New bunker buster bomb is in development

July 14 2005

Pentagon researchers are reportedly developing a so-called super bomb, designed to destroy weapon bunkers buried deep in the earth.

New Scientist magazine said current "bunker buster" bombs rely on weight to force their way through soil, rock or concrete. The newly designed bomb has a blunt nose that forces earth ahead of it and to the sides, creating a cavity the bomb can easily slide through -- allowing it to reach structures buried far deeper than conventional bunker busters can travel.

Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control in Dallas is developing the super bomb for the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency, in conjunction with the U.S. Navy's Surface Warfare Center.

The design builds on the Navy's work on high-speed torpedoes that reduce friction by creating a gas bubble called a supercavity.

Lockheed Martin hopes the supercavitating bombs will reach 10 times the depth of the current U.S. Air Force record holder, the huge BLU-113 bunker buster that can break through nearly 25 feet (7 meters) of concrete or nearly 100 feet (30 meters) of earth.

Lockheed Martin said it expects four prototype weapons to be ready for testing later this year.