

Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System Upgrade Successfully Tracks Sophisticated Missile Targets In Exercise Series

The second generation of Lockheed Martin's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system, BMD 4.0.1, successfully detected, tracked and conducted simulated engagements against a variety of different ballistic missile targets during a series of tracking exercises in the Pacific.

The key feature of the new system is a new integrated signal processor designed to improve the system's discrimination capability to defeat sophisticated ballistic missiles and their countermeasures.

During a series of four tests, the guided missile cruiser USS Lake Erie - upgraded with the BMD 4.0.1 Weapon System - successfully detected, tracked and guided simulated Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IBs to intercept ballistic missile targets launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai. The targets ranged from simple separating medium-range missiles to sophisticated, separating short-range missiles designed to confuse missile-defense systems.

During the tests, USS Lake Erie transmitted data via a tactical data link to other ships and shore command facilities.

Over the next year, USS Lake Erie will complete additional tests, leading up to full operational certification of the Aegis BMD 4.0.1 system in early 2011.

"We were thrilled to see the significant performance improvements with the Aegis BMD 4.0.1 Weapon System and the preliminary data shows the system's performance matched our predictions," said Lisa Callahan, Lockheed Martin's vice president, Maritime BMD Programs. "These exercises allowed us to get an early look at the system. We're eager to learn from these events, focus on the remaining development and enable the improved capability to reach the fleet."

The guided missile destroyer USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) and the Japanese Aegis destroyer JS Myoko (DDG 175) also participated in the events, exercising their respective systems in parallel with the USS Lake Erie, and providing additional crew training opportunities for both ships.

The 92 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 United States, Aegis is the maritime weapon system of choice for Australia, Japan, Norway, South Korea and Spain.

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). Recently the Navy's independent operational test agent assessed the Aegis BMD and SM-3 Block IA system to be operationally effective and operationally suitable. Currently, a total of 22 Aegis BMD-equipped warships - 19 in the U.S. Navy and three in the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force - have the certified capability to engage ballistic missiles and perform long-range surveillance and tracking missions. Two additional U.S. East Coast-based Aegis-equipped ships are being modified to perform ballistic missile defense in the several months and an additional Japanese destroyer will be upgraded by 2010.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 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 2008 sales of \$42.7 billion.

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