Boeing-Led Missile Defense Team Scores Another "Hit"; Successful System Test Includes Intercept Over Pacific

The Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program's Integrated Flight Test was once again a success -- resulting in an intercept and complete destruction of the incoming target.

Tonight's test, referred to as Integrated Flight Test-9, was the fifth system-level test of the program, incorporating all major elements into the test scenario. The intercept occurred over the Pacific Ocean at approximately 10:30 p.m. EDT. Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, a unit of The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA] is the prime contractor for the GMD Program.

With today's successful test, there have been five successful intercepts in seven flight tests since 1999, with approximately 17 more scheduled to take place over the next several years of the developmental test program. The Joint Program Office of the Department of Defense Missile Defense Agency directs the Ground-based Midcourse Defense program.

The flight-test sequence began with a target vehicle launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. The Defense Support Program satellites detected the target booster, equipped with a mock reentry vehicle and decoys, and the GMD Battle Management, Command, Control and Communications (BMC3) was alerted. BMC3 cued ground-based radars that tracked the target complex and provided more accurate target information to the BMC3. The BMC3 provided a weapon-tasking plan to the interceptor and gave the commands leading to the launch of the interceptor vehicle from the Reagan Test Site in the central Pacific Ocean approximately 20 minutes later.

Following booster separation, the BMC3 provided final target tracking information to the kill vehicle through the In-Flight Interceptor Communication System. The kill vehicle intercepted and destroyed the target by hitting body-to-body at an altitude of approximately 140 miles and a closing speed in excess of 15,000 miles per hour.

GMD has been in advanced development since 1998 and is based on technologies pioneered by the Missile Defense Agency in the 1980's and 1990's. It is currently a research and development program incorporating extensive ground and flight tests to determine system performance against long-range ballistic missile targets. While there has been no commitment to deploy the GMD technology, extensive testing efforts are scheduled to take place under operationally realistic conditions with the establishment of a new testbed in the central and northern Pacific Ocean. A new testbed complex is planned for Fort Greely, Alaska beginning in 2004.

Boeing is responsible for the development and integration of the GMD components, including the Ground-Based Interceptor, Ground-Based Radar Prototype, Battle Management, Command, Control and Communication systems, Early Warning Radars and interfaces to the Defense Support Program. Major team members include the Raytheon Company (kill vehicle, radars); TRW (BMC2); and Lockheed Martin Space Systems, Missiles & Space Operations.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $23 billion business. It provides systems solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.

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For further information:
Monica Aloisio
703-414-6033
Ann Beach
562-797-4222