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Missile Defense Agency Completes Change of Responsibility Ceremony

Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon R. England officiated at the Missile Defense Agency Change of Responsibility ceremony today at the Air Force Memorial site in Arlington, Va. near the Pentagon. Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry A. "Trey" Obering III turned over responsibility for the agency's operations to Army Lt. Gen. Patrick J. O'Reilly as the eighth director of the Missile Defense Agency and its predecessor organizations, the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization and the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.

General Obering became the MDA director in July, 2004, and led the agency to numerous accomplishments for the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System during his tenure. These include the emplacement of more than two dozen interceptor missiles in Alaska and California to defend the United States against a limited long-range ballistic missile attack from North Korea, as well as two successful intercept tests under operationally realistic conditions; a highly successful testing and deployment program for sea-based Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense, including 10 successful test intercepts; continued development and testing of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), to include a perfect record of five consecutive test intercepts; execution of a global command, control, battle management and communication network for integrated missile defense operations; continuing development of the Airborne Laser and Kinetic Energy Interceptor for boost-phase missile defense; construction and operation of the largest X-band radar in the world, the Sea-based X-band; completion of upgrades and integration of early warning radars in Alaska, California and the United Kingdom; development and preparation for launch of two new missile tracking satellites, the Space Tracking and Surveillance System; and development and testing of the new Multiple Kill Vehicle system to provide for better capability against more advanced countermeasures that could be encountered in the future. General Obering was also instrumental in the planning and execution of the successful shutdown in February of this year of a satellite containing toxic fuel that was falling from orbit.

General Obering also played a leading role in greatly increasing the United States's missile defense partnerships with nearly two dozen countries, including Japan, United Kingdom, Israel, Australia, Germany, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Netherlands and many others. He has been instrumental in planning for the establishment of proposed missile defense facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic to help defend Europe and the United States from a ballistic missile launched from the Middle East.

During his tenure as director, the Missile Defense Agency completed 17 successful "hit to kill" intercepts in tests against ballistic missile targets of all ranges with Agency-managed land and sea-based missile defense elements.

At a ceremony later in the day, Marine General James E. Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, officiated at a retirement ceremony honoring General Obering's 35 years of active duty in the Air Force. He also presented General Obering with the Defense Distinguished Service Medal.

General O'Reilly has spent more than a decade in missile defense program management, testing and acquisition, including serving as project or program manager for the Patriot Advanced Capability-3, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and the Ground-based Midcourse Defense programs. In 2007 he was named Deputy Director of the Missile Defense Agency. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and received master's degrees from the Naval Postgraduate School, Naval War College and Salve Regina College. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Naval College of Command and Staff; the U.S. Army War College and the U.S. Army Command and Staff College.

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