

Laser knocks down test missile off Calif. coast

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Airborne Laser Test. Image credit: U.S. Department of Defense

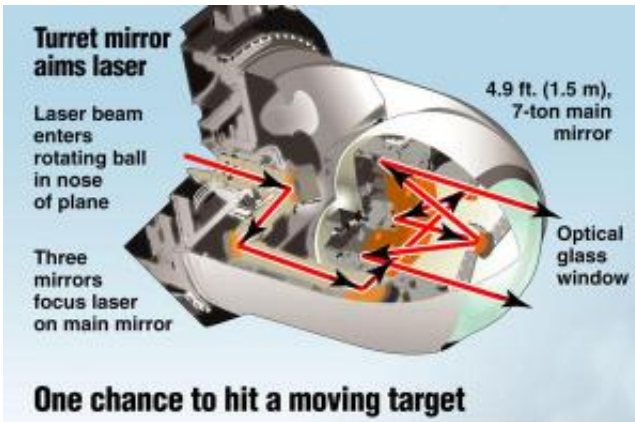
The Air Force says a high-powered laser has destroyed a missile in flight during a test of a national defense system off the California coast.

The successful test is a boost to a program that has had billions in cost overruns and saw its budget sharply cut by the [Pentagon](#) last year.

The Air Force and Boeing Co. announced Friday that an airborne laser system tracked a target missile as it accelerated over the ocean off the Point Mugu Naval Warfare Center on Thursday night. The Air Force says an energy beam heated the missile until it broke up.

It's the first time the laser has knocked down a liquid-fueled missile. The

[Air Force](#) says it destroyed a solid-fuel [missile](#) during a test on Feb. 3.



This airborne laser mounts to the front of a special military 747 jumbo jet.

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