Lockheed Martin's THAAD Weapon System Successfully Intercepts Live Target

First Integrated Weapon System Intercept of a Live Target

Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) today successfully conducted a seeker characterization test of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) Weapon System at White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), NM, today. The THAAD Weapon System successfully met all test objectives for the flight test. The system exceeded its objectives on the test by intercepting the Hera unitary target.

Specific test objectives included demonstrating the integration of the radar, launcher, fire control and communications and interceptor operations; demonstrating kill vehicle control in response to in-flight uplinks; and target acquisition and tracking by the interceptor's seeker.

"The entire THAAD team has been focused on proving THAAD's ability to detect, track and engage a live target," said Tom McGrath, program manager and vice president for THAAD at Lockheed Martin. "We are very pleased to have achieved this objective today and are eager to move forward with more testing that continues to prove the effectiveness of this weapon system."

This is the third successful THAAD developmental flight test conducted since flight testing resumed for the program in November 2005. A successful controlled flight test was conducted last year, followed by a successful integrated test of the entire THAAD system in May of 2006. Two more test flights are scheduled to occur at WSMR before THAAD testing moves to Pacific Missile Range Facility in Hawaii.

THAAD is designed to defend U.S. troops, allied forces, population centers and critical infrastructure against short- to intermediate range ballistic missiles. THAAD comprises a fire control and communications system, interceptors, launchers and a radar. The THAAD interceptor uses hit-to-kill technology to destroy targets, and is the only weapon system that engages threat ballistic missiles at both endo- and exo-atmospheric altitudes.

A key element of the nation's Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS), THAAD is a Missile Defense Agency program, with the program office located in Huntsville, AL. The agency is developing a BMDS to defend the United States, its deployed forces, friends and allies against ballistic missiles of all ranges and in all phases of flight.

Lockheed Martin is a world leader in systems integration and the development of air and missile defense systems and technologies, including the first operational hit-to-kill missile. It also has considerable experience in missile design and production, infrared seekers, command and control/battle management, and communications, precision pointing and tracking optics, as well as radar and signal processing. The company makes significant contributions to all major U.S. missile defense systems and participates in several global missile defense partnerships.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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