



08-NEWS-0074

August 6, 2008

Missile Defense Agency Completes Testing of Propulsion Component for Multiple Kill Vehicle-L

Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today that testing of a key propulsion system component for the Agency's Multiple Kill Vehicle-L (MKV-L) payload has been successfully completed. A post-test assessment showed that the divert thruster stem met performance requirements in a series of static, hot-fire tests at NASA's White Sands Test Facility in Las Cruces, N.M.

During an engagement with the enemy, this high-performance propulsion system maneuvers the carrier vehicle and its cargo of kill vehicles into the threat complex to intercept the targets. With tracking data from the Ballistic Missile Defense System and its own seeker, the carrier vehicle dispenses and guides the kill vehicles to destroy targets in the complex. This technology will negate more advanced countermeasures that could be aboard hostile ballistic missiles.

Next, a hover test of the carrier vehicle will be conducted at the National Hover Test Facility, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. later this year. In this controlled flight test, the carrier vehicle, with a load of 12 inert kill vehicles, will maneuver while tracking a surrogate target complex a distance away.

The Missile Defense Agency's Multiple Kill Vehicle is a force multiplier for all of the land- and sea-based weapons of the integrated midcourse missile defense system. In the event of an enemy launch, a single interceptor equipped with this payload destroys not only the re-entry vehicle but also all credible threat objects, including countermeasures the enemy deploys to try to spoof our defenses. This many-on-many strategy eliminates the need for extensive pre-launch intelligence while leveraging the Ballistic Missile Defense System's discrimination capability, ensuring a robust and affordable solution to emerging threats. Developing, testing and deploying a layered Ballistic Missile Defense System for the U.S. homeland, its deployed forces, friends and allies is essential for protecting against ballistic missiles of all ranges in all phases of flight.

The MKV-L development team for the Missile Defense Agency includes: Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, Sunnyvale, Calif., prime contractor; Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, Canoga Park, Calif., a United Technologies Corp. company, and Octant Technologies Inc., San Jose, Calif.

The Raytheon Company is also developing a separate multiple kill vehicle technology on a dual-path basis.

Media Contact: Pam Rogers, Missile Defense Agency, at (256) 450-1421 or (256) 503-3726, pamela.rogers@mda.mil.