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COBRA DANE's Missile Defense Capability Transferred to U.S. Air Force

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) announced today the transfer of the COBRA DANE's missile defense capability from MDA to the U.S. Air Force.

The upgraded COBRA DANE radar located at Shemya, Alaska, became available for ballistic missile defense operations in 2004, and is the first missile defense capability MDA has transferred to the Air Force. For decades COBRA DANE has supported intelligence data collection on Russian strategic missile system tests for purposes of treaty verification and tracking of Earth orbiting satellites. The radar continues to perform these missions in addition to its integration into the nation's missile defense system. The radar provides missile target tracking, object acquisition and classification and transmits target data to the missile defense command and control network.

In 2005, COBRA DANE participated in a special missile flight test involving a threat-representative missile dropped from a U.S. Air Force transport aircraft, and took part in numerous "ground" tests in which missile flight data is injected into the radar data processor to stimulate the software. COBRA DANE also supports missile defense system integration laboratory tests in Huntsville, Alabama, using replicated COBRA DANE site data processing and missile defense communications hardware.

The Air Force will continue to maintain COBRA DANE, including the hardware that supports the missile defense mission, and will operate the COBRA DANE in support of intelligence, space surveillance, and missile defense.

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