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NNSA Conducts Successful B61-11 JTA Flight Test

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), in collaboration with the U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command, recently conducted a successful surveillance flight test using a Joint Test Assembly (JTA) of the B61 Mod 11 (B61-11) Strategic Bomb.

“JTA tests demonstrate NNSA’s commitment to ensuring that all weapon systems perform as planned and that systems are designed to be safe, secure and effective,” said NNSA’s Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs Don Cook. “The strong partnership between NNSA and Department of Defense is vital to our national security and helps enhance the way NNSA does business and manages its resources.”

A JTA contains instrumentation and sensors that monitor the performance of numerous weapon components during the flight test to determine if the weapon functions as designed. This JTA also included a flight recorder that stored the bomb performance data for the entire test. The data is used in a reliability model, developed by Sandia National Laboratories, to evaluate the reliability of the bomb.



The JTA was produced by the NNSA in support of the Joint Surveillance Flight Test Program between the Department of Defense and the NNSA, and was built to simulate the actual B61-11 weapon configuration utilizing as much war reserve hardware as feasible. It was assembled at the Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas and was not capable of nuclear yield, as it contained no special nuclear materials.

A B-2A Spirit Stealth Bomber from the 509th Bomber Wing, operating out of Whiteman Air Force Base, delivered and released the B61-11 JTA at the NNSA’s Tonopah Test Range in Nevada.

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Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science in the nation's national security enterprise. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability, and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; reduces the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.



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