

CRS Report for Congress

Sea-Based Ballistic Missile Defense — Background and Issues for Congress

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Summary

As part of its effort to develop a global ballistic missile defense (BMD) system, the Department of Defense (DOD) is modifying 18 Navy cruisers and destroyers for BMD operations, and has deployed a large BMD radar — the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX) — on a modified floating oil platform. The eventual role for sea-based systems in the worldwide U.S. BMD architecture has not been determined. The overall issue for Congress for this report is: What should be the role of sea-based systems in U.S. ballistic missile defense, and are DOD's programs for sea-based BMD capabilities appropriately structured and funded?

Potential strengths of sea-based BMD systems include the ability to conduct BMD operations from advantageous locations at sea that are inaccessible to ground-based systems, the ability to operate in forward locations in international waters without permission from foreign governments, and the ability to readily move to new maritime locations as needed. Potential limitations of sea-based BMD systems include possible conflicts with performing other ship missions, higher costs relative to ground-based systems, and vulnerability to attack when operating in forward locations.

The Aegis BMD system in its current (i.e., Block 2004) configuration is intended to track ballistic missiles of all ranges, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and to intercept shorter-ranged ballistic missiles. The Block 2004 configuration is not intended to intercept ICBMs. Current DOD plans call for modifying 3 Aegis cruisers and 15 Aegis destroyers with the Aegis BMD capability by the end of 2009. Future versions of the Aegis BMD system are to include a faster interceptor designed to intercept certain ICBMs. The Aegis BMD system has achieved eight successful exo-atmospheric intercepts in 10 test flights. Japan is acquiring the Aegis BMD system; some other allied navies have expressed an interest in adding BMD capabilities to their ships.

The Aegis BMD program received \$1,122.7 million in FY2007 Missile Defense Agency (MDA) research and development funds. For FY2008, MDA is requesting \$1,059.1 million in research and development funds for the program. The program also receives additional Navy funds.

Potential specific issues for Congress regarding sea-based BMD systems include the role of sea-based BMD systems in the eventual U.S. BMD architecture, whether DOD's program to replace the canceled Navy Area Defense (NAD) program for sea-based terminal-defense operations is adequate, pacing and funding for Aegis BMD radar and missile upgrades, and whether the Aegis BMD development approach offers potential lessons for the ground-based midcourse development program. This report will be updated as events warrant.

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Sea-Based Ballistic Missile Defense — Background and Issues for Congress

Introduction

As part of its effort to develop a global ballistic missile defense (BMD) system, the Department of Defense (DOD) is modifying 18 Navy cruisers and destroyers for BMD operations, and has deployed a large BMD radar — the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX) — on a modified floating oil platform. The eventual role for sea-based systems in the world-wide U.S. BMD architecture has not been determined.

The overall issue for Congress for this report is: What should be the role of sea-based systems in U.S. ballistic missile defense, and are DOD's programs for sea-based BMD capabilities appropriately structured and funded? Decisions that Congress reaches on this issue could affect U.S. BMD capabilities and funding requirements; the size, capabilities, and operational patterns of the Navy and the other services; and the shipbuilding industrial base.

Background

Rationale for Sea-Based BMD Systems

DOD's overall BMD plan includes ground-based, sea-based, airborne, and space-based systems, each of which have potential strengths and limitations. DOD believes that a combination of these systems will provide a more capable BMD architecture.

Potential Strengths. Potential strengths of sea-based BMD systems compared to other BMD systems include the following:

- **Advantageous locations at sea.** Sea-based systems can conduct BMD operations from locations at sea that are potentially advantageous for BMD operations but inaccessible to ground-based BMD systems.
- **Base access and freedom of action.** Sea-based systems can be operated in forward (i.e., overseas) locations in international waters without need for negotiating base access from other governments, and without restrictions from foreign governments on how they might be used.

- **Visibility.** Sea-based systems can operate over the horizon from observers ashore, making them potentially less visible and less provocative.
- **Mobility.** Navy ships with BMD systems can readily move themselves to respond to changing demands for BMD capabilities or to evade detection and targeting by enemy forces, and can do so without placing demands on U.S. airlift assets.

Regarding the first of these potential strengths, there are at least four ways that a location at sea can be advantageous for U.S. BMD operations:

- The location might lie along a ballistic missile's potential flight path, which can facilitate tracking and intercepting the attacking missile.
- The location might permit a sea-based radar to view a ballistic missile from a different angle than other U.S. BMD sensors, which might permit the U.S. BMD system to track the attacking missile more effectively.
- If a potential adversary's ballistic missile launchers are relatively close to its coast, then a U.S. Navy ship equipped with BMD interceptors that is operating relatively close to that coast could attempt to defend a large down-range territory against potential attack by ballistic missiles fired from those launchers.¹ One to four Navy ships operating in the Sea of Japan, for example, could attempt to defend most or all of Japan against theater-range ballistic missiles (TBMs)² fired from North Korea.
- If a Navy ship were equipped with very fast interceptors (i.e., interceptors faster than those the Navy is currently deploying), and if that ship were deployed to an overseas location relatively close to enemy ballistic missile launchers, the ship might be able to attempt to intercept ballistic missiles fired from those launchers during the missiles' boost phase of flight — the initial phase, during which the ballistic missiles' rocket engines are burning. A ballistic missile in the boost phase of flight is a relatively large, hot-burning target that

¹ The ship's potential ability to do this is broadly analogous to how a hand casts a shadow in a candle-lit room. The closer that the hand (i.e., the Navy ship) is moved to the candle (the ballistic missile launcher), the larger becomes the hand's shadow on the far wall (the down-range area that the ship can help defend against ballistic missile attack). In BMD parlance, the area in shadow is referred to as the defended footprint.

² TBMs include, in ascending order of range, short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), which generally fly up to about 600 kilometers (about 324 nautical miles), medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), which generally fly up to about 1,300 kilometers (about 702 nm), and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), which generally fly up to about 5,500 kilometers (about 2,970 nm). Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) are longer-ranged missiles that can fly 10,000 kilometers (about 5,400 nm) or more. Although ICBMs can be used to attack targets within their own military theater, they are not referred to as TBMs.

might be easier to intercept (in part because the missile is flying relatively slowly and is readily seen by radar), and the debris from a missile intercepted during its boost phase might be more likely to not fall on or near the intended target of the attacking missile.

Potential Limitations. Potential limitations of sea-based BMD systems compared to other BMD systems include the following:

- **Conflicts with other ship missions.** Using multimission Navy cruisers and destroyers for BMD operations might reduce their ability to perform other missions, such as air-defense operations against aircraft and anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), land-attack operations, and anti-submarine warfare operations, for four reasons:
 - Conducting BMD operations might require a ship to operate in a location that is unsuitable for performing one or more other missions.
 - Conducting BMD operations may reduce a ship's ability to conduct air-defense operations against aircraft and cruise missiles due to limits on ship radar abilities.
 - BMD interceptors occupy ship weapon-launch tubes that might otherwise be used for air-defense, land-attack, or anti-submarine weapons.
 - Launching a BMD interceptor from a submarine might give away the submarine's location, which might make it more difficult for the submarine to perform missions that require stealthy operations (and potentially make the submarine more vulnerable to attack).

- **Costs relative to ground-based systems.** A sea-based system might be more expensive to procure than an equivalent ground-based system due to the potential need to engineer the sea-based system to resist the corrosive marine environment, resist electromagnetic interference from other powerful shipboard systems and meet shipboard safety requirements, or fit into a limited space aboard ship. A BMD system on a ship or floating platform that is dedicated to BMD operations might be more expensive to operate and support than an equivalent ground-based system due to the maintenance costs associated with operating the ship or platform in the marine environment and the need for a crew of some size to operate the ship or platform.

- **Ship quantities for forward deployments.** Maintaining a standing presence of a Navy BMD ship in a location where other Navy missions do not require such a deployment, and where there is no nearby U.S. home port, can require a total commitment of several

Navy ships, due to the mathematics of maintaining Navy ship forward deployments.³

- **Vulnerability to attack.** A sea-based BMD system operating in a forward location might be more vulnerable to enemy attack than a ground-based system, particularly a ground-based system located in a less-forward location. Defending a sea-based system against potential attack could require the presence of additional Navy ships or other forces.
- **Rough waters.** Very rough waters might inhibit a crew's ability to operate a ship's systems, including its BMD systems, potentially creating occasional gaps in BMD coverage.

Arms Control Considerations

No arms control treaty currently in force limits sea-based BMD systems.⁴

Aegis BMD Program⁵

The Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (Aegis BMD) program is DOD's primary sea-based BMD program. The program includes an Aegis BMD midcourse program and a sea-based terminal program. Each of these is discussed below.

Midcourse Program

Program Origin. The Aegis BMD midcourse program was created by the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) in 2002. Earlier names for the program include the Sea-Based Midcourse program, the Navy Theater Wide Defense program, and the

³ For more on the mathematics of Navy ship forward deployments, see CRS Report RS21338, *Navy Ship Deployments: New Approaches — Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

⁴ The U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which was in force from 1972 until the United States withdrew from the treaty in 2002, prohibited sea-based defenses against strategic (i.e., long-range) ballistic missiles. Article V of the treaty states in part: "Each Party undertakes not to develop, test, or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based." Article II defines an ABM system as "a system to counter strategic ballistic missiles or their elements in flight trajectory...." For more on the ABM Treaty, see CRS Report RL30033, *Arms Control and Nonproliferation Activities: A Catalog of Recent Events*, by Amy F. Woolf, coordinator, et al. The United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002, according to the treaty's procedures for doing so. For a discussion, see CRS Report RS21088, *Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty: Legal Considerations*, by David M. Ackerman.

⁵ Unless otherwise stated, information on the Aegis BMD program is taken from an April 2006 Missile Defense Agency (MDA) briefing on the Aegis BMD program — "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense, Aegis BMD Update and Plans, Briefing to the Future Naval Plans & Requirements Conference," Scott Perry, Aegis BMD [Program Office], April 26, 2006, 22 pp.

Sea-Based Upper Tier program. The program is the successor to earlier sea-based BMD development efforts dating back to the early 1990s.⁶

The Aegis BMD program office is an MDA directorate that reports directly to the director of MDA. MDA provides direction, funding, and guidance to the Aegis BMD program office and is the acquisition executive for the program. To execute the program, the Aegis BMD program office was established as a Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) field activity. NAVSEA provides administrative support (e.g., contracting, comptroller, and security) to the Aegis BMD program office.

Intended Capabilities. The Aegis BMD system in its current configuration (called the Block 2004 configuration; see discussion below) is designed to:

- detect and track ballistic missiles of any range, including ICBMs, and
- intercept short-, and medium-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs and MRBMs above the atmosphere (i.e., exo-atmospherically) during their midcourse phase of flight.

When tracking ICBMs, Aegis BMD ships are to act as sensor platforms providing fire-control-quality tracking data to the overall U.S. BMD architecture.

The Aegis BMD system in its current configuration is *not* designed to:

- intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) or
- intercept ballistic missiles inside the atmosphere, during either their initial boost phase of flight or their final (terminal) phase of flight.

In contrast to the current configuration of the Aegis BMD system, the ground-based midcourse BMD program, with interceptors based in Alaska and California, is designed to intercept ICBMs in the midcourse phase of flight. Discussions comparing the current configuration of the Aegis BMD system and the ground-based midcourse program have not always noted this basic difference in the kinds of ballistic missiles they are intended to intercept.

⁶ The Aegis BMD program is the successor to the Aegis LEAP Intercept (ALI) Flight Demonstration Project (FDP), which in turn was preceded by the Terrier Lightweight Exo-Atmospheric Projectile (LEAP) Project, an effort that began in the early 1990s. Terrier is an older Navy SAM replaced in fleet use by the Standard Missile. Although succeeded by the Standard Missile in fleet use, the Navy continued to use the Terrier missile for development and testing.

As mentioned in an earlier footnote (see section on arms control considerations), the ABM Treaty, which was in force until 2002, prohibited sea-based defenses against strategic (i.e., long-range) ballistic missiles. Navy BMD development activities that took place prior to 2002 were permissible under the ABM treaty because they were not aimed at developing technologies for countering long-range ballistic missiles.

Aegis Ships. The Aegis BMD system builds on the capabilities of the Navy's Aegis ship combat system, which was originally developed for defending ships against aircraft, anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), surface threats, and subsurface threats.⁷ The Aegis system was first deployed by the Navy in 1983, and has been updated several times since. The part of the Aegis combat system for countering aircraft and ASCMs is called the Aegis Weapon System. Key components of the Aegis Weapon System relevant to this discussion include the following:

- the SPY-1 radar — a powerful, phased-array, multifunction radar that is designed to detect and track multiple targets in flight, and to provide midcourse guidance to interceptor missiles;
- a suite of computers running the Aegis fire control and battle-management computer program; and
- the Standard Missile (SM) — the Navy's longer-ranged surface-to-air missile (SAM), so called because it was first developed many years ago as a common, or standard, replacement for a variety of older Navy SAMs.⁸

The version of the Standard Missile currently used for air-defense operations is called the SM-2 Block IV, meaning the fourth upgrade to the second major version of the Standard Missile. The Navy is developing a new version of the Standard Missile for future air-defense operations called the SM-6 Extended Range Active Missile (SM-6 ERAM).

U.S. Navy ships equipped with the Aegis system include Ticonderoga (CG-47) class cruisers and Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) class destroyers. A total of 27 CG-47s were procured for the Navy between FY1978 and FY1988; the ships entered service between 1983 and 1994. The first five, which were built to an earlier technical standard, were judged by the Navy to be too expensive to modernize and were removed from service in 2004-2005. The Navy currently plans to keep the remaining 22 ships in service to age 35.

A total of 62 DDG-51s were procured for the Navy between FY1985 and FY2005; the first entered service in 1991 and the 62nd is scheduled to enter service in late 2010 or early 2011. The Navy currently plans to keep them in service to age 35.

Between 2010/2011, when the 62nd DDG-51 enters service, and 2021, when the first of the 22 remaining CG-47s reaches age 35, the Navy plans to maintain a force of 84 Aegis ships — 22 cruisers and 62 destroyers.

⁷ The Aegis system is named after the mythological shield carried by Zeus.

⁸ For more on the Aegis system and its principal components as originally deployed, see CRS Report 84-180 F, *The Aegis Anti-Air Warfare System: Its Principal Components, Its Installation on the CG-47 and DDG-51 Class Ships, and its Effectiveness*, by Ronald O'Rourke. (October 24, 1984) This report is out of print and is available directly from the author.

Sales of the Aegis system to allied countries began in the late 1980s. Allied countries that now operate, are building, or are planning to build Aegis-equipped ships include Japan (the first foreign buyer, with 4 destroyers in service and 2 more under construction), South Korea (3 destroyers under construction or planned), Australia (3 destroyers planned), Spain (4 frigates in service and 1 or 2 more planned), and Norway (1 frigate in service and 4 more under construction or planned).⁹ The Norwegian frigates are somewhat smaller than the other Aegis ships, and consequently carry a reduced-size version of the Aegis system that includes a smaller, less-powerful version of the SPY-1 radar.

Modification Schedule and Initial Deployments. Modifying an Aegis ship for BMD operations involves making two principal changes:

- changing the Aegis computer program to permit the SPY-1 radar to detect and track high-flying ballistic missiles; and
- arming the ship with a BMD version of the Standard Missile called the SM-3 Block 1A.

A ship with the first modification is referred to as having a long-range search and track (LRS&T) capability. A ship with both modifications is referred to as an engage-capable ship. Modifying each ship reportedly takes about six weeks and costs about \$10.5 million.¹⁰

The SM-3 Block IA is equipped with a kinetic (i.e., non-explosive) warhead designed to destroy a ballistic missile's warhead by colliding with it outside the atmosphere, during the enemy missile's midcourse phase of flight. It is intended to intercept SRBMs and MRBMs. An improved version, the Block IB, is to offer some capability for intercepting intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs). The Block IA and IB do not fly fast enough to offer a substantial capability for intercepting ICBMs.¹¹

A faster-flying version of the SM-3, called the Block II/IIA, is now being developed (see discussion below). The Block II/IIA version is intended to give Aegis BMD ships a capability for intercepting certain ICBMs.

Current DOD plans call for modifying 18 U.S. Aegis ships — 3 cruisers and 15 destroyers — with the Aegis BMD capability. **Table 1** shows the planned installation schedule as of October 2006. Under this schedule, some of the 18 ships will be modified in two steps, with the LRS&T capability being added first, and the

⁹ Source: *Jane's Fighting Ships 2006-2007*. Numbers of ships are planned eventual totals.

¹⁰ Jack Dorsey, "Navy On Front Line Of Missile Defense," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, October 21, 2006.

¹¹ Longer-range ballistic missiles generally fly faster than shorter-range ballistic missiles. Consequently, intercepting a longer-range missile generally requires a faster-flying interceptor than is required for intercepting a shorter-range ballistic missile. The SM-3 Block IA and 1B fly fast enough to intercept TBMs, but not fast enough to provide an effective capability for intercepting ICBMs.

SM-3 missile being added at a later point. Thus, in **Table 1**, some ships shown as LRS&T ships in earlier years migrate to the engage-capable category in later years. As can be seen in the table, the schedule calls for the Navy to have 10 LRS&T ships plus 6 engage-capable ships by the end of calendar 2006 — with all 16 ships reportedly to be based in the Pacific Fleet, at least for the time being, according to one report¹² — and 18 engage-capable ships by the end of calendar 2009.

Table 1. Aegis BMD Installation Schedule
(as of October 4, 2006)

	Cumulative total by end of calendar year					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>LRS&T ships</i>						
CG-47s	1	0	0	0	0	0
DDG-51s	5	9	10	8	1	0
Subtotal	6	9	10	8	1	0
<i>Engage-capable ships</i>						
CG-47s	0	2 ^a	3	3	3	3
DDG-51s	0	0	3	6	14	15
Subtotal	0	2 ^a	6	9	17	18
<i>Total LRS&T Engage-capable ships</i>						
	6	11	16	17	18	18

Source: U.S. Navy data provided to CRS by Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, October 11, 2006.

a. Emergency (i.e., preliminary) engage capability.

Initial Deployments. LRS&T Aegis destroyers began operating in September 2004. Engage-capable Aegis cruisers began operating in September 2005.¹³

Development, Testing, and Certification. Block Development Strategy. Consistent with the approach used for other parts of DOD's BMD acquisition effort, the Aegis BMD system is being developed and deployed in a series of increasingly capable versions, or blocks, that are named after their approximate anticipated years of deployment:

- The current **Block 2004** version includes the SM-3 Block IA missile and a version of the Aegis computer program called Aegis BMD 3.6, which allows the ship to perform BMD operations and other warfare operations (such as air defense) at the same time. (The previous 3.0

¹² Jack Dorsey, "Navy On Front Line Of Missile Defense," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, October 21, 2006.

¹³ The engage-capable cruisers conducted their first operations with an emergency (i.e., preliminary) version of the engagement capability.

version of the computer program did not permit this.)¹⁴ The Block 2004 version is intended to counter SRBMs and MRBMs.

- The **Block 2006/2008** version is to include various improvements, including the Block IB version of the SM-3 and the Aegis BMD signal processor (Aegis BSP) — a radar signal and data processor that improves the SPY-1's ballistic missile target-discrimination performance. The improvements are intended to, among other things, give the system a limited ability to intercept IRBMs.
- The **Block 2010/2012/2014** version is to include further improvements, including the Block II version of the SM-3 around 2013, and the Block IIA version in 2015. The improvements are intended to, among other things, give the system some ability to counter ICBMs. This version will also incorporate changes intended to make the system suitable for broader international ship participation.

Flight Tests. From January 2002 through April 2007, the Aegis BMD system has achieved eight successful exo-atmospheric intercepts in 10 flight tests.

Another CRS report, based on historical flight test data provided by MDA to CRS in June 2005, summarizes early sea-based BMD tests as follows:

The Navy developed its own indigenous LEAP program, which flight tested from 1992-1995. Three non-intercept flight tests achieved all primary and secondary objectives. Of the five planned intercept tests, only the second was considered a successful intercept, however. Failures were due to various hardware, software, and launch problems. Even so, the Navy determined that it achieved about 82% of its primary objectives (18 of 22) and all of its secondary objectives in these tests.¹⁵

Regarding the Aegis BMD program's development approach, the Aegis BMD program office stated:

We have an expression in the Navy and the Aegis BMD program, "test a little, learn a lot." Test more and more and more.... More importantly, the Navy has chosen to work with the Test and Evaluation community to get the most operationally relevant scenarios we can. The [engage-capable Aegis cruiser] USS Lake Erie, on our last few shots, was on a simulated patrol mission. It had a window of vulnerability — read hours — that they could launch. That was all the pre-alert they had, with the exception that the captain was notified of that launch time for safety. Only the ships' crews man the consoles; there are no

¹⁴ For further discussion of the multimission capability of the 3.6 program see Christopher P. Cavas, "U.S. Warships To Get Missile Defense Upgrades," *Defense News*, October 9, 2006: 4.

¹⁵ CRS Report RL33240, *Kinetic Energy Kill for Ballistic Missile Defense: A Status Overview*, by Steven A. Hildreth.

technicians there from outside to help the crew. The forward deployed [BMD-equipped Aegis] ships are operating with this capability.¹⁶

MDA similarly stated that:

The test program for Aegis BMD has focused on the philosophy of “test a little, learn a lot” since its inception in the early 1990’s with the TERRIER Lightweight Exo-Atmospheric Projectile (LEAP) Project. TERRIER LEAP included four flight tests between 1992 and 1995, and was successful in demonstrating that LEAP technology could be integrated into a sea-based tactical missile for exoatmospheric ballistic missile defense.

The lessons learned from TERRIER LEAP evolved into the Aegis LEAP Intercept (ALI) Flight Demonstration Project (FDP), the goal of which was to utilize the Aegis Weapons System and Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) to hit a ballistic missile in the exoatmosphere. The ALI test objectives were achieved with two successful descent phase intercepts of a ballistic missile during Flight Mission 2 (FM-2) and FM-3 in January 2002 and June 2002 respectively firing an SM-3 from the [Aegis cruiser] USS LAKE ERIE.

The transition of ALI to an Aegis BMD capability commenced with FM-4 in November of 2002 with USS LAKE ERIE, executing the first successful ascent phase intercept of a short range ballistic missile (SRBM) by the Aegis BMD element.¹⁷

Table 2 below summarizes seven ALI and Aegis BMD flight tests (called FTM-2 through FTM-8, with the FTM standing for “flight test mission¹⁸) conducted between January 2002 and November 2005. As shown in the table, 6 of the 7 tests resulted in successful intercepts.

¹⁶ A. Brad Hicks, *Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System*. Washington, George C. Marshall Institute, 2005(?). (Washington Roundtable on Science & Public Policy, December 19, 2005) p. 13.

¹⁷ “Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense,” MDA fact sheet, January 30, 2004.

¹⁸ In some presentations, the flight tests are referred to as FM-2, etc., without the “T.”

Table 2. ALI and Aegis BMD Flight Tests

Test name	FTM-2	FTM-3	FTM-4	FTM-5	FTM-6	FTM-7	FTM-8
Date	1/22/02	6/13/02	11/21/02	6/18/03	12/11/03	2/24/05	11/17/05
Target apogee	300km	300km	160km	160km	160km	160km	227km
Target range	500km	500km	600km	600km	600km	600km	925km
Aegis computer program	ALI 1.2	ALI 1.2	ALI 2.0	ALI 2.0	ALI 2.2.2	BMD 3.0	BMD 3.0
SM-3 version	Block 0	Block 0	Block 0	Block 0	Block 0	Block 1	Block 1
Engagement sequence	Uncued	Uncued	Uncued	Cued*	Cued*	Uncued	Uncued
Intercept down range	430km	430km	250km	250km	482km	250km	462km
Intercept cross range	240km	240km	200km	150km	248km	150km	150km
Crew disclosure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Ship's heading	Steady	Steady	Steady	Steady	Maneuvering	Maneuvering	Maneuvering
Target flight phase	Descent	Descent	Ascent	Ascent	Descent	Descent	Descent
Lethal aimpoint	No	No	Aimpoint shift	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kinetic warhead intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense, Aegis BMD Update and Plans," Briefing to the Future Naval Plans & Requirements Conference, Scott Perry, Aegis BMD [Program], April 26, 2006, slide 11.

* Aegis ship to Aegis ship and external sensor to Aegis ship.

On June 22, 2006, an eighth Aegis BMD flight test called FTM-10 resulted in a seventh successful exo-atmospheric intercept in eight attempts. This was the first test to use the Aegis 3.6 computer program.¹⁹

The ninth Aegis BMD flight test, on December 7, 2006, was not successful, and was the first unsuccessful flight test since June 2003. MDA states that the ninth test, called FTM-11,

¹⁹ For additional information on this test, see Missile Defense Agency, "Missile Defense Test Results in Successful 'Hit To Kill' Intercept," June 22, 2006 (06-NEWS-0018); the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory press release, "Ballistic Missile Defense Flight Test a Success," June 23, 2006, the Lockheed Martin press release, "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Weapon System Guides Missiles to Seventh Successful Target Intercept," June 22, 2006; Zachary M. Peterson, "Navy And Missile Defense Agency Intercept Separating Target," *Inside the Navy*, June 26, 2006; and "Take Two: Missile Defense Test A Success," *NavyTimes.com*, June 23, 2006.

was not completed due to an incorrect system setting aboard the Aegis-class cruiser USS Lake Erie prior to the launch of two interceptor missiles from the ship. The incorrect configuration prevented the fire control system aboard the ship from launching the first of the two interceptor missiles. Since a primary test objective was a near-simultaneous launch of two missiles against two different targets, the second interceptor missile was intentionally not launched.

The planned test was to involve the launch of a Standard Missile 3 against a ballistic missile target and a Standard Missile 2 against a surrogate aircraft target. The ballistic missile target was launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Kauai, Hawaii and the aircraft target was launched from a Navy aircraft. The USS Lake Erie (CG 70), USS Hopper (DDG 70) and the Royal Netherlands Navy frigate TROMP were all successful in detecting and tracking their respective targets. Both targets fell into the ocean as planned.

After a thorough review, the Missile Defense Agency and the U.S. Navy will determine a new test date.²⁰

A news article about the test stated:

“You can say it’s seven of nine, rather than eight of nine,” Missile Defense Agency spokesman Chris Taylor said of the second failure in tests of the system by the agency and the Navy....

The drill was planned to demonstrate the Navy’s ability to knock down two incoming missiles at once from the same ship.

“In a real world situation it is possible, maybe even probable, that in addition to engaging a ballistic missile threat that was launched, you may be engaging a surface action,” said Joe Rappisi before the test. He is director for the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system at Lockheed Martin, the primary contractor for the program.

The test would have marked the first time a ship has shot down one target in space and another target in the air at the same time.

The test presented a greater challenge to the ship’s crew and the ballistic missile defense system than previous tests, Rappisi said. The multiple target scenario is also closer to what sailors might actually face in battle.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet has been gradually installing missile surveillance and tracking technology on many of its destroyers and cruisers amid concerns about North Korea’s long-range missile program.

It is also installing interceptor missiles on many of its ships, even as the technology to track and shoot down incoming missiles is being developed and perfected.

The Royal Netherlands Navy joined the tracking and monitoring off Kauai to see how its equipment works. The Dutch presence marked the first time a

²⁰ Untitled Missile Defense Agency “For Your Information” statement dated December 7, 2006 (06-FYI-0090).

European ally has sent one of its vessels to participate in a U.S. ballistic missile defense test.²¹

A subsequent news article stated that:

the test abort of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system Dec. 7 resulted from human error, [MDA Director USAF Lt. Gen. Henry] Obering says.... Both the ballistic missile and aircraft targets launched as planned, but the first interceptor failed to fire because an operator had selected an incorrect setting for the test. Officials then aborted before the second could boost.

Aegis missile defense system tests are at a standstill until officials are able to identify an appropriate ballistic missile target. The one used Dec. 7 was the last of its kind, Obering says, leaving them empty handed in the near future.²²

Another article stated:

Philip Coyle, a former head of the Pentagon's testing directorate, gives the Navy credit for "discipline and successes so far" in its sea-based ballistic missile defense testing program. Coyle is now a senior adviser at the Center for Defense Information.

"The U.S. Navy has an enviable track record of successful flight intercept tests, and is making the most of its current, limited Aegis missile defense capabilities in these tests," Coyle told [*Inside the Navy*] Dec. 7.

"Difficulties such as those that delayed the latest flight intercept attempt illustrate the complexity of the system, and how everything must be carefully orchestrated to achieve success," Coyle added. "Nevertheless, this particular setback won't take the Navy long to correct."²³

The tenth Aegis BMD flight test, conducted on April 26, 2007, was successful. MDA states that the test

involved the simultaneous engagements of a ballistic missile "unitary" target (meaning that the target warhead and booster remain attached) and a surrogate hostile air target....

The test demonstrated the [Aegis ship's] ability to engage a ballistic missile threat and defend itself from attack at the same time. The test also demonstrated the effectiveness of engineering, manufacturing, and mission assurance changes in the solid divert and attitude control system (SDACS) in the kinetic kill

²¹ David Briscoe, "Test Interceptor Missile Fails To Launch," *NavyTimes.com*, December 8, 2006.

²² Amy Butler, "GMD Trial Delayed Until Spring; Aegis Failure Human Error," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, December 19, 2006.

²³ Zachary M. Peterson, "Sea-Based Missile Defense Test Fails Due To 'Incorrect Configuration,'" *Inside the Navy*, December 11, 2006.

weapon. This was the first flight test of all the SM-3 Block IA's upgrades, previously demonstrated in ground tests.²⁴

A press report on the test stated that the hostile air target was an anti-ship cruise missile. The article stated that the scenario for the test

called for the [Aegis ship] to come under attack from a cruise missile fired by an enemy plane.... A Navy plane fired the cruise missile target used in the test.²⁵

Certification. On September 11, 2006, the Navy and MDA certified the version of the Aegis BMD system using the Aegis BMD 3.6 computer program for tactical deployment.²⁶

SM-3 Block II/IIA Missile (Cooperative Program With Japan). Under a memorandum of agreement signed in 1999, the United States and Japan have cooperated in researching technologies for the Block II/IIA version of the SM-3. The cooperative research has focused on risk reduction for four parts of the missile: the sensor, an advanced kinetic warhead, the second-stage propulsion, and a lightweight nose cone.

In contrast to the Block IA/IB version of the SM-3, which has a 21-inch-diameter booster stage but is 13.5 inches in diameter along the remainder of its length, the Block II/IIA version would have a 21-inch diameter along its entire length. The increase in diameter to a uniform 21 inches is to give the missile a burnout velocity (a maximum velocity, reached at the time the propulsion stack burns out) that is 45% to 60% greater than that of the Block IA/IB version.²⁷ The Block IIA version would also include an improved kinetic warhead.²⁸ MDA states that the

²⁴ Missile Defense Agency, "Successful Sea-Based Missile Defense 'Hit to Kill' Intercept," April 26, 2007 (07-NEWS-0032).

²⁵ Audrey McAvoy, "Aegis Missile Test Successful," *NavyTimes.com*, April 27, 2007.

²⁶ See Missile Defense Agency, "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Weapon System Gains Fleet Certification," September 1, 2006 (06-FYI-0082); and Lockheed Martin, "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Weapon System Gains Fleet Certification," September 11, 2006.

²⁷ The 13.5-inch version has a reported burnout velocity of 3.0 to 3.5 kilometers per second (kps). See, for example, J. D. Marshall, *The Future Of Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense*, point paper dated October 15, 2004, available at [<http://www.marshall.org/pdf/materials/259.pdf>]; "STANDARD Missile-3 Destroyers a Ballistic Missile Target in Test of Sea-based Missile Defense System," Raytheon news release circa January 26, 2002, available on the Internet at [http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/micro_stories.pl?ACCT=683194&TICK=RTN4&STORY=/www/story/01-26-2002/0001655926&EDATE=Jan+26,+2002]; and Hans Mark, "A White Paper on the Defense Against Ballistic Missiles," *The Bridge*, summer 2001, pp. 17-26, available on the Internet at [[http://www.nae.edu/nae/bridgecom.nsf/weblinks/NAEW-63BM86/\\$FILE/BrSum01.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.nae.edu/nae/bridgecom.nsf/weblinks/NAEW-63BM86/$FILE/BrSum01.pdf?OpenElement)]. See also the section on "Sea-Based Midcourse" in CRS Report RL31111, *Missile Defense: The Current Debate*, coordinated by Steven A. Hildreth.

²⁸ Source for information on SM-3: Missile Defense Agency, "Aegis Ballistic Missile (continued...)"

Block II/IIA version could “engage many [ballistic missile] targets that would outpace, fly over, or be beyond the engagement range” of earlier versions of the SM-3, and that

the net result, when coupled with enhanced discrimination capability, is more types and ranges of engageable [ballistic missile] targets; with greater probability of kill, and a large increase in defended “footprint” or geography predicted.... The SM-3 Blk II/IIA missile with it[s] full 21-inch propulsion stack provides the necessary fly out acceleration to engage IRBM and certain ICBM threats.²⁹

MDA estimates that the Block II version of the missile could enter service around 2013, and the Block IIA version in 2015.

Sea-Based Terminal Program

In addition to the midcourse program described above, which is intended to intercept ballistic missiles outside the atmosphere, during the midcourse phase of flight, the Aegis BMD program includes a second effort, called the sea-based terminal capability, to develop a complementary sea-based capability for intercepting TBMs in the final, or descent, phase of flight, after the missiles reentered the atmosphere, so as provide local-area defense of U.S. ships as well as friendly forces, ports, airfields, and other critical assets ashore. The sea-based terminal effort is the successor to an earlier effort to achieve such a capability that was called the Navy Area Defense (NAD) program or Navy Area TBMD (Theater BMD) program, and before that, the Sea-Based Terminal or Navy Lower Tier program.

The NAD system was to have been deployed on Navy Aegis ships. The program involved modifying the SM-2 Block IV air-defense missile. The missile, as modified, was called the Block IVA version. The system was designed to intercept descending missiles endo-atmospherically (i.e., within the atmosphere) and destroy them with the Block IVA missile’s blast-fragmentation warhead.

In December 2001, DOD announced that it had canceled the NAD program. In announcing its decision, DOD cited poor performance, significant cost overruns, and substantial development delays. DOD stated that the program’s unit acquisition and unit procurement costs had risen 57% and 65%, respectively.³⁰

²⁸ (...continued)

Defense SM-3 Block IIA (21-Inch) Missile Plan (U), August 2005,” a 9-page point paper provided by MDA to CRS, August 24, 2005.

²⁹ “Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense SM-3 Block IIA (21-Inch) Missile Plan (U), August 2005,” *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

³⁰ Acquisition cost is the sum of procurement cost plus research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) cost. In announcing the cancellation, DOD cited the Nunn-McCurdy provision, a defense acquisition law enacted in 1981. Under the provision as it existed in 2001, a major defense acquisition program experienced what is called a Nunn-McCurdy unit cost breach when its projected unit cost increased by at least 15%. If the increase reached 25%, the Secretary of Defense, to permit the program to continue, must certify that the
(continued...)

Following cancellation of the NAD program, DOD officials stated that the requirement for a sea-based terminal BMD system remained intact. This led some observers to believe that a replacement for the NAD program might be initiated. In May 2002, however, DOD announced that instead of starting a replacement program, MDA had instead decided on a two-part strategy to (1) modify the SM-3 missile to intercept ballistic missiles at somewhat lower altitudes, and (2) modify the fuzes on the Navy's inventory of about 100 SM-2 Block IV air defense missiles so that these missiles can cover some of the remaining portion of the sea-based terminal defense requirement. The modified Block IV missile uses a blast-fragmentation warhead similar in concept to that used in the Israeli Arrow BMD interceptor. DOD officials said the two modified missiles could together provide much (but not all) of the capability that was to have been provided by the Block IVA missile. One aim of the modification strategy, DOD officials suggested, was to avoid the added costs to the BMD program of starting a replacement sea-based terminal defense program.³¹

MDA stated in 2006 that:

There is currently no sea-based terminal ballistic missile defense capability. The Navy Area [Defense] Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (TBMD) Program, had been under development, but was terminated in December 2001. In ballistic missile defense, the modified Aegis Weapon System, with a modified SM-2 Block IV missile provides a near term, limited emergency capability against a very specific segment of the ballistic missile threat. The Navy and MDA consider it vital to develop a more robust capability for terminal ballistic missile defense of the joint sea base and friendly force embarkation points ashore.³²

³⁰ (...continued)

program is essential to national security, that there are no alternatives to the program that would provide equal or greater military capability at less cost, that new estimates of the program's unit acquisition cost or unit procurement cost appear reasonable, and that the management structure for the program is adequate to control the program's unit acquisition or unit procurement cost.

Edward C. "Pete" Aldridge, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics — the Pentagon's chief acquisition executive — concluded, after examining the NAD program, that he could not recommend to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that he make such a certification. Rumsfeld accepted Aldridge's recommendation and declined to issue the certification, triggering the program's cancellation. This was the first defense acquisition program that DOD officials could recall having been canceled as a result of a decision to not certify under a Nunn-McCurdy unit cost breach. ("Navy Area Missile Defense Program Cancelled," Department of Defense News Release No. 637-01, December 14, 2001; James Dao, "Navy Missile Defense Plan Is Canceled By the Pentagon," *New York Times*, December 16, 2001; Gopal Ratnam, "Raytheon Chief Asks DOD To Revive Navy Program," *Defense News*, January 14-20, 2002: 10.)

³¹ Zachary M. Peterson, "Navy To Field Terminal Phase, Sea-Based Missile Defense Capability," *Inside the Navy*, June 5, 2006; Gopal Ratnam, "U.S. Studies New Solution To Naval Missile Defense," *Defense News*, May 13-19, 2002: 4; Randy Woods, "DOD Scraps Navy Area Requirements, Will Expand Midcourse System," *Inside the Navy*, May 6, 2002.

³² Missile Defense Agency, "First at-Sea Demonstration of Sea-Based Terminal Capability Successfully Completed," May 24, 2006 (06-FYI-0079).

MDA's FY2008 budget submission for the Aegis BMD program divides the sea-based terminal program into a near-term (Block 2008) capability and a far-term (Block 2014) capability. The Block 2008 capability includes the fuze-modified SM-2 Block IV and is to provide a near-term sea-based terminal capability against a finite set of SRBMs. The Navy (not MDA) is funding the modification of 100 SM-2 Block IV missiles. This capability is scheduled to enter service in FY2009. MDA states that the Block 2014 capability is envisioned as including a new type of missile, the design of which is not yet determined, that is to provide a more capable and robust sea-based terminal capability.

A modified Block SM-2 IV missile successfully intercepted a target ballistic missile inside the atmosphere, during the terminal phase of flight, in a test conducted on May 24, 2006.³³

DOD Inspector General Report

A March 2006 DOD Inspector General Report on system engineering for DOD's overall missile effort stated:

Although the Aegis BMD element manager (the element manager) followed many of the systems engineering processes described in the Defense Acquisition Guidebook, she had not completed several systems engineering documents and processes that are important to transition the Aegis BMD Element (the element) capabilities for Block [20]04 to the Navy.³⁴

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report

A March 2007 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report assessing the status of selected weapon programs stated of the Aegis BMD program:

According to program officials, the Block 1A missile being fielded during 2006-2007 has mature technologies and a stable design. However, we believe that two critical technologies are less mature because full functionality of these two capabilities of the new missile has not been demonstrated in a realistic environment. If events occur that require the new capability, program officials believe the upgrades will perform as expected. Even without them, officials noted that the missile provides a credible defense against the Block 2004 threat

³³ See Missile Defense Agency, "First at-Sea Demonstration of Sea-Based Terminal Capability Successfully Completed," May 24, 2006 (06-FYI-0079); Gregg K. Kakesako, "Missile Defense System Makes History," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 25, 2006; Audrey McAvoy, "Ship Shoots Down Test Missile For The First Time," *NavyTimes.com*, May 25, 2006; "Navy, MDA Announce First Terminal Sea-Based Intercept," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, May 26, 2006; Zachary M. Peterson, "Navy Conducts First Sea-Based Terminal Phase Missile Defense Test," *Inside the Navy*, May 29, 2006; and Jeremy Singer, "Sea-Based Terminal May Boost U.S. Missile Defense Capability," *Space News* (www.space.com), June 12, 2006.

³⁴ Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, *Acquisition: System Engineering Planning for the Ballistic Missile Defense System (D-2006-060)*, March 2, 2006 (redacted version), p. 9. The report elaborates on the situation in detail on pages 9-16.

set and some of the Block 2006 threat set. All drawings have been released to manufacturing. The program is not collecting statistical data on its production process of the Block 1A missile but is using other means to gauge production readiness....

Technology Maturity

Program officials believe that all three technologies critical to the SM-3 Block 1A missile are mature. However, we believe that two of these critical technologies are less mature. The warhead's seeker has been fully demonstrated in flight tests and is mature. We believe two other technologies, which were upgraded to create the SM-3 Block 1A, are less mature: the Solid Divert and Attitude Control System (SDACS) and the Third Stage Rocket Motor. While some modes of these technologies have been demonstrated in flight tests, the "pulse mode" of the SDACS, which provides endgame divert for the kinetic warhead, and the "zero pulse mode" of the Third Stage Rocket Motor, which increases the missile's capability against shorter-range threats, have not been successfully flight-tested. The SDACS operation in pulse mode failed during a June 2003 flight test. According to program officials, the test failure was a result of multiple issues with the original design. The program has implemented changes to address these problems. While recent ground tests have demonstrated performance of the new configuration, the changes have not yet been flight tested. A flight test in December 2006 that would have partially demonstrated the pulse SDACS was not completed because the missile failed to launch. A flight test that will fully test the new SDACS design is not planned until 2008.

The Third Stage Rocket Motor is capable of three modes of operation, two of which have been added in Block 2006. While both new modes failed initial ground testing, one was later successfully flight tested in June 2006 after design changes. The second, zero pulse mode, has also undergone design changes. While program officials believe they have a working design and that the missile can use this mode if needed, it has not yet been flight-tested. The first flight-test that could demonstrate this capability is not scheduled until fiscal year 2009.

Design Stability

Program officials reported that the design for the SM-3 Block 1A missiles being produced during Block 2006 is stable with 100 percent of its drawings released to manufacturing. Although two upgrades to the SM-3 Block 1A missile have not been fully flight-tested, the program does not anticipate any additional design changes related to these upgrades.

Production Maturity

We did not assess the production maturity of the 22 SM-3 missiles being procured for Block 2006. Program officials stated that the contractor's processes are not yet mature enough to statistically track production processes. The Aegis BMD program is using other means to assess progress in production and manufacturing, such as tracking rework hours, cost of defects per unit, and other defect and test data.

Other Program Issues

The Aegis BMD element builds upon the existing capabilities of Aegis-equipped Navy cruisers and destroyers. Planned hardware and software upgrades to these ships will enable them to carry out the ballistic missile defense mission. In particular, the program is upgrading Aegis destroyers for long-range surveillance and tracking of intercontinental ballistic missiles. The program plans to complete the upgrade of 14 destroyers by the end of the Block 2006 period. In several events, this functionality has been successfully tested, but it has never been validated in an end-to-end flight test with the GMD system, for which it is providing long-range surveillance and tracking. Since our last assessment, Aegis BMD's planned budget through fiscal year 2009 increased by \$362.4 million (4.2 percent), primarily in fiscal years 2008 and 2009.³⁵

Aegis BMD Program Funding

The Aegis BMD program received \$1,122.7 million in FY2007 Missile Defense Agency (MDA) research and development funds. For FY2008, MDA is requesting \$1,059.1 million in research and development funds for the program. The program also receives additional Navy funds for efforts such as modifying the SM-2 Block IV missiles to be used in the near-term (Block 2008) sea-based terminal capability.

Table 3 shows actual or programmed annual funding for the Aegis BMD program from FY1995 through FY2013.

³⁵ Government Accountability Office, *Defense Acquisitions: Assessments of Selected Weapon Programs*, GAO-07-406SP, March 2007, pp. 27-28.

Table 3. Aegis BMD Program Funding, FY1995-FY2013
(millions of dollars, rounded to the nearest tenth)

FY95	75.0
FY96	200.4
FY97	304.2
FY98	410.0
FY99	338.4
FY00	380.0
FY01	462.7
FY02	476.0
FY03	464.0
FY04	726.2
FY05	1,159.8
FY06	893.0
FY07	1,122.7
<i>FY08</i>	<i>1,059.1</i>
<i>FY09</i>	<i>1,129.4</i>
<i>FY10</i>	<i>1,030.5</i>
<i>FY11</i>	<i>987.8</i>
<i>FY12</i>	<i>1,205.5</i>
<i>FY13</i>	<i>1,059.3</i>

Sources: For FY1995 through FY2005: DOD Information Paper provided to CRS by Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, November 14, 2006. For FY2006-FY2013: FY2008 MDA budget justification book for Aegis BMD program.

Table 4 shows FY2006-FY2013 MDA funding for the Aegis BMD program by individual line item.

Table 4. Detailed MDA Aegis BMD Program Funding
(millions of dollars, rounded to nearest tenth)

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
Aegis Block 2004	136.3	23.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aegis Block 2006	448.9	395.3	75.4	42.6	0	0	0	0
Aegis Block 2008	254.0	575.6	721.1	592.9	166.1	31.4	0	0
Aegis Block 2010	0	40.4	71.5	162.8	450.6	324.9	32.0	29.5
Aegis Block 2012	0	8.7	26.7	130.3	316.8	412.7	687.8	758.2
Sea-based terminal Block 2004	0	15.0	62.0	10.0	0	0	0	0
Sea-based terminal Block 2014	0	0	13.0	39.0	60.0	65.0	230.0	163.0
Japanese Cooperative Program	34.8	50.6	74.4	134.9	206.2	221.5	193.7	127.0
Program-Wide Support	19.1	14.0	15.0	16.9	22.0	12.1	11.3	11.4
Amount included in PE 0904903D	0	0	0	0	-191.2	-79.8	-29.3	-29.8
TOTAL	893.0	1122.7	1059.1	1129.4	1030.5	987.8	1025.5	1059.3

Source: FY2008 MDA budget justification book for Aegis BMD program.

In addition to the figures shown in the above table, it was reported in February 2007 that MDA planned to seek congressional approval to transfer an additional \$20 million in FY2007 funding into the sea-based terminal program from other MDA accounts. The plan is consistent with congressional report language on the FY2007 defense budget.³⁶

The figures in **Table 3** and **Table 4** do not include Navy funding for modifying 100 SM-2 Block IV missiles for the near-term (Block 2008) sea-based terminal capability.

Potential Allied Programs

Japan. Japan's interest in BMD, and in cooperating with the United States on the issue, was heightened in August 1998, when North Korea test-fired a Taepo Dong-1 ballistic missile that flew over Japan before falling into the Pacific.³⁷ In addition to cooperating with the United States on development of technologies for the SM-3 Block II/IIA missile, Japan is modifying four of its Aegis destroyers with the Aegis BMD 3.6 Block 2004 BMD system between FY2007 and early FY2011, at a pace of about one ship per year. Under this plan, Japan would have an opportunity in FY2011 and subsequent years to upgrade the ships' BMD capability

³⁶ Chris Johnson, "MDA To Reprogram Funds For Aegis Sea-Based Terminal Missile Defense," *Inside the Navy*, February 26, 2007.

³⁷ For a discussion, see CRS Report RL31337, *Japan-U.S. Cooperation on Ballistic Missile Defense: Issues and Prospects*, by Richard P. Cronin. This archived report was last updated on March 19, 2002. See also CRS Report RL33436, *Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress*, by Emma Chanlett-Avery, Mark E. Manyin, and William H. Cooper.

to a later Block standard, and to install the Aegis BMD capability on its two remaining Aegis destroyers. A Japanese Aegis ship participated as a tracking platform in FTM-10, the June 22, 2006, flight test of the Aegis BMD system. This was the first time that an allied military unit participated in a U.S. Aegis BMD intercept test.³⁸ A Japanese ship again tracked a target missile in FTM-11, in December 2006. Japan is to deploy its first engage-capable Aegis BMD ship in December 2007.

Other Countries³⁹. Other countries that DOD views as potential naval BMD operators include South Korea, Australia, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy. As mentioned earlier, South Korea, Australia, and Spain either operate, are building, or are planning to build Aegis ships. The other countries operate destroyers and frigates with different combat systems that may have potential for contributing to BMD operations.

The United States has conducted high-level discussions with South Korea about equipping South Korea's Aegis destroyers with a BMD capability. South Korea has expressed interest in a sea-based terminal capability.

The United States signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on BMD with Australia in 2004. The United States and Australia are conducting some cooperative projects relating to sea-based BMD.

The United States signed an MOU on BMD with the UK in 2003. A U.S.-UK study on a potential BMD capability for the UK's planned Type 45 destroyers has been completed and was scheduled to be briefed in March 2007.

Germany plans to implement a long-range search and track (LRS&T) BMD capability on some of its ships.

The United States provided pricing data to the Netherlands, and conducted initial discussions with the Dutch to assess the potential for installing a BMD capability on certain Dutch ships. The Netherlands is looking at the potential for integrating the SM-3 missile onto these ships. A Dutch ship participated as a tracking platform in FTM-11, in December 2006.

Spain might have one of its ships participate as a tracking vessel in FTM-12.

³⁸ Missile Defense Agency, "Missile Defense Test Results in Successful 'Hit To Kill' Intercept," June 22, 2006 (06-NEWS-0018).

³⁹ Primary sources for this section: Missile Defense Agency, Frequently Asked Questions, available online at [<http://www.mda.mil/mdalink/html/faq.html>]; a briefing on the Aegis BMD program by Rear Admiral Brad Hicks, Aegis BMD Program Director, to the RUSI 8th Missile Defense Conference, February 27, 2007.

Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX)

General. The Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX) is DOD's other principal sea-based BMD element. It is a midcourse fire-control radar designed to support long-range BMD systems. Its principal functions are to detect and establish precise tracking information on ballistic missiles, discriminate missile warheads from decoys and debris, provide data for updating ground-based interceptors in flight, and assess the results of intercept attempts. SBX is intended to support more operationally realistic testing of the ground-based midcourse system and enhance overall BMD system operational capability.

SBX is a large, powerful, phased-array radar operating in the X band, a part of the radio frequency spectrum that is suitable for tracking missile warheads with high accuracy. The radar is mounted on a modified, self-propelled, semi-submersible oil platform that can transit at a speed of 8 knots and is designed to be stable in high winds and rough seas.⁴⁰

SBX was completed in 2005 for the Missile Defense Test Bed. The semi-submersible platform was designed by a Norwegian firm and built in Russia. It was purchased for the SBX program, and modified and integrated with the SBX radar in Texas.⁴¹ SBX underwent sea trials and high-power radiation testing in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005. It was then moved by a heavy transport vessel to Hawaii, arriving there in January 2006. From there, it is to transit to Adak, Alaska, in the Aleutian Islands, where it is to be homeported and put into operation.

Technical Issues. Technical issues relating to the SBX platform delayed the SBX's planned departure for Alaska. A November 2006 press report stated that:

the vessel carrying the radar has sprung leaks and blown out electrical circuits.

Such mundane problems have kept this vital part of the nation's defense against missile attacks stuck in the wrong harbor. If all had gone according to plan, the \$950 million radar rig, known as SBX, would be operating now off the Aleutian Islands in Alaska and ready to defend against threats from North Korea. Instead, after a three-year odyssey from Norway to Texas and around South

⁴⁰ The platform is 238 feet wide and 398 feet long. It measures 282 from its submerged keel to the top of the radar dome. The SBX has a total displacement of almost 50,000 tons — about one-half the full load displacement of a Navy aircraft carrier. SBX is operated by a crew of about 75.

⁴¹ The platform was designed by Moss Maritime, a Norwegian firm, and built for Moss in 2001-2002 by Vyborg shipbuilding, which is located in Vyborg, Russia (a city north of St. Petersburg, on the Gulf of Finland, that is near the Finnish border). Vyborg Shipbuilding's products include semi-submersible oil platforms. Moss sold the platform to Boeing. Boeing and a subcontractor, Vertex RSI (a part of General Dynamics), modified the platform at the Keppel AMFELS shipyard in Brownsville, TX. The platform was then moved to Kiewit Offshore Services of Corpus Christi, TX, where the radar was added by a combined team of Boeing, Raytheon, Vertex RSI, and Kiewit. ("MDA Completes Integration of X-Band Radar On Sea-Going Platform," *Defense Daily*, April 5, 2005; and "Sea-Based X-band Radar," *GlobalSecurity.org*.)

America, the 28-story-high converted oil platform is in Hawaii, 2,000 miles and months away from its final destination....

By late 2005, it looked as if SBX might come close to meeting its [end-of-2005] target for arriving in Alaska. After trials in the Gulf of Mexico, it was hauled 15,000 miles around South America — the rig is too big for the Panama Canal — and it arrived in Hawaii in January of this year [2006]. The trip to Alaska seemed around the corner, but in March, alarms went off in SBX's engine room. A leaky valve caused water to flood into SBX's pontoon. The rig had to return to Pearl Harbor for repairs to the flaw, which an independent panel later called a 'major casualty.'

Then in June [2006], an electrical fault tripped circuit breakers, forcing SBX back into port for two more weeks of repairs. Such problems are typical during the initial 'shakedown' phase of a new class of ship, says Tom Alexiou, Boeing's SBX program manager. Most important, adds Paul Smith, a Boeing radar manager, there haven't been major issues in the 'far more complex' task of integrating the radar with other ship systems....

Col. John Fellows, the Pentagon's manager for SBX, says staying near Hawaii makes it easier to iron out kinks and join the tests, although officials are eager for the radar's permanent deployment. 'We're pressured on both sides,' he says.

In any case, further issues must be sorted out before the trip to Alaska. The independent panel hired by the Pentagon concluded in June that while SBX 'is an inherently rugged and suitable platform,' the vessel needs 47 modifications before it goes into service. Among them: a better plan for operating in harsh winters and steps to ensure the rig is protected against being rammed by boats. Senior program officials call the modifications minor and say they have agreed to almost all of them.

The panel also noted that maintaining morale poses a challenge. SBX's crew is composed mostly of defense-industry employees and merchant mariners hired by Boeing subcontractors. Only a handful of shipmates are servicemen. Civilian mariners rotate only every 56 days, much longer than work cycles for comparable oil-industry jobs. Leisure consists of a gym, a basketball hoop on the deck and movies under the stars, though plasma TVs and more DVDs are on the way.

Funding for SBX's mooring in the Aleutians, previously cut in another headache for project managers, has been restored, but construction won't be finished until next August, says Col. Fellows. The latest projection for the trip to Alaska is sometime next year [2007].⁴²

The independent assessment referred to in the above-quoted article was completed in June 2006. The report concluded that SBX:

⁴² Jonathan Karp, "A Radar Unit's Journey Reflects Hopes, Snafus In Missile Defense," *Wall Street Journal*, November 28, 2006: 1. See also Kirsten Scharnberg, "Radar Staying Longer Than Planned," *Chicago Tribune*, September 3, 2006. The article was also published in the *Honolulu Advertiser*.

is an inherently rugged and suitable platform for the intended mission[,] however, the [assessment] panel found that at the current time:

1. Crew Readiness and Materiel Readiness issues indicate that SBX-1 needs additional underway shakedown time and inport time to address crew and material issues in the Hawaiian area, and

2. Operational Considerations identifies issues for which operational commanders and developing commands need a full understanding of associated implications, and which require resolution prior to departure from Hawaii and operations at the Adak winter MODLOC [modified location] in the Bering Sea.⁴³

Deployment To Alaska. The SBX reportedly departed Hawaii on January 3, 2007, and arrived in Alaska's Aleutian Islands on February 7, 2007. The SBX reportedly withstood winds of 100 miles per hour and 50-foot waves during its transit to Alaska.⁴⁴

March 2007 Tracking Test. MDA announced on March 21, 2007, that on March 20, the SBX (and also the SPY-1 radars on two Aegis ships) had successfully tracked a target ballistic missile in a test of radars being incorporated into the overall U.S. BMD system.⁴⁵

Navy To Assume Control. In April 2007, it was reported that the Navy and MDA had reached a preliminary agreement for the Navy to assume control of the SBX program.⁴⁶

Potential Other Uses. A March 2006 press report states:

Boeing missile defense officials refuse to answer questions about whether they are developing techniques to produce high-energy weapon effects from the SBX sea-based radar. However, since large distributed-array devices [like the SBX] can be focused to deliver large spikes of energy, powerful enough to disable electronic equipment, the potential is known to exist and is being fielded on a range of U.S., British and Australian aircraft.⁴⁷

⁴³ *SBX-1 Operational Suitability and Viability Assessment, An Independent Assessment.* Arlington (VA), SYColeman, 2006, pp. i-ii. (Final Report, June 2, 2006, Submitted to: Director, Mission Readiness Task Force, Missile Defense Agency, Submitted by: Independent Assessment Team, Prepared by: SYColeman, A Wholly Owned Subsidiary of L-3 Communications). The report is available online at [<http://www.pogo.org/m/dp/dp-SBXOVA-06022006.pdf>]

⁴⁴ "Way Up North," *Defense Daily*, February 12, 2007.

⁴⁵ Missile Defense Agency News Release, 07-NEWS-0028, 21 March 2007, "Missile Defense Flight Test Successfully Completed."

⁴⁶ Emelie Rutherford, "Navy To Assume Responsibility For Sea-Based X-Band Radar Program," *Inside the Navy*, April 16, 2007.

⁴⁷ "Radar Weapons," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, March 20, 2006.

Potential Issues for Congress

Sea-Based Systems in Eventual BMD Architecture

What should be the role of sea-based systems in the eventual national BMD architecture?

A key potential issue for Congress concerns the role of sea-based systems in the eventual U.S. BMD architecture. The eventual architecture is to be defined by U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM)—the U.S. military command responsible for “synchronized DoD effects to combat adversary weapons of mass destruction worldwide,” including integrated missile defense⁴⁸—in consultation with MDA.

Under the evolutionary acquisition approach adopted for the overall U.S. BMD program, it likely will be a number of years before USSTRATCOM and MDA define the eventual BMD architecture.⁴⁹ Until then, the absence of an objective architecture might complicate the task of assessing whether the types and numbers of sea-based BMD systems being acquired are correct. If the role of sea-based systems in the eventual U.S. BMD architecture turns out to be greater than what DOD has assumed deciding to equip 18 Aegis ships with BMD capabilities, then additional funding might be needed to expand the scope of the program to include more than 18 ships.

The issue could also affect the required total number of Navy cruisers and destroyers. If the role of sea-based systems in the eventual U.S. BMD architecture turns out to be greater than what the Navy has assumed in calculating its 88-ship cruiser-destroyer requirement, then the requirement might need to be increased to something more than 88 ships. Potential oversight questions for Congress include the following:

- In the absence of a defined U.S. BMD architecture, what was the basis for deciding that 18 Aegis ships should be equipped for BMD operations? What is the likelihood that 18 BMD-equipped Aegis ships will turn out to be too many or not enough?
- What kinds of BMD operations were factored into the Navy requirement for maintaining a force of at least 88 cruisers and destroyers? If BMD operations by Navy ships turn out to be more significant than what the Navy assumed in calculating the 88-ship figure, will the figure need to be increased, and if so, by how much?

⁴⁸ For more on USSTRATCOM, see CRS Report RL33408, *Nuclear Command and Control: Current Programs and Issues*, by Robert D. Crichtlow. See also USSTRATCOM’s website at [<http://www.stratcom.mil/>], from which the quoted passage is taken.

⁴⁹ For more on evolutionary acquisition in general, see CRS Report RS21195, *Evolutionary Acquisition and Spiral Development in DOD Programs: Policy Issues for Congress*, by Gary J. Pagliano and Ronald O’Rourke. As ballistic missile threats change over time, it is possible that the U.S. BMD architecture may never be fully defined.

Replacement for Navy Area Defense (NAD) Program

Has DOD programmed a sufficiently robust sea-based terminal capability to replace the canceled NAD program?

As discussed in the background section, MDA has programmed a near-term (Block 2008) and far-term (Block 2014) sea-based terminal capability as the replacement for the canceled Navy Area Defense (NAD) program. The Block 2014 capability is envisioned as including a new type of missile whose design is not yet determined. The potential question for Congress is whether DOD's Block 2008/Block 2014 program is sufficiently robust in terms of the sea-based terminal capability it will provide, adequate in terms of annual funding levels, and sufficiently aggressive in terms of the schedule for fielding the planned far-term capability.

Reported options for a new sea-based terminal missile include a system using a modified version of the Army's Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) interceptor or a system using a modified version of the SM-6 Extended Range Active Missile (SM-6 ERAM) air defense missile being developed by the Navy.⁵⁰

In October 2002, it was reported that senior Navy officials

continue to speak of the need for a sea-based terminal BMD capability "sooner rather than later" and have proposed a path to get there. "The cancellation of the Navy Area missile defence programme left a huge hole in our developing basket of missile-defence capabilities," said Adm. [Michael] Mullen. "Cancelling the programme didn't eliminate the warfighting requirement."

"The nation, not just the navy, needs a sea-based area missile defence capability, not to protect our ships as much as to protect our forces ashore, airports and seaports of debarkation" and critical overseas infrastructure including protection of friends and allies.⁵¹

The above-quoted Admiral Mullen became the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) on July 22, 2005.

In July 2004 it was reported that:

The Navy's senior leadership is rebuilding the case for a sea-based terminal missile defense requirement that would protect U.S. forces flowing through foreign ports and Navy ships from short-range missiles, according to Vice Adm. John Nathman, the Navy's top requirements advocate.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Jason Ma and Christopher J. Castelli, "Adaptation Of PAC-3 For Sea-Based Terminal Missile Defense Examined," *Inside the Navy*, July 19, 2004; Malina Brown, "Navy Rebuilding Case For Terminal Missile Defense Requirement," *Inside the Navy*, April 19, 2004.

⁵¹ Michael Sirak, "Sea-Based Ballistic Missile Defence: The 'Standard' Response," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 30, 2002.

The new requirement, Nathman said, would fill the gap left when the Pentagon terminated the Navy Area missile defense program in December 2001. ... However, he emphasized the Navy is not looking to reinstate the old [NAD] system. “That’s exactly what we are not talking about,” he said March 24....

The need to bring back a terminal missile defense program was made clear after reviewing the “analytic case” for the requirement, he said. Though Nathman could only talk in general terms about the analysis, due to its classified nature, he said its primary focus was “pacing the threat” issues. Such issues involve threats that are not a concern today, but could be in the future, he said. Part of the purpose of the study was to look at the potential time line for those threats and the regions where they could emerge.⁵²

Supporters of DOD’s planned program could argue that it replaces enough of the planned NAD capability, and does so soon enough, to provide Navy ships with a sufficient degree of terminal defense capability. They could also argue that attempting to accelerate the Block 2014 effort could increase development risks or require reducing funding for other BMD programs or other DOD priorities, increasing operational risks in other areas.

Supporters of programming a more robust sea-based terminal capability could argue that a full capability for intercepting missiles in the terminal phase could prove useful, if not critical, for intercepting missiles — such as SRBMs or ballistic missiles fired along depressed trajectories — that do not fly high enough to exit the atmosphere and consequently cannot be intercepted by the SM-3. They could also argue a full NAD replacement program would provide a more robust ability to counter potential Chinese TBMs equipped with maneuverable reentry vehicles (MaRVs) capable of hitting moving ships at sea.⁵³

Aegis Radar Upgrades

Are current plans for upgrading the BMD capabilities of the SPY-1 radars on Navy Aegis ships appropriate for meeting requirements for sea-based BMD?

As discussed in the background section, current plans for upgrading the radar capabilities of the Navy’s Aegis cruisers and destroyers include the Aegis BSP, which forms part of the planned Block 06 version of the Navy’s Aegis BMD capability. One potential issue for Congress is whether current plans for developing

⁵² Malina Brown, “Navy Rebuilding Case For Terminal Missile Defense Requirement,” *Inside the Navy*, April 19, 2004.

⁵³ As discussed in another CRS report, China may now be developing TBMs equipped with maneuverable reentry vehicles (MaRVs). Observers have expressed strong concern about this potential development, because such missiles, in combination with a broad-area maritime surveillance and targeting system, would permit China to attack moving U.S. Navy ships at sea. The U.S. Navy has not previously faced a threat from highly accurate ballistic missiles capable of hitting moving ships at sea. Due to their ability to change course, MaRVs would be more difficult to intercept than non-maneuvering ballistic missile reentry vehicles. See CRS Report RL33153, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities — Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O’Rourke.

and installing the Aegis BSP are adequate and sufficiently funded for meeting requirements for sea-based BMD. A second potential issue is whether there are other opportunities for improving the radar capabilities of the Navy's Aegis cruisers and destroyers that are not currently being pursued or are funded at limited levels, and if so, whether funding for these efforts should be increased, so as to better meet requirements for sea-based BMD.

SM-3 Block II/IIA Missile

If feasible, should the effort to develop the Block II/Block IIA version of the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) interceptor missile be accelerated?

Another potential question is whether, if feasible, the effort to develop the Block II/Block IIA missile should be accelerated, and if so, whether this should be done even if this requires the United States to assume a greater share of the combined U.S.-Japan development cost. Views on this issue could be affected by estimates of when other countries might deploy ballistic missiles of various kinds.

Kinetic Energy Interceptor (KEI)

If the Kinetic Energy Interceptor (KEI) is developed for land-based BMD operations, should it also be based at sea? If so, what kind of sea-based platform should be used?

Another potential issue for Congress concerns the Kinetic Energy Interceptor (KEI) — a new ballistic missile interceptor that, if developed, could be used as a ground-based interceptor and perhaps subsequently as a sea-based interceptor. Compared to the SM-3, the KEI would be much larger (perhaps 40 inches in diameter and 36 feet in length) and would have a much higher burnout velocity. Because of its much higher burnout velocity, it might be possible to use a KEI based on a forward-deployed ship to attempt to intercept ballistic missiles during the boost and early ascent phases of their flights. Development funding for the KEI has been reduced by Congress in recent budgets, slowing the missile's development schedule. DOD, however, plans to increase the budget for KEI significantly over the next several years. Under current plans, the missile could become available for Navy use in 2014-2015.⁵⁴

The issue is whether the KEI, if developed, should be based at sea, and if so, what kind of sea-based platform should be used. Basing the KEI on a ship would require the ship to have missile-launch tubes that are bigger than those currently installed on Navy cruisers, destroyers, and attack submarines. Potential sea-based platforms for the KEI include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

⁵⁴ Government Accountability Office, *Defense Acquisitions[:] Assessments of Selected Major Weapon Programs*, GAO-05-301, March 2005, pp. 89-90. See also Thomas Duffy, "Northrop, MDA Working On KEI Changes Spurred By \$800 Million Cut," *Inside Missile Defense*, March 30, 2005: p. 1.

- ballistic missile submarines (which have launch tubes large enough to accommodate the KEI);
- surface combatants equipped with newly developed missile-launch tubes large enough for the KEI; and
- a non-combat DOD ship (perhaps based on a commercial hull) or floating platform.

Supporters of deploying the KEI at sea could argue that it would be more capable than the SM-3 Block II/IIA for intercepting ICBMs and that it could enable navy ships to attempt to intercept certain missiles during the boost phase of flight. Skeptics could argue that in light of other planned BMD capabilities, the need for basing the KEI at sea is not clear.

Among supporters of basing the KEI at sea, supporters of basing it on ballistic missile submarines could argue that submarines can operate close to enemy coasts, in positions suitable for attempting to intercept missiles during their boost phase of flight, while remaining undetected and less vulnerable to attack than surface platforms. Skeptics of basing the KEI on ballistic missile submarines could argue that communication links to submarines are not sufficiently fast to support boost-phase intercept operations, and that launching the KEI could give away the submarine's location, making it potentially vulnerable to attack.

Supporters of basing the KEI on surface combatants equipped with missile-launch tubes large enough for the KEI could argue that surface ships have faster communication links than submarines and more capability to defend themselves than non-combat ships or floating platforms. Skeptics could argue that surface combatants might not be able to get close enough to enemy coasts to permit boost-phase intercepts, and that the defensive capabilities of a surface combatant are excessive to what would be needed for a KEI platform operating in the middle of the ocean, far from potential threats, for the purpose of using the KEI for midcourse intercepts.

Supporters of a non-combat ship or floating platform could argue that a non-combat ship or floating platform would be suitable for basing the KEI in mid-ocean locations, far from potential threats, for the purpose of using the KEI for midcourse intercepts. Skeptics could argue that using such a platform could not be used close to an enemy coast, for the purpose of attempting a boost-phase intercept, unless it were protected by other forces.

According to one report, MDA has been studying possibilities for basing the KEI at sea and was to have selected a preferred sea-based platform in May 2006.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Marc Selinger, "MDA To Pick Platform For Sea-Based KEI in May," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, August 19, 2005: 2.

CG(X) Cruiser

Should procurement of the planned CG(X) cruiser be accelerated?

As a replacement for its 22 Aegis cruisers, the Navy plans to procure 19 new CG(X) cruisers. The radar capabilities of the CG(X) are to be greater than that of the Navy's Aegis ships, and the CG(X) has been justified primarily in connection with future air defense and BMD operations. Under Navy plans, the first CG(X) is to be procured in FY2011, and the final ship in FY2023. The Navy had earlier planned to begin CG(X) procurement in FY2018, but accelerated the planned start of procurement to FY2011 as part of its FY2006 budget submission. If procured as planned, the first CG(X) might enter service in 2017, and the final ship might enter service in 2029. It is possible that limitations on Navy budgets combined with desires to fund other Navy programs may limit CG(X) procurement to no more than one ship per year, which would delay the completion of a 19-ship CG(X) program by several years.⁵⁶

If improvements to Aegis radar capabilities are not sufficient to achieve the desired level of sea-based radar capability for BMD operations, CG(X) radar capabilities could become important to achieving this desired capability. If so, then a potential additional issue is whether the planned CG(X) procurement profile would be sufficient to achieve this desired capability in a timely manner. CG(X) radar technologies could be introduced into the fleet more quickly by accelerating planned procurement of CG(X)s or by designing a less expensive ship that preserves CG(X) radar capabilities while reducing other capabilities less critical to BMD operations, and then procuring this ship more rapidly than the CG(X) could afford to be procured. The option of a reduced-cost ship that preserves CG(X) radar capabilities while reducing other capabilities is discussed in more detail two other CRS reports.⁵⁷

Development and Testing of Aegis BMD System

Are there lessons from development and testing of the Aegis BMD system that can be applied to programs for developing and testing land-based systems?

With eight of ten successful intercepts in eight flight tests, the Aegis BMD program has achieved a higher rate of successful intercepts than has the ground-based midcourse system. At least some part of the Aegis BMD program's higher success rate may be due to two factors:

- The configuration of the Aegis BMD system that has been tested to date is intended to shoot down shorter-range ballistic missiles. In general, shorter-range missiles fly at lower speeds than longer-ranged

⁵⁶ For more on the CG(X) program, see CRS Report RL32109, *Navy DDG-1000 (DD(X)) and CG(X) Ship Acquisition Programs: Oversight Issues and Options for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

⁵⁷ See CRS Report RS22559, *Navy CG(X) Cruiser Design Options: Background and Oversight Issues For Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke; and the "Options For Congress" section of CRS Report RL32109, *op. cit.*

missiles, and interceptors intended to shoot down shorter-ranged ballistic missiles don't need to be as fast as interceptors intended to shoot down longer-ranged ballistic missiles. Consequently, the closing speeds⁵⁸ involved in intercepts of shorter-ranged ballistic missiles are generally lower than those for intercepts of longer-ranged ballistic missiles. Intercepts involving lower closing speeds can be less difficult to attempt than intercepts involving higher closing speeds. In BMD tests over more than 20 years, tests of shorter-range kinetic-energy BMD systems has generally been more successful than tests of longer-range BMD systems.⁵⁹

- The Aegis BMD system is being developed as an extension of the existing Aegis air defense system, and can thus benefit from the proven radar, software, and interceptor technology of that system, whereas the ground-based midcourse system is being developed essentially as a relatively new weapon system.

The potential question is whether these two factors account completely for the difference in success rates for testing of the Aegis BMD program and the ground-based midcourse program. If they do not, then one potential issue is whether there is something about the approach adopted for developing and testing the Aegis BMD capability, compared to that of the ground-based midcourse program that accounts for part of the difference.

As mentioned earlier, the Aegis BMD program says it has focused since its inception on the philosophy of “test a little, learn a lot.” It can also be noted that the Navy has a long history of air-defense missile development programs, and has established a record of technical discipline, rigorousness, and excellence in areas such as nuclear propulsion and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Potential questions for Congress include the following:

- How do the Aegis BMD and ground-based midcourse programs compare in terms of their approaches for system development and testing?
- Are there features of the Aegis BMD program's approach that, if applied to the ground-based midcourse program or other U.S. BMD programs, could improve the development and test efforts for these programs?

⁵⁸ Closing speed is the relative speed at which the missile warhead and the interceptor kinetic kill vehicle approach one another.

⁵⁹ For a discussion, see CRS Report RL33240, *Kinetic Energy Kill for Ballistic Missile Defense: A Status Overview*, by Steven A. Hildreth.

Potential Allied Programs

Should current efforts to explore the potential for establishing BMD capabilities in allied navies be reduced, accelerated, or maintained at current levels?

A final potential issue for Congress concerns the potential for establishing BMD capabilities in allied navies. Should these efforts be reduced, accelerated, or maintained at current levels? Potential oversight questions for Congress include the following:

- What are the potential military and political advantages and disadvantages of establishing BMD capabilities in allied navies?
- To what degree, if any, would these capabilities be integrated into the overall U.S. BMD architecture? How, in terms of technology, command and control, doctrine, and training, would such an integration be accomplished? If these capabilities are not integrated into the U.S. architecture, what kind of coordination mechanisms might be needed to maximize the collective utility of U.S. and allied sea-based BMD capabilities or to ensure that they do not work at cross-purposes?
- How might the establishment of BMD capabilities in allied navies affect U.S. requirements for sea-based BMD systems? To what degree, if any, could allied BMD ships perform BMD operations now envisaged for U.S. Aegis ships?
- What are the potential implications for regional security of missile proliferation and proliferation of BMD systems?

Legislative Activity for FY2008

For FY2008, MDA is requesting \$1,059.1 million in research and development funds for the Aegis BMD program.