



05-FYI-0050

16 May 2005

Radome Successfully Installed on Sea-Based X-Band Radar

Air Force Lt. General Henry "Trey" Obering announced today the completion of the final major assembly of Sea-Based X-Band Radar at Kiewit Offshore Services at Corpus Christi, Texas with the successful deployment of the radar's protective radome.

The radome weighs 18,000 pounds, stands over 103 feet high, and is 120 feet in diameter. Made entirely of a high-tech synthetic fabric, the radome is supported by air pressure alone and can withstand winds more than 130 miles per hour. The design and fabrication of the radome required development of several new processes, materials, and technologies, and is one of the largest air-supported radomes ever developed, and one far more durable than any approaching its size.

The radome installation required an outstanding team of over 200 men and women working together under challenging conditions. Army Col. Mike Smith, project manager, said the government and industry team executed the assembly flawlessly and safely.

With the installation of the radome, the sea-based X-band radar enters an intense phase of final integration, test, and evaluation prior to entering service in the Ballistic Missile Defense System late this year.

Over the next several months the SBX will undergo a wide range of sea trials and exercises prior to cruising this summer to its home port of Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Islands. Its arrival in Adak is scheduled by the end of this year. Although homeported in Adak, it will be capable of moving throughout the Pacific Ocean to support both missile defense advanced testing and defensive operations. Initially, it will provide the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System with an advanced training and decoy discrimination capability that will help interceptor missiles located in Alaska and California provide a defense against a limited long-range missile attack aimed at any of our 50 states. Over time it will be able to support other missiles that may be used against our homeland, deployed forces, allies and friends.



PHOTO CAPTION: The SBX radome provides the characteristic "radar" silhouette after being installed over the weekend.