

## NAVY NEWS WEEK 25-6

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The **USS Intrepid** moored as a museum ship at Pier 86 West 46th Street New York. Photo : Jan van der Werf ©



PACIFIC OCEAN (June 20, 2018) An MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to the Black Knights of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 4 fires flares during an aerial change of command near the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier **USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70)**. **Carl Vinson** is currently underway in preparation for the ship's participation in the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise 2018. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dylan M. Kinee/Released)

### Bollinger Shipyards delivers 29th fast response cutter

By : Ken Hocke

Bollinger Shipyards, Lockport, La., has delivered the 29th fast response cutter, **Forrest Rednour**, to the U.S. Coast Guard. Delivery of the 154' Sentinel-class FRC was on June 7 in Key West, Fla. The FRC has been described as an operational "game changer," by senior Coast Guard officials, Bollinger officials said in a statement announcing the delivery. To build the FRC, Bollinger used a proven, in-service parent craft design based on the Damen Stan Patrol Boat 4708. It has a flank speed of 28 knots, state of the art command, control, communications and computer technology, and a stern launch system for the vessel's 26' cutter boat. "We are proud to announce the delivery of the latest FRC, the **USCGC Forrest Rednour**," Ben Bordelon, Bollinger president & CEO, said in the prepared statement. "The vessel's commissioning is scheduled for November 2018 in southern California. This will be the first of four FRC's to be stationed in San Pedro, Calif. Previous cutters have been stationed around the nation including Alaska and Hawaii. FRCs already in commission have protected our country by seizing tons of narcotics, interdicted thousands of illegal aliens and saved hundreds of lives." Bordelon said that the FRC program is a model program for government acquisition and has surpassed all historical quality benchmarks for vessels of this type and complexity. "The results are the delivery of truly extraordinary Coast Guard cutters that will serve our nation for decades to come," he said. "We are extremely proud that the Fast Response Cutters built by Louisiana craftsmen here at Bollinger Shipyards are having such a major impact on our country's safety and security. "Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished him or herself in the line of duty. This vessel is named after Coast Guard Hero Forrest Rednour. Rednour was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal during World War II for heroic conduct while aboard the Coast Guard cutter **Escañaba** during the rescue of survivors from the torpedoed **USAT Dorchester** in North Atlantic waters in February 1943 In other Bollinger news, during the recent Shipbuilding Council of America's Annual General Membership Meeting in Washington, D.C., the shipyard was presented with an "Award for Excellence in Safety" for the 13th consecutive year. SCA is the national association representing the U.S. shipyard industry. "Bollinger Shipyards

is very pleased to have earned the SCA Award for Excellence in Safety for the 13th consecutive year,” Bordelon said. “This recognition of exceptional safety performance is realized from a commitment at the highest level and the continued focus of Bollinger employees on workplace safety. Bollinger remains steadfast in establishing a culture of positive and focused work habits.” SCA members constitute the shipyard industrial base that builds, repairs, maintains and modernizes U.S. Navy ships and craft, U.S. Coast Guard vessels of all sizes, as well as vessels for other U.S. government agencies. In addition, SCA members build, repair and service America’s fleet of commercial vessels. Bollinger Shipyards is a designer and builder of fast military patrol boats, ocean-going double hull barges, offshore oil field support vessels, tugboats, rigs, liftboats, inland waterways pushboats, barges, and other steel and aluminum products from its new construction shipyards. Bollinger has 10 shipyards and all are strategically located throughout Louisiana with direct access to the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi River and the Intracoastal Waterway. Bollinger is also the largest vessel repair company in the Gulf of Mexico region, company officials said.

source : Workboat

## **Navy Could Extend Life of Amphibs to 50 Years, LCS for 35, If Navy Invests in their Upkeep**

By: [Megan Eckstein](#)

June 20, 2018 6:10 PM



The Whidbey Island-class amphibious dock landing ship **USS *Rushmore* (LSD 47)**, foreground, the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship **USS *Essex* (LHD 2)**, middle, and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer **Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108)** transit the Pacific Ocean during Dawn Blitz 2017. US Navy photo.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Navy could keep its amphibious ships in service for more than 50 years and its Littoral Combat Ships for up to 35

years, as the service looks for ways to increase the size of the fleet in the nearer term by extending the life of today’s ships, according to Naval Sea Systems Command. NAVSEA Commander Vice Adm. Tom Moore said the Navy would not reach its goal of having 355 ships until 2052 if it got rid of in-service ships at the usual pace and relied on increasing the pace of new shipbuilding to grow the fleet. If all of today’s ships remain in service longer, though, the Navy could be operating a 355-ship fleet by 2032 – a full two decades sooner. “If you want to keep all the classes out to as long as you can keep them – and there’s cost associated with that – we think we can get to 355 now in the early 2030s, 2032 to 2035. That’s a significant improvement, and it’s something that we’re looking at pretty seriously,” Moore said while speaking at the American Society of Naval Engineers’ annual Technology, Systems and Ships event. “The budget that just came out [funds to keep the cruisers around a little longer](#), and the Navy’s taking a serious look at do we want to keep the other ships around, in particular the DDGs, going forward.” Vice Adm. Bill Merz, the deputy chief of naval operations for warfare systems (OPNAV N9), already [committed to keeping Arleigh Burke-class destroyers around for 45 years](#), instead of the planned 35. But Moore said that’s just the tip of the iceberg. According to a memo Moore wrote to Merz in late April, Wasp-class amphibious assault ships could be extended from 40 years to between 46 and 53 years, San Antonio-class amphibious transport docks could be extended from 40 to between 47 and 53 years, Whidbey Island-class dock landing ships could be extended from 40 to between 45 to 52 years, Littoral Combat Ships could be extended from 25 years to between 32 and 35 years, Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ships could be extended from 40 to 50 years, and more. The blog Cdr. Salamander [first noted the existence of the memo last month](#). “The bottom line is, if you’re willing to do the maintenance, from a naval architecture standpoint... we can manage all that. So I’m not worried about the service life of it,” Moore said. “I’m more focused on the combat systems side of it, but I believe in this era of open architecture, Aegis, vertical launch systems, that the combat system can maintain its relevance for a long period of time. That was not the case when I was a young officer serving on a DDG-2 Adams-class destroyer. ... The opportunity is there, and I think we’re going to work on that.” Merz told USNI News in April that the Navy keeping all its destroyers around until 45 years of service would get the fleet to 355 ships by 2036 or 2037, though it would be a destroyer-heavy mix of ships compared to the Navy’s ideal composition of a 355-ship fleet. In particular, that fleet would be lacking attack submarines and some amphibious ships compared to the Navy’s stated need. [The Navy hopes to extend the life of up to five Los Angeles-class attack submarines](#), though the SSNs have to be extended on a hull-by-hull basis instead of the class-wide extension the Navy agreed to on the DDGs. Due to strict engineering requirements to submerge, those hulls must be in very good shape; and due to the need to refuel the SSNs after their planned service life, and the Navy having only five spare reactor cores to devote to SSN life extensions, only up to five could be extended.



The Wasp-class amphibious assault ship **USS Essex (LHD 2)** maneuvers into position to conduct a fueling-at-sea with Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship **USS Rushmore (LSD 47)** during an amphibious squadron and Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) integration (PMINT) exercise. US Navy photo.

On the amphib side, Moore told USNI News he was confident they could serve in the fleet for 50 years or more, though top Navy leadership has not publicly committed to extending their service life the way it did for the DDGs. *“We sell our FFGs to other countries and they keep them for another 20 years. We keep carriers, **Enterprise**, around for 52, 53. And we’re going to look at service-life extensions for Nimitz-class [aircraft carriers]; Congress asked us to do that. So from an HM&E standpoint, steel hulls, we know a lot about them and we’re pretty confident we can operate them for the intervals we gave to the Pentagon,”* Moore said after his speech.

Source: <https://news.usni.org>

## **NAVSEA: Navy Ships Using 23 Different Steering Control Systems; Simpler Systems Needed**

By: [Megan Eckstein](#)

June 20, 2018 3:07 PM



Seaman Jonathon Espinozalopez, left, and Seaman Jeffrey Boekeloo, right, drive the ship from the bridge of the amphibious assault ship **USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7)** as it departs Naval Station Mayport on Feb. 7, 2018. **US Navy Photo**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — When watchstanders on **USS John S. McCain (DDG-56)** lost control of the ship’s steering and collided with a merchant ship last summer, they were using one of 23 steering control systems found in the fleet today, and not one that they were

trained to use. Naval Sea Systems Command commander Vice Adm. Tom Moore said today that as industry and government look to bring new capabilities into the fleet, they often seek to cram in as many bells and whistles as possible. But he warned that simplicity and user-friendliness are also virtues that should be considered. *“Certainly on our side of the house, as we design systems ... sometimes in our desire to make them more capable and provide more options and more bells and whistles, we add a level of complexity that’s probably not needed, and in fact in some cases may cause the average deck plate sailor challenges,”* he said at the American Society of Naval Engineers’ annual Technology, Systems and Ships conference. *“I think we’ve got to be very careful with these systems going forward that, one, they have capability that matches and is above what our peers have, but I think we have to recognize also that we have to involve the user and we have to make sure from a human systems interface standpoint that we don’t make it so complex that that complexity causes us problems.”* Moore cited the **McCain** collision as an example. In that case, the watch team – which included sailors from damaged cruiser **USS Antietam (CG-54)**, who were operating aboard the destroyer rather than sitting pierside while their ship was repaired – was unfamiliar with the particulars of [the ship’s new digital integrated bridge and navigation system](#). Commanding Officer Cmdr. Alfredo J. Sanchez ordered the responsibilities of steering the ship and maintaining the throttle to be split between to watch stations on the bridge – the helm control and the nearby lee helm, [USNI News has previously reported](#). *“This unplanned shift caused confusion in the watch team, and inadvertently led to steering control transferring to the lee helm station without the knowledge of the watch team,”* according to a summary of the investigation released late last year. *“The CO had only ordered speed control shifted. Because he did not know that steering had been*



transferred to the lee helm, the Helmsman perceived a loss of steering." Moore said that after the collision he was asked to put out a fleet advisory on the steering control system, to give guidance to help other ships avoid similar mishaps. Moore said he found there were 23 separate steering control systems and he had to write fleet advisories for each one. "That's not a real recipe for success," the admiral said of having so many systems. In comparison, he said there are thousands of car makes and models, and while the average driver may not be able to figure out all the bells and whistles when sitting in the driver's seat for the first time, any driver could safely drive the car because the steering wheel, the gas pedal and the brakes are all in the same place and work the same in each car. "I think we need to be mindful going forward that technology is important and we have to embrace it, but we've got to use it in a way that ... we don't make it so complex that the average user can't make use of it when he's out at sea. I think we can do both of those things going forward, but we may have gotten away from that here on some of the recent things that we've done." Source: <https://news.usni.org>

**Although some training backlog can be overcome with on-board training, the US Navy should not be surprised that these accidents happen.**

## **U.S., Thailand Conclude CARAT Thailand 2018**

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By Lt. Clyde Shavers, CTF73/DESRON 7 Public Affairs



GULF OF THAILAND (June 17, 2018) The guided-missile destroyer **USS Mustin (DDG 89)** and the Royal Thai Navy frigates **HTMS Naresuan (FFG 421)**, **HTMS Taksin (FFG 422)** and **HTMS Bangpakong (FFG 456)** assemble in formation during a photo exercise in support of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (**CARAT Thailand 2018**). The Multilateral (**CARAT**) exercise, in its 2nd iteration and involving the U.S., Singapore and Thailand, is designed to enhance mutual capabilities in a broad spectrum of naval warfare that enable partner navies to operate effectively together as a unified maritime force. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Christopher A. Veloicaza/Released)

PATTAYA, Thailand (NNS) -- The 24th annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (**CARAT**) exercise between the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, and Royal Thai Navy concluded in Pattaya, Thailand, June 21. **CARAT Thailand 2018** involved over 3,000 military personnel from the U.S. and Royal Thai Navy conducting nearly a dozen exercises at sea, over 20 symposiums and table-top exercises that covered the entire spectrum of naval operations, and daily band performances and sports engagements with schools and organizations throughout the area. "The strong partnership between the U.S. and Royal Thai Navy is built upon the enduring commitment and hard work of 24 years of **CARAT** exercises. Our navies operate effectively as a unified maritime force as a result of the mutual trust that has been strengthened over the last two decades of sailing together," said Rear Adm. Joey Tynch, commander, Task Force 73. "As we celebrate 200 years of the U.S.-Thai Friendship, we look forward to continuing this great tradition of **CARAT** exercises next year and beyond." The guided-missile destroyer **USS Mustin (DDG 89)**, expeditionary fast transport **USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6)**, diving and salvage ship **USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52)** and a P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft operated alongside Royal Thai Navy frigates **HTMS Taskin**, **HTMS Naresuan** and **HTMS Bangprakong** in cooperative evolutions in the Gulf of Thailand. Exercises included a gunnery exercise to maintain Sailors' readiness with on-board weapon systems, diving operations to promote mutual efficiency underwater, and an air defense exercise aimed to increase proficiency in air and missile defense. U.S. Marines from Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment underwent jungle survival training with the Royal Thai Marines learning survival techniques on how to find water sources and identify edible vegetation, animals and insects, along with other events including live-fire events and small boat operations. "There's a comradery there that we share knowing that we're all fighting, training and learning with each other for a common good," said Capt. Brandon Bocian, commander of Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment. Other evolutions included joint dive training with Mobile Diving Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1 to increase familiarization of dive equipment and operations and a mine exercise with P-8 Poseidon flights in support of at-sea evolutions. "We have been working with Royal Thai Navy aircrew doing training flights with them, and we have had multiple briefs and classroom discussions covering our different mission sets and how we can most effectively work together," said Lt. Brice Petersen, officer-in-charge of Patrol Squadron 4. "Primarily for this exercise, we have been doing MDA, Maritime Domain Awareness, going out and identifying the different vessels that are in the area." The multi-nation **CARAT** exercise series is organized in bilateral phases with regional nations designed to promote regional security cooperation, strengthen maritime partnerships and enhance mutual capabilities and interoperability. **CARAT** builds upon other engagements and exercises with Thailand to include Pacific Partnership, the largest annual multilateral humanitarian

assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission, Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) involving more than a dozen partner nations, and Cobra Gold, Indo-Pacific's largest multinational exercise. These engagements serve to enhance information sharing and coordination, build mutual warfighting capability and support long-term regional cooperation.

Source: <http://www.navy.mil>

## **The five-domains update**

(limited to the Naval domain)

19 Jun 2018

[Christopher Dixon](#), [Jessica Clarence](#), [Amelia Meurant-Tompkinson](#) and [Melissa Liberatore](#)

### **Sea state**

Australia is set to enhance its submarine capability through [sonar upgrades to all six Collins-class boats](#). The \$230 million contract with Thales is part of a bigger \$542 million project to upgrade the submarines' sensor capabilities and extend their life. The upgrades will be carried out at Thales' underwater systems centre of excellence in Rydalmere, Western Sydney, supporting more than 140 jobs.

Exercise [Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training \(CARAT\)](#) kicked off on 14 June between the Royal Thai Navy and the US Navy and Marine Corps. The 24th iteration of the multi-nation exercise is designed to enhance naval capabilities in the region, '[ensuring a free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific maritime security environment](#)'. The Royal Thai Navy participated in exercises with the **USS *Mustin***, **USNS *Brunswick*** and **USNS *Salvor*** and the marines conducted jungle warfare training and live-fire drills.

Thirty-six Russian warships have [sailed out to the Barents Sea](#) in Russia's biggest naval manoeuvre in 10 years. Large areas of the Barents Sea have been closed off to civilian shipping and commercial aircraft. The Russian Ministry of Defence [described the surprise exercise](#) as a full-range defensive-aimed drill designed to combat a massive enemy attack. It's expected to last until the end of this week. A Norwegian military spokesman confirmed that Norway hadn't been informed about the drill.

Source: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au>

## **Russian Special Mission Submarine BS-64 *Podmoskovye* Spotted with Dorsal Payload Cradle**

The Russian Navy BS-64 ***Podmoskovye*** nuclear-powered submarine was recently spotted with its dorsal payload cradle attached. The submarine is capable of rescuing a crew from a major depth. The operation is completely secret and can be carried out under the ice. No other country currently possesses such technologies. Experts believe the new vessel will



accelerate assistance to submariners in distress, the daily Izvestia writes.

***Podmoskovye*** (Moscow Oblast) with its dorsal payload cradle attached. Photo: [Reddit.com](#)

The Defense Ministry told the newspaper the *Podmoskovye* submarine was upgraded for

the Navy. It got a special superstructure with AS-40 Bester underwater craft. The BS-64 *Podmoskovye* nuclear-powered submarine was built by project 667BRDM (Delta-IV by NATO reporting name). Now it has been upgraded by project 09787 (Delta-IV Stretch) into a deep-water special-designation craft. Zvyozdochka shipyard completed the modernization of the



**BS-64 'Podmoskovye' Special Mission Host Submarine**  
Project 09787 DELTA-STRETCH



submarine in late 2016. AS-40 Bester has a titanium alloy hull. Full displacement is 50 tons. The operational submergence depth is 720 meters and maximum depth is 790 meters. The craft can submerge to the operational depth at 0.5 kts. Electric batteries are mounted outside and can power 4-

5 dives to maximum depth. Bester has a crew of six men. Three operate the bathyscaphe and guide it. The rest are onboard the ***Podmoskovye*** to ensure dive safety. The craft has TV cameras and a panel with sensitive joystick to increase precision. Bester has a docking system. Differential pressure tightly fixes it to the docking unit of the submarine. The craft can thus evacuate the crew in distress in a dry way which is considered to be the safest. The bathyscaphe can rescue 22 men at a time. The ***Podmoskovye*** is currently engaged in transportation trials of the rescue craft. "*Such a symbiosis of a submarine*

and a rescue craft was planned yet in the 1970s. Each submarine had to have special superstructure and operate as a rescue craft, if necessary. Submarines operate far from the home port of call and it takes over three days to deliver rescue equipment in case of an incident. It was planned to airlift the craft to the closest airfield to the naval base to be carried by road to the base. It would then be loaded on a submarine for delivery to the accident area," he said. The Soviet Union created project 940 rescue submarines to evacuate crews from major depths. One was produced for the Northern fleet and another for the Pacific fleet. The underwater craft could operate at a depth of 300 meters. They could surface and even tow wrecked submarines. They had to rescue people only once. It was the crew of S-178 submarine which sank after colliding with a trawler in October 1981, the Izvestia writes.

**Source: Navy Recognition / TASS**



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (June 8, 2018) The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier **USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75)**, far, conducts a replenishment-at-sea with the fast combat support ship **USNS Arctic (T-AOE-8)**. **Harry S. Truman** is operating in U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility in support of maritime security operations alongside allies. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Bobby Siens/Released)

### Has the PLA really overlooked its amphibious force?

It might surprise the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to learn they've short-changed themselves on amphibious capability. Sam Roggeveen wrote on The Interpreter recently ("**Why China isn't planning to storm Taiwan's beaches**") that "*China's*



*navy has grown dramatically over the past two decades, but with one surprising exception: its amphibious forces*".

A Type 071 Yuzhao class LPDs

In terms of the newest modern amphibious ships, it's true China has only four large Type 071 amphibious transport docks; however, two more are in the works, and the bigger

Type 075 helicopter carrier is reportedly now also in production. But here's what matters most: an amphibious ship needn't be the newest model or, as the Americans seem to think, cost \$1 billion each. The PLA Navy already has around 50 older amphibious ships that are more than capable of making the trip across the Taiwan Strait and disgorging PLA Marines, and by 2030 it will have more than 70 amphibious ships in total. Additionally, China has a boatload (to use the precise term) of commercial ferries, roll-on/roll-off ships and other ad hoc amphibious vessels, including barges, that will serve the purpose of getting across the Strait. And the PLA Navy has experience incorporating civilian vessels into military exercises. To suggest that because the PLA Navy only has a few of the most modern amphibious ships they don't have the "*lift*" to get enough troops and equipment ashore on Taiwan is perhaps missing the bigger picture. With the right weather and sea conditions, and with proper "*cover*", the Chinese could get a few tens of thousands troops ashore in a day. The PLA Marine Corps is scheduled to increase from approximately 20,000 to 100,000 Marines. This will take some time, although with the Chinese it's usually less time than experts predict. And often overlooked is the fact the PLA already has 50-60,000 amphibiously trained mechanised infantry. These army "*marines*" are intended as follow-on forces after the Marines seize a beachhead. Just as importantly, the Chinese are doing the necessary training and planning needed to master amphibious operations. President Xi Jinping told the PLA to prepare to take on Taiwan by 2020, and it is doing so. Does anyone think



China won't figure this out? Consider how well the PLA has done with aircraft carrier operations, which much of the Western defence commentariat and even many military officers and analysts said would take years, if not decades. Amphibious operations are no harder than carrier operations. Another point to consider is that an amphibious assault on Taiwan would only be one part of a multifaceted effort, including missile assaults, Special Forces operations, and possibly an airborne assault, paralysing cyberattacks, and efforts to cut communications and satellite links. The PLA Air Force would swarm and eventually render Taiwan's air force extinct, in addition to hammering Taiwanese military and civilian targets. PLA Navy submarines and surface combatants would also be out in force, dominating the Taiwan Strait and maybe the east side of Formosa too. Slipping in the amphibious assault force in this environment is feasible, in my opinion. Taiwan would be well advised to improve its defences and make itself a tough nut to crack, although this requires far more US assistance than seen to date, including political, economic, psychological, and military support. Of course, China would prefer to economically and politically strangle and intimidate Taiwan until it submits. But if it doesn't, in purely military terms (and without considering the political and economic damage to the PRC from such an attack, and the possibility of US and Japanese forces stepping in) an amphibious assault is feasible. Could China do it today? That would be tough but do-able. Could China do it five years from now? Think of where the PLA was five years ago compared to where it is today. Unless the current trend is interrupted, Chinese capabilities will only improve. But this focus on whether China can launch a successful amphibious assault on Taiwan misses something equally important. Within a few years, the Chinese equivalent of a US Navy-Marine Corps Amphibious Ready Group will be making the rounds in Asia, including the Indian Ocean. Attacking Taiwan would be going for broke, and would provoke a harsh reaction. But an amphibious force out and about, conducting bilateral and multilateral training exercises and show-the-flag port visits, greatly expands Chinese military presence and influence. It also lends a sense that China will inexorably dominate Asia, gradually overshadowing or pushing out the US. The message to Asian nations will be to submit to inevitable Chinese domination. Six or seven years ago, I read an article in a Chinese periodical that effectively said, "**Aircraft carriers are nice, but what's really useful are amphibious ships**". Westerners routinely underestimate China, but speaking as a former Marine officer, one might fairly say Beijing understands the importance of amphibious forces at least as well as the US Navy, and sometimes "gets it" even better.

Source: Australian Naval Institute / Lowy Institute

**Angel Soderlund comments: The writer Grant Newsham is a Senior Research Fellow at the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies. He is a retired US Marine Colonel and lived in Japan for 20 years, also serving as a diplomat assigned to the US Embassy, Tokyo and working in the private sector.**



ADRIATIC SEA (June 6, 2018)  
The guided-missile cruiser **USS Normandy (CG 60)** fires its Mark 45 5-inch gun during a live-fire exercise. **Normandy** is deployed as part of the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Bobby Siens/Released)

### **Some US Navy ships could have to return to US for maintenance, repairs under NDAA proposal**

BY : JAMES BOLINGER/STARS AND STRIPES

Navy ships based overseas could have to undertake a new, costly journey back to the United States for maintenance and repairs under a new provision of the defense policy bill, according to an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office. About 30 ships could be impacted by the provision of the House-passed version of the next National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 5515, at a cost of \$80 million a year, or \$400 million for five years, the federal agency found. The provision "*would require all vessels that are part of the U.S. naval fleet to be treated as though they are assigned to home ports in the United States or Guam for purposes of maintenance and repair,*" the agency said. This is a change from the current requirement, as ships with overseas home ports "*are usually exempt from the restrictions on maintenance and repair work in foreign shipyards.*" The Congressional Budget Office, which issues cost and budget analysis of proposed legislation on behalf of

Congress, detailed the estimates as part of a larger look at the House version of the defense policy proposal, which could direct funding of about \$709 billion. The agency also estimated the new Navy ship provision could cost \$40 million a year for fuel for ships to make the roundtrip from their overseas port to the western U.S. coast. Those ships could also see about \$40 million in higher repair costs in the United States versus foreign ports.

**Source: Maasmond Maritime**



**HMCS 701 *Glace Bay*** inbound for the **Naval base** in the port of Halifax-Nova Scotia **HMCS *Glace Bay*** is a Kingston-class coastal defence vessel that has served in the Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Navy since 1996. ***Glace Bay*** is the second ship of her class which is the name for the Maritime Coastal Defence Vessel Project. She is assigned to Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT) and is homeported at CFB Halifax. The Kingston class was designed to fill the minesweeper, coastal patrol and reserve training needs of the Canadian Forces, replacing the Bay-class minesweepers, Porte-class gate vessels and Royal Canadian Mounted Police coastal launches in those roles.[2] In order to perform these varied duties the Kingston-class vessels are designed to carry up to three 6.1-metre (20 ft) ISO containers with power hookups on the open deck aft in order to embark mission-specific payloads. The seven module types available for embarkation include four route survey, two mechanical minesweeping and one bottom inspection modules The Kingston class displace 970 long tons (990 t) and are 55.3 metres (181 ft 5 in) long overall with a beam 11.3 metres (37 ft 1 in) and a draught of 3.4 metres (11 ft 2 in)] The coastal defence vessels are powered by four Jeumont ANR-53-50 alternators coupled to four Wärtsilä UD 23V12 diesel engines creating 7.2 megawatts (9,700 hp). Two LIPS Z-drive azimuth thrusters are driven by two Jeumont CI 560L motors creating 3,000 horsepower (2,200 kW) and the Z drives can be rotated 360°. This gives the ships a maximum speed of 15 knots (28 km/h; 17 mph) and a range of 5,000 nautical miles (9,300 km; 5,800 mi) at 8 knots (15 km/h; 9.2 mph). The Kingston class is equipped with a Kelvin Hughes navigational radar using the I band and a Kelvin Hughes 6000 surface search radar scanning the E and F bands. The vessels carry an AN/SQS-511 towed side scan sonar for minesweeping and a Remote-control Mine Hunting System (RMHS). The vessels are equipped with one Bofors 40 mm/60 calibre Mk 5C gun and two M2 machine guns.[4][a] The Kingston-class coastal defence vessels have a complement of 37.

**Photo : Piet Sinke [www.maasmondmaritime.com](http://www.maasmondmaritime.com) (c)**

## **In first, Netanyahu gives testimony in submarines probe**

**Prime minister not a suspect in Case 3000 on purchase of naval vessels; a number of his close confidants could face charges**

By RAOUL WOOLLIFF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave testimony to police Tuesday in a massive corruption investigation surrounding the purchase of submarines and naval vessels from a German shipbuilder. Investigators questioned the prime minister at his official residence in Jerusalem for five hours over the so-called Case 3000, in which the premier is not a suspect. It was the first time the prime minister was questioned about the case. Case 3000 involves suspicions that state officials were paid bribes to influence a decision to purchase four patrol boats and three Dolphin-class submarines costing a total of 2 billion euros from German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp, despite opposition to the deal by the Defense Ministry. Police said in a statement that Netanyahu “gave testimony over a period of several hours” in the probe. “*The investigation is being conducted under the supervision and oversight of the state prosecutor and with the approval of the attorney general,*” the statement continued. “*Beyond that, we cannot elaborate on additional details from ongoing investigations.*” A spokesperson for the Netanyahu family said the prime minister “*detailed all the professional considerations which guided his decision-making in the matter of the submarines and naval vessels, and their importance to the security of the country.*” “*The prime minister welcomed the opportunity to clarify the complete picture and to finally put an end to the false claims that have been*



made against him by politicians and others,” the spokesperson said. A number of Netanyahu’s close confidants have been arrested as part of the case. Police are reportedly set to recommend indicting five suspects in the case, including Netanyahu’s former adviser and confidant Yitzhak Molcho and his personal lawyer and cousin David Shimron. Police suspect that Molcho tried to push the submarine deal during his diplomatic trips abroad, while Shimron, Molcho’s legal partner, sought to promote the interests of the German shipbuilders within Israel. Shimron has been questioned several times as part of the investigation by the Lahav 433 anti-corruption unit. In addition to his work with Netanyahu, he served as a lawyer for Miki Ganor, who was ThyssenKrupp’s local representative and who turned state’s witness in July. Shimron is considered a key suspect in the case. Netanyahu was expected to be questioned as a suspect Tuesday in a separate corruption case involving the country’s telecom giant, Bezeq. Two Netanyahu confidants have been arrested on suspicion of promoting regulation worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the telecom company. In return, Bezeq’s subsidiary news site, Walla, allegedly provided positive Netanyahu coverage. The confidants have turned state witnesses. But police later said investigators had questioned Netanyahu only over the submarine affair. As investigators arrived at Netanyahu’s residence on Tuesday, some 20 protesters gathered outside, calling on the prime minister to step down amid the investigations. Netanyahu has faced investigators nine times since the beginning of 2017 in connection with three cases in which he is a suspect. Case 4000, the high-profile graft probe relating to the national phone company Bezeq, recently acquired new evidence from a key state’s witness reportedly implicating Netanyahu in an illicit quid pro quo deal. The probe involves suspicions that Netanyahu, who has also served as communications minister for several years over his past two terms, advanced regulatory decisions benefitting Bezeq controlling shareholder Shaul Elovitch in exchange for flattering coverage of the Netanyahus from the Elovitch-owned Walla news site. The state prosecution is currently considering whether to indict the prime minister in two other corruption probes, Case 1000 and Case 2000, after police in February recommended putting Netanyahu on trial in both. In Case 1000 — in which Netanyahu and his wife are suspected of receiving illicit gifts from billionaire benefactors — Netanyahu family spokesperson-turned state’s witness Nir Hefetz reportedly provided investigators with names of additional patrons of the couple, seemingly strengthening the case that the alleged behavior was part of a pattern. In Case 2000 — which involves a suspected illicit quid pro quo deal between Netanyahu and Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper publisher Arnon Mozes — Hefetz was said to have provided names of additional figures involved in the conversations between the two. In April, Channel 10 reported that prosecutors are likely to recommend charging Netanyahu with breach of trust in Case 1000, but may not pursue more serious bribery charges. Prosecutors have yet to formulate an opinion on Case 2000. The prime minister’s wife Sara and son Yair have both been questioned in the cases as well. The Netanyahus have denied any wrongdoing.

Source: Times of Israel staff, AP contributed to this report.

## Who lost the South China Sea?

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US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has [spoken out](#) against China’s strategy of ‘*intimidation and coercion*’ in the South China Sea, including the deployment of anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air missiles and electronic jammers, and, more recently, the landing of nuclear-capable bomber aircraft at Woody Island. There are, Mattis warned, ‘*consequences to China ignoring the international community*’. But what consequences? Two successive US administrations—Barack Obama’s and now Donald Trump’s—have failed to push back credibly against China’s expansionism in the South China Sea, which has accelerated despite a 2016 international arbitral tribunal [ruling](#) invalidating its territorial claims there.

Instead, the US has relied on rhetoric or symbolic actions. For example, the United States has disinvited China from this summer’s 26-country Rim of the Pacific (**RIMPAC**) naval exercise. The move has been played up as a potential indication that the US may finally be adopting a tougher approach towards China. Mattis himself has called the decision an ‘*initial response*’ to China’s militarisation of the South China Sea, which is twice the size of the Gulf of Mexico and 50% bigger than the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, the US Navy’s [freedom of navigation \(FON\) operations](#), which are occurring more regularly under Trump than they did under Obama, have been widely hyped. After the most recent operation, in which a guided-missile cruiser and a destroyer sailed past the disputed Paracel Islands, Mattis declared that the US was the ‘*only country*’ to stand up to China. But China, too, has used America’s FON operations to play to the Chinese public, [claiming](#) after the latest operation that its navy had ‘warned and expelled’ two US warships. More important, neither FON operations nor China’s exclusion from the **RIMPAC** exercise addresses the shifts in regional dynamics brought about by China’s island-building and militarisation, not to mention its bullying of its neighbours. As a result, they will not credibly deter China or reassure US allies. The reality is that China’s incremental encroachments have collectively changed the facts in the South China Sea. It has consolidated its control over the strategic corridor between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, through which one-third of global maritime trade—worth \$5.3 trillion last year—passes. It is also asserting control over the region’s natural resources, by bullying and coercing other claimants seeking to explore for oil and gas in territories that they themselves control under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Vietnam, for example, has been forced to [scrap a project](#) on its own continental shelf. Perhaps most ominous, China’s development of forward operating bases on man-made

South China Sea islands ‘[appears complete](#)’, as Admiral Philip Davidson told a Senate committee in April before taking over the US Indo-Pacific Command. ‘China is now capable of controlling the South China Sea in all scenarios short of war with the US,’ Davidson confirmed. Davidson’s characterisation is revealing. As China takes a long-term strategic approach to strengthening its hold over the South China Sea (and, increasingly, beyond), the US is focused solely on the prospect of all-out war. The Pentagon has flaunted its capability to demolish China’s artificial islands, whose creation Chinese President Xi Jinping has cited as one of his key [accomplishments](#). ‘I would just tell you,’ joint staff director Lt. Gen. Kenneth McKenzie recently said, ‘the US military has had a lot of experience in the western Pacific taking down small islands.’ If open war is China’s only vulnerability in the South China Sea, the US will lose the larger strategic competition. While seeking to protect its military freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the US has turned a blind eye to China’s stealthy but aggressive [assault](#) on the freedom of the seas, including restricting the rights of other countries in the region. The only viable option is a credible strategy that pushes back against China’s use of coercion to advance its territorial and maritime revisionism. As Admiral Harry Harris [cautioned](#) last month while departing as head of the US Indo-Pacific Command, ‘Without focused involvement and engagement by the US and our allies and partners, China will realise its dream of hegemony in Asia.’ Simply put, China is winning the battle for the South China Sea without firing a shot—or paying any international costs. While Trump is sustaining this trend, it began under Obama, on whose watch China created seven artificial islands and started militarising them. Obama’s silence in 2012 when China occupied the disputed Scarborough Shoal—a traditional Philippine fishing ground located within that country’s exclusive economic zone—emboldened China to embark on a broader island-building strategy in the South China Sea the following year. By the time the US realised the scope and scale of China’s land-reclamation program, Russia grabbed its attention by annexing Crimea. Yet the long-term strategic implications of what China has achieved in the South China Sea are far more serious. Unfortunately, when it comes to constraining China’s expansionism, Trump seems just as clueless as his predecessor. Focused obsessively on three issues—trade, North Korea and Iran—Trump has watched quietly as China builds up its military assets through [frenzied construction](#) of permanent facilities on newly reclaimed land. And now China has begun making strategic inroads in the Indian Ocean and the East China Sea, threatening the interests of more countries, from India to Japan. The South China Sea has been and will remain central to the contest for influence in the larger Indo-Pacific region. Thanks to US fecklessness, the widely shared vision of a free, open and democratic-led Indo-Pacific could give way to an illiberal, repressive regional order, with China in full control.

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## Workhorses of the sea



Jan de Nul's **Adhemar De Saint** navigating the Dutch coastal waters near the island Vlieland

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