DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH RICHARD LEHNER, SPOKESMAN, MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY (MDA) SUBJECT: STANDARD MISSILE 3 TEST PROGRAM TIME: 4:02 P.M. EDT DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2010

(Note: Please refer to www.dod.mil for more information.)

SGT. LEE MCMAHON (Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): Hello. I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable for Tuesday, May 18th, 2010. My name is Lee McMahon with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and I will be moderating our call today.

Our -- a note to our bloggers on the line: Please remember to state your name and blog or organization in advance of your question. And if you have to place your phone on hold or are in a conversation, please hang up and call back in, because we might hear your hold music.

Today our guest is Mr. Rick Lehner, spokesman for the Department of Defense Missile Defense Agency. At this time, I'd like to turn it over to Mr. Lehner for any opening remarks, and then we'll go to questions. Sir, the floor is yours.

MR. LEHNER: Thank you. Hi, everyone. It's Rick.

Q Hey.

MR. LEHNER: With regard to the New York Times article, which is what we've been answering queries about most of today, we were a little disappointed in the fact that we've given The Times so much information which we thought would have certainly explained more about the Standard Missile 3 test program. One example was, in the story, it mentioned that four flight tests involving the Standard Missile 3 did not have warheads on the target missile, but it never explained why.

And so I'd just like to explain why. It's actually kind of meaningless, for the most part.

But three of those tests were the very first intercept tests of the prototype Standard Missile 3. And the test objective was just to see if we could actually hit a ballistic missile target, a short-range target, with an interceptor launch from a ship, which we did.

So we certainly proved that we could hit a ballistic missile in space with a sea-based missile. And like I said, those were all prototype interceptors. But this wasn't mentioned in the story.

What else wasn't mentioned in the story was that Doctors Postol and Lewis used some photos that were gleaned from a -- videos that we had released showing the view of the target from the interceptor as it approached, and we also had some scenes from the infrared sensors that were on the test range.

And basically, the assessment made by Postol and Lewis pretty much used those photos as the basis of their assessment that we did not hit where we wanted to hit on those targets. And that's not the case, because there were, you know, several subsequent views of us striking the target. What they saw, just what was publicly released, and we certainly didn't show the exact point where we hit the target, because that would have certainly provided some potential adversaries with some information that we did not want them to have.

But those are just a couple things that were omitted from the stories, even though The Times had been provided with that information.

But the bottom line is that the SM-3 test program is one of the most successful programs in probably the history of the Department of Defense. It has an excellent test record. It's done very well. It's hit exactly where it's supposed to or missed by just a few inches.

And you know, one thing to consider is that when you hit a target, whether it's a unitary target or a separating target, at 6,000 to 8,000 miles per hour, the target is obliterated. And that's one other thing that was left out of the Times story, was that the Postol- Lewis analysis only looked at unitary targets, which is a missile with the booster and the warhead still attached.

It's basically representative of Scud technology, whereas a separating target is more representative of Rodong or Shahab technology. And it's much more difficult to hit. We hit five out of six separating targets in the test program. But that wasn't mentioned in the story either, although the Times did have that information.

So I'll be happy to take your questions now.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Grim, you have the first question.

Q Yes, sir. This is Grim of blackfive.net.

I wanted to ask you how much test data you've collected on the debris fields and how close they impact the area where the warhead was supposed to fall. Is that -- (audio break) -- in this program that you're trying to accomplish? Or is that not as big a consideration?

MR. LEHNER: It's really not a consideration, when you consider that we -- when the SM-3 interceptor hits the target -- like I said, whether it's a unitary target or a separating target -- it completely obliterates the warhead and the missile and spreads a debris field along the path of the original trajectory.

But then it dissipates. And to be honest, pieces that have -- that we've seen after after and intercept, some of them have only been maybe two or three inches across. Even in the case of the satellite that we had to shoot down, there was nothing larger than a football with that very, very large satellite.

Q Thank you.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Colin, you have the next question.

Q Hey, Rick.

MR. LEHNER: Hey, Colin.

Q Postol made a lot of the fact that you guys missed the warhead and hit the missile. Just so we can either put this to rest or make Postol look better, how much does it matter where the SM-3 hits?

MR. LEHNER: It really only matters when you have a separating target, because then you absolutely have to hit the warhead because there's really nothing else to hit.

Q And are most of the systems that you're going up against armed with separating warheads?

MR. LEHNER: All the ones that are medium-range and above certainly all use separating targets. Like I said, the unitary targets are primarily the short-range, single-stage, Scud-type of missile.

Q Right.

MR. LEHNER: And, you know, again, when you -- when you hit that rocket body at 6,000 to 8,000 miles per hour, it does obliterate the target.

Q Okay. So when you say it obliterates the target, you are including the warhead.

MR. LEHNER: That's right. And contrary to what Doctors Postol and Lewis said, after being hit, the -- well, the interceptor does not pass through the body of the -- of the target missile. That's akin to, you know, Wile E. Coyote running through a glass or plate glass and leaving the exact outline of his body after he goes through.

It hits it so hard and so fast that the energy that comes from that collision is just simply too great and causes a catastrophic failure of the missile.

Q Okay.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Greg, you have the next question.

Q Yeah. Could you explain what the difference is between hitting the missile and whether you actually get close enough with an explosive warhead and what different results you can expect?

MR. LEHNER: Well, none of the missile defense technologies that we use now have an exploding warhead. All of them are hit-to-kill technology, where you use only the energy that's generated by the direct collision between the interceptor and the target to destroy the target.

Some of the older technology -- the old Patriot, for example, that was used in the Gulf War -- and the SM-2 -- the SM-2 sea-based interceptor, which is used against aircraft but has been modified now to give it some ballistic missile capability -- all the systems we use now against, you know, short-, medium- and long-range interceptors all use hit-to-kill technology, where you only collide with the target.

Q Okay. Thank you.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Did we have others join the line who have a question? (Pause.) Okay.

Well, I think we have a few more minutes, so, Grim, did you have a second question?

Q Yes, ma'am. You spoke just a moment ago about current threats. I wonder if you could talk for a bit about how you are looking at emerging threats, like cruise missiles such as the deployable one that -- from a cargo container that we were reading about in the paper recently. MR. LEHNER: Well, at the Missile Defense Agency, we're charged only with developing and testing and acquiring defenses against ballistic missiles.

Now, the military services, the Army and the Navy, do have programs and systems that they can use, like Patriot and the SM-2, that are effective against cruise missiles. But the Missile Defense Agency isn't involved in any cruise-missile defense.

Q I see. Thank you.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Colin, did you have a second question?

Q No.

SGT. MCMAHON: Okay. Greg, another question?

Q Yeah, I'd just be curious to know, are you going to be releasing any further information on the testing to try to refute Postol's claim.

MR. LEHNER: Well, I think we've kind of released everything that we have. I know we're going to put something up on our website today that does provide a little bit -- little bit more specific response to the Times article today. And that should be up late this -- later this afternoon. But in the meantime, if you have any specific questions, you can always call me.

Q But there's no imagery or anything that you plan on releasing that may seek to clarify?

MR. LEHNER: No, because -- no, because -- no, because it's really almost impossible to show any more than what we've already shown. Because, again, any more details would certainly show an adversary exactly where we strike the missile.

Q Okay. Thank you.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Are there any other questions on the line?

Q No.

SGT. MCMAHON: Okay. Well, thank you all for your participation today. As we wrap up today's call, I'd like to ask Mr. Lehner if he has any final comments. Sir?

MR. LEHNER: About the only thing I would like to say is that the SM-3 program is progressing along very, very well. Like I said, it's one of the more successful programs -- certainly, one of the more successful missile-defense programs. It has a very good future in terms of our ability to take that technology and improve it and enhance it over time.

We're going to have a new SM-3 Block IB interceptor come online in about 2015. After that, we're going to have a larger SM-3; it'll be a 21-inch-in-diameter SM-3 Block IIA and IIB. And these will have a lot more capability than the current configuration. The SM-3 IIB may eventually have an ICBM capability, which would certainly improve our ability to defend against long-range missiles.

SGT. MCMAHON: Thank you, sir.

Today's program will be available online at the DODLive Blogger(s) Roundtable link on dodlive.mil, where you will be able to

access a story based on today's call, along with source documents, such as biographies, this audio file, and print transcripts.

Again, thank you, sir, and thank you to our blogger participants. This concludes today's event.

END.