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## **Airborne Laser Completion of "First Light"**

Lt. General Henry A. "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today the first successful firing on September 7, 2008 of the megawatt-class Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser (COIL) of the Airborne Laser (ABL) program since it was installed on board the YAL-1A demonstrator aircraft. Although the test lasted only a fraction of a second, it validated the successful year-long integration of the High Energy Laser on board the highly modified 747-400 aircraft.

The firing of the COIL followed a series of laser activation and readiness tests that verified the operation of each of the newly installed subsystems. The laser was fired into an onboard calorimeter, a test instrument used to capture the laser energy and measure performance characteristics of the beam. The success of this test clears the path for continued ground testing of the High Energy Laser to include longer duration lasing and lasing through the ABL Beam Control/Fire Control system.

ABL is being developed as a future element of the nation's ballistic missile defense system, and the first to use directed energy to destroy ballistic missiles in their "boost" phase of flight. Although significant work remains before flight tests can begin, this phase of COIL testing represents a major step toward the ABL program's planned lethal demonstration against a boosting missile in 2009.

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