MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

News Release

http://www.mda.mil
mda.info@mda.mil

7100 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-7100

Archive

September 28, 2000

BMDO Conducts National Missile Defense Exercise

The Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) announced it successfully conducted two non-intercept flight tests today designed to exercise various elements of the National Missile Defense (NMD) system now being developed. The two Risk Reduction Flights (RRF) help reduce technical risks for the next NMD flight test. Data is collected from these tests from actual element performance against test targets flown to validate and verify information from computer models and simulations. The RRF flight tests were held in conjunction with routine U.S. Air Force operational tests involving the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile launched from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. into the Kwajalein Missile Test Range in the central Pacific Ocean.

For both exercises, called RRF-9 and RRF-10, the target vehicles were launched from Vandenberg AFB at 1:01 a.m. PDT and 3:01 a.m. PDT, respectively. NMD system elements participating in the tests were the Defense Support Program (DSP) satellite, a ground-based Early Warning Radar to track the target; Battle Management Command Control and Communications (BMC3) elements in Colorado and Kwajalein, the Ground Based Radar-Prototype (GBR-P) in Kwajalein, and the In-Flight Interceptor Communication System. Since the Ground Based Interceptor was not planned to participate in these tests, all interceptor functions, such as interceptor fly-out, Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle discrimination, and hit-to-kill intercept, were simulated, providing valuable experience and training to NMD personnel who will be responsible for conducting future NMD intercept tests. "Piggy-backing" on Air Force operational tests helps to save several million dollars that would otherwise have been spent on dedicated NMD tests.

RRF-9 deployed a specialized NMD payload system designated as Radar Credible Target 2. This system consists of a target suite of 20 objects and is designed to test the discrimination capabilities of the GBR-P, located at Kwajalein Atoll. The GBR-P is a complex technology designed to help defeat countermeasures that could potentially accompany a hostile ballistic missile aimed at the United States. Preliminary indications are that the GBR-P successfully performed the discrimination function.

RRF-10 exercised the NMD system elements as they will appear during the actual IFT-6 intercept test. Additionally, this flight test deployed a modified Mark-12A Mod 6 reentry vehicle (RV) specially designed as a NASA experiment, and served as the designated threat object for exercising NMD System elements.