Boeing Successfully Launches First Prototype Missile for Ground-Based Midcourse Defense Segment

A Boeing-designed and -built booster vehicle was successfully launched today for its first verification test flight from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. The three-stage booster vehicle is the prototype interceptor for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense Segment (GMDS) Program (formerly National Missile Defense.) The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA] is the prime contractor for the program.

Operational booster design and systems engineering work is done by Boeing in Anaheim, Calif. Boeing in Huntsville, Ala., is responsible for the integration, assembly, test and check out of the developmental booster vehicle.

The booster vehicle is a three-stage commercial-off-the-shelf missile integrating motors from Alliant Techsystems (first stage) and Pratt & Whitney Chemical Systems Division (second and third stages.) The objectives of this first flight test included verifying launch operations and procedures and completing a three-stage flyout and separation. Initial assessments indicate that all objectives were met.

"We are very pleased with the results of today's flight test," said Jim Evatt, executive vice president and general manager of the GMDS program. "The successful first launch of this prototype booster vehicle brings us one step closer to the final integrated system for the ground-based program."

The GMDS 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 the 50 states.

Boeing, as prime contractor, is responsible for the development and integration of the GMDS elements, including the Ground-Based Interceptor, X-Band Radar, Battle Management Command, Control and Communication systems, Upgraded Early Warning Radars and interfaces to the Space-Based Infrared System Satellites. Major team members include Raytheon Company (kill vehicle, radars); TRW (BMC2); and Lockheed Martin Missiles & Space (Payload Launch Vehicle).

The Joint Program Office of the Department of Defense Ballistic Missile Defense Organization directs the Ground-based Midcourse Defense Segment program.

The Boeing Company is the largest aerospace company in the world and the United States' leading exporter. It is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial jetliners and military aircraft, and the largest NASA contractor. The company's capabilities in aerospace also include rotorcraft, electronic and defense systems, missiles, rocket engines, satellites, launch vehicles, and advanced information and communication systems. The company has an extensive global reach with customers in 145 countries.

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