



News Release

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ABL Successfully Fires Complete Weapon System From Aircraft

Army Lieutenant General Patrick J. O'Reilly, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today the successful firing and propagation of the Airborne Laser (ABL) megawatt-class weapons system through the aircraft turret during ground tests at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

To complete this final milestone for 2008, the ABL's chemical oxygen-iodine laser was fired through the beam control/fire control optical system that directs and shapes the beam before exiting the aircraft. The beam was fired into an off-board range simulator to provide realistic test conditions as it absorbs the laser's energy and measures the overall system performance.

The completion of this highly successful test has set the stage for further ground tests at longer durations in preparation for flight tests scheduled to begin in early 2009. The flight test program will culminate in the fall of 2009 with a lethal demonstration against a boosting threat representative missile target.

The ABL is being developed as a future element of the nation's ballistic missile defense system and will be the first weapon system using directed energy to destroy ballistic missiles in the boost phase of flight.

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