Lockheed Martin Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System Successfully Destroys Medium-Range Separating Ballistic Missile During Test

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During a test today, Lockheed Martin's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System intercepted and destroyed a separating ballistic missile target during its midcourse phase of flight.

The test represents the Aegis BMD system's ninth successful ballistic missile intercept in 11 attempts and is the first ballistic missile intercept conducted by an Aegis BMD destroyer. This also marks the third time the Aegis BMD system has demonstrated its target discrimination capabilities by intercepting a ballistic missile with a separating reentry vehicle. In addition to its record of intercepts, Aegis BMD has successfully supported more than 15 ballistic missile defense system tracking tests since June 2004.

In today's test, USS Decatur (DDG 73), an Aegis BMD destroyer equipped with the latest U.S. Navy certified version of the Aegis BMD Weapon System (Aegis BMD 3.6), successfully guided a Standard Missile (SM)-3 Block IA missile to intercept a medium range, separating ballistic missile target outside the Earth's atmosphere.

In addition to USS Decatur, the Aegis BMD Cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) and the Spanish Navy Aegis-equipped frigate Mendez Nunez (F-104) participated in the test as a training event to assess the future capabilities of the F-100 Class.

During the test, USS Port Royal used its SPY-1B radar augmented by a prototype Aegis BMD Signal Processor (BSP) to detect and track the separating warhead in real time, and to differentiate -- or discriminate -- the simulated warhead from the rest of the missile. The BSP's success further validated the readiness of this advanced discrimination capability against complex threats for installation and deployment as part of the next configuration of Aegis BMD capability beginning in 2010.

Also in this test, USS Port Royal exchanged tracking data with a ground- based Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system ashore. THAAD, also developed by Lockheed Martin, is designed to engage ballistic missiles in the terminal phase of flight. The Aegis BMD-THAAD link verified interoperability of systems and sensors in the nation's Ballistic Missile Defense System.

For this test, Mendez Nunez detected and tracked the ballistic missile with a minor modification made to its Aegis Weapon System.

"With nine successful intercepts from three different ships with three different crews, we can now clearly see the potential to transfer this capability to any Aegis-equipped ship," said Rear Adm. Brad Hicks, the Missile Defense Agency's Aegis BMD program director. "Participation by the Spanish crew and the Mendez Nunez demonstrate that Aegis BMD can easily be the common link to proven ballistic missile defense capability for our allies."

The flight mission was the final event of a series of tests conducted in the days preceding today's successful intercept. In the previous events, USS Decatur verified Aegis BMD 3.6's performance in detecting, tracking and targeting a high altitude, anti-radiation missile target, demonstrating the system's multi-mission capability and conducted simultaneous, simulated engagements against two ballistic missile targets launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility. During the same event, THAAD cued USS Port Royal, and the ship's SPY-1B(V) radar augmented by BSP then acquired and tracked the ballistic missile targets.

Mendez Nunez joined USS Decatur and USS Port Royal after completing its Combat System Ship Qualification Trials (CSSQT) off the California coast with two other Aegis-equipped ships: USS Gridley (DDG 101) and Norway's Fridtjof Nansen. During the CSSQT -- the first ever involving ships from three nations -- the three ships operated together to test the performance of their combat systems against a variety of naval threats.

"Aegis again is delivering on its ability to protect against medium range ballistic missile targets," said Orlando Carvalho, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Surface and Sea-Based Missile Defense line of business. "Mendez Nunez's participation builds on the demonstrated success we have had with Japan's Kongo-class Aegis-equipped ships, further using the international reach of Aegis to equip our allies with key BMD capability."

The Aegis BMD 3.6 Weapon System, including the SM-3 Block IA missile, was certified for operational deployment by the U.S. Navy in August 2006. Aegis BMD 3.6 enhances the ballistic missile defense capabilities of the current Aegis BMD fleet and adds capability in other warfare areas -- as demonstrated in today's test.

The MDA and the U.S. Navy are jointly developing Aegis BMD as part of the United States' Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Currently, seven U.S. Navy Aegis-equipped warships have the ability to conduct long range search and track and engage ballistic missiles. Another nine Aegis warships are equipped with Aegis BMD Long Range Surveillance & Track capability. Ultimately 15 Aegis destroyers and three Aegis cruisers will be outfitted with the ability to engage short to intermediate range ballistic missile threats and support other BMDS engagements using the Aegis BMD Weapon System and the SM-3. Japan has purchased Aegis BMD capability for their Aegis destroyers and is a partner developing a larger, faster, and more capable variant of the SM-3.

The Aegis Weapon System is the world's premier naval surface defense system and is the foundation for Aegis BMD, the primary component of the sea- based element of the United States' BMDS. The Aegis BMD Weapon System seamlessly integrates the SPY-1 radar, the MK 41 Vertical Launching System, the SM-3 missile and the weapon system's command and control system. The Aegis BMD Weapon System also integrates with the BMDS, receiving cues from and providing cueing information to other BMDS elements.

The Aegis Weapon System is currently deployed on 83 ships around the globe with more than 20 additional ships planned or under contract. In addition to the U.S., Aegis is the maritime weapon system of choice for Japan, South Korea, Norway, Spain and Australia. Japan began installation of Aegis BMD in its Kongo-class Aegis destroyers in 2007.

Lockheed Martin is a world leader in systems integration and the development of air and missile defense systems and technologies, including the first operational hit-to-kill missile defense system, Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3). It also has considerable experience in interceptor systems, kill vehicles, battle management command, control and communications, precision pointing and tracking optics, as well as radar and other sensors that enable signal processing and data fusion. The company makes significant contributions to nearly all major U.S. Missile Defense Systems and participates in several global missile defense partnerships.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs more than 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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