Lockheed Martin Installs Next Evolution Of Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System On Cruiser USS Lake Erie

Lockheed Martin installed the latest evolution of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System -- which includes a new ballistic missile defense signal processor, Aegis BSP -- on the cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG-70). Over the next year, USS Lake Erie will complete a series of tests, leading up to full certification of the system upgrade by the U.S. Navy in early 2011.

The Aegis BMD 4.0.1 system represents the next incremental capability upgrade that has been the hallmark of Aegis and its "build a little, test a little, learn a lot" systems engineering philosophy. The upgrade's new Aegis BSP processor improves the system's ability to detect, track and target complex ballistic missiles and their associated countermeasures. The addition of BMD 4.0.1 also integrates the new Standard Missile-3 Block IB missile in late 2010.

"The signal processor is a major technical advance for Aegis BMD before it merges with the Navy's Aegis Modernization Program's fully open architecture, multi-mission combat system," said Orlando Carvalho, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Surface/Sea-Based Missile Defense line of business. "The continued Aegis program emphasis on systems engineering excellence supports the Navy's desire to expand BMD capability to additional cruisers and destroyers, and grow missile defense capability to pace the threat."

While USS Lake Erie begins advanced testing with Aegis BMD 4.0.1 to support 2011 certification timeline, the other U.S. Navy Aegis BMD-capable ships are now installing the recently-certified Aegis BMD 3.6.1 version that adds the capability to defeat short-range ballistic missiles as they re-enter the atmosphere in their final (terminal) stage of flight to the existing exo-atmospheric capability. The ongoing develop-test-field process provides incremental enhancements that continue to build on each other and move new capability to the fleet faster. Three additional U.S. East Coast-based Aegis-equipped ships also will receive Aegis BMD 3.6.1 to perform ballistic missile defense by early 2010.

The Missile Defense Agency and the Navy are jointly developing Aegis BMD as part of the United States' Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Currently, a total of 20 Aegis BMD-equipped warships -- 18 in the U.S. Navy and two in the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force -- have the certified capability to engage ballistic missiles and perform long-range surveillance and track missions.

The Aegis Weapon System is the world's premier naval defense system and the sea-based element of the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense System. Its precision SPY-1 radar and integrated command and controls system seamlessly guides the interceptor and uplinks target track information to the missile for terminal homing. Its ability to detect, track and engage targets ranging from sea-skimming cruise missiles to ballistic missiles in space is proven and unmatched. The Aegis BMD Weapon System also integrates with the BMDS, receiving track data from and providing track information to other BMDS elements.

The 91 Aegis-equipped ships currently in service around the globe have more than 950 years of at-sea operational experience and have launched more than 3,500 missiles in tests and real-world operations. In addition to the U.S. and Japan, Aegis is the maritime weapon system of choice for Australia, Norway, South Korea and Spain.

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 is a global security company that employs about 146,000 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 2008 sales of $42.7 billion.

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