



News Release

7100 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-7100

07-NEWS-0036

18 June 2007

Airborne Laser Aircraft to Land at Andrews AFB

Lt. General Henry A. "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today that the Airborne Laser aircraft will land at Andrews AFB, Md. after completing a non-stop, cross-country flight from Edwards AFB, Calif.

The aircraft is scheduled to arrive at Andrews AFB the evening of June 20, and will make a night landing at the base just outside Washington, D.C. near Landover, Md. On June 21, the aircraft will be available for viewing by senior government officials and news media. It will return to Edwards AFB that evening.

The Airborne Laser is a modified Boeing 747-400 freighter aircraft that will use a high-energy Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser (COIL) to generate a directed energy beam to intercept and destroy a hostile ballistic missile during the highly-vulnerable "boost phase" of its trajectory—the first few minutes after it is launched. Advanced tracking lasers will first locate the target missile, measure distance, speed and atmospheric conditions prior to activation of the primary directed energy weapon. The Airborne Laser can also pass information on missile launch sites, target tracks and predicted impact points to other missile defense elements within the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System.

The chemical laser has had more than 70 successful firings over the past three years, and will be installed aboard the aircraft starting later this year in preparation for the first shutdown of a ballistic missile target scheduled for mid-2009.

The Airborne Laser is managed by the Missile Defense Agency's Airborne Laser Program Office at Kirtland AFB, N.M., with flight and ground testing conducted at Edwards AFB. The prime contractor is the Boeing Company, which provides the aircraft, battle management and overall systems integration and testing. Northrop Grumman is developing the high-energy laser and Lockheed Martin provides the aircraft's beam control/fire control system.

News media holding U.S. government facility access badges may receive a briefing from program officials and a tour of the aircraft on June 21, currently planned from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. No photography will be permitted inside the aircraft. News media representatives wishing to participate must go as a single group and transportation will be provided from an Andrews AFB access gate. Point of contact is Debra Christman, Missile Defense Agency, at (703) 693-0901 or debra.christman@mda.mil to reserve one of the limited number of spaces available and receive information on which Andrews AFB access gate will be used for entry to the base.