

Interception of a supersonic sea-skimming target

05/04/2012

Source: French Ministry of Defence

4th April 2012: The French Navy's Horizon class air defence frigate, *Forbin*, successfully engaged a supersonic target simulating an anti-ship missile flying at very low altitude. The target was launched from the DGA's (the Direction Générale de l'Armement) missile test centre based on the Ile du Levant in the south of France (Var region) and intercepted in flight by the *Forbin*'s [Aster 30](#) system. Another French Navy Horizon frigate, the *Chevalier Paul*, tracked the target and the missiles fired.



This test, carried out in conjunction with the DGA, confirmed the Navy's ability to assure the protection of armed forces at sea (carrier and amphibious battle groups) against the most severe of anti-ship missile threats. In addition, the test marks a first for Europe with the two frigates being prepared for and then successfully carrying out a complex operational scenario, confronting a supersonic threat flying at sea-skimming altitude.

During the operation, all access to the firing zone, off the Ile du Levant coast, was forbidden by French authorities.

The *Forbin* and *Chevalier Paul* frigates, equipped with the PAAMS system (deploying **Aster 30 and Aster 15 missiles**) were active notably during the Agapanthe deployment in the Indian Ocean between October 2010 and February 2011 and then during Operation Harmattan. Deployed off the Libyan coast, they provided protection for naval groups linked to the *Charles de Gaulle* aircraft carrier as well as for the LHDs *Tonnerre* and *Mistral*. They also carried out coastal fire support operations and coordinated air activity for the coalition operating off the coast of Libya, a mission known as "Red Crown".