

EBACE 2010 Special Report: News, Blogs, Photos And More

AVIATIONWEEK.COM

NG's Skyguard Lacks Mobility Army Seeking In High-Energy Laser

Reader's Tools

-  Print Article
-  Email Article
-  Save Article
-  Make a Comment
-  Email Alert
-  SHARE 

Aug 10, 2006

By Michael Fabey



While Northrop Grumman is hoping the recent Hezbollah missile attacks on Israel will create interest in its Skyguard chemically powered high-energy laser weapon system either abroad or for American homeland security, it's clear that the U.S. Army wants to wait for a more tactical and mobile system.

While more mobile and cheaper than earlier planned high-energy laser (HEL) proposals, Skyguard lacks the mobility of solid-state high energy systems the Army would rather have, according to Northrop and Army officials.

A demonstrator for such a system probably won't be ready until the mid part of the coming decade.

Army officials have made their need for a very mobile system known this year in congressional testimony. More telling, the service has no current funding plans for anything like a Skyguard system.

Israel and the United States were working on a mobile tactical high energy laser (MTHLE) until last year, but the joint program fell apart partly because Israel was ready to move forward while the Army wanted a more tactical system.

"The U.S. Army wanted something that was more mobile," said Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute.

By that time, the two countries had invested at least \$400 million, according to Northrop, the contractor for the program. Northrop took the technology and investment and created Skyguard.

Skyguard is about one-half the cost of THEL, according to Northrop estimates. The first system would cost about \$150 million, and, depending on the number of units ordered, the cost could drop to \$30 million.

Skyguard is a quarter the size of the THEL test bed, thanks to advancements in the miniaturization of components. It's packaged into the equivalent of three standard, 20-foot by 8-foot containers.

That makes it transportable. But it's not what the Army would call mobile. The service is looking for something that fits into a much smaller vehicle.

1 2 3 Next Page >>

Article Comments



POWERED BY 

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

Submit

Recent Photos [View all photo galleries](#)



NH90 NFH
In: Defense Showcase - Upload your photos!
By: PieterStroobach



Learjet Versus EasyJet
In: Commercial Aviation Showcase - Upload your photos!
By: Benet Wilson



Saudia Tail
In: Commercial Aviation Showcase - Upload your photos!
By: Benet Wilson

Selected Videos [View all video galleries](#)



Aerosonde At Sea
2:23



Irresistible Force
2:02



Evergreen Supertanker
2:20

WORLD AEROSPACE DATABASE

[FEATURED COMPANIES](#) [PRODUCT CATEGORIES](#)

- + [M. C. Gill Corp.](#)
- + [RADA Electronic Industries Ltd.](#)
- + [Israel Aerospace Industries Ltd., RAMTA Division](#)
- + [Cunico Corp.](#)
- + [Arkwin Industries, Inc.](#)

+ more

[Subscribe!](#)

[Get Listed In WAD](#)

Advertisement

EMBRAER
Executive Jets
 It's where you want to be.
[> Learn more](#)