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Skunk Works Mailing List

RE: skunk-works-digest V8 #66 (THAAD Test)

Date: Mon, 21 Jun 1999 07:38:22 -0700
 From: patrick
 Subject: RE: skunk-works-digest V8 #66 (THAAD Test)

At 04:22 AM 6/21/99 GMT, I wrote:

>>
 >> If they wanted to keep the missile within a box (the airspace over WSMR)
 >> and they knew the fuel to be superfluous why not load it with a "test" load
 >> rather than the full amount and the TEMS system to burn it off after
 >> ignition?

>>
>Art chipped in:

>
 > Because then the missile would not perform as a "regular" missile
 > would. It
 > would be non-representative in performance. It would be like using the
 > performance of the 1970s Streak Eagle as a basis for planning regular F-15
 > tactics.

>
 > Having the target coming in on a known course is not an invalid
 > measure. For
 > BMD to work, it is assumed that there is a good track on the incoming
 > prior to
 > interceptor launch. To stage a full-blown, no holds barred test of the
 > system
 > would require doing it out of CONUS. It would be hideously expensive, would
 > require systems that have not yet been finalized and at this stage of the

game
>would be premature. I would agree, though, that such a test should be
conducted
>before full-scale production would be authorized.
>
=====

My point is this was an attenuated flight test. I believe THAAD is required to protect from a missile with a range of 800 miles. This was a test of an intercept done at far less than that, under 100 miles. Since this is nowhere near real time then to not test on a full scale range seems foolish. Despite the costs involved.

It seems we should be able to place the THAAD on Kawajelin Island and fire the HERA from a ship or submarine modified for this purpose. On the other hand the test team "needed" this kill to keep their spirits and momentum up!

patrick

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