



For Your Information

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First at-Sea Demonstration of Sea-Based Terminal Capability Successfully Completed

The U.S. Navy, in cooperation with the Missile Defense Agency, today successfully conducted a ballistic missile defense demonstration involving the intercept of a target missile in the terminal phase (the last few seconds) of flight. The test involved an Aegis cruiser modified to detect, control and engage a ballistic missile target with a modified Standard Missile - 2 (SM-2) Block IV. The Pearl Harbor-based Aegis cruiser *USS Lake Erie* (CG 70) conducted the mission against a short-range target missile launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands, Kauai, Hawaii. It was the first sea-based intercept of a ballistic missile in its terminal phase.

The modified Aegis Weapon System and the modified SM-2 Block IV provided the firing ship the capability to guide the missile to achieve either; 1) a direct body to body hit between the interceptor and the threat or, 2) a near-direct hit where the high pressure, heat and fragments are placed on the threat by a blast fragmentation warhead. This warhead is similar in concept to that used in the deployed Israeli Arrow system. In today's test, the threat missile was completely destroyed by the combined effects of these two mechanisms.

"This is another example of the ongoing cooperative spirit between the Navy and the Missile Defense Agency," said Rear Admiral Barry McCullough, Director, Surface Warfare, on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations.

"We believe it is an important step towards the desired end-state of a robust sea-based terminal ballistic missile defense capability," McCullough added, "and it begins to meet an immediate near-term concern of our Combatant Commanders." "The only terminal phase program we currently have that is operational is the Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3)," he added, "and considerations to put those aboard ships are still under review."

There is currently no sea-based terminal ballistic missile defense capability. The Navy Area Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (TBMD) Program, had been under development, but was terminated in December 2001. In ballistic missile defense, the modified Aegis Weapon System, with a modified SM-2 Block IV missile provides a near term, limited emergency capability against a very specific segment of the ballistic missile threat. The Navy and MDA consider it vital to develop a more robust capability for terminal ballistic missile defense of the joint sea base and friendly force embarkation points ashore.

"There is a significant number of SM-2 Block IV missiles available, which may be modified and deployed on Navy ships modified to perform a BMD mission," said Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director. "While talking with the Navy and the Combatant Commanders, on how and when, we might be able to make that happen," Lieutenant General Obering added, "MDA will continue to improve its development of the midcourse Aegis sea-based ballistic missile defense capability, which utilizes the Standard Missile - 3 (SM-3), and has successfully achieved 6 intercepts in 7 flight tests."

Both the SM-2 Block IV and the SM-3 were developed by the Raytheon Missile Systems of Tucson, Arizona. The Aegis Weapon System, the basis of the weapon system used today and in Aegis BMD ships, was developed by Lockheed Martin of Moorestown, New Jersey.

Queries on this test should be directed to Ms. Pat Dolan, Naval Sea Systems Command Public Affairs at (202) 781-2975. Photos and video will be available later from PMRF Public Affairs. Contact is Tom Clements at (808) 335-4740.