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ROCKET SCIENCE

US military loses cont hypersonic aircraft

by Staff Writers
Washington (AFP) Aug 11, 2011

US military scientists on Thursday launched a hypersonic aircraft but lost contact with the experimental plane in its second test flight, officials said.

The unmanned Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle (HTV-2), designed as a global bomber prototype capable of a mind-boggling 20 times the speed of sound, launched successfully from California aboard a Minotaur IV rocket, according to the Defense Advanced [Research](#) Projects Agency.

But after the plane separated from the rocket in the upper reaches of the atmosphere for its "glide" phase, contact was lost, DARPA said.

"Range assets have lost telemetry with HTV2," DARPA wrote in a Twitter post after the launch.

The agency provided no other details about the flight or how long it had been separated from the rocket.

Last year, scientists lost contact with the HTV-2 after nine minutes in its inaugural flight.

The hypersonic plane, which is supposed to [travel](#) at Mach 20, or 13,000 miles (21,000 kilometers) per hour, could potentially provide the US military with a platform for striking targets anywhere on the planet within minutes using conventional weapons.

Such a weapon, still in development, is part of what the US Air Force has dubbed "prompt global strike" capability.

"The ultimate goal is a capability that can reach anywhere in the world in less than an hour," DARPA said on its website.

In theory, the Falcon could travel between New York City and Los Angeles in less than 12 minutes.

Unlike a ballistic missile, a hypersonic vehicle could maneuver and avoid flying along a predictable path. Moreover, analysts say it would not be mistaken for a nuclear missile, avoiding the possibility of triggering a nuclear confrontation.

But Loren Thompson, an analyst at Lexington Institute with links to the



Illustration of the Falcon HTV-1.

I gave you love.
You gave me
asthma.
« EXPAND
to find out how much
the first five years count.

Coughing, wheezing, and
difficulty breathing are only
the beginning.



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Secondhand smoke can cause
childhood asthma and other
lung-related illnesses.

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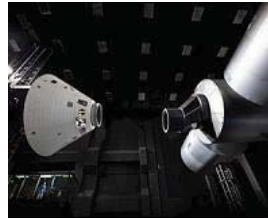

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ROCKET SCIENCE

Ball Aerospace Develops Flight Computers for Next-Generation Launch Vehicles

Boulder CO (SPX) Jul 26, 2011

Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corp. has completed development of prototype launch vehicle flight [computers](#) equipped to bring safety and reliability to future human spaceflight systems. These flight computers were financed by Ball Aerospace and are based on deployed units now being used by NASA's Marshall Space [Flight](#) Center in their simulation [laboratories](#) to develop software and test sy ... read more



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