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Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Maneuvering System Successfully Tested

The Missile Defense Agency announced today the successful completion of an important test of the maneuvering system that will be used to position SM-3 sea-based missiles to a “hit to kill” intercept with a short or medium range ballistic missile warhead before reaching its target.

The Navy’s Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) ejects a Kinetic Warhead (KW) prior to intercept, after being guided to a favorable position by the Aegis Weapon System. The KW’s propulsion system is the Solid Divert and Attitude Control System (SDACS) which controls up, down and side to side maneuvering. Presently, the SM-3 SDACS uses an effective “sustained pulse” mode to position the KW as it travels to intercept the threat. Four of five successful intercept flight tests have been conducted using the sustained pulse SDACS.

On November 30, 2004, an evolutionary enhancement, a multi-pulse mode, of the SDACS was ground tested. The SDACS test performed a simulated mission that included multi-pulse operations designed to improve the KW’s energy and lethality during in-flight maneuvers. All test objectives were met.

Full unit ground testing will begin this winter to support a flight test later in CY 2005. The timing for insertion of multi-pulse SDACS into tactical missiles will be determined by the results of remaining ground and flight tests. A successful test program could lead to incorporation of a multi-pulse SDACS in early 2006.

The SM-3 will operate from Aegis BMD capable cruisers and destroyers to defend against short to medium range ballistic missiles that threaten our deployed forces overseas, our friends and allies. Over the next five years, up to three Aegis cruisers and 15 Aegis destroyers will be capable of firing SM-3 for ballistic missile defense.

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