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## Integrated Flight Test Analysis Completed

Missile Defense Agency (MDA) Director Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering III today announced that a minor communications timing problem occurring during an automatic electronic monitoring test seconds before a planned launch of a ground-based interceptor missile was the "root" cause for last month's aborted Ground Based Midcourse Integrated Flight Test. The interceptor's internal safety system automatically inhibited launch of the missile from Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands when it received information that the first stage rocket motor's thrust vector control component was not within the parameters set by the booster manufacturer. A software change will be incorporated into the test interceptor and, if necessary, to current and future deployed assets. The revised software will be installed into the interceptor's flight computer through the existing umbilical cord connection, and will not require the interceptor to be removed from its underground silo.

An extensive investigation involving hundreds of people from MDA, Boeing, the prime contractor, Orbital Sciences (booster manufacturer) and other firms took place following the test. The investigation determined that while the target was successfully launched from Kodiak, Alaska, the automatic "built-in test" on the interceptor--the last internal health and status test before launch—sent a signal to the interceptor's flight computer that it did not receive the proper number of health and status messages that would have permitted the missile to launch. The investigation team also found that the infrequent communication anomaly would not have jeopardized the success of an interceptor during flight. The team recommended that the flight computer's software be configured with lower parameters to allow a launch to proceed after receipt of a smaller number of electronic messages.

Pending the completion of a new target missile, another flight test is planned for the February/March timeframe. The target missile will be launched from Kodiak and the interceptor from Kwajalein.

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