Boeing-led Missile Defense Team Completes Flight Test and Intercepts Target Missile

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

The test of the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system began at 4:01 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. As the interceptor flew toward the target, it received target data updates from the upgraded missile-warning radar at Beale Air Force Base, Calif. After flying into space, the interceptor released its exoatmospheric kill vehicle, which proceeded to track, intercept and destroy the target warhead.

The test, GMD's seventh intercept overall, was the second intercept with an operationally configured interceptor since September 2006.

"Today's successful test is the team's second intercept in less than 13 months and further demonstrates 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. "Team members are energized and focused as they continue to see the pivotal role they play in developing and deploying a missile defense system that protects the United States."

"With another intercept under our belts, we have even greater confidence that the GMD system, if called upon in a real-world scenario, will defend the nation against a limited ballistic missile attack," said Scott Fancher, Boeing vice president and program director for GMD.

The Boeing-led test was highly complex, involving a wide range of assets, including the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX). SBX, a powerful new sea-based sensor developed by Boeing, tracked the target missile to prepare for the next GMD flight test, which will see SBX provide target updates to an in-flight interceptor for the first time.

"Flight tests are complex; they involve about 1,000 government and contractor personnel and integrate over 50 assets worldwide," said Norm Tew, Boeing director of weapon systems integration for GMD. "Our government and industry partners worked together as one team to make this exercise a successful reality."

GMD defends the nation against a limited number of long-range ballistic missiles, with interceptors deployed in underground silos at Vandenberg 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. The U.S. government has announced plans to extend this capability to Europe.

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.

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For further information:
Pam Keeton
Boeing Missile Defense Systems
office: (703) 414-6158
pamela.v.keeton@boeing.com
Marc Selinger
Boeing Missile Defense Systems
office: (703) 414-6138
marc.selinger@boeing.com
Rick Lehner
Missile Defense Agency
office: (703) 697-8997
richard.lehner@mda.mil