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Successful Ground Based Midcourse Rocket Hazard Test Conducted

Air Force Lt. General Henry "Trey" Obering III, Missile Defense Agency (MDA) director, today announced the Agency completed a successful hazard classification ground test yesterday of an Orbital Sciences Orion 50 XLG rocket motor used in the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program, serving as the first-stage rocket motor for the long-range interceptor missile designed to intercept and destroy a long-range missile aimed at the United States or our allies.

The test was conducted at Eglin AFB, Fla. and involved the successful ignition of the rocket motor by an external open flame, as could be encountered in a transportation-related accident. Data obtained from the test is used to determine final hazard requirements for safe handling, storage and transportation of the ground-based interceptor missile. This was the largest external-source ignition test ever conducted by the Department of Defense.

The test was conducted jointly by the Missile Defense Agency's Interceptor Project Office, the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM), Boeing, Orbital Sciences Corporation, ATK, and the Air Force 46th Test Wing, Eglin AFB.

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