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Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Weapon System Gains Fleet Certification

The U.S. Navy has certified the latest version of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Weapon System for tactical deployment. The upgraded system enhances the ballistic missile defense capabilities of the current Aegis fleet. The system also adds capability in other warfare areas and brings the BMD mission to additional destroyers and cruisers. Currently, several destroyers have improved radar capabilities for long range surveillance and tracking of different ballistic missile threats. The data is fed into the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Three cruisers have this capability and the ability to engage short to medium range threats with the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3). By 2009, 18 ships (15 destroyers and three cruisers) will be identically equipped with both capabilities.

The Missile Defense Agency and the U.S. Navy are jointly developing the Aegis ballistic missile defense capabilities as part of the nation's Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Lockheed Martin is the prime contractor for the development of the upgraded system. The Aegis Weapon System is the foundation for Aegis BMD, the primary component of the sea-based element of the BMDS.

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