Lockheed Martin Team Successfully Tests Thruster For Missile Defense Agency's Multiple Kill Vehicle

Lockheed Martin announced today that its team has successfully completed initial testing of the kill vehicle divert thruster for the U.S. Missile Defense Agency's Multiple Kill Vehicle Payload System.

The test series demonstrated the feasibility of using a divert and attitude control system that employs liquid monopropellant as a low-risk solution for the kill vehicle component of the Multiple Kill Vehicle Payload System. The testing of the complete flight-weight prototype thruster and valve combination, which permits optimal packaging of the propulsion portion of the divert and attitude control system, demonstrated full compliance with the performance and life goals of the kill vehicle divert and attitude control system. The divert and attitude control system will position the kill vehicle to intercept its target.

Lockheed Martin subcontractor, Aerojet, a GenCorp Inc.Company, completed the testing July 16 at its Redmond, Wash., test facility.

"The successful completion of this testing represents the achievement of a key knowledge point for this program," said Rick Reginato, Multiple Kill Vehicle program director, Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "Our team is focused on a low-risk program with earliest operational capability, and this test success is a significant milestone on the path forward."

In the event of an enemy launch, a single interceptor equipped with the Multiple Kill Vehicle Payload System will destroy the enemy lethal reentry vehicle along with any countermeasures deployed to try to spoof the missile defense system. This many-on-many strategy reduces the need for extensive pre-launch intelligence and leverages the Ballistic Missile Defense System discrimination capability, ensuring a robust and affordable solution to emerging threats.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, Sunnyvale, Calif., is the prime contractor for the Multiple Kill Vehicle Payload System. The U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, Ala., executes the program for the Missile Defense Agency.

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. The corporation reported 2005 sales of $37.2 billion.

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