



News Release

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Successful Terminal High Altitude Area Defense Intercept Flight Achieved

Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency Director, announced that a successful test for the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) Element was conducted today at approximately 5:20 a.m. MDT (7:20 a.m. EDT) at the White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico.

Initial indications are that all planned flight test objectives were achieved. This was a fully-integrated flight test of all THAAD Components, including the Launcher, Radar, Fire Control and Communications, and Interceptor. The primary objective was to demonstrate interceptor seeker characterization of a ballistic missile target in the high-endoatmosphere (just inside the earth's atmosphere). A unitary (non-separating) Hera target missile was launched for the test and although it was not a primary objective, a successful intercept of the target occurred. Other objectives included verifying integrated system operations in a high-endoatmospheric engagement and demonstrating the interceptor's kill vehicle's response to in-flight communication and its ability to acquire and track an incoming ballistic missile target. The THAAD radar participated by acquiring and tracking the interceptor and target and providing in-flight target updates.

THAAD soldiers from the 6th Air Defense Artillery Brigade participated in this test with two soldiers conducting radar operations, two soldiers assisting contractors at the Launcher, and one soldier assisting contractors at the THAAD Fire Control and Communications. Their interaction with the complete THAAD system proved a valuable test experience for the soldiers, and provided insight into overall system performance.

While the previous two THAAD flight tests, also conducted at White Sands Missile Range, were focused on interceptor fly-out and performance, the remaining flight test program is providing verification of the integrated THAAD element at increasingly difficult levels.

THAAD uses technologies developed in earlier Missile Defense Agency programs and during the THAAD Program Development and Risk Reduction Phase. It is the first weapon system with both endo- and exoatmospheric (outside earth's atmosphere) capability developed specifically to defend against ballistic missiles. The THAAD element will provide upper-tier defense in the terminal phase segment (approximately final minute of a missile's flight) of MDA's integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). The BMDS is capable of providing a layered defense for the U.S., 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 alone. THAAD is designed to defend against short, medium, and intermediate range ballistic missiles. THAAD is a highly-mobile, integrated weapon system consisting of a Radar, Fire Unit, Launchers, and Interceptors.

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.

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