Boeing Leads Team to Successful National Missile Defense Integrated Flight Test

The National Missile Defense (NMD) program has achieved a successful flight test intercept of a ballistic missile target. The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] is the prime contractor for the National Missile Defense Lead System Integrator (NMD LSI) program. This was the first intercept attempt of the current NMD program.

A launch vehicle, equipped with an exoatmospheric kill vehicle (EKV), was launched from the Kwajalein Island Atoll in the central Pacific Ocean shortly after a target missile, equipped with a mock reentry vehicle and decoy, lifted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., Saturday, Oct. 2, at 7:02 p.m.

"This is a tremendous milestone for the program," said Jim Albaugh, president, Boeing Space & Communications Group. "We are proud to be the Lead System Integrator on the National Missile Defense program and of the successful first test."

The intercept occurred between the EKV and the target reentry vehicle more than 100 miles above the earth. The intercept and destruction of the target vehicle was achieved by body-to-body contact, or kinetic energy. There is no warhead, or explosive device, on the interceptor.

This was the first flight test conducted by Boeing since its selection as the LSI contractor in April 1998. A series of flight tests, designed to incrementally test all aspects of the NMD architecture, is scheduled to continue throughout the initial LSI contract period that extends through April 2001.

"The integration challenge of this program requires tremendous skill, knowledge and intense dedication," said Dr. John Peller, Boeing NMD LSI program manager. "I'm a firm believer that the technology works and can support this effort. Harnessing the technology, producing the components and integrating the systems is the challenge. Obviously, the people committed to this program are up to the challenge."

The NMD LSI program involves the development, testing and potential deployment of a system to detect, track and destroy hostile Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles before they can reach any of our 50 states.

The Boeing-developed NMD architecture meets all program requirements. Additionally, the design is robust enough to meet or adapt to an increased level of potential threats and challenges.

The Boeing Company, as prime contractor, is responsible for the development and integration of the NMD elements, including the Ground-Based Interceptor: X-band Radar; Battle Management Command, Control and Communication systems; Upgraded Early Warning Radars; and interfaces to Space-Based Infrared System satellites.

Major team members of the NMD LSI program include Raytheon Company, responsible for the EKV and radars; TRW, responsible for the Battle Management Command, Control & Communications system; and Lockheed Martin Missiles & Space, responsible for providing the Payload Launch Vehicle to be used in the initial integrated flight tests.

Raytheon Systems Company, a unit of Raytheon Company (NYSE: RTNA, RTNB) is the prime contractor for the EKV. The EKV is being developed at the company's Missile Systems business unit in Tucson, Ariz. Raytheon also produces the NMD program's X-Band Radar and Upgraded Early Warning Radar at its Air and Missile Defense Systems business unit in Bedford, Mass.

The EKV is the intercept component of the Ground Based Interceptor, the weapon element of the NMD system. It has its own infrared seeker, propulsion, communications, discrimination algorithms, guidance and control system, and computers to support target selection and intercept decisions in the final seconds, or end game, of a ballistic missile intercept. It is approximately 52 inches in length, 24 inches in diameter and weighs approximately 120 lbs.

The EKV seeker is composed of focal plane arrays and a cryogenic cooling assembly attached to an optical telescope, supported by hardware and software processing. The EKV will use an on-board navigation and target selection systems to locate the target, and destroy it.

"Saturday's intercept was a spectacular technological achievement for the entire National Missile Defense contractor team led by Boeing," said Raytheon Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Daniel P. Burnham. "I am particularly proud of the performance of our EKV in an extremely complex and demanding environment, and I congratulate the men and women of Raytheon who contributed to this historic accomplishment."

Lockheed Martin Missiles & Space, Sunnyvale, Calif., is the contractor for the Payload Launch Vehicle (PLV). The PLV program is a key test component of Boeing's National Missile Defense program. This program supports the NMD development program by providing the vehicle to launch the EKV. Missiles & Space was responsible for integrating the EKV payload into the PLV conducting the test and launch operations, and delivering the payload to a specific point in space.

"The Payload Launch Vehicle has now performed three consecutive missions successfully for the National Missile Defense program," said Al Smith, Executive Vice President, Lockheed Martin Space Systems. "The Lockheed Martin Missiles & Space PLV team has shown great dedication and commitment in helping to make this flight test a tremendous success. We are pleased to have been able to support the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, the Army, the Air Force and Boeing in the successful test of this critical national initiative."

The PLV consists of an Upper Stage Assembly powered by the second and third stages of a refurbished Minuteman II booster.

The National Missile Defense program is executed by the NMD Joint Program Office of the Department of Defense's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.

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