

A remarkable QinetiQ exercise showcases maritime missile defences

Our plan for change

This ground-breaking trial for the At Sea Demonstration 2015 was made possible by capital expenditure in the LTPA contract that enabled major improvements at the Hebrides range including a new communications infrastructure.

Countering maritime threats

The proliferation of short, medium and long-range ballistic missiles and increasingly advanced anti-ship cruise missiles is a significant threat to navies worldwide. A multinational coalition, the Maritime Theatre Missile Defense (MTMD) forum aims to improve protection against these threats. Comprising Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the UK and the USA, the forum's activity includes major events such as the At Sea Demonstration 2015 (ASD15) – a ground-breaking opportunity to conduct numerous naval interoperability tests.

'Raising the bar'

Comprising three weeks of allied at-sea operations and live weapons firing, planned and coordinated by QinetiQ, ASD15 was hosted by the UK around Europe's largest range: the QinetiQ-operated Hebrides range. A critical aspect was delivering the most sophisticated information architecture ever established for a maritime task group, enabling new levels of interoperability between some of the world's leading navies. Information was shared almost simultaneously from ships in the Hebrides to stations in the UK, USA, Germany, Italy and Spain, across 14.7 million sq km of tactical data link network.



Notable firsts

Highlights included four ballistic missile targets launched, 11 cruise missile targets flown, and nine surface-to-air missiles fired and launched with exo-atmospheric intercept. The demonstration culminated in the first ever launch of a ballistic rocket into space from the UK and its subsequent engagement by a US guided missile destroyer. "We raised the bar with the international community, showcasing QinetiQ capabilities," says Sarah Kenny, Managing Director Maritime, Land & Weapons. Planning ASD15 meant overcoming numerous challenges, from installing a new Trials Control System to rebuilding damage on St Kilda following a storm: "Our people rose to these challenges with determination and perseverance."

Commander Mark Williams, Royal Navy said, "ASD15 had a real operational edge that wasn't fully expected. We set a pathway for greater cooperation in the future."

