

Next-Generation Harpoon Ready for International Market

The Boeing Harpoon Block II missile, an upgraded version of the highly successful Harpoon Block IG missile, has been approved for engineering, manufacturing and development. The U.S. Navy has given Boeing the go-ahead to market the missile internationally.

The Block II upgrade enables the Harpoon to attack land-based targets and improves its accuracy in congested coastal environments.

"In addition to its effectiveness as a weapon system, Harpoon Block II is an outstanding example of acquisition reform," said Bob Krieger, Boeing general manager for Harpoon and SLAM ER. "Our agreement with the U.S. Navy is similar to a commercial contract. The main objective of the agreement is to exploit commercial technology, thereby reducing cost to U.S. and international governments.

"Because Harpoon Block II is an upgrade program like its predecessor upgrades, Block IC and Block IG, the customer has the opportunity to purchase the newest technology at minimum cost and risk," Krieger said.

In a unique government/industry risk-sharing arrangement between The Boeing Company and the U.S. Navy, Boeing will fund development of the missile and ship launch control variants with an eye toward future sales to both the U.S. Navy and international customers. Although not in the current Navy budget, the U.S. Navy supports the missile concept and retains the option to add Harpoon Block II to its inventory at a future date. In the near term, the Navy will support test and evaluation and provide program oversight.

Harpoon Block II incorporates key guidance technologies from two other Boeing weapons programs -- the low-cost, integrated Global Positioning System/Inertial Navigation System (GPS/INS) from the Joint Direct Attack Munition and the software, mission computer and the GPS antenna and receiver from the Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response (SLAM ER).

Harpoon Block II is capable of executing both land-strike and anti-ship missions. To strike targets on land and ships in port, the missile uses GPS-aided inertial navigation to fly to and hit a designated target point. The 500-pound blast warhead delivers lethal firepower against a wide variety of land-based targets, including coastal defense sites, surface-to-air missile sites, exposed aircraft, port/industrial facilities and ships in port.

For more conventional anti-ship missions such as open-ocean or near-land, the GPS/INS improves guidance to the target area where the radar seeker then takes over. The accurate navigation solution allows users to discriminate target ships from islands or other nearby land masses. The Block II improvements will maintain Harpoon's high hit probability, even against ships very close to land.

The multi-mission Block II is deployable from all current Harpoon missile system platforms with either existing command and launch equipment or the new Advanced Harpoon Weapon Control Systems. With initiation of engineering and manufacturing development in 1998, Block II will achieve initial operating capability around the turn of the century. However, Block II retrofit kits can be ordered now.

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