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HOMELAND MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM SUCCESSFULLY INTERCEPTS ICBM TARGET

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency, in cooperation with the U.S. Air Force 30th Space Wing, the Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense and U.S. Northern Command, today successfully intercepted an intercontinental ballistic missile target during a test of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) element of the nation's ballistic missile defense system.

This was the first live-fire test event against an ICBM-class target for GMD and the U.S. ballistic missile defense system.

During the test, an ICBM-class target was launched from the Reagan Test Site on Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Multiple sensors provided target acquisition and tracking data to the Command, Control, Battle Management and Communication (C2BMC) system. The Sea-Based X-band radar, positioned in the Pacific Ocean, also acquired and tracked the target. The GMD system received the target tracking data and developed a fire control solution to intercept the target.

A ground-based interceptor was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and its exo-atmospheric kill vehicle intercepted and destroyed the target in a direct collision.

"The intercept of a complex, threat-representative ICBM target is an incredible accomplishment for the GMD system and a critical milestone for this program," said MDA Director Vice Adm. Jim Syring. "This system is vitally important to the defense of our homeland, and this test demonstrates that we have a capable, credible deterrent against a very real threat. I am incredibly proud of the warfighters who executed this test and who operate this system every day."

Initial indications are that the test met its primary objective, but program officials will continue to evaluate system performance based upon telemetry and other data obtained during the test.

The test, designated Flight Test Ground-Based Interceptor (FTG)-15, will provide the data necessary to assess the performance of the GMD system and provide enhanced homeland defense capabilities.

The GMD element of the ballistic missile defense system provides combatant commanders the capability to engage and destroy intermediate and long-range ballistic missile threats to protect the U.S. The mission of the Missile Defense Agency is to develop and deploy a layered ballistic missile defense system to defend the United States, its deployed forces, allies and friends from limited ballistic missile attacks of all ranges in all phases of flight.

Additional information about all elements of the ballistic missile defense system can be found at www.mda.mil.

Please direct all media related queries to Chris Johnson, MDA Director of Public Affairs, at 571-363-8491 or christopher.johnson@mda.mil.

Please note that imagery is still being processed. Once available -- likely late this evening -- it will be available at www.mda.mil.