Lockheed Martin Successful In Boosted Penetrator Test

Lockheed Martin demonstrated a key technology milestone for the integration of a boosted penetrator warhead with a long-range cruise missile that can be used against hard and deeply buried targets.

In the test, held at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, in Socorro, NM, the penetrator was expelled from a missile body using a small discharge pressurization device.

"This is a unique method of attacking hard and deeply buried targets," said Jim Pappafotis, director of Advanced Programs at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "We made a simple alteration to the cruise missile body that allows us to use the properties of the warhead along with kinetic energy to penetrate the target. The nose of the missile opens like a clamshell, allowing the warhead's booster to provide the required velocity."

The test successfully demonstrated the ability to propel the warhead from the main airframe without altering the airframe's flight path or angle of flight. In operation, the missile would carry the warhead from long ranges against a target. In the terminal phase, just before reaching the target, the warhead would be expelled from the nose of the missile, when a booster would ignite to propel the warhead to high velocity and impact on the target. Other features of Lockheed Martin's dispenser system are planned for demonstration on the Revolutionary Approach To Time-critical Long Range Strike (RATTLRS) program in 2006.

This technique provides significant risk reduction to long-range strike cruise missiles and supersonic cruise missiles, such as the RATTLRS program currently underway at Lockheed Martin's Advanced Development Programs (Skunk Works) in Palmdale, CA, and funded by the Office of Naval Research. Building on a successful collaboration that has produced weapons such as the Joint Air- to-Surface Standoff Missile, the Skunk Works is leading the RATTLRS development effort with support from Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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