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Missile Defense Elements Participate in Air Force Test

Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency (MDA) director, announced today the successful completion of an exercise held May 22 involving Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) elements participating in a routine operational test of a U.S. Air Force strategic missile from Vandenberg AFB, Calif., as a "target of opportunity."

Elements of the BMDS, including the Sea Based X-Band Radar, Beale AFB Upgraded Early Warning Radar, an Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Cruiser, and a transportable AN/TPY-2 radar, successfully detected and tracked the long-range missile over the Pacific Ocean.

Operational sensors provided acquisition and missile tracking data to the BMDS Command, Control, Battle Management and Communications (C2BMC) system using operational communications links. Data collected by the BMDS elements will be used for extensive post-mission analysis to further characterize BMDS capabilities.

This test also served as a target of opportunity for several of MDA's emerging technology programs, including the External Sensors Laboratory and the use of infrared sensors carried aboard F-16 aircraft to track boosting long-range missiles.

The Air Force test, called Glory Trip 197, was part of a continuing program to evaluate and demonstrate the operational readiness of our ground-based strategic deterrent force. The ability to utilize a target of opportunity allows MDA to conduct numerous important exercises and obtain extensive data without incurring the expense associated with launching a test-specific target missile.

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