Lockheed Martin Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Weapon System Destroys Ballistic Missile In Terminal Phase

Lockheed Martin's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Weapon System successfully detected, tracked and intercepted a short-range unitary ballistic missile target in the terminal phase of its trajectory during a test today at the Pacific Missile Range off the coast of Hawaii.

This mission was the first to use the latest version of the Aegis BMD weapon system -- Aegis BMD 3.6.1. -- which adds to the proven sea-based missile defense system the capability to defeat short-range ballistic missiles, that have re-entered the atmosphere in their final stage of flight. The system will be certified for U.S. Navy fleet operations later this year.

In the test mission, the SPY-1B radar on the Aegis BMD cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG 70) detected and tracked the ballistic missile target, and computed a targeting solution to guide two SM-2 Block IV missiles to a successful endo-atmospheric (within the atmosphere) intercept. Once the SM-2s were launched from the ship's Lockheed Martin-developed MK-41 Vertical Launching System (VLS), Aegis guided the missiles through the terminal phase of the intercept. The SM-2 Block IV missiles were recently modified to perform the terminal phase endo-atmospheric intercept of a ballistic missile.

While this event marked the first test in the Missile Defense Agency's evaluation of Aegis BMD against a ballistic missile in its terminal phase, this is the second Aegis success in the terminal phase. In May 2006, the USS Lake Erie successfully intercepted a short-range ballistic missile in its terminal phase in a Navy-sponsored test using a version of the Linebacker Program first developed in 1998.

In addition to the terminal phase successes, Aegis BMD has 12 successful exo-atmospheric intercepts in 14 attempts in the midcourse phase of flight. Separate from the ballistic missile defense tests, USS Lake Erie's Aegis BMD Weapon System was temporarily modified and successfully destroyed an errant United States satellite in February.

"Ballistic missiles present different challenges during each phase of flight, and Aegis BMD is proving its full range of flexibility," said Orlando Carvalho, vice president of Lockheed Martin's Surface/Sea-Based Missile Defense line of business. "That flexibility reflects the disciplined systems engineering that invented, evolved and continues to develop Aegis capabilities against threats yet to come. Engaging ballistic missiles from the sea in the terminal phase is challenging for both the Sailors who executed this mission and the weapon system they used. Sea-Based Terminal is a critical capability in the Aegis BMD weapon system that provides protection to population centers, our deployed forces abroad, and critical infrastructure."

The Missile Defense Agency and the U.S. Navy are jointly developing Aegis BMD as part of the United States' Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Currently, 12 U.S. Navy Aegis-equipped warships have the ability to conduct long-range search and track, and engage ballistic missiles. Another five Aegis warships are equipped with Aegis BMD long-range surveillance and track capability. By the end of 2008, 15 Aegis destroyers and three Aegis cruisers will have the capability to engage short to intermediate-range ballistic missile threats and support other BMDS engagements using the Aegis BMD Weapon System and the SM-3. The Aegis BMD 3.6.1 tested today will be installed on all U.S. Navy Aegis BMD ships beginning in 2009.

Japan has purchased Aegis BMD capability for its Kongo-class Aegis destroyers, and completed its first successful test of Aegis BMD in December 2007.

The Aegis Weapon System is currently deployed on 85 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.

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. The Corporation reported 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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