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Sea-Based X-Band Radar Achieves Major Milestones

Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency Director, announced today that the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX) has completed two major milestones on the path toward integration with the Ballistic Missile Defense System.

Early on October 12, 2005, the X-band radar aboard SBX successfully tracked several orbiting satellites over a 3-hour period. The radar acquired each object and maintained tracks for several minutes, demonstrating this key functionality for the first time. Achieving this milestone demonstrates the radar software is able to control thousands of individual transmit and receive modules. It represents a significant accomplishment on the part of the SBX team.

On October 14, SBX returned from a successful 52-day deployment in the Gulf of Mexico. While in the Gulf, SBX completed more than 100 major test activities, demonstrating the ability to achieve most major sustainment and operational capabilities including transferring personnel, supplies, and fuel; at-sea maintenance; and the ability to operate at sea for extended periods.

The SBX team maintained a constant watch during the busy hurricane season, and the vessel took evasive action in response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The vessel avoided both storms without incident, which serves to further demonstrate SBX's mobility and the team's ability to operate in dynamic circumstances.

SBX is in Corpus Christi, Texas, preparing to depart for the Pacific Ocean and make the long journey around South America to its future homeport in Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Island chain.

The Missile Defense Agency is developing SBX to serve as a primary radar for the Ballistic Missile Defense System. It will track ballistic missiles during tests and defensive operations. The powerful X-band radar will provide discrimination of decoys and countermeasures that could be used by a hostile ballistic missile during an attack on the United States.

SBX is 282 feet high and displaces more than 50,000 tons. Its on-board propulsion system allows SBX to self-deploy throughout the world's oceans. Near-term plans are for it to home-port at Adak Island, but it will also have the capability to support testing and operations throughout the entire Pacific Ocean missile defense test bed.

Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is the prime contractor, and Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems is responsible for development and manufacturing of the X-band radar installed aboard the platform.

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