MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

News Release

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Missile Defense Radar Site Chosen

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) announced today that it has selected Adak, Alaska, as the Primary Support Base (PSB) for the Sea-Based X-Band (SBX) radar. The PSB includes a mooring site and minimum logistics support for the SBX. The SBX is a part of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system, a missile defense system designed to intercept and destroy long-range ballistic missiles aimed at the U.S. homeland.

The selection of Adak is contained in the Record of Decision signed by MDA director Lt. Gen. Ronald T. Kadish, as part of the recently completed GMD extended test range final environmental impact statement (FEIS). The FEIS analyzed the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives to establish an extended test range capability to provide more realistic flight-testing of the GMD system. The FEIS examined development of the capability for single and dual launches of interceptor and target missiles and supporting infrastructure at various locations in the Pacific.

Besides Adak, five other locations were considered: Naval Base Ventura County, Calif.; Naval Station Everett, Wash.; Reagan Test Site, Kwajalein Atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands; Port of Valdez, Alaska and Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The selection of Adak was the result of extensive analysis of numerous factors relating to operations, support and sustainability, including easy access to potential operating areas and available support infrastructure.

The SBX vessel, a self-propelled semi-submersible modified oil-drilling platform, will be modified and payloads installed at shipyards in Brownsville and Corpus Christi, Texas, and is scheduled to begin supporting GMD operations in 2005. The SBX will provide detailed ballistic missile tracking information to the GMD system, as well as advanced target and countermeasures discrimination capability for the GMD interceptor missiles. The ability of the SBX to deploy to operating locations under its own power allows it to support actual GMD operations as well as realistic testing. The SBX is approximately 390 feet long and 250 feet high, and has a displacement of 50,000 tons.