Boeing's Missile Defense Systems' Sea-Based X-Band Radar Begins Transport Operation through the Straits of Magellan

Boeing [NYSE: BA] today teamed with the Missile Defense Agency to begin the transport operation of the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX) from the Gulf of Mexico via the Straits of Magellan.

A component of the Missile Defense Agency's Ground-Based Midcourse Defense program, the SBX will provide tracking, discrimination and hit assessment functions.

Prior to its departure on its journey around the tip of South America, the SBX was located at a Corpus Christi, Texas shipyard. The SBX will be transported into the Pacific Ocean aboard a heavy transport vessel, the Motor Vessel Blue Marlin, which is owned and operated by Dockwise Shipping B.V. of Breda, The Netherlands.

The final destination for the SBX is Adak, Alaska, a small island located in the Aleutian Island chain.

"Using the Blue Marlin clearly made the most sense for our program and for our customer," said Pat Shanahan, Boeing Missile Defense Systems vice president and general manager. "We will save a considerable amount of time and resources. Even though the SBX is self-propelled, the transit time required by Dockwise's Blue Marlin will be less than half what the SBX would require under its own power."

The radar will support interceptor missiles located in Alaska and California and improve their ability to defend against a limited long-range ballistic missile attack on the United States. Home-ported in Adak, the SBX can move throughout the Pacific Ocean in support of advanced missile defense testing and defensive operations.

The SBX program team completed important milestones despite challenges posed by hurricane activity in the Gulf of Mexico over the past several months. Recently, the program marked completion of two rounds of sea trials during which the radar tracked orbiting satellites, thereby demonstrating key functionality for the first time. In total, the program completed more than 100 test activities, demonstrating its ability to achieve major sustainment and operational capabilities, including: transferring personnel, supplies and fuel, performing at-sea maintenance and demonstrating the ability to operate at sea for extended periods.

Boeing is the prime contractor for the GMD program. Other industry partners include: Raytheon, who manufactured the X-band radar; Kiewet OffShore Services where the radar was constructed and integrated onto the SBX; Moss Maritime, who supplied the platform; Keppel-AmFELS, who modified the platform with Boeing; and Vertex/RSI, who worked on the radar structure.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.
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