

NAVY NEWS WEEK 8-1

18 February 2018



ATLANTIC OCEAN (Feb. 6, 2018) The aircraft carrier **Harry S. Truman (CVN 75)** participates in a composite unit training exercise (**COMPTUEX**). Truman is underway as a part of the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG) performing **COMPTUEX**, which evaluates the strike group's ability as a whole to carry out sustained combat operations from the sea, ultimately certifying the HSTCSG for deployment. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tommy Gooley/Released)

This is, as always, a magnificent sight.

Perfect weapon to kill Russian submarines – media tell of largest unmanned vessel

16:10, 11 February 2018

An official who worked on the project noted that the ship represents something of a shift in philosophy for the U.S. Navy.



On January 30, the U.S. Navy accepted the Anti-Submarine Warfare Continuous Trail Unmanned Vessel (ACTUV) from DARPA, the Pentagon's premier technology-innovation agency. The **Sea Hunter**, as the first ship of the ACTUV program is called, is an unmanned ship primarily designed to track quiet diesel-electric submarines for months with little or no human help, according to The National Interest. One DARPA official who worked on the ACTUV program noted that the ship represents something of a shift in philosophy for the U.S. Navy. "The U.S. military has talked about the strategic importance of replacing

'king' and 'queen' pieces on the maritime chessboard with lots of 'pawns,' and ACTUV is a first step toward doing exactly that." The project includes human-machine interaction, since the **Sea Hunter** only provides surveillance while other ships would be necessary to actually destroy an adversary submarine. The Sea Hunter will approximately cost \$15,000 to \$20,000 per day to operate, whereas the average costs of operating a guided-missile destroyer with anti-submarine warfare capabilities are around \$700,000 per day, the publication notes.

Source: <https://www.unian.info>

Russian Navy will soon field a large amphibious ship that can carry 13 battle tanks and 300 marines

The **Ivan Gren** will be delivered to the Navy by spring this year.

By [Immanuel Jotham](#)

February 11, 2018 11:42 GMT

The Russian Navy is waiting to take delivery of a massive amphibious assault ship by Spring this year as part of a major modernisation drive. Called the **Ivan Gren**, the vessel will be large enough to carry 13 battle tanks, 300 marines, or 36 armoured personnel carriers. United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) was tasked with the design and building of the vessel.

Trials and other tests are scheduled to be conducted by the end of February, said Sergei Mikhailov, a spokesperson for the shipyard.



The Russian Navy is going through a major modernisation drive - Representational image
VIKTOR DRACHEV/AFP/Getty Images

Alexei Rakhmanov, head of the company, spoke with the press this weekend on the delivery, reports Tass. "We are expecting any minute, so to speak. The task is to complete all the measures. I won't give any specific time frame but I believe that we are to complete everything by the end of spring," he said. Also called the "**Project 11711 large amphibious assault lead ship**", it was reportedly developed by the Nevskoye Design Bureau, a part of USC, in St. Petersburg in Northwest Russia. The entire project spanned a time period of nearly 14 years. Ship building began in December 2004 at Yantar Shipyard in Kaliningrad, also under the USC, in Western Russia, notes the report. It was then completed in 2012. Sea trials were started in 2016 with state trials in the Baltic sea starting November 2017. **Ivan Gren**, the "large amphibious assault ship" is waiting to be fielded by the Navy this year. **Ivan Gren** can reportedly transport an entire reinforced marine infantry company with all their military hardware and land it using pontoons if needed. It is not clear at this time what the actual dimensions of the vehicle, or its displacement, are. Its weapons systems, however, include 30mm six-barrel artillery guns and two Kamov Ka-29 transport and attack helicopters in its deck. This amphibious assault vessel is a part of the Russian Navy's efforts to upgrade their ageing vessels and weapons. Just a few weeks back, reports emerged that all of the Navy's vessels will be equipped with the "[unstoppable](#)" hypersonic [Zircon missile](#) systems. It is not clear at this time if the **Ivan Gren** will also get these weapons.

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk>

Unstoppable it may be in their minds, but the perfect weapon has not yet been developed or fielded.

Tunisia intercepts ship with undeclared military cargo

2018-02-16 21:01



iStock

Tunis - Tunisian authorities on Friday intercepted and boarded a ship carrying undeclared armoured vehicles and other military equipment off the port of Sfax, customs officials said. They said the vessel, which was flying the Panamanian flag, was carrying trucks, armoured personnel carriers and equipment for military camps. Also on board were "24 containers whose content was not declared, and which are suspected of containing weapons and ammunition", a statement said. The ship is now being searched in Sfax. Media reports said the ship was Russian and bound for Cameroon. Northwest and southwest Cameroon is home to an English-speaking minority that accounts for about a fifth of the population. Many English-speakers there have accused the francophone majority of discrimination and that has fuelled a separatist movement. Sfax is some 300km from Libya, which has been embroiled in political and military chaos since the 2011 revolution that overthrew strongman Moammar Gaddafi.

Source: <https://www.news24.com>

Submersible Drone for Frigate Admiral Gorshkov to Pass Tests by 2019

11 February 2018 23:10 Rubric: [Russia](#), [Industry](#)

Russian Project 22350 **Admiral Gorshkov**-class frigates are to be equipped with unmanned submarine and surface vehicles. The matter is remotely controlled boats and standalone unmanned submersibles, a well-informed source told *Mil.Press Today*.

According to him, one of the trial stages for the submersible drones will start in the coming summer, and the whole testing program is to be completed early in 2019.



Multipurpose deep-sea standalone unmanned submersible Mil.Press Today

Russian Navy plans to use the submarine drones for mine countermeasures, sea bottom screening, and scientific researches. The unmanned boats would perform reconnaissance, patrol and

examination missions, added the source. "Moreover, the submarine and surface drones will be interconnected within a unified network-centric control system. The UK, Belgium and Netherlands are jointly developing similar concepts to equip new minesweepers", said the interviewee. The submarine drone for **Admiral Gorshkov** has been already named, but designers keep it unannounced so far. Russian Navy used to purchase unmanned boats from French *ECA Group* that has



supplied *Inspector MkII* drone boats and *Seascan Mk2* anti-mine submersibles for the Project 12700 minesweepers. Even in the last summer, the French company [planned](#) to localize production of their mine defense craft in Russia, but the Navy [renounced](#) that idea later.

Typhoon-class unmanned mine defense boat

consortium Typhoon on the basis of the BL-680 fast-speed boat produced by Mnev & Co. Surprisingly, some declared parameters of the Russian boat surpass the French counterpart's ones.

Source: <http://mil.today>



The Dutch diesel-powered attack submarine **HNLMS Walrus** leaves Devonport dockyard Feb 12 for sea training.

Photo : Raymond Wergan, Newton Ferrers. (c)

Despite the RN's other problems, BOST reputation seems to be unaffected as navies flock to Devonport.

UK's new super nuke sub could be SCRAPPED as Government tries to fill budget BLACK HOLE

A TOP-LEVEL nuclear submarine may be scrapped or delayed if the Ministry of Defence (MoD) drastically tries to plug a massive £21 billion budget black hole. The stunning revelation comes as a Royal Navy document showed plans that the Astute class sub could be pushed back, or even "cancelled". If the MoD decides to scrap the new vessels it means only six, instead of eight, of the £1.6bn "hunter-killers" would be able to protect the UK from foreign threats, including Russia. In the document, seen by the Daily Express, senior commanders said: "In the long term the delay (or cancellation) will ease the pressure on manning, but we must not be seen to welcome this situation. Any loss of capability will impact on operations." Another part of the document added: "To delay (or cancel) of AST 7 will have a significant impact capability." The shocking plans emerged one week after MPS warned against the Government's plans to axe Britain's two amphibious vessels, and

the knock-on loss of up to 2,000 Royal Marines, as part of plans to plug the budget deficit. Astute subs are among the most quiet in the world and come armed with powerful Tomahawk missiles capable of delivering death from 754 miles away.



Its sonar is also so powerful that it can detect boats coming in and out of New York harbours from the English Channel.

NUKE SUB: The Government could scrap the powerful vessels

It can also stay underwater for 25 years – only needing to come up for air when replenishing food and water supplies. The news comes as Russia continues to build up its Northern Fleet with the first of five new Borei II class subs. Last night former first Sea Lord Admiral Lord West said:

"These submarines are crucial to defend our deterrent, crucial to monitor Russian attack submarines which are now being quite aggressive, crucial for intelligence gathering and crucial to prevent Russian vessels accessing the Atlantic if they want to cause us harm. "Our original operational requirement was to have eight. Obviously, this news is a bad thing operationally, and unfortunate for the nation."

Source: <https://www.dailystar.co.uk>

I think that the 25 years underwater is over-stating it a bit.

US Navy Probes Alleged Drug Use by Sailors in Japan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The US Navy said Saturday it was probing sailors at a base in Japan over alleged drug use and vowed no tolerance for any misconduct.

February, 10, 2018 - 13:30



"Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) is investigating Yokosuka-based sailors for alleged drug use and distribution," the 7th Fleet said, referring to its home base southwest of Tokyo. "The Navy has zero tolerance for drug abuse and takes all allegations involving misconduct of our sailors, navy civilians and family members very seriously," it said in a comment emailed to AFP. It added the allegations were still under investigation and would not comment further. The response came after the Wall Street Journal reported that at least a dozen sailors were being investigated on suspicion of buying, selling and using LSD, ecstasy and other drugs. Some of them

were serving aboard the **USS Ronald Reagan** aircraft carrier whose home port is Yokosuka, the journal quoted navy officials as saying Friday. The navy was also probing whether US sailors were using the internet to buy or sell drugs or were distributing them to local Japanese residents, it said. The drug allegations come at a time when Japan is touting its security alliance with the United States to counter missile and nuclear threats from North Korea. The 7th Fleet has also been hit by a string of accidents in the last year. In August, the destroyer **USS John S. McCain** collided with a tanker off Singapore, killing 10 sailors and injuring five others. Two months earlier in June, another destroyer, the **USS Fitzgerald**, and a cargo ship smashed into each other off Japan, leaving seven sailors dead.

Source: <https://www.tasnimnews.com>

Sailors are not immune from daily life in spite of spending so much time at sea. This was to be expected, and no one should be surprised. Trust a news hound to make a story out of it.

US donates patrol boats to Senegal and Cabo Verde

Written by defenceWeb, Monday, 12 February 2018

The US military has donated two patrol boats to Senegal's Navy and five patrol boats to Cabo Verde to enhance their

maritime security, with an emphasis on combating drug trafficking. The boats were funded by the US Africa Command Counternarcotic and Transnational Threats Programs Division. The two 38 foot (11.5 m) Defiant class patrol boats were handed over to the Senegalese Navy during a ceremony on 8 February 2018 in Dakar, Senegal. The donation included boat repair and maintenance kits, and towing vehicles, and a two-week training session on the use and maintenance of the vessels. The Defiant is an aluminium patrol boat built by Metal Shark. Various powerplant options are available, including inboard diesels or multiple outboards, giving top speeds of up to 50 knots depending on engine configuration. Another patrol boat is scheduled for delivery to the Senegalese Navy in October 2018. This will be the sixth of this class donated to Senegal, Africa Command said. *"This donation augments Senegal's law enforcement capacity to patrol its exclusive economic zone and adjacent international waters through the provision*



of an offshore patrol capability greatly enhancing their ability to counter illicit drug trafficking in the maritime domain," said Ken Diamond, Africom counter illicit trafficking programme manager. Africom also said it had donated five 21 foot Relentless class patrol boats to the Cabo Verde Maritime Police in December 2017 and has plans to donate 10 more by 2019. The 6.4 metre long Relentless patrol boats are aluminium vessels also built by Metal Shark. These boats also came with operations and maintenance training and personal protective equipment, said Chad Godlewski, Africom counter illicit trafficking branch chief. *"The boats were given to the Maritime Police to increase Cabo Verde's ability to interdict illicit drug trafficking,"* he said. *"Cabo Verde is located at a strategic crossroads between South America, Africa, and Europe and this is a primary transit route for South American cocaine."*

Source: www.defenceweb.co.za

While many littoral African states are upgrading their maritime capability, our country seems to be doing the opposite.

More support bases to be built to assist PLA Navy: analyst

By Yang Sheng Source:Global Times Published: 2018/2/12 22:58:40

It is reasonable and necessary for China to strengthen its maritime power as it is becoming stronger, Chinese experts said after People's Daily published three articles on a whole page to emphasize the importance of building China into a strong maritime country. *"Building China as a maritime power fits China's development, the global trend and is the necessary choice for realizing the Chinese Dream of the national rejuvenation,"* read one article published on People's Daily on Sunday under the topic *"It's about time to build a strong maritime country."* The three articles reviewed China's maritime development since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012, including promoting marine ecological protection, safeguarding integrity and the national interests as well as launching cooperation on disputed issues. The authors of the three articles included Liu Jixian, former head of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Academy of Military Science in Beijing. With development of the [Belt and Road](#) initiative, massive personnel, resources and property are expanding to other countries and some countries are facing problems like war and terrorism, Liu wrote. Thus it was urgent that China strengthen its maritime power to protect overseas interests, he noted. *"Building a powerful maritime strength is the strategic mainstay of China's development,"* he said. *"These articles sent a clear message that China will invest more efforts in strengthening its ability to safeguard sea routes and overseas interests,"* Xu Guangyu, a retired major general and senior adviser to the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, told the Global Times. *"More overseas logistic bases will be built in the future to assist the PLA Navy to conduct operations globally."* China has one overseas base in Djibouti to supply its fleet conducting piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. *"There is no need to hide the ambition of the PLA Navy: to gain an ability like the US Navy so that it can conduct different operations globally,"* Xu said. *"The US is a global power with massive overseas interests. Considering that China has already become a global economic power, it is entirely reasonable for China to boost its maritime power."* The Djibouti base *"won't be the last,"* he said. *"More overseas bases will be built on different continents for sure, but they are not military bases and not based on a military alliance with other countries. Instead, they are based on partnership and not targeting any other country,"* Xu said. China's maritime ambition is not the same as Western countries when they built their sea hegemony in the past, said Wang Yiwei, director of the Institute of International Affairs at the Renmin University of China in Beijing.

Source: <http://www.globaltimes.cn>

China's Rising Power

[David Stoffey](#)

12th Feb '18

Beijing is on the move. China is looking to assume a global Mandate of Heaven in lieu of the [faltering](#) U.S.-led international order. Throughout Chinese history, the Mandate of Heaven has bestowed a just ruler of China with governing legitimacy. Chinese political philosophy has been built around this idea since the Zhou Dynasty 3,000 years ago. When dynasties rose

from uncivilized disorder, it was because the Mandate of Heaven had been claimed by a just and able ruler. During the collapse of dynasties, ensuing chaos and destruction was due to the loss of the Mandate. Chinese civilizational history argues that *Zhongguo*, the Chinese name for China literally meaning the Middle Kingdom, is the center of all—the focal point of humanity. Chinese leaders have not easily assumed the Mandate of Heaven over the past 150 years because of the Century of Humiliation. The Century of Humiliation began with the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century and continued until the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took control in 1949. Party leadership continues to blame the Century of Humiliation for modern struggles. Assumption of the Mandate is predicated on quasi-hegemony, which China has not seen for centuries. The world is changing, however, and the Middle Kingdom's power is growing quickly. To once again assume the full



Mandate, CCP leadership must prove China is stronger than the United States, its greatest geopolitical rival.

Image Courtesy of Creative Commons, © 2013

The Belt Road Initiative (BRI) is the primary example of China's growing power. This soft power campaign of international infrastructure investment is at least [ten times larger](#) than the Marshall Plan, the post-war U.S.-led reconstruction of Western Europe. If the Marshall Plan was responsible for the European wave of friendly U.S. influence after the end of World War II, imagine how much soft power Beijing can buy with more than one trillion dollars of investment around Asia, Europe, and Africa over the next several years. Especially as the United States retreats from its active global role. The BRI is a smart use of the considerable sums of foreign capital China has built up over its rapid economic rise. But Beijing is not free from peripheral neighbors' negative assumptions about China's actions. The BRI was originally known as the "One Belt, One Road Initiative." With the use of the word "one," partners did not see this soft power play as altruistic and generous. They understood "one" to focus [solely on China](#), at the cost of all others. Recipient nations have reason to doubt Chinese intentions—89 percent of contractors participating in the BRI are Chinese companies. If the BRI is supposed to help all nations and not merely double down on Chinese financial investment returns, then the foreign ministry of China may be sending the wrong messages. If one trillion dollars in soft power does not buy favor, China is not beyond modern gunboat diplomacy—nuclear coercion. With the [discovery](#) of the H-20 stealth bomber development last year, China is nearing completion of the third leg of the nuclear triad. This bomber will be able to strike Hawaii from mainland China. Coupling the H-20 with the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile and Jin and Shang-class nuclear submarines gives China a very potent nuclear force. The DF-41 is equipped with the multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV), which makes it very difficult for anti-missile defenses to shoot down. More so, the DF-41 can strike any target within the continental United States. The Jin-class submarines are comparable to U.S. submersible capabilities and give Beijing the ability to place nuclear weapons in any blue water around the world. China owns an estimated 260 nuclear weapons currently, but there are concerns that Beijing is preparing for a [nuclear breakout](#). The People's Liberation Army (PLA) may be looking to achieve nuclear parity with the United States, which would jeopardize U.S. conventional superiority. This nuclear modernization program across branches of the PLA is not without its faults. China's growing military power is [pushing](#) many Asian states into orbit of the United States (although, as the [previous article](#) of this series notes, the United States is not taking advantage of the opportunity well). China's nuclear submarines, the most important leg of the nuclear triad, are not as capable as previously assumed. On January 12, a Shang-class submarine was [found and tracked](#) for two days by a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship. The key strength of a nuclear submarine is its ability to hide, and acoustically, the PLA navy's submersibles are too loud. The H-20 is an impressive scientific achievement for the PLA, but it cannot reliably threaten the continental United States from basing locations in China, whereas U.S. Air Force capabilities are forward-based in East Asia. Chinese President Xi Jinping implied interest in assuming the Mandate of Heaven at his 2017 World Economic Forum (WEF) speech in Davos. He criticized then President-elect's threats of trade war and protectionism. Xi announced that Beijing would protect global stability and interests as the United States fades from duty. Indeed, as WEF founder and chairman Klaus Schwab [proclaimed](#) as he introduced Xi to speak, "In a world marked by great uncertainty and volatility the world is looking to China." Music to Xi's ears. **Source: <https://chargedaffairs.org>**
Much has been said on this aspect, but reading the military publications no one in power (incl US) is paying any attention.

Israeli Navy Attacks Fishing Boats And Abducts Two Fishermen In Northern Gaza

Israeli navy ships attacked, on Sunday morning, several fishing boats with live fire, and abducted two fishermen, in Palestinian territorial waters, in the northern part of the Gaza Strip. Nizar Ayyash, the head of the Palestinian Fishermen Syndicate, said the navy fired dozens of live rounds at fishing boats, and abducted two fishermen, identified as Tareq Abdul-

Bari Sultan and Aa'ed Nizar Sultan. Last year, Israel abducted 39 Palestinian fishermen, including some who were shot prior



to their detention, in addition to killing two, and wounding fourteen others. The attack is part of constant Israeli violations against the fishermen, workers and farmers, in several parts of the besieged and impoverished Gaza Strip. The assaults violate various agreements, including the ceasefire deal which was reach on August 26th, 2014, after the Israeli war on Gaza, which led to the death is at least at 2137, including 578 children, 264 women, and 103 elderly, while more than 11100, including 3374 children, 2088 women and 410 elderly, have been injured. As part of Oslo agreement, signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on September 13,

1993, the Palestinians are supposed to fish and sail within twenty nautical miles from the Gaza shore. Israel repeatedly and unilaterally reduced the fishing zone to three nautical miles, and later increased it to nine miles, then reduced it to six. On Sunday at dawn, the soldiers abducted twelve Palestinians, including one woman, from their homes in the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem.

Source : imemc.org



SAN DIEGO (Feb. 10, 2018) Hollywood actor, musician, humanitarian, and honorary Chief Petty Officer Gary Sinise talks to a patient at Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS) during the sixth annual Invincible Spirit Festival. The festival included a three-hour concert with Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band, activities for children, rock climbing, food cooked by Team Irvine and 149 volunteers who set up and served food at the event. Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band debut their first military concert at NMCS in 2012. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Indra Beaufort/Released)

For those of you who watch TV series Criminal Minds: Beyond borders and before this CSI New York his is a familiar face.

Saab boss says shipbuilding jobs are here for the long run

By Melissa Keogh

Defence and shipbuilding in South Australia will not be a “boom and bust” industry, but will support secure long-term jobs and opportunities. That’s according to Andy Keough, former Defence SA chief and current managing director of defence and security company Saab Australia. Andy, a former submariner, played a key part in lobbying for Australia’s \$50 billion Future Submarines to be built here in SA. He says despite big sectors, such as the mining industry, usually experiencing a “boom and bust” pattern, there is a long-term commitment to continue shipbuilding in SA. “We saw it with the upswing of the mining industry which took off with unimaginable riches that have come and gone,” Andy says. “But here there is now a Federal Government commitment to continuous shipbuilding ... and that’s a massive magnet that will continue to draw high quality workers from across Australia and the world. “There aren’t many sectors in Australia that have the assurance that their industry will continue for many decades to come.” Saab Australia managing director Andy Keough. The Future Submarines Program includes the construction of a fleet of 12 new subs, constructed from 2022/23 at Adelaide’s Osborne shipyards, creating 2800 jobs. The subs are one part of the nation’s \$89 billion naval shipbuilding plan, which also features the construction of the Future Frigates and Offshore Patrol Vehicles. While Saab has been selected to upgrade the control systems for navy’s current fleet of Collins Class submarines, it is also supporting Lockheed Martin to deliver the cutting edge combat system capability for the Future Submarines. After two years in the top job at government agency, Defence SA, Andy joined the Mawson Lakes-based Saab as its managing director. He brought with him 22 years of experience in the

Australian Navy, including commanding two Collins Class submarines. Andy retired from the navy in 2007, a year after receiving the Conspicuous Service Cross for his leadership while in command of **HMAS Sheean**. Originally from Sydney, he came to SA nine years ago to work for ASC, starting in business improvement before graduating to being responsible for the in-service maintenance of the Collins Class fleet. He says that typical views of the shipbuilding workforce were changing as people realised both skilled tradespeople and high-tech engineers are essential to operations. *"When I was with ASC there was a large trade workforce, but for every tradesman there were four or five highly skilled professionals including engineers, project managers, and supply chain and quality,"* he says. The skill level of the defence industry is evident in Saab's own workforce, which includes a range of *"hardware and software engineers undertaking advanced naval combat system work"*. Ships from Task Group 659.1 (including HMA Ships **Canberra**, **Warramunga** and **Ballarat** and **HMNZS Te Kaha**) joined by French Floreal class frigate **FNS Prairial** transit to Pearl Harbour, Hawaii to participate in Exercise Rim of the Pacific (**RIMPAC**) 2016. The ships have Saab's combat management system on board. Andy says *"business is expanding"* at Saab Australia, with the company expecting to grow its workforce by at least 150 *"in the next couple of years"*. Saab is also strengthening its ties to academia through a partnership with the University of South Australia (UniSA). Saab will partner with UniSA students to collaborate on the design of a future combat system, following the formation of the Defence Technologies Institute in 2017. The initial collaboration involved Saab hosting projects for students in STEM-related fields, helping to equip them for their careers in defence and shipbuilding industries. *"Saab is working closely with UniSA so that for generations to come, graduates from this partnership will build a skilled, technologically savvy workforce for defence capabilities,"* Andy says. *"It's essential for a company like Saab to have a close relationship with UniSA because they (students) are our talent pipeline. They will assist us to get the best individuals on board."* **Source : brand South Australië**
What they say and what in fact happens rarely seem to fall in step.

Mississippi Visits Yokosuka During Current Deployment

Release Date: 2/12/2018 10:02:00 AM

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Elesia K. Patten, Submarine Group 7 Public Affairs



BUSAN, Republic of Korea (June 13, 2016)
The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine **USS Mississippi (SSN 782)** arrives at the Republic of Korea (ROK) Fleet base in Busan as part of a routine port visit. **Mississippi** is a member of Commander, Submarine Squadron (COMSUBRON) 1 and is based out of Pearl Harbor. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jermaine M. Ralliford/Released)

FLEET ACTIVITIES YOKOSUKA, Japan (NNS) -- The Virginia-class attack submarine **USS Mississippi (SSN 782)** arrived at Fleet Activities Yokosuka Feb. 12, for a routine visit as part of its deployment to the Indo-Pacific region. This kind of visit strengthens the already positive alliance between the U.S. and Japan through the crews' interaction with the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force. It also demonstrates the U.S. Navy's commitment to regional stability and maritime security in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. Seventh Fleet, which celebrates its 75th year in 2018, spans more than 124 million square kilometers, stretching from the International Date Line to the India/Pakistan border; and from the Kuril Islands in the North to the Antarctic in the South. Seventh Fleet's area of operation encompasses 36 maritime countries and 50 percent of the world's population with between 50-70 U.S. ships and submarines, 140 aircraft and approximately 20,000 Sailors in the 7th Fleet. **Mississippi** is one of the most technologically advanced and stealthiest submarines in the world and is capable of fulfilling a multitude of missions. **Mississippi** is homeported in Pearl Harbor. **Source: www.navy.mil**

Navy Submits 30-Year Ship Acquisition Plan

Release Date: 2/12/2018 3:11:00 PM

From Navy Office of Information

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Department of the Navy submitted the long-range ship acquisition plan to Congress Feb. 12. The 30-Year Ship Acquisition Plan is a Congressionally-mandated report which describes the Department of the Navy's long-range shipbuilding plans for 2019-2048. This year's report focuses on meeting the Navy's baseline acquisition requirements needed to build the Navy the Nation Needs (NNN) and sustaining the domestic industrial base to meet that aim. In support of the National Defense Strategy's stated goal of achieving a more lethal, resilient and agile force, the plan

serves as a roadmap to reach a 355-ship fleet by the early FY2050s, potentially quicker with an aggressive investment of resources. The plan pursues acquisition strategies to build ships more quickly and affordably and places top priority on sustaining the industrial base now and for the future. Ultimately, the plan supports the Navy's overall effort to build the Navy the Nation Needs to protect the homeland, defend the interests of America and its allies abroad, and preserve America's strategic influence around the world. This plan addresses the Navy's most critical shipbuilding needs by:

- * Building CVNs four years apart after CVN 82 instead of five to support a 12-ship CVN force.
- * Building 12 Columbia-class SSBNs in support of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and STRATCOM deterrence requirements.
- * Establishing a stable profile of two per year Attack Submarines (SSN).
- * Establishing a stable profile of 2.5 per year Large Surface Combatants (DDG), plus an additional ship in FY2022.
- * Establishing a stable profile of two per year Small Surface Combatants (LCS, FFG) starting in FY2022, accommodating the transition to FFG(X).
- * Increasing the pace for amphibious ship production to support a 12-ship LHD/LHA force and modernized lethality in FY2033, FY2036 and FY2039.
- * Addresses the candidate long-term replacement for the NNN payload-based submarine, filled mid-term by Virginia Payload Module (VPM).

The plan can be viewed in its entirety here: www.secnav.navy.mil/fmc/fmb/Pages/Fiscal-Year-2019.aspx.

Source: www.navy.mil

This makes for interesting reading, provided budgets are attached to these "wishes".

NATO needs a new Maritime Strategy for its Northern Flank

NATO's naval power offers much potential to deter and – if necessary – help combat Russia.

NATO has historically recognised the value of proactively utilising sea power against the more land-orientated Moscow – particularly in northern waters. Notably, during the 1980s, a central theme of both NATO's Concept of Maritime Operations and the overlapping US Maritime Strategy was the forward use of naval forces in and around the Norwegian Sea. This was designed to help maintain the Alliance's Atlantic sea lines of communication (SLOC) by preventing the breakout of Soviet forces into the Atlantic through the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap, secure NATO's northern Norwegian flank, force a diversion of Moscow's forces away from the Central European front and – in the case of the US model – allow for the targeting of the USSR's strategic assets, including ballistic missile submarines and bases on the Kola Peninsula. The Royal Navy played a vital role in this late Cold War approach. In times of tension or war, it would have been the UK-led Anti-Submarine Striking Force (ASWSTRIKFOR) – centred on at least one Invincible-class carrier – that would first help hold the GIUK 'line', and then provide the lead ASW element of NATO's US-led Carrier Striking Force (CARSTRIKFOR) as it proceeded into the Norwegian Sea. Although the life expectancy of such a Royal Navy surface group facing Soviet air and naval forces without major US support was subject to much scepticism, few can doubt its importance in the opening stages of a conflict prior to the arrival of reinforcements. Further forward, UK SSNs would have sought to engage Northern Fleet submarines as close to their home bases as practical, while Royal Marines would have been deployed to defend Norway. Much has changed since the end of the Cold War. Structurally, the majority of NATO's maritime command system – most notably Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) and its sub-components highlighted above – has been disbanded. Doctrinally, the most recent Alliance Maritime Strategy – published in 2011 – focuses on lower level security threats rather than interstate conflict. Materially, all of the key allied navies have been subject to drastic cuts. With regards to the UK, the number of destroyers and frigates in Royal Navy service has fallen from 51 in 1990 to 19 today, only six SSNs remain operational, and the RAF has lost its maritime patrol capability. Arguably the most significant US move has been the closure of Naval Air Station Keflavik in Iceland – a base from which ASW, fighter and AEW support would have been provided to forces defending the GIUK gap. Despite the recent announcement that a new NATO headquarters – tentatively named Atlantic Command – is to be set up to coordinate the defence of the Alliance's SLOC, procurement decisions such as an order for nine P-8 Poseidon aircraft to be operated by the RAF, and renewed periodic US Navy deployments to Keflavik, only limited progress has been made in returning maritime operations to prominence following the re-emergence of the Russian threat. In contrast, significant steps forward have occurred in improving NATO's land force posture in Europe since Moscow's intervention in Ukraine – particularly concerning the defence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. These include the establishment of the Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroups and Very High Readiness Joint Task Force. Nevertheless, there is also a blunt truth that NATO needs to face. The entire Baltic theatre – positioned between Russia proper and its heavily militarised Kaliningrad Oblast – is set in the midst of a Russian A2/AD exclusion zone of advanced surface-to-air missiles, precision guided ballistic and cruise missiles, and shore-based anti-ship missiles. Access to the region can be shut down in hours, and as simulations have indicated, the rapid defeat of the outnumbered and outgunned resident NATO forces is highly probable. If confronted with a scenario in which the Baltic States are occupied, the best recent historical precedent to the situation facing NATO might be the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990, and the subsequent allied push for its liberation. However, there would be four key differences between facing Iraq then and Russia today. Firstly, Moscow has a capacity to disrupt an allied mobilisation – including the shipping of forces from the US. Secondly, Russia can conduct conventional precision strikes at long range. Thirdly, Moscow fields technologically advanced equipment, albeit in limited quantities. The final contrast is the presence of Russia's nuclear force. The adoption of a new

forward maritime strategy in the alliance's northern region is crucial to helping mitigate all but the latter challenge. At sea, the North Atlantic is arguably more vital to NATO's operations than during the Cold War, as the alliance's ground forces stationed in Europe have been vastly scaled down over the last three decades. The need to conduct an offensive liberation campaign would necessitate a major build-up of US assets. Moscow has the ability to threaten NATO's SLOC using submarines and aircraft. Although far fewer in number than during the Cold War, older Northern Fleet vessels are being refitted for further service, and newer types such as the Yasen-class submarine are starting to become operational. In the air, many of the Russian Air Force's T-22M3 'Backfire' bombers look set to be fitted with the new Kh-32 anti-ship missile. While too weak to halt the flow of reinforcements from North America to Europe outright – at best, perhaps half a dozen Russian Navy submarines would be available for forward operations in the 2020s – even limited losses could prove politically disastrous to NATO. As was the case during the Cold War, one method to counter this SLOC interdiction would be through the rapid deployment of alliance forces north-east beyond the GIUK gap and into the Norwegian Sea to put pressure on Russia to maintain a defensive posture around its northern waters. The destroying or pinning down of Russian submarines and aircraft close to their bases would also help reduce the threat to the US and Western Europe from cruise missiles. A further great advantage of positioning forces off northern Norway is that it would bring targets across north-east Russia – including the militarily vital bases on the Kola Peninsula – into the range of NATO ship and submarine-launched cruise missiles and carrier aircraft using stand-off weapons. This would force a diversion of some of Moscow's best defensive assets from the Baltic, compelling it to fight a war on two fronts. In peacetime, the credible threat of NATO spreading a Baltic conflict beyond the immediate region to threaten wider Russian security would also act as a significant deterrent to Moscow commencing any hostile action in the first place. The great imponderable of this contingency is the nuclear question, and whether conventional attacks from a NATO maritime force might trigger an unconventional response from the Kremlin. But on that premise, if Russia were willing to try to 'escalate to de-escalate' with nuclear weapons, it seems likely that such a move would be triggered by any major NATO counter-offensive. As such, no action short of the alliance's effective capitulation over the Baltic States would be adequate enough to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. Once again, the role of the UK in a forward maritime strategy would be pivotal. Indeed, it would arguably be more credible than was the case during the late Cold War. In particular, the air group available in the early 2020s to one Queen Elizabeth class-carrier – 24 F-35Bs with nine Merlins HM.2s in the ASW role and a further four on airborne surveillance and control (ASaC) duty – compares favourably with a late 1980s Invincible-class wartime air group of perhaps ten Sea Harriers FRS.1 and twelve Sea Kings for ASW and ASaC. While the size of Britain's surface and sub-surface force has shrunk considerably, so has Moscow's offensive power. Although the odds would hardly be overwhelmingly in favour of the UK formation, a Royal Navy carrier group (supported by escorts from Northern European navies, submarines and land based aircraft) positioned between Iceland and Scotland on the main GIUK gap route into the North Atlantic would represent a formidable obstacle to any Russian submarines or maritime strike aircraft seeking to interdict NATO's SLOC. Once it joined up with a US Navy carrier contingent, the combined force would provide credible offensive options. Although major weaknesses in areas such as ASW have been allowed to emerge in recent years, NATO's already existing naval superiority over Russia means that rebooting the Alliance's previous maritime posture would not require unrealistic investment. It has been reported that a new Alliance Maritime Strategy is to be published this year, and such a refreshed doctrine is likely to encourage movement to a more proactive posture. But this would be to little avail without practical commitment – particularly in the form of exercises – to hone skills and generate deterrence, and NATO's focus on northern waters has recently been sorely lacking. The upcoming Exercise Trident Juncture 2018 – taking place in Norway in October and November of this year – will help to reverse this trend, but a great deal remains to be done. Ultimately, only a full re-evaluation of NATO's approach to containing Russia that focuses on how to exploit the Alliance's maritime strength is likely to change the current reality. **Source: UK Defence Journal**

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The *Frontera* navigating the Dutch coastal waters last weekend **Photo : Flying Focus Aerial Photography www.flyingfocus.nl ©**

Shown before, The North Sea can be an unfriendly piece of sea.