# Boeing-led Team Tracks and Targets Simulated Missile in Airborne Laser Ground Test

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA], working with industry teammates and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, successfully conducted an Airborne Laser (ABL) ground test June 6, demonstrating the weapon's ability to track and target a ballistic missile.

During the test at Boeing facilities in Wichita, Kan., the ABL, which operates aboard a modified Boeing 747-400F aircraft, located a simulated boosting ballistic missile target created by a target simulator. After using simulated returns from a surrogate target illuminator laser to track the target, the Airborne Laser used simulated returns from a surrogate beacon illuminator laser to compensate for atmospheric turbulence that ABL's high-energy laser would encounter in its path to a target.

The equipment used in the test is part of the beam control/fire control system, designed and integrated by Lockheed Martin, and the battle management system, developed by Boeing.

"The Airborne Laser team is working tirelessly to reach its first 2006 Knowledge Point, in which the two actual illuminators will be installed, integrated and ground-tested in the ABL aircraft," said Pat Shanahan, vice president and general manager of Boeing Missile Defense Systems. "The June 6 achievement is a major step toward that goal and demonstrates the Boeing team's commitment to chart the course and develop critical missile defense capability for our nation."

The ABL program plans to install and test the illuminators later this year. The high-energy laser, which achieved lethal power and run-times in a ground laboratory in December 2005, is currently being refurbished and will be installed in the ABL aircraft in 2007 to prepare for the program's first missile shoot-down test in 2008.

Boeing is the prime contractor for ABL, which will provide a speed-of-light capability to destroy all classes of ballistic missiles in their boost phase of flight. Boeing provides the modified aircraft and the battle management system and is the overall systems integrator. ABL partners are Northrop Grumman, which supplies the high-energy laser and the beacon illuminator laser, and Lockheed Martin, which provides the nose-mounted turret in addition to the beam control/fire control system.

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 $30.8 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; a foremost developer of advanced concepts and technologies; 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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