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Standard Missile-3 Maneuvering System Successfully Tested

Air Force Lieutenant General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced today that a design verification ground test of the Standard Missile-3 Solid Divert and Attitude Control System Block IA design was successfully completed on March 30, 2005. The Solid Divert and Attitude Control System is used to control the yaw, pitch and roll of the interceptor's kinetic warhead during the final seconds of flight before intercepting an enemy ballistic missile.

The test, conducted in the Alliant Techsystems, Elkton, Maryland altitude chamber, confirmed the Solid Divert and Attitude Control System's ability to support the three desired operational maneuverability levels of sustained, pulse one and pulse two. This test is the first of five flight-configured ground tests supporting pulse mode qualification.

The Standard Missile-3 is the interceptor missile being incorporated into Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense, the sea-based element of the Agency's Ballistic Missile Defense System now being developed, tested and fielded as part of a "layered" missile defense designed to intercept and destroy ballistic missiles of all ranges during any phase of their flight. Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense integrates the Standard Missile-3 with the Aegis Combat System installed on U.S. Navy ships deployed around the world to provide protection against short to intermediate range ballistic missile threats.

On February 24, 2005, the Standard Missile-3 and the Aegis Weapon System scored the fifth "hit-to-kill" intercept, in six attempts, of a ballistic missile target. The test involved the Navy's Aegis cruiser USS Lake Erie, and intercepted a ballistic missile target launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Kauai, Hawaii.

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