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Missile Defense Sensors Gather Data in Critical Measurements Program (CMP) – 4B to Enhance Development

On October 6, 2004, the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC) successfully launched the second in a series of sub-orbital rockets from Wake Island in the central Pacific Ocean into the U.S. Army Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The test was designed to obtain extensive data collection as part of the Critical Measurements Program (CMP). The first CMP launch was conducted on September 29.

The missile's payload again included a mock warhead, a sensor package and a number of missile defense-related experiments, all of which were designed to collect radar and optical data addressing critical system level issues. The missile traveled approximately 600 miles.

The data obtained from the missile launch will be used to help improve missile defense interceptor and sensor systems in development now, and in the future. Previous experiments have provided data immediately useful to ballistic missile defense programs, including the Terminal High Altitude Area (THAAD), Patriot and the Aegis ballistic missile defense systems designed to intercept and destroy short to medium range ballistic missiles. During yesterday's test, extensive optical and radar data were collected on the missile and its payload from multiple ground, sea and airborne sensors throughout the entire flight of the missile.

Major test team members include the Army Space and Missile Defense Command of Huntsville, Ala., the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Lincoln Laboratory, Lexington, Mass. and Orbital Sciences Corporation, Launch Systems Group, Chandler, Ariz. The flights are part of an ongoing effort to provide experimental data for the Missile Defense Agency, and additional flights will take place to help improve and enhance all aspects of our missile defense development efforts.

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