



For Your Information

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Missile Defense Agency Receives First Sea-Based Interceptor Missile

On October 22, 2004, the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) received the first sea-based interceptor missile that will be carried by some of the U.S. Navy's Aegis-class cruisers. This was the first of five Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) interceptors scheduled for delivery by the end of this year. The SM-3 is designed to intercept and destroy short to intermediate range ballistic missiles before they reach their target, providing protection to our homeland, our deployed military forces, and our friends and allies. The SM-3 delivered to MDA will be part of the Agency's on-going development and test program, but the interceptors will also be available during a contingency, and will be operated by the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet and U.S. Pacific Command.

Modifications are underway or have been completed to upgrade the existing SPY-1 radar systems aboard several Aegis cruisers and destroyers to give them the ability to detect and track ballistic missiles, and communicate data about a hostile ballistic missile after it is launched. Five destroyers will have completed the necessary radar and communications modifications by year's end. Ten additional destroyers and three cruisers are scheduled to complete modifications by the end of 2006. The three cruisers will also be capable of launching the SM-3 missile.

The SM-3 is built by the Raytheon Company's Missile Systems Division.

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