

## Missile Defense Test Site Contracts Awarded

- [Arms Control Today](#)

Major construction activity on a proposed U.S. missile defense test site at Fort Greely, Alaska, is projected to start this June under two contracts awarded April 16 to private construction companies.

Boeing, the lead private contractor on the proposed U.S. ground-based midcourse missile defense (GMD) system currently being tested, awarded the Bechtel Corporation a contract April 16 for construction of missile interceptor silos at Fort Greely. The work is to begin in mid-June, and Bechtel will receive approximately \$60 million.

Pentagon plans envision stationing five missile interceptors and possibly one spare at Fort Greely by September 2004. The interceptors are for testing purposes, but Pentagon officials claim that the interceptors also could be used in an emergency.

Lieutenant General Ronald Kadish, who manages U.S. missile defense programs, told congressmen at a late February hearing that he would have "high confidence" that, if testing went according to plan, the interceptors at Fort Greely could be used in 2004 to shoot down a ballistic missile launched unannounced by North Korea.

The other April 16 contract, awarded by the Army Corps of Engineers, calls on Fluor Alaska, Incorporated to construct a base for operationally realistic missile defense testing, including four buildings at Fort Greely to house electronics, communications, and maintenance equipment associated with the GMD system. If certain options are exercised, the contract's total value could exceed \$250 million.

Because weather conditions at the central Alaska site limit outside work to a seven-month period, the contract calls for finishing the buildings' exteriors by October so that interior work can be done throughout the winter. Construction under this contract is to be completed by June 2004.

A mid-April discovery at Fort Greely of about 20 barrels with U.S. government markings suggesting they could contain toxic chemicals is not expected to delay site construction. An Army Corps of Engineers spokesperson in Alaska said April 19 that an analysis showed that the substance in the barrels was not toxic and that preliminary work at the site started last August would soon resume after being halted for several days.

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