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THAAD Radar Completes Successful Target Tracking Test

Lt. General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today the successful completion of an important radar data collection flight test for the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense element. The test was conducted on March 5 and involved the launch of a short-range target missile from an aircraft over the Pacific Ocean.

The short-range target missile was launched at approximately 2:30 p.m. Hawaii Time (7:30 p.m. EST) from a U.S. Air Force C-17A transport aircraft approximately 400 miles west of the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai, Hawaii. The target missile was extracted from the rear of the C-17A aircraft by parachute. The missile's rocket motor then ignited, sending it on a planned trajectory over the Pacific Ocean.

The target missile's flight was successfully tracked by the THAAD radar, now designated as Army Navy/Transportable Radar Surveillance, or AN/TPY-2. Preliminary indications are that all radar data collection objectives were met. The AN/TPY-2 operates in the X-band frequency, and is capable of tracking and identifying small objects at long distance and at very high altitude, including space.

Air-launched targets provide the capability to structure target missile trajectories during flight tests so that they are able to better replicate potential trajectories hostile ballistic missiles could use during an attack of our homeland, our deployed forces and our allies and friends.

The THAAD element will provide upper-tier defense in the terminal segment of MDA's integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System, which means that it is designed to destroy ballistic missiles during the terminal, or final, phase of flight. The Ballistic Missile Defense System is designed to provide an integrated, "layered" defense of the United States, our deployed forces, allies and friends against ballistic missile threats of all ranges, in all phases of flight—boost, midcourse and terminal.

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The THAAD radar at the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai, Hawaii