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The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA], working with industry teammates and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, today successfully completed a missile defense flight test that demonstrated the increased operational capability of the nation's only defense against long-range ballistic missiles.

The test of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system began at 1:22 p.m. Eastern when a long-range ballistic missile target lifted off from the Kodiak Launch Complex in Alaska. Seventeen minutes later, military operators launched an interceptor from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. After flying into space, the interceptor released its exo-atmospheric kill vehicle, which proceeded to track the target warhead. Due to earlier program accomplishments, several test objectives were accelerated and included in this test.

The test achieved several significant objectives for the first time:

- An operationally configured interceptor was fired from an operational GMD site;
- An operationally configured interceptor tracked a ballistic missile;
- A newly upgraded missile-warning radar at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., provided target data to an in-flight interceptor;
- The mission-control center at the Joint National Integration Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., controlled a live GMD engagement.

Although not a primary objective of the test, the kill vehicle intercepted the warhead and destroyed it. This was the first intercept with an operationally configured interceptor.

The test also laid groundwork for the program's planned intercept in late 2006.

"Today's successful test is a major accomplishment for the GMD team and demonstrates a significant step in GMD's evolution to a robust and reliable capability for the warfighter," said Pat Shanahan, vice president and general manager of Boeing Missile Defense Systems. "A key radar collected target information and shared it with an operationally configured interceptor, the interceptor used that data to zero in on a target in space, and battle managers oversaw this activity in real time from thousands of miles away. The team is energized and focused as they continue to see the pivotal role they are playing in developing and deploying a missile defense system that protects the United States."

GMD provides the nation a limited defensive capability against long-range ballistic missiles, with interceptors deployed in underground silos at Vandenberg Air Force Base and Ft. Greely, Alaska. An integral element of the global ballistic missile defense system, GMD also consists of radars, other sensors, command-and-control facilities, communications terminals and a 20,000-mile fiber optic communications network.

Boeing is the prime contractor for GMD, the central element of the Missile Defense Agency's overall layered ballistic missile defense architecture. Industry partners include Raytheon, Orbital Sciences Corp., and Northrop Grumman.

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 \$30.8 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer; a foremost developer of advanced concepts and technologies; 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 sustainment solutions and launch services.

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