

Boeing-led Industry Team Completes Sea-Based X-Band Radar Integration

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The Boeing-led [NYSE: BA] Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX) industry team has integrated the SBX radar onto its sea-going platform in Corpus Christi, Texas, marking a major integration milestone in the program.

"The integration of the massive Sea-Based X-Band Radar is a critical step in further advancing the nation's defense against ballistic missile threats by delivering to the government a revolutionary sensor capability," said Boeing Vice President and GMD Program Manager Paul Hoff. "The addition of such a large-scale radar gives us increased confidence in the overall GMD system and added flexibility for defense of the nation."

SBX, a key component of the Missile Defense Agency's Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program, consists of an advanced radar system mounted on a sea-going platform. SBX will be able to track, discriminate and assess long-range ballistic missile threats. SBX passes data to elements of the GMD system to facilitate the interception of missiles by ground-based interceptors. The radar will continue to relay updated targeting information after an interceptor launches its kill vehicle toward the incoming target.

SBX's floating platform, a modified oil-drilling vessel, measures 240 feet wide and 390 feet long. It includes a power plant, bridge and control rooms, living quarters, storage areas and the infrastructure necessary to support the massive X-band radar. The X-band radar, sitting on top of the vessel, is the most sophisticated phased array, electro-mechanically steered X-band radar in the world, consisting of thousands of antennae driven by transmit/receive modules.

The SBX "heavy lift" took place using a heavy lift crane capable of lifting 12,500 tons and built for loading massive structures onto production platforms in the petroleum industry. The overall SBX assembly involved moving the modified SBX platform from AMFELS shipyard in Brownsville, Texas, to the Kiewit yard in Corpus Christi for installation of the radar onto the sea-going platform. Prior to arrival, the SBX platform was modified to accept the radar Drive Platform and Control System (DPCS) with the array antenna and electronics installed. The special crane, called a heavy lift device (HLD), lifted the SBX DPCS high enough so when the barge was moved away the SBX platform was positioned directly below the DPCS. The HLD lifted the DPCS vertical, held the load until the sea-going platform was in position and then lowered the load onto the platform.

As prime contractor for the GMD program, Boeing is responsible for the development and integration of the GMD system components, including the SBX; ground-based interceptor; battle management, command, control and communication systems; early warning radars; and interfaces to the Defense Support Program early warning satellite system. Raytheon built the SBX radar.

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