. A sixth test was conducted in September 2006 at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, but was not completed due to a failure of the target missile after it was launched.

The primary objective of this highly operationally realistic test was to demonstrate target acquisition, tracking and aimpoint selection by the avionics software contained in the THAAD interceptor, and to intercept a separating target. Another objective was to observe the effects of an interceptor launch on adjacent missile canisters in the THAAD launcher. The ability of soldiers to conduct launcher, fire control and radar operations was also observed. Using current tactics, techniques and procedures developed by the US Army Air Defense School, soldiers, for the first time in a THAAD test, manually engaged the target using the systems semi-automatic mode. Soldiers operating the equipment were not aware of actual target launch time. All of these factors provided increased operational realism to the test. The U.S. Navy cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG-70), received a tracking cue from THAAD and used its advanced SPY-1 radar to successfully track the target, and conducted a simulated Standard Missile-3 interceptor missile launch to engage the target.

The Ballistic Missile Defense System now in development, testing and initial deployment and operations is currently or will be capable of providing a layered defense for the U.S. homeland, its deployed forces, friends and allies against ballistic missiles of all ranges in all phases of flight. The higher-altitude and theater-wide protection offered by THAAD provides more protection of larger areas than lower-tier systems like Patriot alone. THAAD can be transported by air to wherever it is needed worldwide, and consists of radar, fire control unit, missile launchers, and interceptor missiles.

The Army's first THAAD battery was activated last month at Fort Bliss, Texas, giving soldiers the opportunity to train on THAAD equipment for approximately one year in anticipation of fielding.

The THAAD Program is managed by the Missile Defense Agency in Washington, DC, and executed by the THAAD Project Office in Huntsville, Ala. Lockheed Martin Corporation is the prime contractor.

Media Contact: Pam Rogers, Missile Defense Agency, at (256) 450-1421 or (256) 503-3726, pamela.rogers@mda.mil.

For broadcast outlets: Satellite footage of the test will be available at the following coordinates at 9 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time (3 a.m. Thursday Eastern Daylight Time) for one hour.

Satellite: Galaxy-18 (G-18) at 123W. Transponder 23K/Slot B. Downlink 12155.5MHz Vertical. Symbol rate 3.617 Msps, QPSK rate $\frac{3}{4}$. Trouble number: (630) 440-0085.