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Test is 1st intercept using an enhanced version Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV)

HUNTSVILLE, Ala., June 22, 2014– In a complex test today over the Pacific Ocean, the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and an industry team led by Boeing [NYSE: BA] intercepted and destroyed a target in flight using the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system.

This was a successful test using an enhanced version of the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV), a device attached to the intercept booster, that flew on its own in space, hit and destroyed the target.

“Today’s test demonstrated the system’s performance under an expanded set of conditions that reflect real-world operational requirements,” said Jim Chilton, vice president and general manager, Boeing Strategic Missile & Defense Systems. “Working together with our government, military and industry partners, we have delivered a capability that continues to demonstrate its readiness and reliability to protect the United States.”

The test began at 2:49 p.m. Eastern time when a threat-representative target was launched into the Pacific Range from the Marshall Islands. With tracking data from the Boeing-developed Sea-based X-band Radar and the Aegis SPY-1 radar, Army soldiers in Colorado Springs, Colo., launched the ground-based interceptor from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

The EKV was released while the interceptor was in space. The EKV received updates from the GMD system, detected and tracked the target and destroyed it through a high-speed impact. This test met several key objectives, including achieving a long flight time and high-velocity closing speeds.

“The operational complexity of the GMD system is a major engineering challenge, but we have drawn upon our unmatched expertise to work toward today’s successful intercept,” said Norm Tew, Boeing vice president and GMD program director. “This test enables us to continually modernize and improve the system, providing even greater capabilities to protect this country.”

With interceptors at Vandenberg and Fort Greely, Alaska, GMD is an integral element of the United States’ layered ballistic missile defense architecture. The program consists of command-and-control facilities, communications terminal, and a 20,000-mile fiber-optic communications network that interface with ballistic missile defense radars and other sensors. Boeing has been prime contractor since 2001 and works with partners Northrop Grumman, Orbital ATK and Raytheon.

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