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Navy Ford (CVN-78) Class Aircraft Carrier Program: Background and Issues for Congress

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Summary

CVN-78, CVN-79, CVN-80, and CVN-81 are the first four ships in the Navy's new *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) class of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers (CVNs).

CVN-78 (*Gerald R. Ford*) was procured in FY2008. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at $13,084.0 million (i.e., about $13.1 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received advance procurement (AP) funding in FY2001-FY2007 and was fully funded in FY2008-FY2011 using congressionally authorized four-year incremental funding. To help cover cost growth on the ship, the ship received an additional $1,394.9 million in FY2014-FY2016 and FY2018 cost-to-complete procurement funding. The ship was delivered to the Navy on May 31, 2017, and was commissioned into service on July 22, 2017. The Navy is currently working to complete construction, testing, and certification of the ship's 11 weapons elevators and to correct other technical problems aboard the ship.

CVN-79 (*John F. Kennedy*) was procured in FY2013. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at $11,327.4 million (i.e., about $11.3 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received AP funding in FY2007-FY2012, and was fully funded in FY2013-FY2018 using congressionally authorized six-year incremental funding. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in September 2024.

CVN-80 (*Enterprise*) and CVN-81 (not yet named) are being procured under a two-ship block buy contract that was authorized by Section 121(a)(2) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018). The provision permitted the Navy to add CVN-81 to the existing contract for building CVN-80 after the Department of Defense (DOD) made certain certifications to Congress. DOD made the certifications on December 31, 2018, and the Navy announced the award of the contract on January 31, 2019. Compared to the estimated procurement costs for CVN-80 and CVN-81 in the Navy's FY2019 budget submission, the Navy estimates under its FY2020 budget submission that the two-ship block buy contract will reduce the cost of CVN-80 by $246.6 million and the cost of CVN-81 by $2,637.3 million, for a combined reduction of $2,883.9 million (i.e., about $2.9 billion). Using higher estimated baseline costs for CVN-80 and CVN-81 taken from a December 2017 Navy business case analysis, the Navy estimates under its FY2020 budget submission that the two-ship contract will reduce the cost of CVN-80 by about $900 million and the cost of CVN-81 by about $3.1 billion, for a combined reduction of about $4.0 billion.

CVN-80 was procured in FY2018. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at $12,335.1 million (i.e., about $12.3 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received AP funding in FY2016 and FY2017, and the Navy plans to fully fund the ship in FY2018-FY2025 using incremental funding authorized by Section 121(c) of P.L. 115-232. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget requests $1,062.0 million in procurement funding for the ship. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in March 2028.

Prior to the awarding of the two-ship block buy contract, CVN-81 was scheduled to be procured in FY2023. Following the awarding of the two-ship block buy contract, the Navy has chosen to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020 (as opposed to a ship that was procured in FY2019, as suggested by Congress's action on the Navy's FY2019 budget). The Navy's FY2020 budget submission estimates the ship's procurement cost at $12,450.7 million (i.e., about $12.5 billion) in then-year dollars. The Navy plans to fully fund the ship beginning in FY2019 and extending beyond FY2026 using incremental funding authorized by Section 121(c) of P.L. 115-232. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget requests $1,285.0

million in procurement funding for the ship. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in February 2032.

Oversight issues for Congress for the CVN-78 program include the following:

- a delay in CVN-78's first deployment due to the need to complete the construction, testing, and certification of the ship's weapons elevators and to correct other technical problems aboard the ship;
- whether the Navy has been sufficiently forthcoming in reporting unfinished construction work or technical problems on CVN-78;
- the impact on the CVN-78 program of funding DOD operations during part of FY2020 under a continuing resolution (CR);
- DOD's decision to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020, instead of a ship that was procured in FY2019;
- the Navy's decision, as part of its FY2020 budget submission, to not accelerate the scheduled procurement of CVN-82 from FY2028 to an earlier fiscal year;
- whether the Navy in its FY2020 budget request has accurately priced the work on the CVN-78 program that it is proposing to fund in FY2020;
- cost growth in the CVN-78 program, Navy efforts to stem that growth, and Navy efforts to manage costs so as to stay within the program's cost caps;
- additional CVN-78 program issues that were raised in a December 2018 report from the Department of Defense's (DOD's) Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) and a May 2019 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on DOD weapon systems;
- whether the aircraft carrier to be procured after CVN-81 should be a Ford-class carrier (i.e., a large-deck, nuclear-powered carrier) or a smaller and perhaps nonnuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

The Navy's FY2020 budget submission originally proposed to not fund the mid-life nuclear refueling overhaul (called a Refueling Complex Overhaul, or RCOH) for the aircraft carrier CVN-75 (*Harry S. Truman*), and to instead retire the ship around FY2024 and deactivate one of the Navy's carrier air wings at about the same time. On April 30, 2019, however, the Administration announced that it was effectively withdrawing this proposal from the Navy's FY2020 budget submission. The Administration now supports funding the CVN-75 RCOH and keeping CVN-75 (and by implication its associated air wing) in service past FY2024.

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Introduction

This report provides background information and potential oversight issues for Congress on the *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) class aircraft carrier program. The Navy's proposed FY2019 budget requests a total of $2,347 million (i.e., about $2.3 billion) in procurement funding for the CVN-78 program. Congress's decisions on the CVN-78 program could substantially affect Navy capabilities and funding requirements and the shipbuilding industrial base.

The Navy's FY2020 budget submission also proposed to not fund the mid-life nuclear refueling overhaul (called a Refueling Complex Overhaul, or RCOH) for the aircraft carrier CVN-75 (*Harry S. Truman*), and to instead retire the ship around FY2024 and also deactivate one of the Navy's carrier air wings at about the same time. On April 30, 2019, however, the Administration announced that it was effectively withdrawing this proposal from the Navy's FY2020 budget submission. The Administration now supports funding the CVN-75 RCOH and keeping CVN-75 (and by implication its associated air wing) in service past FY2024. For additional discussion of this withdrawn budget proposal, see **Appendix A**.

For an overview of the strategic and budgetary context in which the CVN-78 class program and other Navy shipbuilding programs may be considered, see CRS Report RL32665, *Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.[1]

Background

Current Navy Aircraft Carrier Force

The Navy's current aircraft carrier force consists of 11 nuclear-powered ships,[2] including 10 Nimitz-class ships (CVNs 68 through 77) that entered service between 1975 and 2009, and one Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) class ship that was commissioned into service on July 22, 2017.[3]

Statutory Requirements for Numbers of Carriers and Carrier Air Wings

Requirement to Maintain Not Less Than 11 Carriers

10 U.S.C. 8062(b) requires the Navy to maintain a force of not less than 11 operational aircraft carriers.[4] The requirement for the Navy to maintain not less than a certain number of operational

[1] See also CRS Report R43838, *A Shift in the International Security Environment: Potential Implications for Defense—Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke, and CRS Report R44891, *U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke and Michael Moodie.

[2] The Navy's last remaining conventionally powered carrier, *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63), was decommissioned on January 31, 2009.

[3] The commissioning into service of CVN-78 on July 22, 2017, ended a period during which the carrier force had declined to 10 ships—a period that began on December 1, 2012, with the inactivation of the one-of-a-kind nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Enterprise* (CVN-65), a ship that entered service in 1961.

[4] 10 U.S.C. 8062 was previously numbered as 10 U.S.C. 5062. It was renumbered as 10 U.S.C. 8062 by Section 807 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018), which directed a renumbering of sections and titles of Title 10 relating to the Navy and Marine Corps. (Sections 806 and 808 of P.L. 115-232 directed a similar renumbering of sections and titles relating to the Air Force and Army,

aircraft carriers was established by Section 126 of the FY2006 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1815/P.L. 109-163 of January 6, 2006), which set the number at 12 carriers. The requirement was changed from 12 carriers to 11 carriers by Section 1011(a) of the FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364 of October 17, 2006).[5]

Requirement to Maintain a Minimum of Nine Carrier Air Wings

10 U.S.C. 8062(e), which was added by Section 1042 of the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 2943/P.L. 114-328 of December 23, 2016), requires the Navy to maintain a minimum of nine carrier air wings.[6]

Navy Force-Level Goal of 12 Carriers

12-Carrier Goal Established December 2016

In December 2016, the Navy released a force-level goal for achieving and maintaining a fleet of 355 ships, including 12 aircraft carriers[7]—one more than the minimum of 11 carriers required by 10 U.S.C. 8062(b). This was the first Navy force-level goal to call for 12 (rather than 11) carriers since a 2002-2004 Navy force-level goal for a fleet of 375 ships.[8]

Planned and Potential Dates for Achieving 12-Carrier Force

Given the time needed to build a carrier and the projected retirement dates of existing carriers, increasing the carrier force from 11 ships to 12 ships on a sustained basis would take a number of years:

- Procuring carriers on 3-year centers—that is, procuring one carrier every three years—would achieve a 12-carrier force on a sustained basis by about 2030,

respectively.)

[5] As mentioned in footnote 3, the carrier force dropped from 11 ships to 10 ships between December 1, 2017, when *Enterprise* (CVN-65) was inactivated, and July 22, 2017, when CVN-78 was commissioned into service. Anticipating the gap between the inactivation of CVN-65 and the commissioning of CVN-78, the Navy asked Congress for a temporary waiver of 10 U.S.C. 8062(b) to accommodate the period between the two events. Section 1023 of the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2647/P.L. 111-84 of October 28, 2009) authorized the waiver, permitting the Navy to have 10 operational carriers between the inactivation of CVN-65 and the commissioning of CVN-78.

[6] 10 U.S.C. 8062(e) states the following:

> The Secretary of the Navy shall ensure that-
>
> (1) the Navy maintains a minimum of 9 carrier air wings until the earlier of-
>
> (A) the date on which additional operationally deployable aircraft carriers can fully support a 10th carrier air wing; or
>
> (B) October 1, 2025;
>
> (2) after the earlier of the two dates referred to in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1), the Navy maintains a minimum of 10 carrier air wings; and
>
> (3) for each such carrier air wing, the Navy maintains a dedicated and fully staffed headquarters.

[7] For more on the 355-ship force-level goal, see CRS Report RL32665, *Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[8] See the appendix entitled "Earlier Navy Force-Structure Goals Dating Back to 2001" in CRS Report RL32665, *Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

unless the service lives of one or more existing carriers were substantially extended.

- Procuring carriers on 3.5-year centers (i.e., a combination of 3- and 4-year centers) would achieve a 12-carrier force on a sustained basis no earlier than about 2034, unless the service lives of one or more existing carriers were substantially extended.
- Procuring carriers on 4-year centers would achieve a 12-carrier force on a sustained basis by about 2063—almost 30 years later than under 3.5-year centers—unless the service lives of one or more existing carriers were substantially extended.[9]

Under the Navy's FY2020 30-year shipbuilding plan, as under the Navy's FY2019 30-year shipbuilding plan, carrier procurement would shift from 5-year centers to 4-year centers after the procurement of CVN-82 in FY2028, and a 12-carrier force would be achieved on a sustained basis in the 2060s.

The projected size of the carrier force in the Navy's FY2020 30-year (FY2020-FY2049) shipbuilding plan reflected the Navy's now-withdrawn FY2020 budget proposal to not fund the RCOH for the aircraft carrier CVN-75 (*Harry S. Truman*), and to instead retire the ship around FY2024. With the withdrawal of this budget proposal, the projected size of the carrier force is now, for the period FY2022-FY2047, one ship higher than what is shown in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission.

The newly adjusted force-level projection, reflecting the withdrawal of the proposal to retire CVN-75 around FY2024, is as follows: The force is projected to include 11 ships in FY2020-FY2021, 12 ships in FY2022-FY2024, 11 ships in FY2025-FY2026, 10 ships in FY2027, 11 ships in FY2028-FY2039, 10 ships in FY2040, 11 ships in FY2041, 10 ships in FY2042-FY2044, 11 ships in FY2045, 10 ships in FY2046-FY2047, 9 ships in FY2048, and 10 ships in FY2049.

Incremental Funding Authority for Aircraft Carriers

Under incremental funding, some of the funding needed to fully fund a ship is provided in one or more years after the year in which the ship is procured. In recent years, Congress has authorized DOD to use incremental funding for procuring certain Navy ships, most notably aircraft carriers:[10]

- Section 121 of the FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364 of October 17, 2006) granted the Navy the authority to use four-year incremental funding for CVNs 78, 79, and 80. Under this authority, the Navy could fully fund each of these ships over a four-year period that includes the ship's year of procurement and three subsequent years.
- Section 124 of the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1540/P.L. 112-81 of December 31, 2011) amended Section 121 of P.L. 109-364 to grant the Navy the authority to use five-year incremental funding for CVNs 78, 79, and 80.

[9] Source for 2063 date in relation to four-year centers: Congressional Budget Office (CBO), in a telephone consultation with CRS on May 18, 2017.

[10] For more on full funding and incremental funding, see CRS Report RL31404, *Defense Procurement: Full Funding Policy—Background, Issues, and Options for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke and Stephen Daggett, and CRS Report RL32776, *Navy Ship Procurement: Alternative Funding Approaches—Background and Options for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

Since CVN-78 was fully funded in FY2008-FY2011, the provision in practice applied to CVNs 79 and 80.

- Section 121 of the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 4310/P.L. 112-239 of January 2, 2013) amended Section 121 of P.L. 109-364 to grant the Navy the authority to use six-year incremental funding for CVNs 78, 79, and 80. Since CVN-78 was fully funded in FY2008-FY2011, the provision in practice applies to CVNs 79 and 80.
- Section 121(c) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018) authorized incremental funding to be used for making payments under the two-ship block buy contract for the construction of CVN-80 and CVN-81. This provision does not limit the total number of years across which incremental funding may be used to procure either ship.

Aircraft Carrier Construction Industrial Base

All U.S. aircraft carriers procured since FY1958 have been built by Huntington Ingalls Industries/Newport News Shipbuilding (HII/NNS), of Newport News, VA. HII/NNS is the only U.S. shipyard that can build large-deck, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. The aircraft carrier construction industrial base also includes roughly 2,000 supplier firms in 46 states.[11]

Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) Class Program

Overview

The *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) class carrier design (**Figure 1**) is the successor to the *Nimitz*-class carrier design.[12] The *Ford*-class design uses the basic *Nimitz*-class hull form but incorporates several improvements, including features permitting the ship to generate more aircraft sorties per day, more electrical power for supporting ship systems, and features permitting the ship to be operated by several hundred fewer sailors than a *Nimitz*-class ship, reducing 50-year life-cycle operating and support (O&S) costs for each ship by about $4 billion compared to the *Nimitz*-class design, the Navy estimates. Navy plans call for procuring at least four Ford-class carriers—CVN-78, CVN-79, CVN-80, and CVN-81.

CVN-78 (Gerald R. Ford)

CVN-78, which was named *Gerald R. Ford* in 2007,[13] was procured in FY2008. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at $13,084.0 million (i.e., about $13.1 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received advance procurement (AP) funding in FY2001-FY2007 and was fully funded in FY2008-FY2011 using congressionally authorized

[11] Source for figures of 2,000 supplier firms in 46 states: Jennifer Boykin, president of HII/NNS, as quoted in Marcus Weisgerber, "US Navy Places First 2-Carrier Order in Three Decades," *Defense One*, January 31, 2019.

[12] The CVN-78 class was earlier known as the CVN-21 class, which meant nuclear-powered aircraft carrier for the 21st century.

[13] §1012 of the FY2007 defense authorization act (H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364 of October 17, 2006) expressed the sense of Congress that CVN-78 should be named for President Gerald R. Ford. On January 16, 2007, the Navy announced that CVN-78 would be so named. CVN-78 and other carriers built to the same design are consequently referred to as Ford (CVN-78) class carriers. For more on Navy ship names, see CRS Report RS22478, *Navy Ship Names: Background for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

four-year incremental funding. To help cover cost growth on the ship, the ship received an additional $1,394.9 million in FY2014-FY2016 and FY2018 cost-to-complete procurement funding. (This $1,394.9 million is included in the above-mentioned estimated procurement cost of $13,084.0 million.) The ship was delivered to the Navy on May 31, 2017, and was commissioned into service on July 22, 2017. The Navy is currently working to complete construction, testing, and certification of the ship's 11 weapons elevators, and to correct other technical problems aboard the ship.

Figure 1. USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78)

Source: Navy photograph dated April 8, 2017, accessed October 3, 2017, at http://www.navy.mil/view_image.asp?id=234835.

CVN-79 (John F. Kennedy)

CVN-79, which was named *John F. Kennedy* on May 29, 2011,[14] was procured in FY2013. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at $11,327.4 million (i.e., about $11.3 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received AP funding in FY2007-FY2012, and was fully funded in FY2013-FY2018 using congressionally authorized six-year incremental funding. The ship is being built with an improved shipyard fabrication and assembly process that incorporates lessons learned from the construction of CVN-78. A key aim of this improved process is to substantially reduce the real (i.e., inflation-adjusted) construction cost of CVN-79 compared to that of CVN-78. CVN-79 is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in September 2024.

[14] See "Navy Names Next Aircraft Carrier USS John F. Kennedy," *Navy News Service*, May 29, 2011, accessed online on June 1, 2011, at http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=60686. See also Peter Frost, "U.S. Navy's Next Aircraft Carrier Will Be Named After The Late John F. Kennedy," *Newport News Daily Press*, May 30, 2011. CVN-79 is the second ship to be named for President John F. Kennedy. The first, CV-67, was the last conventionally powered carrier procured for the Navy. CV-67 was procured in FY1963, entered service in 1968, and was decommissioned in 2007.

Two-Ship Block Buy Contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81

CVN-80 (*Enterprise*) and CVN-81 (not yet named) are being procured under a two-ship block buy contract that was authorized by Section 121(a)(2) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018). The provision permitted the Navy to add CVN-81 to the existing contract for building CVN-80 after the Department of Defense (DOD) made certain certifications to Congress. DOD made the certifications on December 31, 2018, and the Navy announced the award of the contract on January 31, 2019.

Compared to the estimated procurement costs for CVN-80 and CVN-81 in the Navy's FY2019 budget submission, the Navy estimates under its FY2020 budget submission that the two-ship block buy contract will reduce the cost of CVN-80 by $246.6 million and the cost of CVN-81 by $2,637.3 million, for a combined reduction of $2,883.9 million (i.e., about $2.9 billion).[15] (DOD characterizes the combined reduction as "nearly $3 billion."[16]) Using higher estimated baseline costs for CVN-80 and CVN-81 taken from a December 2017 Navy business case analysis, the Navy estimates under its FY2020 budget submission that the two-ship contract will reduce the cost of CVN-80 by about $900 million and the cost of CVN-81 by about $3.1 billion, for a combined reduction of about $4.0 billion.[17] These figures are all expressed in then-year dollars, meaning dollars that are not adjusted for inflation.

Regarding the difference between a savings of about $2.9 billion from the figures in the Navy's FY2019 budget submission and a savings of about $3.9 billion from the December 2017 Navy business case analysis, a February 5, 2019, press report quoted a Navy spokesman as stating that the Navy's FY2019 budget submission "already accounted for at least $1B [$1 billion] of potential savings, a two-CVN buy would save an additional $3B [$3 billion]."[18] This suggests that the Navy, in preparing its FY2019 budget submission, may have anticipated that it would receive from Congress authority for implementing some kind of combined purchase (such as, perhaps, a combined purchase of materials) for CVN-80 and CVN-81.

For additional background information on the two-ship block buy contract, see **Appendix B**.

CVN-80 (Enterprise)

CVN-80, which was named *Enterprise* on December 1, 2012,[19] was procured in FY2018. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at $12,335.1 million (i.e., about $12.3 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received AP funding in FY2016 and FY2017, and the Navy plans to fully fund the ship in FY2018-FY2025 using incremental funding authorized by Section 121(c) of P.L. 115-232. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget requests

[15] Source: CRS calculation based on costs for single-ship purchases as presented in Navy's FY2019 budget submission and costs for two-ship purchase as presented in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission.

[16] Source: Navy information paper on estimated cost savings of two-ship carrier buy provided to CRS by Navy Office of Legislative Affairs on June 20, 2019.

[17] Navy information paper provided to CRS by Navy Office of legislative Affairs on June 20, 2019.

[18] Justin Katz, "CAPE Estimates Navy's Two-Ship Buy Will Save $3.1B—$900 Million Less Than Service Projections," *InsideDefense.com*, February 5, 2019 (subscription required).

[19] The Navy made the announcement of CVN-80's name on the same day that it deactivated the 51-year-old aircraft carrier CVN-65, also named *Enterprise*. ("Enterprise, Navy's First Nuclear-Powered Aircraft Carrier, Inactivated," *Navy News Service*, December 1, 2012; Hugh Lessig, "Navy Retires One Enterprise, Will Welcome Another," *Newport News Daily Press*, December 2, 2012.) CVN-65 was the eighth Navy ship named *Enterprise*; CVN-80 is to be the ninth.

$1,062.0 million in procurement funding for the ship. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in March 2028.

CVN-81 (Not Yet Named)

Prior to the awarding of the two-ship block buy contract, CVN-81, which has not yet been named, was scheduled to be procured in FY2023. Following the awarding of the two-ship block buy contract, the Navy has chosen to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020 (as opposed to a ship that was procured in FY2019). The Navy's FY2020 budget submission estimates the ship's procurement cost at $12,450.7 million (i.e., about $12.5 billion) in then-year dollars. The Navy plans to fully fund the ship beginning in FY2019 and extending beyond FY2026 using incremental funding authorized by Section 121(c) of P.L. 115-232. The Navy's proposed FY2020 budget requests $1,285.0 million in procurement funding for the ship. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in February 2032.

Program Procurement Funding

Table 1 shows procurement funding for CVNs 78, 79, 80, and 81 through FY2026+ (meaning FY2026 and some number of years after FY2026).

Program Procurement Cost Cap

Congress has established procurement cost caps for CVN-78 class aircraft carriers:

- Section 122 of the FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364 of October 17, 2006) established a procurement cost cap for CVN-78 of $10.5 billion, plus adjustments for inflation and other factors, and a procurement cost cap for subsequent Ford-class carriers of $8.1 billion each, plus adjustments for inflation and other factors. The conference report (H.Rept. 109-702 of September 29, 2006) on P.L. 109-364 discusses Section 122 on pages 551-552.
- Section 121 of the FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 3304/P.L. 113-66 of December 26, 2013) amended the procurement cost cap for the CVN-78 program to provide a revised cap of $12,887.0 million for CVN-78 and a revised cap of $11,498.0 million for each follow-on ship in the program, plus adjustments for inflation and other factors (including an additional factor not included in original cost cap).
- Section 122 of the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1356/P.L. 114-92 of November 25, 2015) further amended the cost cap for the CVN-78 program to provide a revised cap of $11,398.0 million for each follow-on ship in the program, plus adjustment for inflation and other factors, and with a new provision stating that, if during construction of CVN-79, the Chief of Naval Operations determines that measures required to complete the ship within the revised cost cap shall result in an unacceptable reduction to the ship's operational capability, the Secretary of the Navy may increase the CVN-79 cost cap by up to $100 million (i.e., to $11.498 billion). If such an action is taken, the Navy is to adhere to the notification requirements specified in the cost cap legislation.
- Section 121(a) of the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2810/P.L. 115-91 of December 12, 2017) further amended the cost cap for the CVN-78 program to provide a revised cap of $12,568.0 million for CVN-80 and

subsequent ships in the program, plus adjustment for inflation and other factors. (The cap for CVN-79 was kept at $11,398.0 million, plus adjustment for inflation and other factors.) The provision also amended the basis for adjusting the caps for inflation, and excluded certain costs from being counted against the caps.

Table 1. Procurement Funding for CVNs 78, 79, 80, and 81 Through FY2026+

(Millions of then-year dollars, rounded to nearest tenth)

FY	CVN-78	CVN-79	CVN-80	CVN-81	Total
FY01	21.7 (AP)	0	0	0	21.7
FY02	135.3 (AP)	0	0	0	135.3
FY03	395.5 (AP)	0	0	0	395.5
FY04	1,162.9 (AP)	0	0	0	1,162.9
FY05	623.1 (AP)	0	0	0	623.1
FY06	618.9 (AP)	0	0	0	618.9
FY07	735.8 (AP)	52.8 (AP)	0	0	788.6
FY08	2,685.0 (FF)	123.5 (AP)	0	0	2,808.5
FY09	2,684.6 (FF)	1,210.6 (AP)	0	0	3,895.2
FY10	851.3 (FF)	482.9 (AP)	0	0	1,334.2
FY11	1,775.2 (FF)	902.5 (AP)	0	0	2,677.7
FY12	0	554.8 (AP)	0	0	554.8
FY13	0	491.0 (FF)	0	0	491.0
FY14	588.1 (CC)	917.6 (FF)	0	0	1,505.7
FY15	663.0 (CC)	1,219.4 (FF)	0	0	1,882.4
FY16	123.8 (CC)	1,569.5 (FF)	862.4 (AP)	0	2,555.7
FY17	0	1,241.8 (FF)	1,370.8 (AP)	0	2,612.6
FY18	20.0 (CC)	2,561.1 (FF)	1,569.6 (FF)	0	4,150.7
FY19	0	0	955.2 (FF)	618.0 (FF)	1,573.2
FY20 (requested)	*0*	*0*	*1,062.0 (FF)*	*1,285.0 (FF)*	*2,347.0*
FY21 (programmed)	*0*	*0*	*1,079.7 (FF)*	*1,565.0 (FF)*	*2,644.7*
FY22 (programmed)	*0*	*0*	*1,016.6 (FF)*	*1,307.0 (FF)*	*2,323.6*
FY23 (programmed)	*0*	*0*	*1,169.0 (FF)*	*760.0 (FF)*	*1,929.0*
FY24 (programmed)	*0*	*0*	*1,051.0 (FF)*	*667.0 (FF)*	*1,718.0*
FY25 (projected)	*0*	*0*	*2,198.8 (FF)*	*696.0 (FF)*	*2,894.8*
FY26+ (projected)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*5,552.7 (FF)*	*5,552.7*
Total	**13,084.0**	**11,327.4**	**12,335.1**	**12,450.7**	**49,197.2**

Source: Table prepared by CRS based on Navy's FY2020 budget submission and (for CVN-78 funding figures for FY2010 and FY2011) Navy Office of Legislative Affairs email to CRS dated March 20, 2019, regarding an additional $120 million in reprogrammed funding—$57.3 million in FY2010 and $62.7 million in FY2011—for CVN-78.

Notes: Figures may not add due to rounding. "AP" is advance procurement funding; "FF" is full funding; "CC" is cost to complete funding (i.e., funding to cover cost growth), which is sometimes abbreviated in Navy documents as CTC. FY2026+ means FY2026 and some number of years after FY2026.

In an August 2, 2017, letter to the congressional defense committees, then-Acting Secretary of the Navy Sean Stackley notified the committees that under subsection (b)(7) of Section 122 of P.L. 114-92 as amended by Section 121 of P.L. 113-66—a subsection allowing increases to the cost cap for CVN-78 for "the amounts of increases or decreases in costs of that ship that are

attributable solely to an urgent and unforeseen requirement identified as a result of the shipboard test program"—he had increased the cost cap for CVN-78 by $20 million, to $12,907.0 million.

In a May 8, 2018, letter to the congressional defense committees, Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer notified the committees that under subsections (b)(6) and (b)(7) of Section 122 of P.L. 114-92 as amended by Section 121 of P.L. 113-66—subsections allowing increases to the cost cap for CVN-78 for "the amounts of increases or decreases to cost required to correct deficiencies that may affect the safety of the ship and personnel or otherwise preclude the ship from safe operation and crew certification" and for "the amounts of increases or decreases in costs of CVN 78 that are attributable solely to an urgent and unforeseen requirement identified as a result of the shipboard test program," respectively—he had increased the cost cap for CVN-78 by $120 million, to $13,027 million.[20]

Changes in Estimated Unit Procurement Costs Since FY2008 Budget

Table 2 shows changes in the estimated procurement costs of CVNs 78, 79, 80, and 81 since the budget submission for FY2008—the year of procurement for CVN-78.

Withdrawn Proposal to Not Fund CVN-75 RCOH

The Navy's FY2020 budget submission proposed to not fund the mid-life nuclear refueling overhaul (called a Refueling Complex Overhaul, or RCOH) for the aircraft carrier CVN-75 (*Harry S. Truman*), and to instead retire the ship around FY2024 and deactivate one of the Navy's carrier air wings at about the same time. On April 30, 2019, however, the Administration announced that it was effectively withdrawing this proposal from the Navy's FY2020 budget submission. The Administration now supports funding the CVN-75 RCOH and keeping CVN-75 (and by implication its associated air wing) in service past FY2024. For additional discussion of this withdrawn budget proposal, see **Appendix A**.

Issues for Congress for FY2020

Delay in CVN-78's First Deployment Due to Ship's Weapon Elevators and Other Technical Problems

Overview

One oversight issue for Congress concerns a delay in CVN-78's first deployment due to the need to complete the construction, testing, and certification of the ship's weapons elevators and to correct other technical problems aboard the ship.

The ship's 11 weapons elevators—referred to as Advanced Weapons Elevators (AWEs)—move missiles and bombs from the ship's weapon magazines up to the ship's flight deck, so that they can be loaded onto aircraft that are getting ready to take off from the ship. A lack of working weapons elevators can substantially limit an aircraft carrier's ability to conduct combat operations.

[20] A copy of the May 8, 2018, letter was provided to CRS and CBO by the Navy Office of Legislative Affairs on July 19, 2018.

Table 2. Changes in Estimated Procurement Costs of CVNs 78, 79, 80, and 81

(As shown in FY2008-FY2020 budgets, in millions of then-year dollars)

Budget	CVN-78		CVN-79		CVN-80		CVN-81	
	Est. proc. cost	Scheduled FY of proc.	Est. proc. cost	Scheduled FY of proc.	Est. proc. cost	Scheduled FY of proc.	Est. proc. cost	Scheduled FY of proc.
FY08	10,488.9	FY08	9,192.0	FY12	10,716.8	FY16	n/a	FY21
FY09	10,457.9	FY08	9,191.6	FY12	10,716.8	FY16	n/a	FY21
FY10	10,845.8	FY08	n/a	FY13	n/a	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY11	11,531.0	FY08	10,413.1	FY13	13,577.0	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY12	11,531.0	FY08	10,253.0	FY13	13,494.9	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY13	12,323.2	FY08	11,411.0	FY13	13,874.2	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY14	12,829.3	FY08	11,338.4	FY13	13,874.2	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY15	12,887.2	FY08	11,498.0	FY13	13,874.2	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY16	12,887.0	FY08	11,347.6	FY13	13,472.0	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY17	12,887.0	FY08	11,398.0	FY13	12,900.0	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY18	12,907.0	FY08	11,377.4	FY13	12,997.6	FY18	n/a	FY23
FY19	12,964.0	FY08	11,341.4	FY13	12,601.7	FY18	15,088.0	FY23
FY20	$13,084.0	FY08	11,327.4	FY13	12,335.1	FY18	12,450.7	FY20
Annual % change								
FY08 to FY09	-0.3		0%		0%		n/a	
FY09 to FY10	+3.7		n/a		n/a		n/a	
FY10 to FY11	+6.3		n/a		n/a		n/a	
FY09 to FY11					+26.7%			
FY11 to FY12	0%		-1.5%		-0.1%		n/a	
FY12 to FY13	+6.9%		+11.3%		+2.8%		n/a	
FY13 to FY14	+4.1%		-0.6%		0%		n/a	
FY14 to FY15	+0.5%		+1.4%		0%		n/a	
FY15 to FY16	0%		-1.3%		-2.9%		n/a	
FY16 to FY17	0%		+0.4%		-4.2%		n/a	
FY17 to FY18	+0.2%		-0.2%		+0.7%		n/a	
FY18 to FY19	+0.4%		-0.3%		-3.0%		n/a	
FY19 to FY20	+0.9%		-0.1%		-2.1%		-17.5%	
Cumulative % change through FY20								
Since FY08 (CVN-78 year of proc.)	+24.7%		+23.2%		+15.1%		n/a	
Since FY13 (CVN-79 year of proc.)	+6.2%		-0.7%		-11.1%		n/a	
Since FY18 (CVN-80 year of proc.)	+1.4%		-0.4%		-3.0%		n/a	

Source: Table prepared by CRS based on FY2008-FY2020 Navy budget submissions. n/a means not available.

Notes: The FY2010 budget submission did not show estimated procurement costs or scheduled years of procurement for CVNs 79 and 80. The scheduled years of procurement for CVNs 79 and 80 shown here for the FY2010 budget submission are inferred from the shift to five-year intervals for procuring carriers that was announced by Secretary of Defense Gates in his April 6, 2009, news conference regarding recommendations for the FY2010 defense budget.

Challenges in completing the construction, testing, and certifying CVN-78's weapon elevators were first reported in November 2018, and the issue has been a matter of continuing oversight attention since then. The Navy has struggled since November 2018 to meet promises it has repeatedly made to the defense oversight committees to get the elevators completed, tested, and certified. For much of 2019, the Navy continued to report that 2 of the 11 weapon elevators were completed, tested, and certified.[21] On October 23, 2019, the Navy reported that the figure had increased to 4 of 11.[22]

In addition to challenges in building, testing, and certifying the ship's weapon elevators, the Navy reportedly has been working to address problems with other systems on the ship, including its propulsion and electrical systems. Technical issues regarding the weapon elevators and other ship systems have delayed the ship's first deployment to 2022 at the earliest, which would be about five years after the ship was commissioned into service.[23] The delay in the ship's first deployment is lengthening a period during which the Navy is attempting to maintain policymaker-desired levels of carrier forward deployments with its 10 other carriers—a situation that can lead to operational strains on those 10 carriers and their crews.

Potential Oversight Questions

Potential oversight questions for Congress include the following:

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[21] Sam LaGrone, "Carrier Ford Will Only Have Two Weapon Elevators Ready When it Leaves Shipyard," *USNI News*, October 9, 2019. See also Anthony Capaccio, "On Costliest U.S. Warship Ever, Navy Can't Get Munitions on Deck," *Bloomberg*, July 30, 2019. (The article was also published by *Bloomberg* with the title "Flawed Elevators on $13 Billion Carrier Miss Another Deadline.") Ben Werner, "Navy Says More Experts Coming to Work Ford Carrier Elevator Delays," *USNI News*, July 5, 2019; Navy Research, Development and Acquisition Public Affairs Office, "Navy Full Court Press on USS Gerald R. Ford Weapons Elevators," *Navy News Service*, July 1, 2019; Mark D. Faram, "The Navy's New Plan to Fix Ford's Elevators Failures," *Navy Times*, July 1, 2019; Paul McLeary, "Navy Calls In Outsiders To Fix Troubled Ford Carrier," *Breaking Defense*, July 1, 2019; Ben Werner and Sam LaGrone, "USS Gerald R. Ford Weapons Elevator Certifications Will Extend Pat October," USNI News, May 29, 2019. See also Paul McLeary, "Will Trump Fire SecNav? Super Carrier USS Ford Suffers New Setback," *Breaking Defense*, May 29, 2019; Rich Abott, "Ford Elevator Work Prioritized And Extending Past October," *Defense Daily*, June 3, 2019; Megan Eckstein, "Navy Building a Land-Based Test Site for Ford-Class Weapons Elevators, But Timing Won't Help CVN-78," *USNI News*, May 31, 2019.

For earlier press reports, see Anthony Capaccio, "U.S. Navy's Costliest Carrier Was Delivered Without Elevators to Lift Bombs," *Bloomberg*, November 2, 2018; Anthony Capaccio, "Flawed Bomb Elevators Leave Inhofe Leery of Buying Two Carriers," *Bloomberg*, December 5, 2019; Megan Eckstein, "SECNAV to Trump: Ford Carrier Weapons Elevators Will Be Fixed by Summer, or 'Fire Me,'" *USNI News*, January 8, 2019; USS Gerald R. Ford Public Affairs, "USS Gerald R. Ford Accepts First Advanced Weapons Elevator," *Navy News Service*, January 16, 2019; Christopher Woody, "The Navy's Newest Aircraft Carrier Got a Long-Missing Piece of Gear in December, Helping to Solve a Problem the Navy Secretary Has Bet His Job on Fixing," *Business Insider*, January 20, 2019; Richard Sisk, "Navy Finally Has One Weapons Elevator Working on Its Newest Carrier," *Military.com*, January 22, 2019; Mark D. Faram, "Once Beleaguered by Critics, the Ford Gets a Lift," *Navy Times*, January 23, 2019; USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) Public Affairs, "USS Gerald R. Ford Accepts Second Advanced Weapons Elevator," *Navy News Service*, March 6, 2019; Mark D. Faram, "Why the Once-Maligned Flattop Ford Is Finally Getting a Lift (or 11)," *Navy Times*, March 7, 2019; Rich Abott, "Carrier Elevator Test Site Will Procure New Elevator, Ford Accepts Second Elevator," *Defense Daily*, March 7, 2019; Rich Abott, "Navy To Build Land-Based Carrier Elevator Test Site," *Defense Daily*, February 21, 2019.

[22] Wesley Morgan, "Navy Secretary Accuses Congressional Critics of 'Disinformation' on Ford Carrier," *Politico Pro*, October 23, 2019. See also Sam LaGrone, "Carrier Ford May Not Deploy Until 2024, 3rd Weapons Elevator Certified," *USNI News*, October 22, 2019; Anthony Capaccio, "Trump Lets Navy's Chief Off the Hook Over an Offer to 'Fire Me,'" *Bloomberg*, November 2, 2019.

[23] An October 25, 2019, press report stated that Navy officials "are taking a hard look at what's next and if there's enough time for Ford to meet remaining milestones and necessary to deploy sometime in 2022—which as of now is still the target…." (Mark D. Faram, "Carrier Ford Underway For Tests as Navy Mulls Future Schedule," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, October 25, 2019.)

- Why did the Navy accept delivery of CVN-78 from the shipbuilder and commission the ship into service if most or all of its weapon elevators were not completed, tested, and certified?
- What steps has the Navy taken since CVN-78 was delivered to the Navy on May 31, 2017, to keep Congress informed of challenges regarding the ship's weapon elevators and other ship systems?
- Why is it taking so long to complete, test, and certify the weapon elevators?
- How much is it costing to complete, test, and certify the weapon elevators, and will the Navy include this cost in the ship's total reported procurement cost?
- When will the ship start its first deployment, and how much of a delay will that represent compared to the ship's original schedule for starting its first deployment?
- How much additional operational stress is the delay in CVN-78's first deployment placing on the Navy's 10 other aircraft carriers?
- What steps is the Navy taking to ensure that a similar situation does not arise regarding the construction and initial deployments of CVN-79, CVN-80, and CVN-81?

Press Reports

An October 22, 2019, press report states:

> USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) may not be ready to deploy until 2024, further complicating the Navy's persistent problems of generating deployable carriers from the East Coast.
>
> Ford's originally planned deployment date was 2018, but that timeline has continued to slip due largely to developmental delays in the new technologies that were included aboard the first-in-class nuclear aircraft carrier. The delays are also in part due to the Department of Defense's decision for Ford to undergo full-ship shock trials before its first deployment.
>
> The news of the later deployment date came during a Tuesday House Armed Services readiness subcommittee hearing in an exchange between Naval Sea Systems Command head Vice Adm. Tom Moore and Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Va.).
>
> "The original deployment was 2018 and best estimates we're looking at 2024?" Luria asked Moore during the hearing.
>
> "I think we'll beat that," Moore said. "We're going to pull back as far to the left [i.e., earlier] as we can, but I think we're going to beat that."
>
> The initial estimated deployment date is still under review, pending a decision by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday in consultation with Moore and James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition, Geurts told reporters following the hearing.
>
> "I want to make sure the new CNO has got an opportunity to review that plan and make sure he and I are both comfortable with it," Geurts told USNI News after the hearing.[24]

An October 23, 2019, press report states:

[24] Sam LaGrone, "Carrier Ford May Not Deploy Until 2024, 3rd Weapons Elevator Certified," *USNI News*, October 22, 2019.

> Navy Secretary Richard Spencer defended the long-delayed USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier Wednesday [October 23] and shot back at critics, suggesting that pointed remarks on Capitol Hill Tuesday amounted to "disinformation."
>
> "The ship will be ready to serve and do what it's going to do in the time that the CNO thinks is appropriate, and it's going to be sooner than 2024," Spencer told an audience at the Brookings Institution, referring to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday. That's the latest estimate for when the Ford will deploy for the first time.
>
> The carrier was originally scheduled to be able to deploy in 2018. Former Navy officer Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Va.) offered a blistering criticism of the delays Tuesday [October 22], calling the vessel a "$13 billion nuclear-powered floating berthing barge" during a hearing with Vice Adm. Thomas Moore of Naval Sea Systems Command and Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition James Geurts.
>
> "I look at her and other leadership on the Hill who continually disparage the Ford as a program and I get a little angry," Spencer said, noting that the 2024 date refers to when the carrier's air wing will be aboard and certified for operations, not when the warship itself will be ready. The carrier will be "sent to the fleet much earlier than that," he said.
>
> "You could not ask for a better disinformation program for our competitors" than criticism from congressional critics that underplays the Ford's potential, he added.
>
> "We're going to work this out," Spencer continued, calling the carrier an "efficiency game-changer" and emphasized that of its 11 weapons elevators, long a sticking point for the ship, "this morning we signed elevator No. 4 over" and "elevators 5 and 6 are moving in the ship." Moore and Geurts said Tuesday [October 22] that three of the elevators have been certified for use.[25]

An October 24, 2019, press report stated:

> The plight of the very expensive and very late Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier ignited a war of words between U.S. lawmakers and Navy leaders this week….
>
> At an event Wednesday [October 23], Navy Secretary Richard Spencer bristled at Luria's criticism of the "massively complex systems" on Ford.
>
> Speaking at a Brookings Institution think tank event, he said such complaints left him feeling that he "could not ask for a better disinformation program for our competitors."
>
> "The way we went to the moon was because the country was behind this, to get us to the moon with new technology," Spencer said. "We're going to work this out."
>
> Ford's innovative high-tech catapults have not only bedeviled engineers trying to perfect them but have also irked President Donald Trump, who said in 2017 that the carrier's electromagnetic system should return to "goddamned steam."
>
> Spencer blamed Congress Wednesday for ever putting a price cap on the carrier, which he likened to making a deal to get your house painted for $100 and then offering the painter only $75.
>
> "I would love to know that Congress understands what a price cap does," Spencer added.
>
> Spencer also laid into [Representative Elaine] Luria for not offering to help.
>
> "I consider that disparaging," he said.

[25] Wesley Morgan, "Navy Secretary Accuses Congressional Critics of 'Disinformation' on Ford Carrier," *Politico Pro*, October 23, 2019. See also Ben Werner, "SECNAV Spencer Rebuts Congressional Criticism of Ford Carrier Program," *USNI News*, October 23, 2019; Paul McCleary, "Navy Secretary Rips Hill, Says Shipbuilder HI Has 'No Idea,'" *Breaking Defense*, October 23, 2019.

> Luria's Capitol Hill team responded that, during Tuesday's hearing, she offered to do just that.
>
> "We want to be here for readiness to provide you the tools to get the carriers out to deploy on time," she told Moore and Assistant Navy Secretary for Research, Development and Acquisition James Geurts. "What else do you need to do that?"
>
> On Wednesday, Spencer also denounced how lawmakers—who he refers to as his "board of directors"—only blame the Navy for the Ford's failures.
>
> "I love the fact that…Congress turns around and says, 'Navy, this is your fault,'" he said. "I have an extra seat up there when I testify, and I have not seen Huntington Ingalls-Newport News called up on the Hill to testify on the outrage my board of directors sees on the Ford."
>
> In a statement released Wednesday night, Luria said she was disappointed that Spencer "finds Congressional oversight disparaging."
>
> "Here are the facts: The USS FORD will be six years delayed in its initial deployment, which causes incredible strain on the carrier fleet," she said.[26]

An October 27, 2019, press report stated:

> The Navy was kept in the dark by Huntington Ingalls' leadership about the severity of engineering issues with Advanced Weapons Elevators on the aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford according to Navy's top civilian official speaking with reporters Sunday [October 27] at Naval Station Norfolk.
>
> Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer minced no words after being questioned about the Ford's struggles and recent lawmaker comments about the ship shortly after arriving back ashore from a several hour visit to the ship, which is undergoing trials off the Virginia Coast….
>
> Spencer lauded the work being done on the ship by what he described as an "energized" and "seamless" team of sailors and civilian yard workers working together "to knock down these problems."
>
> His ire, he said, is with leadership at Huntington Ingalls and the shipyard for not communicating the problem up front.
>
> "My issue is with senior management, the board of directors," Spencer said. "I do not believe that we did have an understanding of their understanding of the issue, as translated to us all through the fall [of calendar year 2018)."
>
> The company originally promised the ship' post-shakedown availability would end this past July 15, Spencer said, telling the Navy they were "fairly confident they're going to get all the elevators done."
>
> That forecast changed in March, Spencer said, when "all of a sudden" the shipyard informed the Navy the elevators wouldn't be completed until sometime in 2021 or 2022.
>
> "That was a bit of a gut blow, which questioned in my mind, do they really know what the problem is?" Spencer said and adding "Navy came in and did what we should have done earlier" and "took control of the situation completely as it pertains to the elevator program" and "we got the issues knocked down."
>
> Huntington Ingalls didn't comment directly on Spencer's words, saying instead that the Ford, as a "first-in-class ship" has had "many unique challenges" according to Beci

[26] Geoff Ziezulewicz, "SECNAV, Lawmaker Trade Barbs on Ford Flattop Woes," Navy Times, October 24, 2019. See also Justin Katz, "Spencer Unloads on Congress, HII Following Navy Testimony on Ship Maintenance," *Inside Defense*, October 23, 2019.

> Brenton, spokeswoman for for the company. While "most things have gone very well," she said, "Some of the newer technologies have been more challenging than anticipated.
>
> She echoed Spencers comments saying the company and the Navy have been "working closely" to resolve issues as they arise and praised the efforts of the shipbuilders finding fixes.
>
> "With respect to the advanced weapon elevators, we have four certified elevators turned over to the Navy, and we are on a path to complete the remaining seven in the coming months," she said. "We will continue to support our Navy partner in their preparations for the ship's deployment."
>
> Spencer said he believes the ship and the program have turned a corner in recent months and the worst is behind….
>
> To date, he said, the ship has "seven moving elevators, of which four are certified" and handed over to the ship with "three others that are under various forms of testing."
>
> When asked how long now before the ship is combat-ready, Spencer said "I'll let you know" saying the ship can't become combat ready until she is "given to the Navy" and put through a full work-up cycle.
>
> That's because of necessary milestones in the ship's immediate future, such as "Post Delivery Tests and Trials, Full Ship Shock Trials", and a "Planned Incremental [Maintenance] Availability," which all must happen before the ship can begin working up for deployment, officials told Defense & Aerospace Report this week.
>
> But that work-up and deployment, Spencer said, is "going to be way before 2024, I guarantee you that."…
>
> "The issues with the elevators that we're slaving away with, when we find a fix here is being immediately walked over to the Kennedy [CVN-79]," he said. "I think what you're going to see is learning put into action with Kennedy, and you'll see it out quicker."[27]

An October 28, 2019, press report stated:

> The US Navy's top acquisition official was upbeat as he met with media Monday [October 28] in his Pentagon office. He was just back after a quick trip to the long-troubled aircraft carrier Gerald R Ford (CVN 78), now underway off the Virginia coast on sea trials after 15 months in a shipyard….
>
> [Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition James Geurts] added that the four operationally-certified elevators are the three upper-stage elevators plus a utility elevator also used for medical evacuations. Seven more lower-stage elevators continue to receive attention, with three of those nearing certification, he said. But it will still be about a year and a half before all 11 elevators are certified and in full operation, he cautioned.
>
> Of the ship's other systems, the Dual Band Radar (DBR), a unique feature on the Ford, "has been up and operating while at sea, tracking targets. Feeling pretty good about that," he said.
>
> Geurts also said he was pleased with progress on the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), two more key new technologies on the carrier. New elements have been put in place on the arresting gear, he said, and land-based testing of the systems continues at an ever-growing pace. Flight operations on the

[27] Mark D. Faram, "SECNAV: Huntington Ingalls Leadership Misled Navy on Ford Elevator Issues," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, October 27, 2019.

> Ford, he said, should resume shortly after the turn of the year, adding the goal is to work the system hard.
>
> The ship's propulsion system already is being checked out, Geurts noted.
>
> "We've been at full power, we've tested the [main shaft] bearings, we've tested the throttles, everything looks solid," he said, knocking a wooden table while adding the main turbine generators and the propulsion plant also look good.
>
> Geurts expressed confidence that a dispute between HII and General Electric about responsibilities with problems in the ship's propulsion plant will be worked out between the companies, with no additional costs to the Navy….
>
> Asked for examples of where the cost cap might have prevented needed work from being done in a timely fashion, Geurts pointed to "some of the prototyping, some of the risk reduction.
>
> "With a cost cap you can actually cause a behavior that suppresses information," he said. "People don't want to bring bad news to the boss. I'm much more for transparency so you can make decisions.
>
> "I just worry sometimes the intended behavior might not be the resultant behavior," he added. "Cost cap as a management mechanism may not be the best way to drive that."
>
> During the Ford's post-shakedown availability—a planned post-delivery shipyard period where Navy ships return to the yard to correct deficiencies discovered in their initial, shakedown, period and receive additional work—Newport News shipbuilders essentially defined a new shipyard trade of specialists working on the advanced elevators, which will be installed on the Kennedy, Enterprise and all future carriers in addition to the Ford.
>
> "The shipyard has created a kind of trade school for elevators now," Geurts said. "I am pretty optimistic that HII is setting up almost a specific trade, with specific training and a specific focus on this. That work force can now move from ship to ship and kind of be the AWE super geniuses as opposed to having to retrain tradesmen in this rather unique skill."
>
> A full, land-based test site is also being built by the Navy in Philadelphia to further test the technology.
>
> "I think that's where we missed it," Geurts said of the AWE problems on the Ford. "The technology itself is not that exotic. The construction and getting the construction sequence right and having that planned very, very specifically, is what we really learned on 78.
>
> "The other challenge is there isn't a huge degree of commonality between the eleven elevators, so you don't really get as much learning between elevators on the single ship, you get learning on the elevators across a class of ships."[28]

An October 29, 2019, press report stated that

> The Navy's top acquisition official said all the of the delayed advanced weapons elevators (AWEs) on the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) will be finished and operational by the time an 18-month post-deliver test and trials (PDT&T) period finishes.
>
> Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition James Geurts told media during a roundtable Oct. 28 that as of Oct. 27, when he and Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer visited the Ford, it was about 50 percent through its sea trials and is expected back to the naval base by the mid-week.

[28] Christopher P. Cavas, "Heady Days for US Navy's Carrier Program," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, October 28, 2019.

> The carrier first went back to sea for sea trials after finishing its post-shakedown availability (PSA) repair and maintenance period on Oct. 25….
>
> After finishing these trials, it will undergo a nominal 18-month PDT&T period where the crew and air wing will get certified and get the ship ready for carrier strike group workups. Flight operations will start on CVN-78 in the next calendar year to recertify the flight deck, fuel systems and overall prepare for flight operations.
>
> Geurts admitted there is carryover work on the long-delayed elevators, but he was sure they will be finished before the ship is deployed and the Navy-industry team have a better handle on them going forward.
>
> "We do have a little carryover work and so we did work our way through elevators," with four turned over to the crew and seven left to finish installation and certification.
>
> Geurts said the Navy has cycled the finished elevators over 200 times since the Ford started these trials. They are "operating fine at sea and all that but we'll continue to shake those systems out."
>
> He noted shipbuilder and AWE builder Huntington Ingalls Industries [HII' has personnel on board during the trials to work on the seven remaining elevators "proving exactly how to do that while at sea & how to pre-stage equipment the right way."
>
> Geurts said three of the lower elevators are in varying states of final construction and when he visited HII was testing one.
>
> "So we're taking advantage of that and working as an integrated team out there."
>
> Geurts underscored the Navy-HII team's output over the last 90-100 days "has been on a much better path than we were previously and that's why I am cautiously optimistic on both progress to get the rest of the Ford ones done and then be able to accelerate through 79 through 81."
>
> Last week, Spencer said the Navy started making more progress on the AWEs once a service team took over the project but also strongly criticized HII management….
>
> Geurts said the Navy and HII have had to work together "to get the right team focused on elevators. The Navy put a dedicated team down there, HII has recognized we've got to get both build, grow and sustain a dedicated workforce to get after those and be a little bit bolder in our action."…
>
> Geurts explained several risk reduction measures the Navy and HII have undertaken to speed up the elevator work.
>
> Some changes are "design tweaks for producibility." Previously, the AWE door hinges were welded on every time so when you reset the door they had to unweld them and then reposition them.
>
> "It actually was one of the submarine experts came over from HII and looked at it and now kind of moving to movable fittings so you can kind of get the fitting right and then do the welds so you can adjust it easier."
>
> The Navy has also built a full digital twin of the AWE software. "That's already up and running, so we can run the software and get the software stable and test it. And then longer term we're building a land-based test site up in Philly."[29]

An October 30, 2019, press report stated:

[29] Rich Abott, "Geurts: Ford Elevators Done By 18-Month Post-Delivery Trial End, New Team Working," *Defense Daily*, October 29, 2019. See also Ben Werner, "Navy Rethinking Need For Dual-Phase Carrier Delivery," *USNI News*, October 29, 2019.

The Secretary of the Navy today said the cost cap on the first Ford-class aircraft carrier helped lead to problems resulting in delays to the advanced weapons elevators (AWEs) and explained the government's issues and changing strategy with the shipbuilder.

Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer said on Wednesday at a Heritage Foundation press roundtable that the Navy and shipbuilder/AWE builder Huntington Ingalls Industries [HII] planned to build a test elevator site, similar to the electromagnetic advanced landing system (EMALS) located in Lakehurst, N.J.

The Navy has used Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst to test the General Atomics advanced arresting gear (AAG) and EMALS [electromagnetic aircraft launch system] hundreds of times before testing them on the first new carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78).

"Then we had the cost cap come in. And as [HII president and CEO] Mike Petters can say, you know fine, the cost cap comes in and no one builds the land site [weapon] elevator. We had to cut costs somewhere. Sometimes we're our own worst enemy," Spencer said….

Spencer said he thinks about it and wonders if anyone was expecting there to be second and third order effects of a cost cap.

"You don't get anything for free and you're not going to drive quality by cost cap. We have to start thinking differently when we go to cost control."…

On Monday [October 28], Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition James Geurts said the Navy-HII team's output on the elevators has been much better in the last few months and he was cautiously optimistic on progress of the Ford elevators….

Spencer said in fall 2018 the Navy was finalizing the HII elevator plan. The company gave him a chart that said all 11 AWEs would be tested and certified by the end of the planned post-shakedown availability (PSA), which was then planned for July 15.

He said HII management reported high confidence of this timeline while Naval Reactors told him due to throttle and bearing issues the PSA would likely be pushed into September or October, "so I had more margin there. Did I feel confident? Completely confident."

Then, in January, Spencer said he made a bet with President Trump that the AWEs would be finished with the PSA or he could be fired….

Spencer explained this was meant to rally the shipbuilders.

"What we weren't seeing down there was the spring in the step of the people on the waterfront, to be very frank with you. It was business as usual. So we said ok, here's a rally point, we're going to commit to this."

However, in May 2019 he said HII management "goes oops, here we are, elevators aren't going to be ready until the end of 2020, possibly 2021. And that's when I went, do they really know what they're doing?"

Spencer called that a moment of inflection and called Thomas Fargo, chairman of the board of HII, asking if the board knew what was going on with management "because out trust and confidence on this specific project of the elevators has eroded significantly."

While Spencer said Fargo said yes, there were continued frustrations on the government side.

"That's when Hondo [Geurts] and I said let's get a tiger team down there and let's take this over as the general contractor and HII can sub[contract] to us [i.e., the Navy]. And that's basically what's happened this last 3 months."

> Spencer said he went to the president and, after explaining the situation, was told "it's a complex system, keep knocking down the dragons."[30]

Another October 30, 2019, press report stated that at the press roundtable, Spencer noted that CVN-78 is the first ship in its class:

> "It's first of class.… First of class is tough. If I look at what we're doing to [the second-in-class ship, the future John F. Kennedy (CVN-79)], we're down 3.2 million man-hours for where Ford was[, an] 18 percent decrease. You look at what we're doing on the elevators, what we're picking up on—here's a fine example to the way to look at it: on the elevators, one of the problems was we have to get a two-pound pressure differential in each deck on three-ton doors. Well, the way they designed it is you actually have to weld and cut the hinge to adjust it. Well, now we're doing a hanging hinge on Kennedy. So we're taking learning [from CVN-78] to the ship [CVN-79]. I'd be remiss if I'd say that's the last (funding request), to be very frank; I'd rather have the option to say we're going to come for more than to say we're capped off now. I feel good on what we're finally learning on the end of this."[31]

Another October 30, 2019, press report resulting from the press roundtable stated:

> Refusing to backtrack from previous criticisms and admitting anew he has questioned if executives at Huntington "really know what they're doing," Spencer did signal a new detente with a congresswoman [Representative Elaine Luria] he sparred with recently about the Ford class, however….
>
> In a thaw in the relationship however, on Tuesday Luria and Navy acquisition boss James Geurts met in her Capitol Hill office to go over the Navy's plans to fix seven of the ship's 11 electromagnetic weapons elevators. Luria spokesman Chris Carroll told me it was "a positive meeting," adding his boss "still has strong concerns about progress on the Ford." Geurts' spokesman Capt. Danny Hernandez said the Navy would keep conversations with members of Congress private.
>
> Speaking at a breakfast event at the Heritage Foundation today, Spencer sought to play down the feud, telling reporters the back-and-forth was the result of "frustration on both sides" over problems on the Ford, adding he shares her frustration over the ship's problematic technologies and delayed schedule.

Reporting on the status of various systems on the ship, another October 20, 2019, press report stated:

> The skipper of the world's most technologically advanced aircraft carrier [Capt. John J. "Yank" Cummings] says the ship has "absolutely" turned the corner and is now ready to work towards full operational status.
>
> After a 15-month stint back in the shipyard where the ship was built, most of its plethora of new technology is now up and running. The ship is now ready to begin advanced trials as the crew and the Navy will now learn how to take Ford's high-tech gear to the next level and earn a spot in the deployment rotation….
>
> Cummings talked to media on board the ship today, moments after their five-day at sea period ended as the ship tied up at Naval Station Norfolk's Pier 11. While underway… nearly all of her ship systems were put to the test, he said, and passed….

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[30] Rich Abott, "SECNAV: Ford Issues Due To Cost Cap, Explains Timeline," *Defense Daily*, October 30, 2019. See also Megan Eckstein, "SECNAV Spencer: Carrier Ford Challenges Tied to Costs Caps, Requirements Process," *USNI News*, October 30, 2019; Paul McCleary, "SecNav Again Blasts Huntington Ingalls On Ford Carriers," *Breaking Defense*, October 30, 2019.

[31] Megan Eckstein, "SECNAV Spencer: Carrier Ford Challenges Tied to Costs Caps, Requirements Process," *USNI News*, October 30, 2019. Ellipsis as in original.

> The past few days, according to to the Naval Sea Systems Command's Rear Adm. Jim Downey, the man in charge of overseeing the building and maintenance of the Navy's flattop fleet, have proven the ship has finally worked out most of the kinks that have plagued the ship since even before it was commissioned in July of 2017.
>
> "The ship got underway right on schedule on Friday—conducted over 100 events over the the last few days and was very successful overall."
>
> Up and running, he said, is the ship's propulsion system that was put through the full range of testing both forward and backwards and even high-speed turns. There was no sign of the thrust bearing issues that led to breakdowns before the latest overhaul started.
>
> "Throttle control…performed very well, overall," Downey said "All four [main turbine generators] were online all of those fixes were demonstrated at sea."
>
> The navigation system got a workout and combat systems, which features the ship's dual-band radar worked fine through its initial runs where it "tracked multiple targets."
>
> And though all the Advanced Weapons Elevators aren't fully operational, yet, Downey said that all eleven will be operating by the end of the "post delivery testing and trials phase" which is expected to wrap up in the next 18 months.
>
> While at sea, he said, the four elevators now fully operational got a workout while at sea. In addition, a fifth elevator, considered close close to certification was also run constantly and though it's not fully certified, Downey said it "met all its requirements."[32]

Navy Reporting of Information on Status of CVN-78's Systems

Another potential issue for Congress is whether the Navy has been sufficiently forthcoming in reporting unfinished construction work or technical problems on CVN-78. An October 16, 2019, press report states:

> Four major systems in the ship will continue to need work: the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), the Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), the eleven Advanced Weapons Elevators (AWEs) and the Dual-Band Radar (DBR). Issues with those developmental, new-technology systems have been widely reported on for years, ever since Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld under the banner of transformation ordered them installed on the first ship in the new class despite deep Navy reservations and recommendations against doing so.
>
> Less talked about are the ship's electrical and propulsion systems. The Ford's more-than-100-megawatt electrical system is far more powerful than the 30 MW systems installed in the ten ships of the previous Nimitz-class carriers, and all that power is crucial to the operation of the four major developmental systems.
>
> The power plant is driven by two new-design nuclear reactors which, by the skimpy information provided to the public, seem to be working fine. But according to numerous sources, there are problems—often unspecified—with the propulsion plant.
>
> One issue that was reported involved the failure of main thrust bearings, fixtures that bear the weight of rotating propeller shafts. Twice, in April 2017 and again in January 2018, the Ford suffered main thrust bearing failures while at sea and was required to head back to port. The Navy did not publicize these problems, which were unknown to the public until Bloomberg's Tony Capaccio reported them in May 2018.
>
> Other reported problems include significant delays with initial sea trials due to issues with voltage regulators on the four main turbine generators. Reports persist that one main

[32] Mark D. Faram, "Carrier Ford Turns the Corner, Officials Say," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, October 30, 2019.

> propulsion turbine had to be virtually rebuilt after a 2016 accident caused significant damage to its rotors. Some of those accounts add there was serious damage to a second turbine.
>
> It's hard to tell specifically what's going on as Navy and industry decline to go into specifics or to confirm the reports. But the accounts persist, and it could be that one of the most serious problems with the Ford is not up top where the aircraft handling systems and radars are, but deep down in the hull where the propulsion plant lies.
>
> What is abundantly clear is that candor and honesty are not hallmarks of the carrier program—an incredible state of affairs given the enormous cost of the ships and their deep significance to the nation's defense. Quite apart from the very legitimate need for secrecy about classified combat system and propulsion information are fears to disclose even the most mundane details—witness the dearth of photography put out by the service over the ship's initial 81 days at sea. After an initial spate of photos taken when the ship was delivered and commissioned, exceptionally few images have been released to the public—and those that were strained to avoid showing much of the ship, instead focusing on closeups of people aboard her or, if on the flight deck, with an out-of-focus ship's island in the background. This stands in stark contrast to the constant stream of images and videos put out by every other carrier in the fleet when they're in port and underway.
>
> Media would love to photograph and report on the ship, but they're banned from underway visits. At no time during those initial 81 days at sea was any member of any media aboard despite numerous requests to do so. No reporters did standups from the flight deck with the scream of jet engines behind them. No one interviewed sailors on board about what it's like to live and work on such an advanced-technology ship. No ship's captain talked about the wonders of the new systems. No one was allowed to inject the "wow" factor into their reporting—the awe and wonder virtually anyone has the first time they see and ride on a massive aircraft carrier carrying out flight operations at sea.
>
> Why this secrecy? A good question which, when asked, is often met with shuffles and explanations that the ship isn't yet ready, that it would be a distraction, that passenger-carrying aircraft aren't yet qualified to land on the ship….
>
> Professional military people make careers thinking about how to deal with potential enemies, and the history of the US displays no shortfall of bravery, heroism and forthrightness in dealing with the country's foes. But Navy officials are scared and afraid. Afraid of Congressional and governmental oversight, afraid of public criticism, afraid of an informed media, and afraid of each other's internal sniping—which seems to know no end. Senior officials will strongly deny it, but the fear is palpable, quantifiable, widely acknowledged on the inside and obvious from the outside.
>
> Sources say when the Ford renews its trials and development period there will be a heightened sense of urgency and activity. That would be good to see—if the Navy can conquer its fears and lets [sic: let] us.[33]

Media roundtables and other engagements with the press regarding CVN-78 that the Secretary of the Navy and other senior Navy officials conducted in late October 2019—engagements that produced several of the articles quoted and cited in the previous section regarding challenges with the ship's weapon elevators and other systems—can be viewed as an attempt by the Navy to address the issues regarding the reporting of information on CVN-78 that are raised in the above-quoted passage.

[33] Christopher P. Cavas, "The Mysterious and Super-Secret USS Gerald R. Ford," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, October 16, 2019.

Impact of Continuing Resolution (CR) on CVN-78 Program

Another issue for Congress concerns the impact on the CVN-78 program of funding DOD operations during part of FY2020 under a continuing resolution (CR). Another CRS report provides discusses CR impacts on various Navy shipbuilding programs. As discussed in that report, the following points can be made regarding CR impacts on the CVN-78 program:

- Based on the Navy's FY2020 budget submission—which presents CVN-81 as a ship to be procured in FY2020, rather than a ship was procured in FY2019 (see next section)—the CR's prohibition on increasing a program's procurement quantity would appear to prohibit the Navy from using CR-provided funding for procuring CVN-81, since under the budget submission's presentation, no Ford-class carrier was procured in FY2019, while one is being requested for FY2020. Such an impact could affect not only CVN-81 itself, but more generally the executability of the current two-carrier contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81, which in turn could affect the construction sequence and construction cost of CVN-80.
- If Congress, in marking up the Navy's requested FY2020 budget, decides to treat CVN-81 as a ship that was procured in FY2019, then the CR's prohibition on increasing a program's procurement quantity might have no impact on the CVN-78 program in FY2020. In that case, however, the program could nevertheless be affected by the CR because the amount of procurement funding provided for the program in FY2019 ($1,573.2 million) is equivalent to about 67% of the amount requested for FY2020 ($2,347.0 million).

Navy Decision to Show CVN-81 as a Ship to Be Procured in FY2020

Another issue for Congress concerns DOD's decision to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020, instead of a ship that was procured in FY2019. Grounds for showing CVN-81 as a ship that was procured in FY2019 would include the following:

- Within Section 121 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018)—the provision that authorized the two-ship block buy contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81—subsection (a)(1) specifically authorizes a contract for the procurement of CVN-81 "beginning with the fiscal year 2019 program year." The header for subsection (a)(1) is "Procurement Authorized."
- Consistent with Section 121(a)(1), the funding table for the Navy's shipbuilding account in the conference report (H.Rept. 115-874 of July 25, 2018) on H.R. 5515 shows a quantity of "1" in line 002 of the FY2019 SCN (Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy) appropriation account. Line 002 is the line item for procurement (not advance procurement [AP]) funding for the CVN-78 program. A notation in the table for line 002 states that the procurement funding authorized for this line item is for "Authorize CVN81—One ship."[34] The funding table does not authorize any funding for line 003 of the FY2019 SCN account—the line item for AP funding for the CVN-78 program. (AP funding is funding for the procurement of a ship to be procured in a future fiscal year.)

[34] H.Rept. 115-874, p. 1164.

- Consistent with the two above points, the paragraph in the FY2019 DOD appropriations act (Division A of H.R. 6157/P.L. 115-245 of September 28, 2018) that makes appropriations for the SCN account makes procurement (not AP) appropriations for the CVN-78 program. This paragraph also states that "the funds made available by this Act for the Carrier Replacement Program (CVN-80) may be available to modify or enter into a new contract for the procurement of a Ford-class aircraft carrier designated CVN–81 pursuant to section 121 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019."
- Consistent with this bill language, the funding table for the SCN account in the joint explanatory statement for H.R. 6157 shows that this funding was provided for line 2 of the FY2019 SCN account (CVN-78 program procurement funding), not line 3 of the FY2019 SCN account (CVN-78 program AP funding).[35]
- Consistent with all of the above points (and as reflected in **Table 1** of this CRS report), the Navy's FY2020 budget submission shows the $618 million in FY2019 funding for CVN-81 as full funding (meaning funding for a procured ship), rather than AP funding (meaning funding for a ship to be procured in a future fiscal year).[36]

DOD's decision to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020, instead of a ship that was procured in FY2019, affects the comparison of numbers of ships procured in FY2019 and FY2020. If DOD had decided to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship that was procured in FY2019, then the total number of ships procured in FY2019 would be 14, and the total number requested for FY2020 would be 11—3 ships, or 21%, fewer than the FY2019 total of 14. Showing CVN-81 in the FY2020 budget submission as an FY2020 ship changes the FY2019 and FY2020 totals to 13 ships and 12 ships, respectively, making number FY2020 closer to the FY2019 number.

DOD's decision to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020, instead of a ship that was procured in FY2019, also affects the aircraft carrier procurement profile shown in the Navy's FY2020 30-year (FY2020-FY2049) 30-year shipbuilding plan. If DOD had decided to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship that was procured in FY2019, the ship-procurement table in the 30-year plan would show the procurement of no carriers for the first eight years (FY2020-FY2027) of the 30-year period. Showing CVN-81 in the FY2020 budget submission as an FY2020 ship changes the presentation to show the procurement of an aircraft carrier in the first year of the 30-year period.

Potential oversight questions for Congress include the following:

- **Compliance with congressional intent.** Is DOD's decision to show CVN-81 as a ship to be procured in FY2020, rather than as a ship that was procured in FY2019, consistent with congressional intent as shown in bill and report language for P.L. 115-232 and P.L. 115-245? Can DOD's decision be viewed as a challenge to Congress's Article 1 power to authorize and appropriate funds for the construction of Navy ships? If DOD's decision regarding the year of procurement for CVN-81 is accepted, would this set a precedent for the executive branch regarding its future compliance with Congressional decisions for authorizing and funding of other federal programs?

[35] Joint explanatory statement for H.R. 6157, PDF pages 174 and 176 of 559.

[36] *Department of Defense, Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 President's Budget Estimate Submission, Navy, Justification Book Volume 1 of 1, Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy*, March 2019, p. 15 (PDF page 51 of 356).

- **Executability of FY2019 procurement funds for CVN-81.** FY2019 SCN-account funding for the CVN-78 program was appropriated by Congress, and shows in the Navy's FY2020 budget-justification books, as procurement funding (meaning funding for one or more procured ships) rather than AP funding (meaning funding for one or more ships to be procured in a future fiscal year). If CVN-81 is accepted as a ship to be procured in FY2020, what implications, if any, might that have for the executability of the $618 million in FY2019 procurement (as opposed to AP) funds for CVN-81 shown in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission (as reflected in **Table 1** of this CRS report)?
- **Executability of CVN-81 during portion of FY2020 under a CR.** Navy officials have testified that if the Navy operates under a continuing resolution (CR) for some part of FY2020, then absent a special legislative provision in the CR known as an anomaly, the Navy during that period likely would not be able to proceed with CVN-81, because CRs typically prevent year-to-year quantity increases in procurement programs, and treating CVN-81 as a ship to be procured in FY2020 would mean that the CVN-78 program would have a year-to-year quantity increase of zero ships in FY2019 followed by one ship in FY2020.[37] If work on CVN-81 were to not proceed for some part of FY2020 because the Navy during that period were to operate under a CR, what impact would that have on the implementation and status of the two-ship contract for building CVN-80 and CVN-81?
- **FY2019 and FY2020 numbers of ships procured and 30-year shipbuilding plan.** What effect, if any, did considerations regarding the comparison of numbers of ships procured in FY2019 and FY2020 and the aircraft carrier procurement profile during the initial years of the 30-year shipbuilding plan have on DOD's decision to show CVN-81 in its FY2020 budget submission as a ship to be procured in FY2020, instead of a ship that was procured in FY2019?
- **Treatment in FY2020 legislation.** Since P.L. 115-232 shows CVN-81 as authorized in FY2019, how should the House and Senate Armed Services committees act on the request in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission to authorize an aircraft carrier in FY2020? If the FY2020 national defense authorization act authorizes the procurement of an aircraft carrier in FY2020, and the authorization for the procurement of an aircraft carrier in FY2019 were not rescinded, would that create confusion as to whether the ship being authorized in FY2020 was CVN-81 or CVN-82, the latter being a ship currently planned for procurement in FY2028? If the FY2019 authorization for CVN-81 were rescinded, what implications, if any, would that have for the implementation of Section 121 of P.L. 115-232, including the award of the two-carrier contract on January 31, 2019 (i.e., during FY2019)?

CVN-82 Not Accelerated from FY2028 to an Earlier Year

Another issue for Congress concerns the Navy's decision, as part of its FY2020 budget submission, to not accelerate the scheduled procurement of CVN-82 from FY2028 to an earlier fiscal year. The Navy's FY2020 budget submission shows that, as a result of the two-carrier contract, the scheduled delivery date for CVN-81 has been accelerated by seven months, to

[37] Source: Spoken remarks by Navy officials at an April 9, 2019, hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Department of the Navy's proposed FY2020 budget.

February 2032, compared to September 2032 in the Navy's FY2019 budget submission. The scheduled year of procurement for CVN-82 has not been changed—in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, it shows as a ship to be procured in FY2028, as it did in the Navy's FY2019 budget submission. The accelerated delivery date for CVN-81, combined with the unchanged year of procurement for CVN-82, suggests that the interval between the construction of CVN-81 and construction of CVN-82 has been increased by something like seven months.

Other things held equal, this increased interval could result in increased loss of learning in shifting from construction of CVN-81 to construction of CVN-82, and possibly in reduced spreading of shipyard fixed overhead costs during the construction of CVN-82. Both of these effects could increase the procurement cost of CVN-82. Potential oversight questions for Congress include the following:

- What impact, if any, will the accelerated delivery of CVN-81 under the two-carrier contract, combined with the unchanged year of procurement for CVN-82, have on the procurement cost of CVN-82?
- How might the procurement cost of CVN-82 change in real (i.e., inflation-adjusted) terms if its year of procurement were accelerated to an earlier year, such as FY2027?

Pricing of Proposed FY2020 Work on CVN-78 Program

Another issue for Congress is whether the Navy has accurately priced the work it is proposing to do on the CVN-78 program in FY2020, particularly in the context of implementing the two-carrier contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81.

Cost Growth and Managing Costs within Program Cost Caps

Overview

For the past several years, cost growth in the CVN-78 program, Navy efforts to stem that growth, and Navy efforts to manage costs so as to stay within the program's cost caps have been continuing oversight issues for Congress on the CVN-78 program.[38] As shown in **Table 2**, the

[38] The Congressional Budget office (CBO) in 2008 and GAO in 2007 questioned the accuracy of the Navy's cost estimate for CVN-78. CBO reported in June 2008 that it estimated that CVN-78 would cost $11.2 billion in constant FY2009 dollars, or about $900 million more than the Navy's estimate of $10.3 billion in constant FY2009 dollars, and that if "CVN-78 experienced cost growth similar to that of other lead ships that the Navy has purchased in the past 10 years, costs could be much higher still." CBO also reported that, although the Navy publicly expressed confidence in its cost estimate for CVN-78, the Navy had assigned a confidence level of less than 50% to its estimate, meaning that the Navy believed there was more than a 50% chance that the estimate would be exceeded. (Congressional Budget Office, Resource Implications of the Navy's Fiscal Year 2009 Shipbuilding Plan, June 9, 2008, p. 20.) GAO reported in August 2007 that

> Costs for CVN 78 will likely exceed the budget for several reasons. First, the Navy's cost estimate, which underpins the budget, is optimistic. For example, the Navy assumes that CVN 78 will be built with fewer labor hours than were needed for the previous two carriers. Second, the Navy's target cost for ship construction may not be achievable. The shipbuilder's initial cost estimate for construction was 22 percent higher than the Navy's cost target, which was based on the budget. Although the Navy and the shipbuilder are working on ways to reduce costs, the actual costs to build the ship will likely increase above the Navy's target. Third, the Navy's ability to manage issues that affect cost suffers from insufficient cost surveillance. Without effective cost surveillance, the Navy will not be able to identify early signs of cost growth and take necessary

estimated procurement costs of CVN-78, CVN-79, and CVN-80 have grown 24.7%, 23.2%, and 15.1%, respectively, since the submission of the FY2008 budget. Cost growth on CVN-78 required the Navy to program $1,394.9 million in cost-to-complete procurement funding for the ship in FY2014-FY2016 and FY2018 (see **Table 1**). As also shown in **Table 2**, however, cost growth on CVN-78, CVN-79, and CVN-80 more or less stopped in FY2013 and FY2014:

- while the estimated cost of CVN-78 grew considerably between the FY2008 budget (the budget in which CVN-78 was procured) and the FY2014 budget, since the FY2014 budget, it has grown by only a small amount (about 2%);
- while the estimated cost of CVN-79 grew considerably between the FY2008 budget and the FY2013 budget (in part because the procurement date for the ship was deferred by one year in the FY2010 budget),[39] since the FY2013 budget it has declined by a small amount (less than 1%); and
- while the estimated cost of CVN-80 grew considerably between the FY2008 budget and the FY2013 budget (in part because the procurement date for the ship was deferred by two years in the FY2010 budget),[40] since the FY2013 budget it has declined by about 11%.

Sources of Risk of Cost Growth and Navy Actions to Control Cost

Sources of risk of cost growth on CVN-78 have included, among other things, certain new systems to be installed on CVN-78 whose development, if delayed, could delay the completion of the ship. These systems include a new type of aircraft catapult called the Electromagnetic Launch System (EMALS), a new aircraft arresting system called the Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), and the ship's primary radar, called the Dual Band Radar (DBR). Congress has followed these and other sources of risk of cost growth for years.

In July 2016, the DOD Inspector General issued a report critical of the Navy's management of the AAG development effort.[41] In January 2017, it was reported that after conducting a review of potential alternative systems, the Navy had decided to continue stay with its plan to install EMALs and AAG on the first three Ford-class carriers.[42] Section 125 of the FY2017 National

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corrective action.

(Government Accountability Office, *Defense Acquisitions[:] Navy Faces Challenges Constructing the Aircraft Carrier Gerald R. Ford within Budget*, GAO-07-866, August 2007, summary page. See also Government Accountability Office, Defense Acquisitions[:] Realistic Business Cases Needed to Execute Navy Shipbuilding Programs, Statement of Paul L. Francis, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management Team, Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Seapower and Expeditionary Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, July 24, 2007 (GAO-07-943T), p. 15.)

[39] Deferring the ship's procurement from FY2012 to FY2013 put another year of inflation into the ship's estimated cost in then-year dollars (which are the type of dollars shown in **Table 2**), and may have reduced production learning curve benefits in shifting from production of CVN-78 to production of CVN-79.

[40] Deferring the ship's procurement from FY2016 to FY2018 put additional years of inflation into the ship's estimated cost in then-year dollars (which are the type of dollars shown in **Table 2**), and may have reduced production learning curve benefits in shifting from production of CVN-79 to production of CVN-80.

[41] Inspector General, U.S. Department of Defense, *Advanced Arresting Gear Program Exceeded Cost and Schedule Baselines*, Report No DODIG-2016-107, July 5, 2016, 29 pp. For press reports about the DOD IG report, see Justin Doubleday, "DOD IG: Navy Mismanaged Development, Testing of Advanced Arresting Gear," *Inside the Navy*, July 11, 2016; Christopher P. Cavas, "Pentagon Finds Navy Mismanaged Arresting Gear Program," *Defense News*, July 11, 2016.

[42] Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., "Navy Commits To High-Tech Catapults, Arresting Gear For All 3 Ford Carriers," *Breaking*

Defense Authorization Act (S. 2943/P.L. 114-328 of December 23, 2016) limited the availability of funds for the AAG program until certain conditions are met.

Navy officials have stated that they are working to control the cost of CVN-79 by equipping the ship with a less expensive primary radar,[43] by turning down opportunities to add features to the ship that would have made the ship more capable than CVN-78 but would also have increased CVN-79's cost, and by using a build strategy for the ship that incorporates improvements over the build strategy that was used for CVN-78. These build-strategy improvements, Navy officials have said, include the following items, among others:

- achieving a higher percentage of outfitting of ship modules before modules are stacked together to form the ship;
- achieving "learning inside the ship," which means producing similar-looking ship modules in an assembly line-like series, so as to achieve improved production learning curve benefits in the production of these modules; and
- more economical ordering of parts and materials including greater use of batch ordering of parts and materials, as opposed to ordering parts and materials on an individual basis as each is needed.

For additional background information on cost growth in the CVN-78 program, Navy efforts to stem that growth, and Navy efforts to manage costs so as to stay within the program's cost caps, see **Appendix C** and **Appendix D**.

Confidence Levels

The Navy states that its confidence levels for its estimated procurement costs (not including costs for class-wide spare parts) for CVNs 79, 80, and 81 are 36%, 22%, and 20% as of June 2019, respectively, meaning that the Navy as of June 2019 estimates that the risk of future cost growth on CVNs 79, 80, and 81 were 74%, 78%, and 80%, respectively.[44]

October 2019 Press Reports About $197 Million Cost Cap Increase

An October 25, 2019, press report stated:

> The Navy's most expensive vessel is getting even costlier, as the service says it needs to add as much as $197 million more to correct deficiencies with the USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier.
>
> That includes completing the installation and certification of 11 elevators to lift munitions and other equipment from below decks that were supposed to be ready more than two years ago.
>
> The previously undisclosed notification to Congress is on top of an extra $120 million identified in May 2018 to correct earlier deficiencies. The move last year caused the carrier

Defense, January 17, 2017. See also David B. Larter, "Advanced Arresting Gear Is Coming Along," *Defense News*, June 25, 2018; Paul McLeary, "Navy's troubled Ford Carrier Makes Modest Progress," *Breaking Defense*, June 25, 2018.

[43] See, for example, Megan Eckstein, "PEO Carriers: CVN-79 Will Have a New Radar, Save $180M Compared to [CVN-78's] Dual Band Radar," *USNI News*, March 17, 2015; Christopher P. Cavas, "Dual Band Radar Swapped Out In New Carriers," *Defense News*, March 17, 2015; Christopher P. Cavas, "New US Carrier Radar Enters the Picture," *Defense News*, March 23, 2015.

[44] Source: Navy information paper provided to CRS by Navy Office of legislative Affairs on June 20, 2019.

> to breach a $12.9 billion cost cap set by Congress in an effort to stop spiraling cost increases. The new request takes the carrier's estimated cost to $13.22 billion.
>
> The latest funding is needed "to correct deficiencies identified during testing to ensure the safety of the ship and personnel and to deliver an operational ship to the fleet," Captain Danny Hernandez, a Navy spokesman, said in a statement….
>
> More money also is needed to pay for "additional labor to address and correct technical issues, completing deferred work," and "there are also time charges associated with a longer repair period," the Pentagon comptroller said in an Oct. 7 document to Congress requesting permission for the Navy to shift $40 million from prior-year programs. The remaining $157 million would come from funds this fiscal year and 2021, Hernandez said.[45]

An October 28, 2019, press report stated:

> A congressionally-imposed cost cap remains in place on the Ford, however, and the Navy in late September received permission to add $197 million to the ship's acquisition cost, for a new total of $13.224 billion. The new monies were needed, the Navy said in a statement, "in order to correct deficiencies identified during testing, to ensure the safety of the ship and personnel, and to deliver an operational ship to the fleet."
>
> The additional money also includes more for work on the elevators. The new money will come from the current 2019 budget and the future fiscal 2020 and 2021 budgets.[46]

An October 30, 2019, press report stated that Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer, at a press roundtable on that date,

> said he has "medium confidence" that a recent $197 million reprogramming request to Congress to fund more Ford fixes will be enough, simply because "first of classes is tough."
>
> "I'd be remiss if I said that was the last, to be very frank. I'd rather have the option to say we're going to come for more than saying no we're capped off now. I feel good on what we're finally learning on the end of this birthing process," Spencer said.[47]

Recent Related Legislative Provisions

Section 128 of the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1356/P.L. 114-92 of November 25, 2015) states the following:

> SEC. 128. Limitation on availability of funds for U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CVN–79).
>
> (a) Limitation.—Of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2016 for procurement for the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CVN–79), $100,000,000 may not be obligated or expended until the date on which the Secretary of the Navy submits to the congressional defense committees the certification under subsection (b)(1) or the notification under paragraph (2) of such subsection, as the case may be, and the reports under subsections (c) and (d)....
>
> (c) Report on costs relating to CVN–79 and CVN–80.—

[45] Anthony Capaccio, "Navy's $13 Billion Carrier Needs Another $197 Million in Fixes," *Bloomberg*, October 25, 2019.

[46] Christopher P. Cavas, "Heady Days for US Navy's Carrier Program," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, October 28, 2019.

[47] Rich Abott, "SECNAV: Ford Issues Due To Cost Cap, Explains Timeline," *Defense Daily*, October 30, 2019. See also Megan Eckstein, "SECNAV Spencer: Carrier Ford Challenges Tied to Costs Caps, Requirements Process," *USNI News*, October 30, 2019; Paul McCleary, "SecNav Again Blasts Huntington Ingalls On Ford Carriers," *Breaking Defense*, October 30, 2019.

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report that evaluates cost issues related to the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CVN–79) and the U.S.S. Enterprise (CVN–80).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) Options to achieve ship end cost of no more than $10,000,000,000.

(B) Options to freeze the design of CVN–79 for CVN–80, with exceptions only for changes due to full ship shock trials or other significant test and evaluation results.

(C) Options to reduce the plans cost for CVN–80 to less than 50 percent of the CVN–79 plans cost.

(D) Options to transition all non-nuclear Government-furnished equipment, including launch and arresting equipment, to contractor-furnished equipment.

(E) Options to build the ships at the most economic pace, such as four years between ships.

(F) A business case analysis for the Enterprise Air Search Radar modification to CVN–79 and CVN–80.

(G) A business case analysis for the two-phase CVN–79 delivery proposal and impact on fleet deployments.

Section 126 of the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 2943/P.L. 114-328 of December 23, 2016) states the following:

SEC. 126. Limitation on availability of funds for procurement of U.S.S. Enterprise (CVN–80).

(a) Limitation.—Of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2017 for advance procurement or procurement for the U.S.S. Enterprise (CVN–80), not more than 25 percent may be obligated or expended until the date on which the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations jointly submit to the congressional defense committees the report under subsection (b).

(b) Initial report on CVN–79 and CVN–80.—Not later than December 1, 2016, the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations shall jointly submit to the congressional defense committees a report that includes a description of actions that may be carried out (including de-scoping requirements, if necessary) to achieve a ship end cost of—

(1) not more than $12,000,000,000 for the CVN–80; and

(2) not more than $11,000,000,000 for the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy (CVN–79).

(c) Annual report on CVN–79 and CVN–80.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Together with the budget of the President for each fiscal year through fiscal year 2021 (as submitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code) the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations shall submit a report on the efforts of the Navy to achieve the ship end costs described in subsection (b) for the CVN–79 and CVN–80.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report under paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to the procurement of the CVN–79 and the CVN–80, the following:

(A) A description of the progress made toward achieving the ship end costs described in subsection (b), including realized cost savings.

(B) A description of low value-added or unnecessary elements of program cost that have been reduced or eliminated.

(C) Cost savings estimates for current and planned initiatives.

(D) A schedule that includes—

(i) a plan for spending with phasing of key obligations and outlays;

(ii) decision points describing when savings may be realized; and

(iii) key events that must occur to execute initiatives and achieve savings.

(E) Instances of lower Government estimates used in contract negotiations.

(F) A description of risks that may result from achieving the procurement end costs specified in subsection (b).

(G) A description of incentives or rewards provided or planned to be provided to prime contractors for meeting the procurement end costs specified in subsection (b).

Section 121(b) of the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2810/P.L. 115-91 of December 12, 2017) states the following:

SEC. 121. Aircraft carriers.

...

(b) Waiver on limitation of availability of funds for CVN–79.—The Secretary of Defense may waive subsections (a) and (b) of section 128 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114–92; 129 Stat. 751) after a period of 60 days has elapsed following the date on which the Secretary submits to the congressional defense committees a written notification of the intent of the Secretary to issue such a waiver. The Secretary shall include in any such notification the following:

(1) The rationale of the Secretary for issuing the waiver.

(2) The revised test and evaluation master plan that describes when full ship shock trials will be held on Ford-class aircraft carriers.

(3) A certification that the Secretary has analyzed and accepted the operational risk of the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford deploying without having conducted full ship shock trials, and that the Secretary has not delegated the decision to issue such waiver.

Issues Raised in December 2018 DOT&E and May 2019 GAO Reports

Another oversight issue for Congress concerns CVN-78 program issues raised in a December 2018 report from DOD's Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E)—DOT&E's annual report for FY2018—and the 2019 edition of the Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) annual report surveying selected DOD weapon acquisition programs, which was published in May 2019.

December 2018 DOT&E Report

Regarding the CVN-78 program, the December 2018 DOT&E report stated the following in part:

Assessment

• The delays in the ship development and initial trials pushed both phases of initial operational testing until FY21 and FY22. The delay in the ship's delivery and development added approximately 2 years to the timeline. As noted in previous annual reports, the CVN 78 test schedule has been aggressive, and the development of EMALS [Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System], AAG [Advanced Arresting gear], AWE [Advanced Weapons

Elevator], DBR [Dual Band Radar], and the Integrated Warfare System delayed the ship's first deployment to FY22.

Reliability

• Four of CVN 78's new systems stand out as being critical to flight operations: EMALS, AAG, DBR, and AWEs. Overall, the poor reliability demonstrated by AAG and EMALS and the uncertain reliability of DBR and AWEs could delay CVN 78 IOT&E [Initial Operational Test and Evaluation]. The Navy continues to test all four of these systems in their shipboard configurations aboard CVN 78. Reliability estimates derived from test data for EMALS and AAG are discussed in following subsections. For DBR and AWE, only engineering reliability estimates have been provided.

EMALS

• Testing to date involved 747 shipboard launches and demonstrated EMALS capability to launch aircraft planned for the CVN 78 Air Wing.

• Through the first 747 shipboard launches, EMALS suffered 10 critical failures. This is well below the requirement of 4,166 Mean Cycles Between Critical Failures, where a cycle represents the launch of one aircraft.

• The reliability concerns are exacerbated by the fact that the crew cannot readily electrically isolate EMALS components during flight operations due to the shared nature of the Energy Storage Groups and Power Conversion Subsystem inverters onboard CVN 78. The process for electrically isolating equipment is time-consuming; spinning down the EMALS motor/generators takes 1.5 hours by itself. The inability to readily electrically isolate equipment precludes EMALS maintenance during flight operations.

AAG

• Testing to date included 763 attempted shipboard landings and demonstrated AAG capability to recover aircraft planned for the CVN 78 air wing.

• The Program Office redesigned major components that did not meet system specifications during land-based testing. Through the first 763 attempted shipboard landings, AAG suffered 10 operational mission failures (which includes one failure of the barricade system). This reliability estimate falls well below the re-baselined reliability growth curve and well below the requirement of 16,500 Mean Cycles Between Operational Mission Failures, where a cycle represents the recovery of one aircraft.

• The reliability concerns are magnified by the current AAG design that does not allow electrical isolation of the Power Conditioning Subsystem equipment from high power buses, limiting corrective maintenance on below-deck equipment during flight operations.

Combat System

• Results of SBDT [sea-based developmental testing] events indicate good SSDS [ship self-defense system] performance in scheduling and launching simulated RAMs [Rolling Airframe Missiles] and ESSMs [Evolved Sea Sparrow Missiles], as well as scheduling DBR directives for ESSM acquisition and target illumination. Insufficient interoperability testing with a CEC [Cooperative Engagement Capability] network and Link 16 prevents an estimate of performance in this area. It is unknown if the integration problems between SSDS and Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program (SEWIP) Block 2 identified during engineering testing at Wallops Island have been resolved because SEWIP Block 2 was not installed on the ship during these SBDT events.

• CVN 78's combat system testing on the SDTS [self-defense test ship] is at risk due to schedule constraints, lack of funding, and insufficient planned developmental testing.

DBR

• Throughout the five CVN 78 SBDTs, DBR was plagued by extraneous false and close-in dual tracks adversely affecting its performance.

• Integration of the DBR electronic protection capabilities remains incomplete and unfunded. With modern threats, a lack of electronic protection places the ship in a high-risk scenario if deployed to combat.

• The Navy analysis noted that DBR performance needs to be improved to support carrier air traffic control center certification.

Sortie Generation Rate

• CVN 78 is unlikely to achieve its SGR [sortie generation rate] requirement. The target threshold is based on unrealistic assumptions including fair weather and unlimited visibility, and that aircraft emergencies, failures of shipboard equipment, ship maneuvers, and manning shortfalls will not affect flight operations. During the 2013 operational assessment, DOT&E conducted an analysis of past aircraft carrier operations in major conflicts. The analysis concludes that the CVN 78 SGR requirement is well above historical levels.

• DOT&E plans to assess CVN 78 performance during IOT&E by comparing it to the SGR requirement as well as to the demonstrated performance of the Nimitz-class carriers.

• Poor reliability of key systems that support sortie generation on CVN 78 could cause a cascading series of delays during flight operations that would affect CVN 78's ability to generate sorties. The poor or unknown reliability of these critical subsystems represents the most risk to the successful completion of CVN 78 IOT&E.

Manning

• Based on current expected manning, the berthing capacity for officers and enlisted will be exceeded by approximately 100 personnel with some variability in the estimates. This also leaves no room for extra personnel during inspections, exercises, or routine face-to-face turnovers.

• Planned ship manning requires filling 100 percent of the billets. This is not the Navy's standard practice on other ships, and the personnel and training systems may not be able to support 100 percent manning. Additionally, workload estimates for the many new technologies such as catapults, arresting gear, radar, and weapons and aircraft elevators are not yet well understood.

Electromagnetic Compatibility

• Developmental testing identified significant EMI [electromagnetic interference] and radiation hazard problems. The Navy continues to characterize and develop mitigation plans for the problems, but some operational limitations and restrictions are expected to persist into IOT&E and deployment. The Navy will need to develop capability assessments at differring levels of system utilization in order for commanders to make informed decisions on system employment.

Live Fire Test & Evaluation

• The vulnerability of CVN 78's many new critical systems to underwater threat-induced shock is unknown. The program plans to complete shock testing on EMALS, AAG, and the AWE components during CY19, but because of a scarcity of systems, shock testing of DBR components lags and will likely not be completed before the FSSTs [full ship shock trials].

• The Vulnerability Assessment Report provides an assessment of the ship's survivability to air-delivered threat engagements. The classified findings in the report identify the specific equipment that most frequently would lead to mission capability loss. In FY19, the Navy is scheduled to deliver additional report volumes that will assess vulnerability to

underwater threats and compliance with Operational Requirements Document survivability criteria.

Recommendations

The Navy should:

1. Provide schedule, funding, and an execution strategy for assessing SGR. This strategy should specify which testing will be accomplished live, a process for accrediting the Seabasing/Seastrike Aviation Model for operational testing, and a method for comparing CVN 78 performance with that of the Nimitz class.

2. Continue to characterize the electromagnetic environment onboard CVN 78 and develop operating procedures to maximize system effectiveness and maintain safety. As applicable, the Navy should utilize the lessons learned from CVN 78 to inform design modifications for CVN 79 and future carriers.

3. Develop and implement DBR electronic protection to enhance ship survivability against modern threats.

4. Submit an updated TEMP.[48]

Issues Raised in May 2019 GAO Report

The May 2019 GAO report, which covers some issues previous discussed in this CRS report, stated the following:

Technology Maturity, Design Stability, and Production Readiness

The Navy accepted delivery of the lead ship, CVN 78, in May 2017 despite challenges related to immature technologies and struggles to demonstrate the reliability of mature systems. The Navy reports that 10 of the Ford Class's 12 critical technologies are fully mature—the advanced arresting gear (AAG) and one of the ship's missile systems are not yet mature. The advanced weapons elevators are among the systems deemed mature by the Navy; however, according to Navy officials, only 2 of the 11 elevators installed on the ship can bring munitions to the flight deck—a key element of operational flights. The shipbuilder is working to correct the system during its first post-delivery maintenance period, now scheduled to end in October 2019, and the Navy plans to create a land-based site to test the elevators, which will come at an additional cost.

Shipboard testing is ongoing for several critical systems and could delay future operational testing. Those systems include the electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS), AAG, and dual band radar (DBR). Although the Navy is testing EMALS and AAG on the ship with aircraft, the reliability of those systems remains a concern. If these systems cannot function safely, CVN 78 will not demonstrate it can rapidly deploy aircraft—a key requirement for these carriers. Recent shipboard testing revealed that the Navy is struggling to get DBR to operate as planned. Moreover, DBR poses a greater radiation hazard to personnel and systems on an aircraft carrier than the Navy anticipated, which could restrict certain types of flight operations.

The remaining challenges the Navy faces in maturing CVN 78's critical technologies could lead to their redesign or replacement on later ships. This would include CVN 79, which is currently 55 percent complete, as well as the third and fourth ships, CVNs 80 and 81. CVN 79 repeats the CVN 78 design with some modifications and replaces DBR with the Enterprise Air Surveillance Radar (EASR), which is in development. The Navy does not identify this new system as a critical technology in the Ford Class program because it

[48] Department of Defense, Director, Operational Test & Evaluation, *FY2018 Annual Report*, December 2018, pp. 133-134.

derives from the pre-existing Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) program. However, EASR is a different size and performs a different mission than the AMDR systems, which are designed for destroyers. Therefore, EASR may still require design and development efforts to function on the carrier. The Navy plans to procure two EASR units for CVNs 79 and 80 and install the CVN 79 unit during that ship's second phase of delivery. CVNs 80 and 81 will repeat the design of CVN 79.

Other Program Issues

CVN 78's procurement costs increased by 23 percent over its initial cost cap and as a result of continuing technical deficiencies, the Navy may still require more funding to complete this ship. The Navy increased the current $12.9 billion cost cap for CVN 78 by $120 million in May 2018 to account for additional post-delivery work, but added work and cost changes may result in an additional cost increase.

Costs for CVN 79 are also likely to increase as a result of optimistic cost and labor targets, putting the ship at risk of exceeding its $11.4 billion cost cap. The CVN 79 cost estimate assumes unprecedented construction efficiency—labor hours will be 18 percent lower than CVN 78. However, our analysis shows the shipbuilder is not meeting this goal and is unlikely to improve performance enough to meet cost and labor targets.

Congress raised the cost cap for CVN 80 and later ships to $12.6 billion and approved the Navy's plans to buy two carriers—CVNs 80 and 81—at the same time, based on the shipbuilder's estimate that this strategy will save the Navy over $2 billion. However, it is unclear whether the Navy can meet this cost cap, even with the estimated savings from a two-ship buy, because it assumes further reductions in subsystem costs, construction change orders, and labor hours. The Navy projects a further reduction in labor hours compared to CVN 79—about 25 percent fewer labor hours than CVN 78—will contribute to cost savings for these ships.

The program office indicated that it does not separately track or report information on software development to integrate the various subsystems of the ship. These subsystems include CVN 78's combat control systems, which rely on integrating systems through software intensive development.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. The program office stated that, in July 2018, CVN 78 entered a year-long maintenance period. It also said that, as of February 2019, two advanced weapons elevators are operating, and it continues to improve developmental system reliability.

The program also stated that, with CVN 79 construction 55 percent complete, shipbuilder cost performance remains stable, but slightly below the level needed to achieve production labor hour reduction targets. The program stated that the shipbuilder continues to work through the effects of material shortfalls that disrupted performance. The program said that the Navy plans to deliver a complete, deployable ship as scheduled and within the cost cap to maintain an 11-carrier fleet.

The program office also stated that the Navy awarded the CVN 80/81 procurement contract in January 2019 and expects to save $4 billion, compared to if it had purchased each ship individually. According to the program, the contract limits the Navy's liability and incentivizes the shipyard's best performance.[49]

[49] Government Accountability Office, *Weapon Systems Annual Assessment[:] Limited Use of Knowledge-Based Practices Continues to Undercut DOD's Investments*, GAO-19-336SP, May 2019, p. 104.

Design of Aircraft Carrier to Be Procured after CVN-81

Overview

Another oversight issue for Congress is whether the aircraft carrier to be procured after CVN-81 should be a Ford-class carrier (i.e., a large-deck, nuclear-powered carrier [CVN]) or a smaller and perhaps nonnuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The Navy's FY2020 30-year shipbuilding plan calls for procuring the next carrier in FY2028, and for that carrier to be a CVN. The question of whether the Navy should shift at some point from procuring CVNs like the CVN-78 class to procuring smaller and perhaps nonnuclear-powered aircraft carriers has been a recurrent matter of discussion and Navy study over the years, and currently appears to be a matter of active discussion in the Navy.

Advocates of smaller carriers traditionally have argued that they are individually less expensive to procure, that the Navy might be able to employ competition between shipyards in their procurement (something that the Navy cannot do with large-deck, nuclear-powered carriers like the CVN-78 class, because only one U.S. shipyard, HII/NNS, can build aircraft carriers of that size), and that today's aircraft carriers concentrate much of the Navy's striking power into a relatively small number of expensive platforms that adversaries could focus on attacking in time of war.

Supporters of CVNs traditionally have argued that smaller carriers, though individually less expensive to procure, are less cost-effective in terms of dollars spent per aircraft embarked or aircraft sorties that can be generated, that it might be possible to use competition in procuring certain materials and components for large-deck, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, and that smaller carriers, though perhaps affordable in larger numbers, would be individually less survivable in time of war than CVNs.

Section 128(d) of the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1356/P.L. 114-92 of November 25, 2015) required the Navy to submit a report on potential requirements, capabilities, and alternatives for the future development of aircraft carriers that would replace or supplement the CVN–78 class aircraft carrier. The report, which was conducted for the Navy by the RAND Corporation, was delivered to the congressional defense committees in classified form in July 2016. An unclassified version of the report was then prepared and issued in 2017 as a publicly released RAND report.[50] The question of whether to shift to smaller aircraft carriers was also addressed in three studies on future fleet architecture that were required by Section 1067 of the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1356/P.L. 114-92 of November 25, 2015).

Current Discussion

Statements from Navy officials suggest that the Navy is currently considering moving to a new aircraft carrier/naval aviation force architecture that might supplement today's CVNs with smaller and perhaps nonnuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

One option for a smaller carrier is the so-called Lighting Carrier, a term referring to an LHA-type amphibious assault ship equipped with an air wing consisting largely of F-35B Joint Strike Fighter (JSFs). (The alternate name for the F-35 is the Lighting II. The B variant of the F-35, which is currently being procured for the Marine Corps, is short takeoff, vertical landing

[50] Bradley Martin and Michael McMahon, *Future Aircraft Carrier Options*, Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 2017, 87 pp.

[STOVL] variant that can be operated off of ships with flight decks that are shorter than the flight decks of CVNs.) The Navy and Marine Corps are currently experimenting with the Lightning Carrier concept.[51]

Another option for a smaller carrier is one whose air wing would consist mostly or entirely of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The Navy in recent years has periodically studied the potential of UAV carriers.

The current discussion both inside and outside the Navy over the aircraft carrier to be procured after CVN-81 appears to reflect several considerations, including the following:

- concerns over China's improving capabilities for detecting surface ships and attacking them with anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) and advanced anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs);
- the procurement and operating and support (O&S) costs of CVNs and their air wings, particularly in a context of constraints on Navy funding and funding demands from other competing Navy programs; and
- the potential capabilities of smaller carriers operating air wings consisting of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and/or F-35B Joint Strike Fighters (i.e., the short-takeoff, vertical landing [STOVL] version of the F-35 now being procured for the Marine Corps).

A February 15, 2019, press report stated the following:

> Under Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly said now that the Navy found a way to build two new Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers [CVN-80 and CVN-81] while saving money it is starting to look at future carrier procurement, which might be very different.…
>
> Modly said Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer sees $13 billion carriers as not sustainable going forward and the service will be looking at ways to further reduce costs or keep the carrier capabilities more affordable in future ship procurements.
>
> "There was general conclusion that those two for sure would be built" and once that was determined "that was going to happen," Modly said during the AFCEA West 2019 conference here [in San Diego].…
>
> After the CVN-80 and -81 [procurement] decision was made, "I think a lot of derivative decisions still need to be made. So the secretary [Spencer] would like to take a look at 'O.K. now that we made that decision, and that second one that comes will be in quite a few years from now, we need to start thinking now about what's the next one look like.'"
>
> Modly told reporters they are asking questions like "Is it going to be advanced as this one? Or is it going to be smaller or are we going to buy two smaller ones or maybe shift air power to other forms of delivery. And we don't know the answers of that but we're looking at this."[52]

An October 24, 2019, press report stated:

> The secretary of the U.S. Navy said the sea service is looking ahead to determine what the follow-on aircraft carrier design will look like, even as work continues to get the new USS Gerald R. Ford [CVN-78] out to regular operations at sea.
>
> "With the [recent] two-carrier [CVN-80 and CVN-81] buy, what will the next carrier look like? We're having discussions on that as we speak, and we will see what happens," Navy

[51] See, for example, Megan Eckstein, "Marines Test 'Lightning Carrier' Concept, Control 13 F-35Bs from Multiple Amphibs," *USNI News*, October 23, 2019.

[52] Rich Abott, "Navy Starts Looking At Carriers After CVN-81," *Defense Daily*, February 15, 2019.

> Secretary Richard V. Spencer said, speaking Oct. 23 at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank. "I think we actually whiteboard this thing. What will it look like in 10 to 15 years? Is it a floating platform for electrically charged unmanned aircraft? I don't know."
>
> Spencer said the Navy is looking at the "lightning carrier" concept, deploying 20 F-35B Lightning II strike fighters on an amphibious assault ship. Recently the USS America operated in the eastern Pacific Ocean with 13 F-35Bs of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 122, the Corps' most recently equipped F-35B squadron. Earlier this year, USS Wasp operated for a short period with 10 F-35Bs of VMFA-121 on board.
>
> "My cost performance there is tremendous," Spencer said. "Does it have the same punch? No, it doesn't. But it has a very interesting sting to it."
>
> Such lightning carriers would lack airborne early warning aircraft unless the Navy developed a capability for these smaller decks. The sea service is developing an aerial refueling tanker capability to be installed in the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft to refuel the F-35Bs.
>
> During the opening phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan operated as a "Harrier carrier," equipped with two full squadrons of AV-8B Harrier II attack aircraft, which the F-35B is replacing, rather than the usual six aircraft.
>
> The concept might get a serious workout in a couple of years.
>
> "In 2021, you will see a Marine Corps F-35B squadron on the Queen Elizabeth, which we are very excited about," Spencer said, speaking of the plan to operate a Marine Corps F-35B squadron alongside a British F-35B squadron on the new Royal Navy aircraft carrier.[53]

An October 30, 2019, press report about remarks made by Secretary Spencer at a media roundtable event held that day at the Heritage Foundation stated that

> The secretary embraced [Marine Corps Commandant General David] Berger's proposal to use large-deck amphibious ships loaded with F-35B "Lightning II" strike fighters. He said: "Does it have the same strike capability as a carrier? No, it doesn't. But if part of the mission of the carrier is presence and forward deployability … lightning carriers [are] a great option to augment what the requirement might be."[54]

Shock Trial

An earlier oversight issue for Congress for the CVN-78 program was whether to conduct the shock trial for the CVN-78 class in the near term, on the lead ship in the class, or years later, on the second ship in the class. For background information on that issue, see **Appendix E**.

[53] Richard R. Burges, "Secretary: Navy Discussing Next-Gen Carrier Concepts, Including 'Lightning Carrier,'" *Seapower*, October 24, 2019. See also Wesley Morgan, "Navy Secretary Accuses Congressional Critics of 'Disinformation' on Ford Carrier," *Politico Pro*, October 23, 2019.

[54] Otto Kreisher, "Spencer Lauds Tight Integration of Navy, Marine Forces in 'Great Power Competition,'" *Seapower*, October 27, 2019. Ellipsis as in original.

Legislative Activity for FY2020

Summary of Congressional Action on FY2020 Funding Request

Table 3 summarizes congressional action on the FY2020 procurement funding request for the CVN-78 program. As shown in **Table 1**, of the $2,347.0 million requested for FY2020, $1,062 million is for CVN-80 and $1,285 million is for CVN-81.

Table 3. Congressional Action on FY2020 Funding Request

Millions of dollars, rounded to nearest tenth.

		Authorization			Appropriation		
	Request	HASC	SASC	Conf.	HAC	SAC	Conf.
Procurement	2,347.0	1,952.0	2,347.0		2,066.0	0	
Procurement (CVN-80)	0	0	0		0	1,062.0	
Procurement (CVN-81)	0	0	0		0	1,174.8	

Source: Table prepared by CRS based on Navy's FY2020 budget submission, committee and conference reports, and explanatory statements on FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act and FY2020 DOD Appropriations Act.

Notes: HASC is House Armed Services Committee; **SASC** is Senate Armed Services Committee; **HAC** is House Appropriations Committee; **SAC** is Senate Appropriations Committee; **Conf.** is conference agreement.

FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2500/S. 1790)

House

The House Armed Services Committee, in its report (H.Rept. 116-120 of June 19, 2019) on H.R. 2500, recommended the funding level shown in the HASC column of **Table 3**. The recommended reduction of $395.0 million includes a reduction of $302.0 million for "Basic construction/ conversion excess cost growth" and a reduction of $93.0 million for "Propulsion equipment excess cost growth." (Page 378)

Sections 111, 112, 113, and 114 of H.R. 2500 as reported by the committee state:

> SEC. 111. MODIFICATION OF ANNUAL REPORT ON COST TARGETS FOR CERTAIN AIRCRAFT CARRIERS.
>
> Section 126(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (P.L. 114-328; 130 Stat. 2035) is amended--
>
> (1) in the subsection heading, by striking ``and CVN-80'' and inserting ``, CVN-80, and CVN-81'';
>
> (2) in paragraph (1), by striking ``costs described in subsection (b) for the CVN-79 and CVN-80'' and inserting ``cost targets for the CVN-79, the CVN-80, and the CVN-81''; and
>
> (3) in paragraph (2)--
>
> (A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking `` and the CVN-80'' and inserting ``, the CVN-80, and the CVN-81''
>
> (B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ``costs described in subsection (b)'' and inserting ``cost targets'';

(C) in subparagraph (F), by striking ``costs specified in subsection (b)'' and inserting ``cost targets''; and

(D) in subparagraph (G), by striking ``costs specified in subsection (b)'' and inserting ``cost targets''.

SEC. 112. REPEAL OF REQUIREMENT TO ADHERE TO NAVY COST ESTIMATES FOR CERTAIN AIRCRAFT CARRIERS.

Section 122 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (P.L. 109-364; 120 Stat. 2104), as most recently amended by section 121(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (P.L. 115-91; 131 Stat. 1309), is repealed.

SEC. 113. FORD CLASS AIRCRAFT CARRIER SUPPORT FOR F-35C AIRCRAFT.

Before accepting delivery of the Ford class aircraft carrier designated CVN-79, the Secretary of the Navy shall ensure that the aircraft carrier is capable of operating and deploying with the F-35C aircraft.

SEC. 114. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR REDUCTION OF AIRCRAFT CARRIER FORCE STRUCTURE.

None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2020 for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended to reduce the number of operational aircraft carriers of the Navy below the number specified in section 8062(b) of title 10, United States Code.

Regarding Section 114, H16-120 states:

Section 114—Prohibition on Use of Funds for Reduction of Aircraft Carrier Force Structure

This section would limit the Secretary of Defense from reducing the aircraft carrier force structure below the level required by section 5062 of title 10, United States Code.

The committee continues to believe that the nation's preeminent power projection capability is embodied with the aircraft carrier strike group. The ability to rapidly relocate a strategic asset and launch long-range, deep penetrating strike from a location that is not hampered by sovereign limitations represents the linchpin in our nation's national security. The committee concurs with the Navy's assessment that the aircraft carrier is more survivable today than at any point in the last 75 years.

The committee continues to support an expansion of the aircraft carrier force structure to obtain the Navy's requirement of 12 aircraft carriers. The committee is supportive of the two-carrier procurement authorized in section 121 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115–232) and is supportive of further efforts to reduce the span between aircraft carrier construction.

Additionally, the budget request contained no funds for the Refueling and Complex Overhaul (RCOH) of the USS Harry S. Truman. The committee is encouraged that the administration reversed its recommendation to retire the USS Harry S. Truman before the planned RCOH and agrees with the overwhelming view within Congress that maintaining this strategic asset for another 25 years is crucial to national security. Therefore, the committee recommends $17.0 million to begin procurement of the long lead items associated with the USS Harry S. Truman RCOH. (Pages 29-30)

Senate

The Senate Armed Services Committee, in its report (S.Rept. 116-48 of June 11, 2019) on S. 1790, recommended the funding level shown in the SASC column of **Table 3**. S.Rept. 116-48 also states:

Carrier replacement program

The budget request included $2.3 billion in line number 2 of Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy (SCN), for the carrier replacement program.

The committee notes that the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (P.L. 115-232) authorized the aircraft carrier designated CVN-81.

Therefore, the committee recommends a quantity decrease from 1 to 0 in line number 2 of SCN for the carrier replacement program. (Page 21)

Regarding shipbuilding account funding line items relating to the CVN RCOH program that are not shown in **Table 3**, S.Rept. 116-48 states:

Refueling and complex overhauls of aircraft carriers

The budget request included $647.9 million in line number 5 of Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy (SCN), for refueling and complex overhauls (RCOH) of aircraft carriers.

The committee notes unjustified cost growth from the CVN-73 RCOH to the CVN-74 RCOH in basic construction/conversion and ordnance.

Therefore, the committee recommends a decrease of $50.0 million in line number 5 of SCN for refueling and complex overhauls of aircraft carriers.

Refueling and complex overhaul advance procurement

The budget request included no funding in line number 6 of Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy (SCN), for refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH) advance procurement.

The committee does not support the budget request's proposal to not refuel the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75).

Therefore, the committee recommends an increase of $16.9 million to restore the CVN-75 RCOH in line number 6 of SCN for refueling and complex overhaul advance procurement. (Pages 22-23)

Section 122 of S. 1790 as reported by the committee states:

SEC. 122. Capabilities based assessment for naval vessels that carry fixed-wing aircraft.

(a) In general.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall initiate a capabilities based assessment to begin the process of identifying requirements for the naval vessels that will carry fixed-wing aircraft following the ships designated CVN–81 and LHA–9.

(b) Elements.—The assessment shall—

(1) conform with the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System, including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5123.01H; and

(2) consider options for the vessels described under subsection (a) that would enable greater commonality and interoperability of naval aircraft embarked on such naval vessels, including aircraft arresting gear and launch catapults.

(c) Notification requirement.—Not later than 15 days after initiating the assessment required under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Navy shall notify the congressional defense committees of such action and the associated schedule for completing the assessment and generating an Initial Capabilities Document.

Regarding Section 122, S.Rept. 116-48 states:

Capabilities based assessment for naval vessels that carry fixed-wing aircraft (sec. 122)

The committee recommends a provision that would require the Secretary of the Navy to conduct a capabilities-based assessment to clarify the future requirements for naval vessels that carry fixed-wing aircraft.

The committee notes that the budget request's proposal to retire the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75) early would yield a force with 10 or fewer aircraft carriers for more than 20 years. The budget request also includes a 7-year gap until the funding of the next amphibious assault ship, LHA-9, which will likely result in a production break. The committee is concerned that both the CVN-75 and LHA-9 proposals are contrary to current Navy force structure requirements and will result in significant negative impacts for the shipbuilding industrial base.

The committee also notes that the Under Secretary of the Navy stated in February 2019, "If $13 billion is unaffordable . . . what's the next carrier look like? Is it going to be as advanced as [the USS Gerald R. Ford] or is it going to be smaller? . . . We don't know the answers to that, but we're looking at those."

The committee also notes that all three future fleet platform architecture studies required by section 1067 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (P.L. 114-92) recommended that the Navy pursue a class of aircraft carriers smaller than the Ford-class. The committee believes that smaller aircraft carriers could both increase aircraft carrier capacity and provide a more efficient means to conduct a range of missions with lower sortie requirements, including support for amphibious operations.

Accordingly, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to consult the fleet architecture studies, as well as the report on alternative aircraft carrier options required by section 128 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (P.L. 114-92), and initiate a capabilities-based assessment to begin the process of identifying requirements for the naval vessels that will carry fixed-wing aircraft following CVN-81 and LHA-9. (Page 8)

Section 123 of S. 1790 as reported by the committee states:

SEC. 123. Ford-class aircraft carrier cost limitation baselines.

(a) In general.—Chapter 633 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 8692. Ford-class aircraft carrier cost limitation baselines

"(a) Limitation.—The total amounts obligated or expended from funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for Shipbuilding and Conversion, Navy, or for any other procurement account, may not exceed the following amounts for the following aircraft carriers:

"(1) $13,027,000,000 for the construction of the aircraft carrier designated CVN–78.

"(2) $11,398,000,000 for the construction of the aircraft carrier designated CVN–79.

"(3) $12,202,000,000 for the construction of the aircraft carrier designated CVN–80.

"(4) $12,451,000,000 for the construction of the aircraft carrier designated CVN–81.

"(b) Adjustment of limitation amount.—The Secretary of the Navy may adjust an amount set forth in subsection (a) by the following:

"(1) The amounts of increases or decreases in costs attributable to economic inflation after September 30, 2019.

"(2) The amounts of increases or decreases in costs attributable to compliance with changes in Federal, State, or local laws enacted after September 30, 2019.

"(3) The amounts of outfitting costs and post-delivery costs incurred for that ship.

"(4) The amounts of increases or decreases in costs of that ship that are attributable to insertion of new technology into that ship, as compared to the technology baseline as it was defined prior to October 1, 2019.

"(5) The amounts of increases or decreases to cost required to correct deficiencies that may affect the safety of the ship and personnel or otherwise preclude the ship from safe operations and crew certification.

"(6) With respect to the aircraft carrier designated as CVN–78, the amounts of increases or decreases in costs of that ship that are attributable solely to an urgent and unforeseen requirement identified as a result of the shipboard test program.

"(7) With respect to the aircraft carrier designated as CVN–79, the amounts of increases not exceeding $100,000,000 if the Chief of Naval Operations determines that achieving the amount set forth in subsection (a)(2) would result in unacceptable reductions to the operational capability of the ship.

"(c) Limitation on technology insertion cost adjustment.—The Secretary of the Navy may use the authority under paragraph (4) of subsection (b) to adjust the amount set forth in subsection (a) for a ship referred to in that subsection with respect to insertion of new technology into that ship only if—

"(1) the Secretary determines, and certifies to the congressional defense committees, that insertion of the new technology would lower the life-cycle cost of the ship; or

"(2) the Secretary determines, and certifies to the congressional defense committees, that insertion of the new technology is required to meet an emerging threat and the Secretary of Defense certifies to those committees that such threat poses grave harm to national security.

"(d) Limitation on shipboard test program cost adjustment.—The Secretary of the Navy may use the authority under paragraph (6) of subsection (b) to adjust the amount set forth in subsection (a) for the aircraft carrier designated CVN–78 for reasons relating to an urgent and unforeseen requirement identified as a result of the shipboard test program only if—

"(1) the Secretary determines, and certifies to the congressional defense committees, that such requirement was not known before the date of the submittal to Congress of the budget for fiscal year 2020 (as submitted pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code);

"(2) the Secretary determines, and certifies to the congressional defense committees, that waiting on an action by Congress to raise the cost cap specified in subsection (a)(1) to account for such requirement will result in a delay in the date of initial operating capability of that ship; and

"(3) the Secretary submits to the congressional defense committees a report setting forth a description of such requirement before the obligation of additional funds pursuant to such authority.

"(e) Exclusion of battle and interim spares from cost limitation.—The Secretary of the Navy shall exclude from the determination of the amounts set forth in subsection (a), the costs of the following items:

"(1) CVN–78 class battle spares.

"(2) Interim spares.

"(f) Written notice of change in amount.—The Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees written notice of any change in the amount set forth in subsection (a) determined to be associated with a cost covered in subsection (b) not less than 30 days prior to making such change.".

(b) Clerical amendment.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8691 the following new item:

"§ 8692. Ford-class aircraft carrier cost limitation baselines.".

(c) Repeal of superseded provision.—Section 122 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109–364; 120 Stat. 2104) is repealed.

Regarding Section 123, S.Rept. 116-48 states:

Ford-class aircraft carrier cost limitation baselines (sec. 123)

The committee recommends a provision that would establish Ford-class aircraft carrier cost limitation baselines in title 10, United States Code, and repeal a superseded provision.

The committee notes that cost limitation baselines for Ford-class aircraft carriers were first enacted in section 122 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (P.L. 109-364). These cost limitation baselines have been amended in public law three times to account for cost estimate adjustments.

The committee further notes that the Secretary of the Navy raised the cost limitation baseline for the CVN-78 to $13.0 billion in May 2018.

The committee believes that Ford-class cost limitation baselines should now be adjusted to reflect the Navy's latest cost estimates for each of the four ships in the class and that the cost limitation baseline for each such ship should be codified in title 10, United States Code, due to the long-term nature of aircraft carrier construction and the benefits of greater clarity in oversight requirements.

The provision therefore would: (1) Update the cost limitation baseline for each Ford-class aircraft carrier; (2) Require notification of the congressional defense committees at least 30 days prior to the Secretary of the Navy's adjusting a limitation amount; (3) Eliminate adjustments that would be based on non-recurring engineering changes that are no longer applicable; and (4) Eliminate reporting requirements related to CVN-79, which would be maintained elsewhere. (Pages 8-9)

Section 128 of S. 1790 as reported by the committee states:

SEC. 128. Refueling and complex overhauls of the U.S.S. John C. Stennis and U.S.S. Harry S. Truman.

(a) Refueling and complex overhaul.—The Secretary of the Navy shall carry out the nuclear refueling and complex overhaul of the U.S.S. John C. Stennis (CVN–74) and U.S.S. Harry S. Truman (CVN–75).

(b) Use of incremental funding.—With respect to any contract entered into under subsection (a) for the nuclear refueling and complex overhauls of the U.S.S. John C. Stennis (CVN–74) and U.S.S. Harry S. Truman (CVN–75), the Secretary may use incremental funding for a period not to exceed six years after advance procurement funds for such nuclear refueling and complex overhaul effort are first obligated.

(c) Condition for out-year contract payments.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2020 is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose for that later fiscal year.

Regarding Section 128, S.Rept. 116-48 states:

Refueling and complex overhauls of the USS John C. Stennis and USS Harry S. Truman (sec. 128)

The committee recommends a provision that would require the Secretary of the Navy to carry out the nuclear refueling and complex overhaul of the USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74) and USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75).

The provision would also authorize the use of incremental funding for a period not to exceed 6 years after advance procurement funds for each nuclear refueling and complex overhaul effort are first obligated.

The committee notes that in testimony before the Armed Services Committee of the Senate on March 14, 2019, the Acting Secretary of Defense stated, "[The proposal not to refuel the USS Harry S. Truman] represents some of the strategic choices that we've made in this year's budget. . . . The funds we freed up from making these decisions are invested in the future force." The committee understands that this desired future force includes offensively armed unmanned or optionally-manned surface vessels, for which the budget request includes more than $2. 7 billion to procure in fiscal years 2020 through 2024.

While recognizing the need to modernize the U.S. military to support the National Defense Strategy, the committee has not received adequate justification to support a shift in funding from refueling an aircraft carrier to procuring unproven systems. Specifically, the committee is unaware of: a new joint warfighting plan that concluded that the Nation needs one fewer aircraft carrier; proven substitute capabilities for the combat power and reach of the Truman and its air wing; unmanned surface and undersea systems proven to be operationally effective and suitable in the threat environment; or a change in the Chief of Naval Operations' requirement for 12 aircraft carriers.

The committee is also unaware of administration proposals to change section 8062 of title 10, United States Code, which requires the Navy to maintain not fewer than 11 operational aircraft carriers, or section 1025 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (P.L. 115-91), which made it the policy of the United States to achieve a 355-ship Navy comprised of the "optimal mix" of ships as soon as practicable. The "optimal mix" is defined as the mix of ships in the Navy's 355-ship requirement, including 12 aircraft carriers.

The committee also notes that the Department of Defense estimates that not refueling the Truman would save approximately $3.5 billion plus annual operating costs. The committee is unclear as to how these savings compare to the development, procurement, and annual operating costs of the systems that are envisioned to provide equivalent or better capability as compared to the Truman and its air wing. The committee is also unaware of the schedule necessary to field such systems.

Additionally, the committee notes that the Navy's "Report to Congress on the Annual Long-Range Plan for Construction of Naval Vessels for Fiscal Year 2020" states, "Unmanned and optionally-manned systems are not accounted for in the overall battle force[.] . . . The physical challenges of extended operations at sea across the spectrum of competition and conflict, the concepts of operations for these platforms, and the policy challenges associated with employing deadly force from autonomous vehicles must be well understood prior to replacing accountable battle force ships." The committee does not believe that this standard has been met regarding the budget request's Truman proposal. (Pages 10-11)

Section 129 of S. 1790 as reported by the committee states:

SEC. 129. Report on carrier wing composition.

(a) In general.—Not later than May 1, 2020, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the optimal composition of the carrier air wing in 2030 and 2040, including alternative force design concepts.

(b) Elements.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following elements:

(1) Analysis and justification for the Navy's stated goal of a 50/50 mix of 4th and 5th generation aircraft for 2030.

(2) Analysis and justification for an optimal mix of carrier aircraft for 2040.

(3) A plan for incorporating unmanned aerial vehicles and associated communication capabilities to effectively implement the future force design.

(c) Briefing.—Not later than March 1, 2020, the Secretary of the Navy shall provide the congressional defense committees a briefing on the report required under subsection (a).

Regarding Section 129, S.Rept. 116-84 states:

Report on carrier wing composition (sec. 129)

The committee recommends a provision that would direct the Secretary of the Navy to submit a report to the congressional defense committees, no later than May 1, 2020, on the optimal composition of the carrier air wing in 2030 and 2040, as well as alternative force design concepts. The provision would also require the Secretary to provide a briefing on the report no later than March 1, 2020, to the congressional defense committees.

The committee is concerned, based on a number of independent analyses, that the Navy's current stated goal of a 50/50 mix of 4th and 5th generation aircraft for the future carrier air wing will not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy.

Therefore, the report required by this provision would include: (1) Analysis and justification used to reach the 50/50 mix of 4th and 5th generation aircraft for 2030; (2) Analysis and justification for the optimal mix of carrier aircraft for 2040; and (3) A plan for incorporating unmanned aerial vehicles and associated communication capabilities to effectively implement the future force design. (Page 11)

S.Rept. 116-48 also states:

Reliability growth of systems on Ford-class aircraft carriers

The committee notes that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report on June 6, 2018, titled "Navy Shipbuilding: Past Performance Provides Valuable Lessons for Future Investments" (GA0-18-238SP), which assessed Navy shipbuilding performance over the past 10 years and concluded that ". . . the Navy's shipbuilding programs have had years of construction delays and, even when the ships eventually reached the fleet, they often fell short of quality and performance expectations."

The committee is concerned that Navy ships are being delivered to the fleet with incomplete and underperforming systems, which often leads to the reliability of key systems falling short of Navy requirements.

The reliability of key systems on the lead ship in the Ford-class of aircraft carriers, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78), is particularly concerning. While the Navy accepted delivery of CVN-78 from the shipbuilder in May 2017, 20 months later than initially planned, reliability measured through September 30, 2018, of four key systems is either orders of magnitude below the Navy's stated requirement or unknown.

As reported by the Department of Defense's Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) in December 2018, through the first 747 shipboard launches, the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) suffered 10 critical failures, well below the requirement of 4,166 mean cycles between critical failures, where a cycle represents the launch of one aircraft. Through the first 763 attempted shipboard landings, the Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) suffered 10 operational mission failures, well below the re-baselined reliability growth curve and well below the requirement of 16,500 mean cycles between operational mission failures, where a cycle represents the recovery of one aircraft. For the Dual Band Radar (DBR) and Advanced Weapons Elevators (AWE), only

> engineering reliability estimates, not actual data, have been provided by the Navy to the DOT&E.
>
> The committee is concerned that inadequate reliability of key shipboard systems, such as those on CVN-78, will result in degraded operational performance that will not meet combatant commander needs.
>
> Therefore, beginning on October 1, 2019, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to submit quarterly reports to the congressional defense committees on the reliability of the EMALS, AAG, DBR, and A WE until each system meets its full reliability requirement. Each report shall utilize the DOT&E measures and metrics to report measured reliability for each system for the previous fiscal year quarter. Each report shall also include projected reliability growth estimates, in graphical and tabular form, to achieve the Navy's reliability requirement for each system with the associated schedule. In addition, the reports shall include descriptions of actions being taken to improve the reliability of each system. (Pages 50-51)

FY2020 DOD Appropriations Act (H.R. 2968/S. 2474)

House

The House Appropriations Committee, in its report (H.Rept. 116-84 of May 23, 2019) on H.R. 2968, recommended the funding level shown in the HAC column of **Table 3**. The recommended reduction of $281.0 million is for "Basic construction excess to need" ($20.0 million) and "Propulsion equipment excess to need" ($261.0 million). (Page 175)

Senate

The Senate Appropriations Committee, in its report (S.Rept. 116-103 of September 12, 2019) on S. 2474, recommended the funding levels shown in the SAC column of **Table 3**. The committee recommended dividing the program's requested procurement funding into separate line items for CVN-80 and CVN-81, and reducing the amount requested for CVN-81 by $110.25 million for "Insufficient budget justification: Growth for non–propulsion equipment." (Page 120)

S.Rept. 116-103 states:

> *CVN 80 and CVN 81 Budget Justification Materials*.—The fiscal year 2020 President's budget request includes $2,347,000,000 for the incrementally funded procurement of CVN 80 and CVN 81 in accordance with contract authorities provided by the Congress and implemented by the Department of Defense in fiscal year 2019. The Committee notes that the Navy did not update its congressional budget justification or briefing materials in support of this acquisition and strategy, which has fiscal implications well into the 2030s. The Committee finds this unsatisfactory and directs the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller) to provide not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, proposals for updated CVN 78 Class congressional budget justification documents to the congressional defense committees in support of future budget submissions, to be implemented with the fiscal year 2021 President's budget request. (Page 121)

S.Rept. 116-103 also states:

> *CVN 78 Sortie Generation Rate*.—Consistent with direction contained in Senate Report 115–290, accompanying the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2019, the Program Executive Officer, Aircraft Carriers, in coordination with the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, provided an updated plan to the congressional defense committees for the CVN 78 Sortie Generation Rate [SGR] demonstration schedule and test

requirements. Further, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller) certified SGR demonstration full funding in the fiscal year 2020 President's budget request. The Committee notes the completed plans for sustained SGR and that the plan for addressing the SGR surge pace was to be developed by September 2019. Noting potential delays to the CVN 78 schedule since submission of the fiscal year 2020 President's budget request, the Program Executive Officer, Aircraft Carriers, and the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, are directed to provide the congressional defense committees an update on plans for addressing SGR surge pace not later than October 1, 2019. (Page 195)

Appendix A. Withdrawn Proposal to Not Fund CVN-75 RCOH

The Navy's FY2020 budget submission proposed to not fund the mid-life nuclear refueling overhaul (called a Refueling Complex Overhaul, or RCOH) for the aircraft carrier CVN-75 (*Harry S. Truman*), and to instead retire the ship around FY2024 and also deactivate one of the Navy's carrier air wings at about the same time. On April 30, 2019, however, the Administration announced that it was effectively withdrawing this proposal from the Navy's FY2020 budget submission. The Administration now supports funding the CVN-75 RCOH and keeping CVN-75 (and by implication its associated air wing) in service past FY2024.[55] This appendix presents, for reference purposes, additional background information on this withdrawn budget proposal.

Following the Administration's April 30 withdrawal of its proposal to not fund the CVN-75 RCOH, the Navy states that the CVN-75 RCOH can no longer begin in FY2024, as planned prior to the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, because the Navy spent the months prior to April 30 planning for the ship's deactivation rather than for giving it an RCOH. As a result, the Navy states, the CVN-75 will now begin a year later, in FY2025. As a consequence of this one-year shift in the schedule for the RCOH, the Navy states, the funding stream for the CVN-75 shown in **Table A-1** will also now shift one year to the right, and the CVN-75 RCOH can be reinstated without any funding in FY2020, because FY2020 is now effectively the same as FY2019 in **Table A-1**.[56]

Performing an RCOH on a carrier is needed for the carrier to be able to operate for the second half of its intended 50-year service life.[57] Not performing an RCOH on CVN-75 would mean that, instead of remaining in service for the second half of its intended 50-year service life, the ship would be decommissioned, permanently removed from service, and eventually dismantled. (CVN-75 was commissioned into service on July 25, 1998, and will be 26 years old in 2024.) The Navy's FY2020 budget submission shows that, for the period FY2022-FY2047, this would have reduced the size of the carrier force by one ship compared to what it would otherwise be.

More specifically, the Navy's FY2020 30-year (FY2020-FY2049) shipbuilding plan, reflecting the proposal to not fund the CVN-75 RCOH, projected that the carrier force would remain at 11 ships through FY2024, decline to 10 ships in FY2025, and remain at 10 ships for the remainder of the 30-year period, except for a few years (FY2027, FY2040, FY2042-FY2044, and FY2046-FY2048) when it would temporarily decline to 9 ships. Consequently, beginning in FY2025 and extending through the end of the 30-year period, the carrier force would not be in compliance

[55] See, for example, David B. Larter, "Trump Administration Reverses Course on Decision to Decommission Carrier Truman," *Defense News*, April 30, 2019; Courtney Mabeus and Brock Vergakis, "USS Harry S. Truman Will Not Be Retired Ahead of Schedule, Pence Says," *Virginia Pilot*, April 30, 2019; Ben Werner, "Pence: No Early Retirement for USS Harry S. Truman," *USNI News*, April 30, 2019; Rich Abott, "Pence: Administration Will Not Retire USS Truman Early," *Defense Daily*, May 1, 2019; Joe Gould, "Trump Reverses His Own Aircraft Carrier Policy, Takes a Victory Lap," *Defense News*, May 1, 2019; Paul McLeary, "Pentagon, Navy In Dark About Trump's USS Truman Decision," *Breaking Defense*, May 1, 2019.

[56] Source: Navy briefing on in-service aircraft carrier programs for CRS and CBO, May 8, 2019.

[57] To operate for a full 50-year life, existing Nimitz (CVN-68) class nuclear-powered carriers are given an RCOH when they are 20 to 25 years old, which is when their original nuclear fuel core has been exhausted. The RCOH gives the ship a new nuclear fuel core sufficient to power the ship for the remainder of its 50-year life. The RCOH also involves a significant amount of other overhaul, repair, and modernization work on the ship. An RCOH requires about 44 months from contract award to delivery. RCOHs are funded primarily through the Navy's shipbuilding account; the nuclear fuel cores installed as part of the RCOH are funded through the Other Procurement, Navy (OPN) appropriation account.

with the requirement under 10 U.S.C. 8062(b) for the Navy to maintain a force of not less than 11 operational aircraft carriers.

As an associated action, the Navy's FY2020 budget submission also proposed deactivating one of the Navy's carrier air wings around FY2024. This would reduce the number of carrier air wings from nine to eight, meaning that the Navy beginning around FY2024 would no longer be in compliance with the requirement under 10 U.S.C. 8062(e) to maintain a minimum of nine carrier air wings.

Table A-1 shows funding for the CVN-75 RCOH in the Navy's FY2019 budget submission. As shown in the table, the estimated total cost of the CVN-75 RCOH in the FY2019 budget submission was $5,578 million (i.e., about $5.6 billion).

Table A-1. Funding for CVN-75 RCOH in FY2019 Budget Submission

Millions of dollars

FY2019	FY020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	To complete	Total
0	16.9	234.7	539.0	752.0	4,035.4	5,578.0

Source: Table prepared by CRS using data from Navy's FY2019 budget submission.

Note: Following the Administration's April 30 withdrawal of its proposal to not fund the CVN-75 RCOH, the Navy states that the CVN-75 RCOH can no longer begin in FY2024, as planned prior to the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, because the Navy spent the months prior to April 30 planning for the ship's deactivation rather than for giving it an RCOH. As a result, the Navy states, the CVN-75 will now begin a year later, in FY2025. As a consequence of this one-year shift in the schedule for the RCOH, the Navy states, the funding stream for the CVN-75 shown in the table will also now shift one year to the right, and the CVN-75 RCOH can be reinstated without any funding in FY2020, because FY2020 is now effectively the same as FY2019 in the table. (Source: Navy briefing on in-service aircraft carrier programs for CRS and CBO, May 8, 2019.)

The figure of about $5.6 billion shown in **Table A-1** does not include the cost of the two nuclear fuel cores that would be installed as part of the RCOH. (CVN-75, like all Nimitz-class carriers, has two nuclear reactors, each of which would receive a new fuel core as part of an RCOH.) Fuel cores for aircraft carrier RCOHs are procured through the Other Procurement, Navy (OPN) appropriation account. The Navy states that it procured the cores for the CVN-75 RCOH—one of them in FY2008 and the other in FY2011—for a total cost of about $538 million.[58] Adding this $538 million cost to the total cost shown in **Table A-1** would increase the total estimated cost of the CVN-75 RCOH to about $6.1 billion.

The fuel cores for the planned future RCOHs for CVN-76 and CVN-77 (the final two Nimitz-class carriers) have also been procured—the CVN-76 RCOH cores were funded in FY2012 and FY2013, and the CVN-77 RCOH cores were funded in FY2015 and FY2019. Thus, if CVN-75 were to not receive an RCOH, and if it were not possible or cost effective to rescind the funding for the core funded in FY2019,[59] then two of the six Nimitz-class fuel cores that have been procured since FY2008 for anticipated use in RCOHs would not in the end be used in an RCOH and would in effect become surplus to the RCOH effort. The Navy indicated that if that were to occur, these two cores would be placed in storage for potential future use as emergency

[58] Source: Remarks by Rear Admiral Randy Crites, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Budget, at a DOD press briefing on the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, March 12, 2019, as shown in DOD's transcript of the briefing.

[59] As of March 2019, the FY2019 funding for this core had been obligated, but only a fraction of it had been expended. Rescinding the funding, if possible, would impact revenues and workloads at the firms involved in producing the nuclear fuel cores, which could produce collateral cost or other effects on other work done for the Navy by these firms.

replacement cores for a Nimitz-class ship until all Nimitz-class ships complete their service lives.[60]

If CVN-75 were to not receive an RCOH and is instead be decommissioned, the savings from not funding the RCOH would be partially offset by the cost to deactivate and dismantle CVN-75. The Navy estimated the cost to deactivate and dismantle CVN-75 at about $1.5 billion.[61] The initial increments of this approximate $1.5-billion cost would have occurred in FY2023 ($130.3 million) and FY2024 ($247.2 million).[62] The estimated net savings from not funding the RCOH and instead deactivating and dismantling the ship would thus have been about $4.1 billion (i.e., about $5.6 billion less about $1.5 billion). The Navy stated that there would also be 20 to 25 years of additional annual savings of about $1 billion per year in the form of avoided annual operation and support (O&S) costs for CVN-75 and the deactivated carrier air wing.[63] DOD officials reportedly wanted to redirect the estimated net RCOH-related savings of about $4.1 billion and the estimated recurring savings of about $1 billion per year to Navy investments for technologies that will add to future Navy capabilities.[64]

Following the April 30, 2019, withdrawal of the proposal to not fund CVN-75's RCOH and instead decommission the ship (and a carrier air wing), a Navy issued an information paper providing an update on the funding schedule for CVN-75's RCOH. The information paper stated:

> Navy is implementing the President's decision to restore the refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH) for CVN 75. Prior to the PB-20 [President's (proposed) Budget for FY2020] inactivation decision, Navy was assessing potentially moving the start of the CVN 75 RCOH from FY2024 to FY2025. This was based on an evaluation of projected Fleet operations along with the current cumulative RCOH and maintenance schedules across the Fleet. With the President's restoral decision, the Navy is reviewing the required CVN 75 RCOH and airwing funding profile. The current assessment is that the RCOH will likely need to be re-phased one year to the right, starting in FY2025.
>
> Prior to the inactivation decision, the original PB-19 SCN funding profile is shown in Figure 1:

SCN Funding ($M)	FY19 (and prior)	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Beyond PB-19 FYDP	Total
PB-19 CVN 75 RCOH	0.0	16.9	234.7	539.0	752.0	4,035.4	5,578.0

(Figure 1)

[60] Source: Remarks by Rear Admiral Randy Crites, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Budget, at a DOD's press briefing on the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, March 12, 2019, as shown in DOD's transcript of the briefing.

[61] Source: Navy remarks at Navy briefing for congressional staff on the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, March 14, 2019.

[62] Source: Navy remarks at Navy briefing for congressional staff on the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, March 14, 2019.

[63] Source: Navy remarks at Navy briefing for congressional staff on the Navy's FY2020 budget submission, March 14, 2019.

[64] See for example, Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., "Pentagon To Retire USS Truman Early, Shrinking Carrier Fleet To 10," Breaking Defense, February 27, 2019; Sam LaGrone, "Pentagon Plan to Sideline Carrier Truman Will Net Just $17M in FY 2020," USNI News, February 28, 2019; Lara Seligman, "Nothing Projects Power Like an Aircraft Carrier. Does the Pentagon Think Otherwise?" *Foreign Policy*, March 1, 2019.

With the shift of the RCOH to start in FY2025, SCN funding begins in FY2021 vice FY2020. Figure 2 shows the current estimated SCN funding profile, which contains adjustments associated with the schedule re-phase, inflation, and overhead rates.

SCN Funding ($M)	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	Beyond PB-20 FYDP	Total
Estimated CVN 75 RCOH Restoral		17.3	239.1	510.0	695.2	4,216.3	5,677.9

(Figure 2)

No SCN funding sources are required in FY2020. There are no OMN or MPN/DHAN funding requirements in FY2020.[65]

RCOHs are done primarily by Huntington Ingalls Industries/Newport News Shipbuilding (HII/NNS) in Newport News, VA, and form a significant part of HII/NNS's business base, along with construction of new nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and construction of new nuclear-powered submarines. RCOHs in recent years have been scheduled in a more-or-less heel-to-toe fashion at HII/NNS—when one RCOH is done, the next one is scheduled to begin soon thereafter. RCOHs are done in a particular dry dock at HII/NNS, so a carrier undergoing an RCOH in that dry dock must be ready to depart the dry dock before the following carrier can be moved into the dry dock for its RCOH.

Until it was withdrawn, the proposal in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission to not fund CVN-75's RCOH and instead decommission the ship (and a carrier air wing) raised a number of potential oversight issues for Congress, including the following:

- **Compliance with congressional direction.** The central purposes of 10 U.S.C. 8062(b) and 8062(e) are to act as mandates to the executive branch to support a force of not less than 11 carriers and a minimum of 9 carrier air wings in executive branch planning. They represent directions from Congress for the Navy to provide the funding needed to maintain an 11-carrier, 9-carrier-air-wing force, regardless of limitations on the Navy's overall budget or other considerations. A proposed budget from the Navy that is inconsistent with these provisions might thus be viewed as a challenge to Congress's Article 1 power to set policy and to determine the composition of federal spending (i.e., Congress's constitutional power of the purse). If DOD were to treat the requirements in 10 U.S.C. 8062(b) and 8062(e) as optional matters rather than mandates, would this create a precedent for the executive branch to treat similar provisions in the *U.S. Code* as optional matters rather than mandates? For example, would it create a precedent for DOD, if it so desired, to begin treating as an optional matter the long-standing requirement in 10 U.S.C. 8063(a) that the Marine Corps "shall be so organized as to include not less than three combat divisions and three air wings, and such other land combat, aviation, and other services as may be organic therein?" If the executive branch were to begin treating statutory provisions like 10 U.S.C. 8062(b) and 8062(e) as optional matters rather than mandates, what implications might this have for policy and program execution, for Congress's power to legislatively establish policy and program goals, and for Congress's power of the purse?

[65] Navy information paper entitled "USS TRUMAN Restoration Information Paper," May 9, 2019, provided by Navy Office of Legislative Affairs on May 13, 2019.

- **Alternative capabilities to be funded; net impact on Navy capabilities.** What were OSD's plans for redirecting the savings associated with deactivating CVN-75 and a carrier air wing around FY2024? What types of capabilities would have been created or maintained by these redirected funds? How would these capabilities compare in nature and timing to the capabilities that are to be provided by the continued operation of CVN-75 and the carrier air wing? Taking these factors into account, what would have been the net operational impact for the Navy of deactivating CVN-75 and a carrier air wing around FY2024 and redirecting the resulting savings toward these other investments?
- **Requirement for 12-carrier force.** The Navy's 2016 Force Structure Assessment (FSA) led to a Navy force-level requirement for a fleet of 355 ships that includes 12 aircraft carriers. OSD allowed the Navy to present that FSA to the Congress, and to program shipbuilding and other actions in support of achieving the 355-ship force-level goal. OSD did not publicly object to the FSA's 12-carrier requirement (or any other part of the 355-ship force-level goal). What was the analytical basis for an action that would reduce the size of the carrier from 11 to 10, instead of helping it to eventually increase from 11 to 12?
- **Next Force Structure Assessment (FSA).** The Navy states that it is currently conducting a new FSA as the successor to the 2016 FSA, and that this new FSA is to be completed by the end of 2019. This new FSA could change the 355-ship figure, the planned mix of ships, or both. Did the Navy's proposal to not fund the CVN-75 RCOH, and thereby reduce the carrier force from 11 ships to 10 ships, prejudge the outcome of the new FSA? Would the new FSA be tainted by the knowledge that the Navy had already proposed reducing the carrier force to 10 ships? How well could the analysts performing the new FSA have avoided being influenced by the Navy's proposed action? Was the Navy prepared to go ahead with the CVN-75 RCOH if the new FSA concludes that there is a requirement for 11 or more carriers?
- **Likelihood of need for emergency replacement cores.** How likely was it that the Nimitz-class program would need to use an emergency replacement set of fuel cores during the remainder of the Nimitz-class life cycle? What set of circumstances might lead to a need for an emergency replacement set of fuel cores? How often have such circumstances previously arisen for a nuclear-powered U.S. Navy ship whose fuel cores are intended to be sufficient for powering the ship for at least one-half of its expected service life? Given the assessed likelihood of the Nimitz-class program needing to use an emergency replacement set of fuel cores during the remainder of the Nimitz-class life cycle, what would have been the government's resulting return on investment of the several hundred million dollars used to procure the two fuel cores that would be placed in storage?
- **Acting Secretary of Defense.** The proposal to not fund the CVN-75 RCOH and to deactivate a carrier air wing represented a notable change from prior DOD force-structure planning and budgeting. Was it appropriate for such a change to be proposed by DOD during a time when DOD has an acting Secretary of Defense rather than a Secretary who was confirmed specifically for that position?
- **Impact on industrial base and cost of other work.** What would have been the impact on HII/NNS and the other parts of the aircraft carrier industrial base if CVN-75 were inactivated rather than given an RCOH? What impact, if any,

> would this have had on the cost of other work performed at HII/NNS and other parts of the aircraft carrier industrial base during these years, and on the eventual cost of the CVN-76 RCOH?

For further reference, it can be noted that the Navy's FY2015 budget submission proposed not funding the RCOH for the aircraft carrier CVN-73 (*George Washington*). The proposal raised oversight issues for Congress broadly similar to those listed above. Congress, in acting on the Navy's proposed FY2015 budget, rejected the proposal to not fund CVN-73's RCOH.[66] The RCOH was funded and is currently underway.

[66] See Appendix B of the December 22, 2014, version of CRS Report RS20643, *Navy Ford (CVN-78) Class Aircraft Carrier Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

Appendix B. Background Information on Two-Ship Block Buy for CVN-80 and CVN-81

This appendix presents additional background information on the two-ship block buy contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81.

The option for procuring two CVN-78 class carriers under a two-ship block buy contract had been discussed in this CRS report since April 2012.[67] In earlier years, the discussion focused on the option of using a block buy contract for procuring CVN-79 and CVN-80. In more recent years, interest among policymakers focused on the option of using a block buy contract for procuring CVN-80 and CVN-81.

On March 19, 2018, the Navy released a request for proposal (RFP) to Huntington Ingalls Industries/Newport News Shipbuilding (HII/NNS) regarding a two-ship buy of some kind for CVN-80 and CVN-81. A March 20, 2018, Navy News Service report stated the following:

> The Navy released a CVN 80/81 two-ship buy Request for Proposal (RFP) to Huntington Ingalls Industries—Newport News Shipbuilding (HII-NNS) March 19 to further define the cost savings achievable with a two-ship buy.
>
> With lethality and affordability a top priority, the Navy has been working with HII-NNS over the last several months to estimate the total savings associated with procuring CVN 80 and CVN 81 as a two-ship buy.
>
> "In keeping with the National Defense Strategy, the Navy developed an acquisition strategy to combine the CVN 80 and CVN 81 procurements to better achieve the Department's objectives of building a more lethal force with greater performance and affordability," said James F. Geurts, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research Development and Acquisition. "This opportunity for a two-ship contract is dependent on significant savings that the shipbuilding industry and government must demonstrate. The Navy is requesting a proposal from HII-NNS in order to evaluate whether we can achieve significant savings."
>
> The two-ship buy is a contracting strategy the Navy has effectively used in the 1980s to procure Nimitz-class aircraft carriers and achieved significant acquisition cost savings compared to contracting for the ships individually. While the CVN 80/81 two-ship buy negotiations transpire, the Navy is pursuing contracting actions necessary to continue CVN 80 fabrication in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and preserve the current schedule. The Navy plans to award the CVN 80 construction contract in early FY 2019 as a two-ship buy pending Congressional approval and achieving significant savings.[68]

Section 121(a)(2) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018) permitted the Navy, after the Department of Defense (DOD) made certain certifications to Congress, to add CVN-81 to the existing contract for building CVN-80. DOD provided the required certification on December 31, 2018. On

[67] See the section entitled "Potential Two-Ship Block Buy on CVN-79 and CVN-80" in the April 4, 2012, version of CRS Report RS20643, *Navy Ford (CVN-78) Class Aircraft Carrier Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke. In more recent years, this section was modified to discuss the option in connection with CVN-80 and CVN-81.

[68] Naval Sea Systems Command Public Affairs, "Navy Seeks Savings, Releases Two-Carrier RFP," *Navy News*, March 20, 2018. See also Megan Eckstein, "UPDATED: Navy, Newport News Taking Steps Towards Two-Carrier Buy," *USNI News*, March 19, 2018.

January 31, 2019, the Navy announced that it had awarded a two-ship fixed-price incentive (firm target) (FPIF) contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81 to HII/NNS.[69]

The two-ship contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81 can be viewed as a block buy contract because the two ships are being procured in different fiscal years (CVN-80 was procured in FY2018 and CVN-81 is shown in the Navy's FY2020 budget submission as a ship procured in FY2020).[70] The Navy's previous two-ship aircraft carrier procurements occurred in FY1983 (for CVN-72 and CVN-73) and FY1988 (for CVN-74 and CVN-75). In each of those two earlier cases, however, the two ships were fully funded within a single fiscal year, making each of these cases a simple two-ship purchase (akin, for example, to procuring two Virginia-class attack submarines or two DDG-51 class destroyers in a given fiscal year) rather than a two-ship block buy (i.e., a contract spanning the procurement of end items procured across more than one fiscal year).

Compared to DOD's estimate that the two-ship block buy contract for CVN-80 and CVN-81 would produce savings of $3.9 billion (as measured from estimated costs for the two ships in the December 2017 Navy business case analysis), DOD states that "the Department of Defense's Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) developed an Independent Estimate of Savings for the two-ship procurement and forecast savings of $3.1 billion ([in] Then-Year [dollars]), or approximately 11 percent.... The primary differences between [the] CAPE and Navy estimates of savings are in Government Furnished Equipment[71] and production change orders."[72] Within the total estimated combined reduction in cost, HII/NNS reportedly expects to save up to $1.6 billion in contractor-furnished equipment.[73]

A November 2018 DOD report to Congress that was submitted as an attachment to DOD's December 31, 2018, certification stated the following regarding the sources of cost reduction for the two-ship contract:

> The CVN 80 and CVN 81 two-ship buy expands and improves upon the affordability initiatives identified in the Annual Report on Cost Reduction Efforts for JOHN F. KENNEDY (CVN 79) and ENTERPRISE (CVN 80) as required by section 126(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (P.L. 114-328). Production saving initiatives for single-ship buys included use of unit families in construction, pre-outfitting and complex assemblies which move work to a more efficient workspace environment, reduction in the number of superlifts,[74] and facility investments which improve the shipbuilder trade effectiveness. A two-ship buy assumes four years between

[69] See Office of the Navy Chief of Information, "Navy Awards Contract for Construction of Two Carriers," Navy News Service, January 31, 2019; Megan Eckstein, "UPDATED: Navy Awards 2-Carrier Contract to Newport News Shipbuilding," *USNI News*, January 31, 2019; Marcus Weisgerber, "US Navy Places First 2-Carrier Order in Three Decades," *Defense One*, January 31, 2019; David B. Larter, "US Navy Signs Mammoth Contract with Huntington Ingalls for Two Aircraft Carriers," *Defense News*, January 31, 2019; Rich Abott, "Navy Awards HII $15 Billion In Two Carrier Buy," *Defense Daily*, February 1, 2019.

[70] For more on block buy contracting, see CRS Report R41909, *Multiyear Procurement (MYP) and Block Buy Contracting in Defense Acquisition: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke and Moshe Schwartz.

[71] Government-furnished equipment (GFE) is equipment that the government purchases from supplier firms and then provides to the shipbuilder for incorporation into the ships.

[72] Department of Defense, FORD Class Aircraft Carrier Certification, CVN 80 and CVN 81 Two Ship Procurement Authority, as Required by Section 121(b) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (P.L. 115-232), November 2018, pp. 8-9.

[73] Rich Abott, "Navy Awards HII $15 Billion In Two Carrier Buy," *Defense Daily*, February 1, 2019. Contractor-furnished equipment (CFE) is equipment that the contractor (in this case, HII/NNS) purchases from supplier firms for incorporation into the ships.

[74] A superlift is the use of a crane to move a very large section of the ship from the land into its final position on the ship.

> ship deliveries which allows more schedule overlap, and therefore more shop-level and assembly-level production efficiencies than two single-ship buys.
>
> Procuring two ships to a single technical baseline reduces the requirement for engineering labor hours when compared to single-ship estimates. The ability to rollover production support engineering and planning products maximizes savings while recognizing the minimum amount of engineering labor necessary to address obsolescence and regulatory changes on CVN 81. The two-ship agreement with the shipbuilder achieves a 55 percent reduction in construction support engineering hours on CVN 81 and greater than 18 percent reduction in production support and planning hours compared to single ship procurements.
>
> The two-ship procurement strategy allows for serial production opportunities that promote tangible learning and reduced shop and machine set-up times. It allows for efficient use of production facilities, re-use of production jigs and fixtures, and level loading of key trades. The continuity of work allows for reductions in supervision, services and support costs. The result of these efficiencies is a production man-hours step down that is equivalent to an 82 percent learning curve since CVN 79.
>
> Key to achieving these production efficiencies is Integrated Digital Shipbuilding (iDS). The Navy's Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) and the shipbuilder's investment in iDS, totaling $631 million, will reduce the amount of production effort required to build FORD Class carriers. The two-ship buy will accelerate the benefits of this approach. The ability to immediately use the capability on CVN 81 would lead to a further reduction in touch labor and services in affected value streams. The two-ship agreement with the shipbuilder represents a production man-hours reduction of over seven percent based on iDS efficiencies. Contractual authority for two ships allows the shipbuilder to maximize economic order quantity material procurement. This allows more efficient ordering and scheduling of material deliveries and will promote efficiencies through earlier ordering, single negotiations, vendor quotes, and cross program purchase orders. These efficiencies are expected to reduce material costs by about six percent more when compared to single-ship estimates. Improved material management and flexibility will prevent costly production delays. Furthermore, this provides stability within the nuclear industrial base, de-risking the COLUMBIA and VIRGINIA Class programs. The two-ship buy would provide economic stability to approximately 130,000 workers across 46 States within the industrial base.
>
> Change order requirements are likewise reduced as Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) providers will employ planning and procurement strategies based on the common technical baseline that minimize configuration changes that must be incorporated on the follow ship. Change order budget allocations have been reduced over 25 percent based on two-ship strategies.
>
> In addition to the discrete savings achieved with the shipbuilder, the two-ship procurement authority provides our partner GFE providers a similar opportunity to negotiate economic order quantity savings and achieve cross program savings when compared to single-ship estimates.[75]

An April 16, 2018, press report stated the following:

> If the Navy decides to buy aircraft carriers CVN-80 and 81 together, Newport News Shipbuilding will be able to maintain a steady workload that supports between 23,000 and 25,000 workers at the Virginia yard for the next decade or so, the shipyard president told reporters last week.

[75] Department of Defense, FORD Class Aircraft Carrier Certification, CVN 80 and CVN 81 Two Ship Procurement Authority, as Required by Section 121(b) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (P.L. 115-232), November 2018, pp. 6-7.

> Part of the appeal of buying the two carriers together is that the Navy would also buy them a bit closer together: the ships would be centered about three-and-a-half or four years apart, instead of the five-year centers for recent carrier acquisition, Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin told reporters.
>
> Boykin said the closer ship construction centers would allow her to avoid a "labor valley" where the workforce levels would dip down after one ship and then have to come back up, which is disruptive for employees and costly for the company.
>
> If this two-carrier buy goes through, the company would avoid the labor valley altogether and ensure stability in its workforce, Boykin said in a company media briefing at the Navy League's Sea Air Space 2018 symposium. That workforce stability contributes to an expected $1.6 billion in savings on the two-carrier buy from Newport News Shipbuilding's portion of the work alone, not including government-furnished equipment....
>
> Boykin said four main things contribute to the expected $1.6 billion in savings from the two-carrier buy. First, "if you don't have the workforce valley, there's a labor efficiency that represents savings."
>
> Second, "if you buy two at once, my engineering team doesn't have to produce two technical baselines, two sets of technical products; they only have to produce one, and the applicability is to both, so there's savings there. When we come through the planning, the build plan of how we plan to build the ship, the planning organization only has to put out one plan and the applicability is to both, so there's savings there."
>
> The third savings is a value of money over time issue, she said, and fourth is economic order quantity savings throughout the entire supply chain.[76]

Discussions of the option of using a block buy contract for procuring carriers have focused on using it to procure two carriers in part because carriers have been procured on five-year centers, meaning that two carriers could be included in a block-buy contract spanning six years—the same number of years originally planned for the two block buy contracts that were used to procure mnay of the Navy's Littoral Combat Ships.[77]

It can be noted, however, that there is no statutory limit on the number of years that a block buy contract can cover, and that the LCS block buy contracts were subsequently amended to cover LCSs procured in a seventh year. This, and the possibility of procuring carriers on 3- or 3.5-year centers, raises the possibility of using a block buy contract to procure three aircraft carriers: For example, if procurement of aircraft carriers were shifted to 3- or 3.5-year centers, a block buy contract for procuring CVN-80, CVN-81, and CVN-82 could span seven years (with the first ship procured in FY2018, and the third ship procured in FY2024) or eight years (with the first ship procured in FY2018 and the third ship procured in FY2025).

The percentage cost reduction possible under a three-ship block buy contract could be greater than that possible under a two-ship block buy contract, but the offsetting issue of reducing congressional flexibility for changing aircraft carrier procurement plans in coming years in response to changing strategic or budgetary circumstances could also be greater.

[76] Megan Eckstein, "Newport News Would Save $1.6 Billion, Maintain Stable Workforce of 25,000 Under 2 Proposed Carrier Buy," *USNI News*, April 16, 2018. See also Rich Abott, "HII Sees Two Carrier Buy Saving $1.6 Billion Before GFE," *Defense Daily*, April 11, 2018: 10-11.

[77] For more on the LCS block buy contracts, see CRS Report RL33741, *Navy Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

Appendix C. Cost Growth and Managing Costs Within Program Cost Caps

This appendix presents additional background information on cost growth in the CVN-78 program, Navy efforts to stem that growth, and Navy efforts to manage costs so as to stay within the program's cost caps.

October 2019 CBO Report

An October 2019 CBO report on the potential cost of the Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan states the following regarding the CVN-78 program:

> The Navy's current estimate of the total cost of the USS Gerald R. Ford, the lead ship of the CVN-78 class, is $13.1 billion in nominal dollars appropriated over the period from 2001 to 2018. CBO used the Navy's inflation index for naval shipbuilding to convert that figure to $16.2 billion in 2019 dollars, or 25 percent more than the corresponding estimate when the ship was first authorized in 2008. Neither the Navy's nor CBO's estimate includes the $5 billion in research and development costs that apply to the entire class.
>
> Because construction of the lead ship is finished, CBO used the Navy's estimate for that ship to estimate the cost of successive ships in the class. But not all of the cost risk has been eliminated; in particular, the ship's power systems, advanced arresting gear (the system used to recover fixed-wing aircraft landing on the ship), and weapons elevators are not yet working properly. It is not clear how much those problems will cost to fix, but current Navy estimates suggest that it will be several tens of millions of dollars or more. CBO does not have enough information to independently estimate those final repair costs.
>
> The next carrier after the CVN-78 is the CVN-79, the John F. Kennedy, which is expected to be completed in 2024 and deployed in 2026. Funding for the ship began in 2007, the Congress officially authorized its construction in 2013, and the planned appropriations for it were completed in 2018. The Navy estimates that the ship will cost $11.3 billion in nominal dollars (or $11.9 billion in 2019 dollars). The Navy's 2014 selected acquisition report on the CVN-79 states that "the Navy and shipbuilder have made fundamental changes in the manner in which the CVN 79 will be built to incorporate lessons learned from CVN 78 and eliminate the key contributors to cost performance challenges realized in the construction of CVN 78." Nevertheless, the Navy informed CBO that there is a greater than 60 percent chance that the ship's final cost will be more than the current estimate. Although CBO expects the Navy to achieve a considerable cost reduction in the CVN-79 compared with the CVN-78, as is typical with the second ship of a class, CBO's estimate is higher than the Navy's. Specifically, CBO estimates that the ship will cost $12.4 billion in nominal dollars (or $12.9 billion in 2019 dollars), about 9 percent more than the Navy's estimate.
>
> In 2018, the Congress authorized the third carrier of the class, the Enterprise (CVN-80). Appropriations for that ship began in 2016 and are expected to be complete by 2025. In 2019, the Congress authorized the Navy to purchase materials jointly for the CVN-80 and the next ship, the CVN-81, to save money by buying in greater quantity. It also authorized the Navy to change the sequencing involved in building the ships to gain greater efficiencies in their construction. Although that legislative action is known as a "two-carrier buy," the Navy would not be building both ships at exactly the same time. Purchasing the two ships together would accelerate the CVN-81's construction by only one year compared with buying the ships individually as envisioned in the 2019 shipbuilding plan.

> In the 2020 budget, the Navy estimated that the CVN-80 would cost $12.3 billion in nominal dollars (or $11.4 billion in 2019 dollars). That represents a savings of $300 million compared with the Navy's estimate in the 2019 budget. In contrast, CBO estimates that the CVN-80 would cost $13.6 billion in nominal dollars (or $12.4 billion in 2019 dollars), about 9 percent more than the Navy's estimate. In information provided to CBO as part of the 2019 budget presentation, the Navy indicated that there was a greater than 60 percent chance that the ship's final cost will be more than it estimated; in contrast, with the 2020 budget, the Navy puts that figure at 78 percent. Thus, it is not clear whether the service's 2020 estimates incorporate savings stemming from a two-carrier buy or simply an acceptance of increased risk of future cost growth.
>
> With respect to the CVN-81, the pattern is similar. In the 2019 budget, the Navy estimated the CVN-81 at $15.1 billion in nominal dollars. In the 2020 budget with the two-carrier buy, the Navy estimated the cost of the ship at $12.6 billion in nominal dollars (or $10.5 billion in 2019 dollars), for a savings of $2.5 billion. However, the Navy also told CBO that there is an 80 percent chance that the final cost will be higher than the current estimate, compared with the roughly 40 percent chance indicated in the 2019 budget. CBO estimates that the CVN-81 would cost $14.4 billion in nominal dollars (or $11.9 billion in 2019 dollars), or 14 percent more than the Navy's estimate.
>
> Overall, the Navy estimates an average cost of $12.7 billion (in 2019 dollars) for the 7 carriers (CVN-81 through CVN-87) in the 2020 shipbuilding plan. CBO's estimate is $13.0 billion per ship….[78]

August 2018 Press Report

An August 17, 2018, press report states the following:

> Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc., the sole U.S. builder of aircraft carriers, continues to fall short of the Navy's demand to cut labor expenses to stay within an $11.39 billion cost cap mandated by Congress on the second in a new class of warships.
>
> With about 47 percent of construction complete on the USS John F. Kennedy, Navy figures show the contractor isn't yet meeting the goal it negotiated with the service: reducing labor hours by 18 percent from the first carrier, the USS Gerald Ford....
>
> It took about 49 million hours of labor to build the Ford, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The Navy's goal for the Kennedy is to reduce that to about 40 million hours.
>
> Huntington Ingalls's performance "remains stable at approximately 16 percent" less, William Couch, spokesman for the Naval Sea Systems Command, said in an email. He said "key production milestones and the ship's preliminary acceptance date remain on track" and there are "ample opportunities" for improvement "with nearly four years until contract delivery and over 70 percent of assembly work" remaining on the vessel's superstructure.
>
> But the Pentagon's naval warfare division, which reports to Ellen Lord, the Defense Department's chief weapons buyer, is less sanguine. It said in a July assessment that Huntington Ingalls "is unlikely to fully recover the needed 18 percent" reduction....
>
> On the effort to meet the 18 percent labor-hour reduction for the Kennedy, the Navy's program manager "assesses that although difficult, the shipbuilder can still attain" it, Couch said.

[78] Congressional Budget Office, *An Analysis of the Navy's Fiscal Year 2020 Shipbuilding Plan*, October 2019, pp. 17-19.

> Beci Brenton, a spokeswoman for Newport News, Virginia-based Huntington Ingalls, said "we are seeing the benefits associated with significant build strategy changes and incorporation of lessons learned" from the first vessel.
>
> Brenton said "the current production performance" is 16 percent less than the Ford's estimate at the time of contract award for the second vessel but the reduction is 17 percent when compared with the first vessel's current cost....
>
> But Shelby Oakley, a director with the GAO who monitors Navy shipbuilding, said "with so much of the program underway, it is unlikely that the Navy will regain efficiency." In later phases of a shipbuilding contract, she said, "performance typically degrades, not improves."
>
> It's also "unclear how the lessons learned" from the first ship "could help regain efficiency when they are already baked in to the Navy's overly optimistic estimate for the program," she said.[79]

June 2018 Press Report

A June 19, 2018, press report stated the following:

> Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc. is asking General Electric Co. to compensate it for damage caused by flawed workmanship during installation of propulsion system components on the U.S. Navy's $13 billion aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford.
>
> The problem, which forced the most expensive U.S. warship back to port in January, has yet to be fully resolved although the carrier is once again at sea....
>
> Huntington Ingalls, a shipbuilder based in Newport News, Virginia, "has notified the original manufacturer of the shipyard's intent to seek compensation," Naval Sea Systems Command spokesman William Couch said in an email. Beci Brenton, a spokeswoman for Huntington said, "We continue to work with appropriate stakeholders to support resolution of this situation."
>
> Perry Bradley, a spokesman for Boston-based GE, said "we're not going to comment on specifics other than to say" that "GE is working closely with" Huntington's Newport News Shipyard unit and "the U.S. Navy to resolve the issue."...
>
> The episode in January was the second failure in less than a year with a "main thrust bearing" that's part of the carrier's propulsion system. The first occurred in April 2017, during sea trials a month before the vessel's delivery. The ship has been sailing in a shakedown period to test systems and work out bugs. It's now scheduled to be ready for initial combat duty in 2022.
>
> The Navy's carrier program office said in an assessment that an inspection of the carrier's four main thrust bearings after the January failure revealed "machining errors" by GE workers at a Lynn, Massachusetts, facility during the original manufacturing as "the actual root cause."
>
> The bearing overheated, the Navy said in a March 8 memo to Congress, and "after securing the equipment to prevent damage, the ship safely returned to port." A failure review board is identifying "modifications required to preclude recurrence," it said. The bearing is one of four that transfers thrust from the ship's four propeller shafts.

[79] Anthony Capaccio, "Navy's Troubled $11 Billion Carrier Falters on Another Milestone," *Bloomberg*, August 17, 2018.

> "The costs associated with repairing" the thrust bearings "are currently being assessed" and "this will include recovery of costs from the manufacturer of the Main Reduction Gear, General Electric (Lynn), as appropriate," the Navy said in the memo.
>
> Couch said the Navy doesn't expect similar propulsion problems with the next vessel in the class, the John F. Kennedy, because a different manufacturer made that carrier's propulsion train components.
>
> "Any propulsion train deficiencies identified" with the Ford "will be corrected and implemented" in "future ships of the class as necessary," he said.[80]

May 2018 Press Report

A May 11, 2018, press report stated the following:

> The Navy's costliest vessel ever just got pricer, breaching a $12.9 billion cap set by Congress by $120 million, the service told lawmakers this week.
>
> The extra money for the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford built by Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc. is needed to replace faulty propulsion components damaged in a January failure, extend the vessel's post-delivery repair phase to 12 months from the original eight months and correct deficiencies with the "Advanced Weapons Elevators" used to move munitions from deep in the ship to the deck.
>
> The elevators on the ship, designated CVN 78, need to be fixed "to preclude any effect on the safety of the ship and personnel," the Naval Sea Systems Command said in a statement to Bloomberg News on Friday. "Once the adjustment is executed, the cost for CVN 78 will stand at $13.027" billion, the Navy said.
>
> In addition to informing Congress that the spending lid has been breached, the Navy will have to let lawmakers know how it will shift funds to make up the difference.
>
> Navy officials didn't disclose the propulsion failure or elevator problems during budget hearings before Congress in recent weeks, and House and Senate lawmakers didn't ask about it....
>
> The Ford's propulsion system and elevator flaws are separate from reliability issues on its troubled aircraft launch and recovery systems.
>
> After its delivery last May, the ship operated for 70 days and completed 747 shipboard aircraft launches and recoveries, exceeding the goal of about 400, the Navy said.
>
> None of the 11 weapons elevators are operational but at least two are being used for testing "to identify many of the remaining developmental issues for this first-of-class system," the Navy has said. The command said all 11 elevators "should have been complete and delivered with the ship delivery" in May 2017.[81]

April 2018 Press Report

An April 16, 2018, press report stated the following:

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[80] Anthony Capaccio, "Huntington Ingalls Asks General Electric to Pay for Carrie Flaw," *Bloomberg*, June 19, 2018.

[81] Anthony Capaccio, "U.S. Navy's Costliest Vessel Just Got Even Pricier," Bloomberg, May 11, 2018. See also Mark D. Faram, "Why the Navy's Newest Aircraft Carrier Was Forced Back into Port," Navy Times, May 23, 2018; Anthony Capaccio, "U.S. Navy's Costliest Warship Suffers New Failure at Sea," *Bloomberg*, May 8, 2018. The May 23, 2018, article includes quotes from Colleen O'Rourke, a spokeswoman for the Navy Sea Systems Command. Colleen O'Rourke is no relation to Ronald O'Rourke.

> Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin provided an update on the various stages of construction on several major Navy shipbuilding programs during the Navy League's Sea Air Space Expo last week.
>
> The future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN-79) is about 43 percent complete, with launch planned for the fourth quarter of 2019 and delivery set for 2022. Boykin said the company has achieved about 75 percent of the ship erected and they are on track for an 18 percent man-hour budget reduction.
>
> Boykin provided these updates during a press briefing at the conference.
>
> Boykin revealed that undocking of CVN-79 in the fourth quarter of 2019 will occur three months earlier than originally planned.[82]

September 2017 Press Report

A September 26, 2017, press report states the following:

> Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc. is falling short of a U.S. Navy goal to reduce hours of labor on the second ship in the new Ford class of aircraft carriers in a drive to reduce costs, according to service documents.
>
> With 34 percent of construction complete on the USS John F. Kennedy, Huntington Ingalls estimates it will be able to reduce labor hours by 16 percent from the hours needed to construct the first vessel, the Gerald R. Ford. That's less than the 17 percent reduction reported at the end of last year and the 18 percent goal the Navy negotiated in the primary construction contract for the carrier.
>
> The "recent degradation in cost performance stems largely from the delayed availability of certain categories of material," such as pipe fittings, controllers, actuators and valves, according to the Navy's annual report on the program and updated figures obtained by Bloomberg News....
>
> "We acknowledge that the cost reduction target for CVN-79," relative to the first carrier, "is challenging," Huntington Ingalls spokeswoman Beci Brenton said in an email, referring to the Kennedy by its Navy designation. "While it is still early in the ship's schedule, we are seeing positive results from" new initiatives to keep costs in check, she said....
>
> Navy Secretary Richard Spencer told reporters last week that he will stay involved in monitoring the CVN-79's construction trends. "This is my personal approach—the CEO has to be involved."
>
> A close watch is required "because there are so many moving parts and so many opportunities to do things in a more efficient manner," Spencer said.
>
> The Navy has been working with the contractors "to mitigate technical risks and impacts of late material," Navy spokesman Victor Chen in an email. "The overall volume of late material items and associated impact to construction performance is declining. The Navy has hired third-party experts who are working collaboratively with the shipbuilder to identify manufacturing opportunities for efficiency gains" and to assist in implementing improvements....
>
> The 18 percent reduction in labor hours was "quite optimistic" from the start, Michele Mackin, a Government Accountability Office director who oversees its shipbuilding assessments, said in an email. "Even based on that assumption, the $11.4 billion cost cap

[82] Rich Abott, "Huntington Ingalls Updates Ships Statuses, Reactivates Ingalls East Bank," *Defense Daily*, April 16, 2018: 16-17.

was unlikely to be met," she said. "If those labor-hour efficiencies are in fact not materializing, costs will go higher.

Also, "with the ship being over 30 percent complete, it's unlikely the shipbuilder can get back enough efficiencies to further reduce labor hours—the more complicated work is yet to come," she said.[83]

June 2017 Navy Testimony

At a June 15, 2017, hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Department of the Navy's proposed FY2018 budget, the following exchange occurred:

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (CHAIRMAN) (continuing):

Secretary Stackley, the Navy broached a cost cap for CVN-78. Do you believe that it has?

SEAN STACKLEY, ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:

Sir, right now our estimate for CVN-78, we're trying to hold it within the $12.887 billion number that was established several years ago. We have included a $20 million [procurement funding] request in this budget pending our determination regarding repairs that required for the...

MCCAIN:

Is that a breach of Nunn-McCurdy?[84]

STACKLEY:

Not at this point in time, sir, we're continuing to evaluate whether that additional funding will be required. We're doing everything we can to stay within the existing cap and we'll keep Congress informed as we complete our post-delivery assessment.

MCCAIN:

Problem is we haven't been informed. So either you bust the cap and breach Nunn-McCurdy—Nunn-McCurdy or you notify us. You haven't done either one.

STACKLEY:

Sir, we've been submitting monthly reports regarding the carrier, we've alerted the concern regarding the repairs that are being required for the motor turbine generator set and we've acknowledged the risk associated with those repairs. However, what we're trying to do is not incur those costs, avoid cost by other means, and as of right now we're not ready to trip that cost cap.

MCCAIN:

Well, it's either not allowable or it's allowable. It's not allowable, then you take a certain course of action. If it's allowable then you're required to notify Congress. You have done neither.

STACKLEY:

[83] Anthony Capaccio, "U.S. Aircraft Carrier's Labor Costs Missing Navy's Savings Goal," *Bloomberg*, September 26, 2017. See also Lee Hudson, "NNS Slightly Lagging Expected Efficiencies with CVN-79 30 Percent Constructed," *Inside the Navy*, July 24, 2017.

[84] This is a reference to the Nunn-McCurdy provision, a statute relating to cost growth in DOD acquisition programs. For more on the Nunn-McCurdy provision, see CRS Report R41293, *The Nunn-McCurdy Act: Background, Analysis, and Issues for Congress*, by Moshe Schwartz and Charles V. O'Connor.

> If we need to incur those costs, they will be allowable costs. We're trying to avoid that at this stage of time, sir.
>
> MCCAIN:
>
> I agree, but we were supposed to be notified—OK. I can tell you that you are either in violation of Nunn-McCurdy or you are in violation of the requirement that we be notified. You have done neither. There's two scenarios.
>
> STACKLEY:
>
> Sir, we have not broached the cost cap. If it becomes apparent that we'll need to go above the cost cap, we will notify Congress within—within the terms that you all have established.
>
> MCCAIN:
>
> OK. Well, I'll get it to you in writing but you still haven't answered the question because when there's a $20 million cost overrun, it's either allowable and then we have to be notified in one way. If it's not allowable, Nunn-McCurdy is—is reached. But anyway, maybe you can give us a more satisfactory explanation in writing, Mr. Secretary.[85]

June 2017 GAO Report

A June 2017 GAO report states the following:

> The cost estimate for the second Ford-Class aircraft carrier, CVN 79, is not reliable and does not address lessons learned from the performance of the lead ship, CVN 78. As a result, the estimate does not demonstrate that the program can meet its $11.4 billion cost cap. Cost growth for the lead ship was driven by challenges with technology development, design, and construction, compounded by an optimistic budget estimate. Instead of learning from the mistakes of CVN 78, the Navy developed an estimate for CVN 79 that assumes a reduction in labor hours needed to construct the ship that is unprecedented in the past 50 years of aircraft carrier construction....
>
> After developing the program estimate, the Navy negotiated 18 percent fewer labor hours for CVN 79 than were required for CVN 78. CVN 79's estimate is optimistic compared to the labor hour reductions calculated in independent cost reviews conducted in 2015 by the Naval Center for Cost Analysis and the Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation. Navy analysis shows that the CVN 79 cost estimate may not sufficiently account for program risks, with the current budget likely insufficient to complete ship construction.
>
> The Navy's current reporting mechanisms, such as budget requests and annual acquisition reports to Congress, provide limited insight into the overall Ford Class program and individual ship costs. For example, the program requests funding for each ship before that ship obtains an independent cost estimate. During an 11-year period prior to 2015, no independent cost estimate was conducted for any of the Ford class ships; however, the program received over $15 billion in funding. In addition, the program's Selected Acquisition Reports (SAR)—annual cost, status, and performance reports to Congress—provide only aggregate program cost for all three ships currently in the class, a practice that limits transparency into individual ship costs. As a result, Congress has diminished ability to oversee one of the most expensive programs in the defense portfolio.[86]

[85] Transcript of hearing as posted at CQ.com.

[86] Government Accountability Office, *Ford-Class Aircraft Carrier[:] Follow-On Ships Need More Frequent and Accurate Cost Estimates to Avoid Pitfalls of Lead Ship*, GAO-17-575, June 2017, summary page. See also Jason

February 2016 Navy Testimony

The Navy testified in 2016 that

> The Navy is committed to delivering the lead ship of the class, Gerald R Ford (CVN 78) within the $12.887 billion congressional cost cap. Sustained efforts to identify cost reductions and drive improved cost and schedule performance on this first-of-class aircraft carrier have resulted in highly stable cost performance since 2011. Based on lessons learned on CVN 78, the approach to carrier construction has undergone an extensive affordability review and the Navy and the shipbuilder have made significant changes on CVN 79 to reduce the cost to build the ship. The benefits of these changes in build strategy and resolution of first-of-class impacts experienced on CVN 78 are evident in early production labor metrics on CVN 79. These efforts are ongoing and additional process improvements continue to be identified.
>
> Alongside the Navy's efforts to reduce the cost to build CVN 79, the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act reduced the cost cap for follow ships in the CVN 78 class from $11,498 million to $11,398 million. To this end, the Navy has further emphasized stability in requirements, design, schedule, and budget, in order to drive further improvement to CVN 79 cost. The FY 2017 President's Budget requests funding for the most efficient build strategy for this ship and we look for Congress' full support of this request to enable CVN 79 procurement at the lowest possible cost....
>
> ... The Navy will deliver the CVN 79 within the cost cap using a two-phased strategy wherein select ship systems and compartments that are more efficiently completed at a later stage of construction - to avoid obsolescence or to leverage competition or the use of experienced installation teams - will be scheduled for completion in the ship's second phase of production and test. Enterprise (CVN 80) began construction planning and long lead time material procurement in January 2016 and construction is scheduled to begin in 2018. The FY 2017 President's Budget request re-phases CVN 80 funding to support a more efficient production profile, critical to performance, below the cost cap. CVN 80 planning and construction will continue to leverage class lessons learned to achieve cost and risk reduction, including efforts to accelerate production work to earlier phases of construction, where work is more cost efficient.[87]

October 2015 Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing

Cost growth and other issues in the CVN-78 program were reviewed at an October 1, 2015, hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Below are excerpts from the prepared statements of the witnesses at the hearing.

OSD ASD Testimony

The prepared statement of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Acquisition) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) states the following in part:

Sherman, "DOD Plans Independent Cost Estimates for All Follow-On Ford Class Ships," *Inside the Navy*, June 19, 2017.

[87] Statement of the Honorable Sean J. Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), and Vice Admiral Joseph P. Mulloy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources, and Lieutenant General Robert S. Walsh, Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration & Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, before the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces of the House Armed Services Committee on Department of the Navy Seapower and Projection Forces Capabilities, February 25, 2016, pp. 8-9.

By 2000, the CVN(X) Acquisition Strategy that had been proposed by the Navy was an evolutionary, three-step development of the capabilities planned for the CVN. This evolutionary strategy intending to mature technology and align risk with affordability originally involved using the last ship of the CVN 68 NIMITZ Class, USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77), as the starting point for insertion of some near term technology improvements including information network technology and the new Dual Band Radar (DBR) system from the DD(X) (now DDG 1000) program, to create an integrated warfare system that combined the ship's combat system and air wing mission planning functions.

However, the then incoming Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 directed re-examination of the CVN program, among others, to reduce the overall spend of the department and increase the speed of delivery to the warfighters. As a result of the SECDEF's direction, the Navy proposed to remove the evolutionary approach and included a new and enlarged flight deck, an increased allowance for future technologies (including electric weapons), and an additional manpower reduction of 500 to 800 fewer sailors to operate. On December 12, 2002, a Program Decision Memorandum approved by then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz codified this Navy proposal and gave this direction back to the DOD enterprise. The ship was renamed the CVN-21 to highlight these changes. By Milestone B in April 2004, the Navy had evaluated the technologies intended for three ships, removed some of them, and consolidated the remaining ones into a single step of capability improvement on the lead ship. The new plan acknowledged technological, cost, and schedule challenges were being put on a single ship, but assessed this was achievable. The Acting USD AT&L (Michael Wynne) at that milestone also directed the Navy to use a hybrid of the Service Cost Position and Independent Cost Estimate (ICE) to baseline the program funding in lieu of the ICE, (although one can easily argue even the ICE was optimistic given these imposed circumstances).

By 2004, DOD and Congressional leadership had lost confidence in the acquisition system, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England established the Defense Acquisition Performance Assessment (DAPA) panel to conduct a sweeping and integrated assessment of "every aspect" of acquisition. The result was the discovery that the Industrial Base had consolidated, that excessive oversight and complex acquisition processes were cost and schedule drivers, and a focus on requirements stability was key to containing costs. From this, a review of the requirements of the CVN resulted in a revised and solidified "single ship" Operational Requirements Document (ORD) for the FORD Class as defined today, with the CVN 78 as lead ship.

On the heels of a delay because of the budgetary constraints in 2006, the start of the construction of CVN 78 was delayed until 2008, but the schedule for delivery was held constant, further compounding risks and costs. The Navy's testimony covers these technical and schedule risks and concurrency challenges well.

By 2009, this Committee had issued a floor statement in support of the Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act (WSARA). Congress was now united in its pursuit of acquisition reform and, in concert, USD AT&L re-issued and updated the Department of Defense's acquisition instruction (DoDI 5000.2) in 2008. WSARA included strengthening of the 'Nunn-McCurdy" process with requires DOD to report to Congress when cost growth on a major program breaches a critical cost growth threshold. This legislation required a root-cause assessment of the program and assumed program termination within 60 days of notification unless DOD certified in writing that the program remained essential to national security.

WSARA had real impact on the CVN 78, as by 2008 and 2009 the results of all the previous decisions were instantiated in growth of cost and schedule. Then USD AT&L John Young required the Navy to provide a list of descoping efforts and directed the Navy to have an off-ramp back to steam catapults if the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching System (EMALS) remained a problem for the program. He also directed an independent review of

all of the CVN 78 technologies by a Defense Support Team (DST). Prior to the DST, the Navy had chartered a Program Assessment Review (PAR) with USD (AT&L) participation of EMALS/Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) versus steam. One of the key PAR findings was converting the EMALS and AAG production contracts to firm, fixed price contracts to cap cost growth and imposed negative incentives for late delivery.

The Dual Band Radar (DBR) cost and risk growth was a decision by-product of the DDG 1000 program Nunn-McCurdy critical unit cost breach in 2010. Faced with a need to reduce cost on the DDG 1000 program and the resultant curtailment of the program, the expectation of development costs being borne by the DDG 1000 program was no longer the case and all of the costs associated with the S-band element development and a higher share of the X-band element then had to be supported by the CVN 78 program.

The design problems encountered with AAG development have had the most deleterious effects on CVN 78 construction of any of the three major advanced technologies including EMALS and DBR. Our view of AAG is that these engineering design problems are now in the past and although delivery of several critical components have been delayed, the system will achieve its needed capabilities before undergoing final operational testing prior to deployment of the ship. Again, reliability growth is a concern, but this cannot be improved until a fully functional system is installed and operating at the Lakehurst, New Jersey land based test site, and on board CVN 78.

With the 2010 introduction by then USD AT&L Ashton Carter (now in its third iteration by under USD AT&L Frank Kendall) of the continuous process improvement initiative that was founded in best business practices and WSARA called "Better Buying Power," the CVN underwent affordability, "Should Cost," and requirements assessment. Navy's use of the "Gate" process has stabilized the cost growth and reset good business practices. However, there is still much to do. We are in the testing phase of program execution prior to deployment and we had been concerned about the timing of the Full Ship Shock Trial (FSST). After balancing the operational and technical risks, the Department decided to execute FSST on CVN 78 prior to deployment.

EMALS and AAG are also a concern with regard to final operational testing stemming from the development difficulties that each experienced. The Navy still needs to complete a significant amount of land-based testing to enable certification of the systems to launch and recover the full range of aircraft that it is required to operate under both normal and emergency conditions. This land-based testing is planned to complete before the final at-sea operational testing for these systems begins....

USD AT&L continues to work with Navy to tailor the program and ensure appropriate oversight at both the Navy Staff level as well as OSD. Our review of the Navy's plan for maintaining control of the cost for CVN 79 included an understanding of the application of lessons learned from the construction of CVN 78 along with the application of a more efficient construction plan for the ship including introduction of competition where possible. We have established an excellent relationship with the Navy to work together to change process and policies that have impacted the ability of the program to succeed, to include revitalizing the acquisition workforce and their skills.

We are confident in the Navy's plan for CVN 79 and CVN 80 and, as such, Under Secretary Kendall recently authorized the Navy to enter into the detail design and construction phase for CVN 79 and to enter into advanced procurement for long lead time materials for CVN 80 construction. OSD and the Navy are committed to delivering CVN 79 within the limits of the cost cap legislated for this ship.[88]

[88] Statement of Hon Katharina McFarland, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Acquisition), Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Procurement, Acquisition, Testing and Oversight of the Navy's Gerald R. Ford Class Aircraft Carrier Program, October 1, 2015, 5 pp.

OSD DOT&E Testimony

The prepared statement of the Director, Operational Test & Evaluation (DOT&E), within OSD states the following in part:

> The Navy intends to deliver CVN 78 early in calendar year 2016, and to begin initial operational test and evaluation (IOT&E) in late calendar year 2017. However, the Navy is in the process of developing a new schedule, so some dates may change. Based on the current schedule, between now and the beginning of IOT&E, the CVN 78 program is proceeding on an aggressive schedule to finish development, testing, troubleshooting, and correction of deficiencies for a number of new, complex systems critical to the warfighting capabilities of the ship. Low or unknown reliability and performance of the Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), the Dual Band Radar (DBR), and the Advanced Weapons Elevators (AWE) are significant risks to a successful IOT&E and first deployment, as well as to achieving the life-cycle cost reductions the Navy has estimated will accrue for the Ford-class carriers. The maturity of these systems is generally not at the level that would be desired at this stage in the program; for example, the CVN 78 test program is revealing problems with the DBR typical of discoveries in early developmental testing. Nonetheless, AAG, EMALS, DBR, and AWE equipment is being installed on CVN 78, and in some cases, is undergoing shipboard checkout. Consequently, any significant issues that testing discovers before CVN 78's schedule-driven IOT&E and deployment will be difficult, or perhaps impossible, to address.
>
> Resolving the uncertainties in the reliability and performance of these systems is critical to CVN 78's primary function of conducting combat operations. CVN 78 has design features intended to enhance its ability to launch, recover, and service aircraft. EMALS and AAG are key systems planned to provide new capabilities for launching and recovering aircraft that are heavier and lighter than typically operated on Nimitz-class carriers. DBR is intended to enhance radar coverage on CVN 78 in support of air traffic control and ship self-defense. DBR is planned to reduce some of the known sensor limitations on Nimitz-class carriers that utilize legacy radars. The data currently available to my office indicate EMALS is unlikely to achieve the Navy's reliability requirements. (The Navy indicates EMALS reliability is above its current growth curve, which is true; however, that growth curve was revised in 2013, based on poor demonstrated performance, to achieve EMALS reliability on CVN 78 a factor of 15 below the Navy's goal.) I have no current data regarding DBR or AWE reliability, and data regarding the reliability of the re-designed AAG are also not available. (Poor AAG reliability in developmental testing led to the need to re-design components of that system.) In addition, performance problems with these systems are continuing to be discovered. If the current schedule for conducting the ship's IOT&E and first deployment remain unchanged, reliability and performance shortfalls could degrade CVN 78's ability to conduct flight operations.
>
> Due to known problems with current aircraft carrier combat systems, there is significant risk CVN 78 will not achieve its self-defense requirements. Although the CVN 78 design incorporates several combat system improvements relative to the Nimitz-class, these improvements (if achieved) are unlikely to correct all of the known shortfalls. Testing on other ships with similar combat systems has highlighted deficiencies in weapon employment timelines, sensor coverage, system track management, and deficiencies with the recommended engagement tactics. Most of these limitations are likely to affect CVN 78 and I continue to view this as a significant risk to the CVN 78's ability to defend itself against attacks by the challenging anti-ship cruise missile and other threats proliferating worldwide.
>
> The Navy's previous decision to renege on its original commitment to conduct the Full Ship Shock Trial (FSST) on CVN 78 before her first deployment would have put CVN 78 at risk in combat operations. This decision was reversed in August 2015 by the Deputy

> Secretary of Defense. Historically, FSSTs for new ship classes have identified for the first time numerous mission-critical failures the Navy had to address to ensure the new ships were survivable in combat. We can expect that CVN 78's FSST results will have significant and substantial implications on future carriers in the Ford-class and any subsequent new class of carriers.
>
> I also have concerns with manning and berthing on CVN 78. The Navy designed CVN 78 to have reduced manning to reduce life-cycle costs, but Navy analyses of manning on CVN 78 have identified problems in manning and berthing. These problems are similar to those seen on other recent ship classes such as DDG 1000 and the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS)....
>
> There are significant risks to the successful completion of the CVN 78 IOT&E and the ship's subsequent deployment due to known performance problems and the low or unknown reliability of key systems. For AAG, EMALS, AWE and DBR, systems that are essential to the primary missions of the ship, these problems, if uncorrected, are likely to affect CVN 78's ability to conduct effective flight operations and to defend itself in combat.
>
> The CVN 78 test schedule leaves little or no time to fix problems discovered in developmental testing before IOT&E begins that could cause program delays. In the current program schedule, major developmental test events overlap IOT&E. This overlap increases the likelihood problems will be discovered during CVN 78's IOT&E, with the attendant risk to the successful completion of that testing and to the ship's first deployment.
>
> The inevitable lessons we will learn from the CVN 78 FSST will have significant implications for CVN 78 combat operations, as well as for the construction of future carriers incorporating the ship's advanced systems; therefore, the FSST should be conducted on CVN 78 as soon as it is feasible to do so.[89]

Navy Testimony

The prepared statement of the Navy witnesses at the hearing states the following in part:

> In June 2000, the Department of Defense (DOD) approved a three-ship evolutionary acquisition approach starting with the last NIMITZ Class carrier (CVN 77) and the next two carriers CVNX1 (later CVN 78) and CVNX2 (later CVN 79). This approach recognized the significant risk of concurrently developing and integrating new technologies into a new ship design incrementally as follows:
>
> • The design focus for the evolutionary CVN 77 was to combine information network technology with a new suite of multifunction radars from the DDG 1000 program to transform the ship's combat systems and the air wing's mission planning process into an integrated warfare system.
>
> • The design focus for the evolutionary CVNX1 (future CVN 78) was a new Hull, Mechanical and Electrical (HM&E) architecture within a NIMITZ Class hull that included a new reactor plant design, increased electrical generating capacity, new zonal electrical distribution, and new electrical systems to replace steam auxiliaries under a redesigned flight deck employing new Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) catapults together with aircraft ordnance and fueling "pit-stops". Design goals for achieving reduced manning and improved maintainability were also defined.
>
> • The design focus for the evolutionary CVNX2 (future CVN 79) was a potential "clean-sheet" design to "open the aperture" for capturing new but immature technologies such as the Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) and Advanced Weapons Elevators (AWE) that would be ready in time for the third ship in the series; and thereby permit the experience gained

[89] Statement by J. Michael Gilmore, Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, [October 1, 2015], 19 pp.

from design and construction of the first two ships (CVN 77 and CVN 78) to be applied to the third ship (CVN 79).

Early in the last decade, however, a significant push was made within DOD for a more transformational approach to delivering warfighting capability. As a result, in 2002, DOD altered the program acquisition strategy by transitioning to the new aircraft carrier class in a single transformational leap vice an incremental three ship strategy. Under the revised strategy, CVN 77 reverted back to a "modified-repeat" NIMITZ Class design to minimize risk and construction costs, while delaying the integrated warfare system to CVN 78. Further, due to budget constraints, CVN 78 would start construction a year later (in 2007) with a NIMITZ Class hull form but would entail a major re-design to accommodate all the new technologies from the three ship evolutionary technology insertion plan.

This leap ahead in a single ship was captured in a revised Operational Requirements Document (ORD) in 2004, which defined a new baseline that is the FORD Class today, with CVN 78 as the lead ship. The program entered system development and demonstration, containing the shift to a single ship acquisition strategy. The start of CVN 78 construction was then delayed by an additional year until 2008 due to budget constraints. As a result, the traditional serial evolution of technology development, ship concept design, detail design, and construction – including a total of 23 developmental systems incorporating new technologies originally planned across CVN 77, CVNX1, CVNX2 - were compressed and overlapped within the program baseline for the CVN 78. Today, the Navy is confronting the impacts of this compression and concurrency, as well as changes to assumptions made in the program planning more than a decade ago....

Given the lengthy design, development, and build span associated with major warships, there is a certain amount of overlap or concurrency that occurs between the development of new systems to be delivered with the first ship, the design information for those new systems, and actual construction. Since this overlap poses cost and schedule risk for the lead ship of the class, program management activities are directed at mitigating this overlap to the maximum extent practicable.

In the case of the FORD Class, the incorporation of 23 developmental systems at various levels of technical maturity (including EMALS, AAG, DBR, AWE, new propulsion plant, integrated control systems) significantly compounded the inherent challenges associated with accomplishing the first new aircraft carrier design in 40-years. The cumulative impact of this high degree of concurrency significantly exceeded the risk attributed to any single new system or risk issue and ultimately manifested itself in terms of delay and cost growth in each element of program execution; development, design, material procurement (government and contractor), and construction....

Shipbuilder actions to resolve first-of-class issues retired much of the schedule risks to launch, but at an unstable cost. First-of-class construction and material delays led the Navy to revise the launch date in March 2013 from July 2013 to November 2013. Nevertheless, the four-month delay in launch allowed increased outfitting and ship construction that were most economically done prior to ship launch, such as completion of blasting and coating operations for all tanks and voids, installation of the six DBR arrays, and increased installations of cable piping, ventilation, electrical boxes, bulkheads and equipment foundations. As a result, CVN 78 launched at 70 percent complete and 77,000 tons displacement – the highest levels yet achieved in aircraft carrier construction. This high state of completion at launch enabled improved outfitting, compartment completion, an efficient transition into the shipboard test program, and the on-time completion of key milestones such as crew move aboard.

With the advent of the shipboard test program, first time energization and grooming of new systems have required more time than originally planned. As a result, the Navy expects the sea trial schedule to be delayed about six to eight weeks. The exact impact on ship delivery will be determined based on the results of these trials. The Navy expects no schedule delays

to CVN 78 operational testing and deployability due to the sea trials delay and is managing schedule delays within the $12.887 billion cost cap.

Additionally, at delivery, AAG will not have completed its shipboard test program. The program has not been able to fully mitigate the effect of a two-year delay in AAG equipment deliveries to the ship. All AAG equipment has been delivered to the ship and will be fully installed on CVN 78 at delivery. The AAG shipboard test and certification program will complete in time to support aircraft launch and recovery operations in summer 2016....

The Navy, in coordination with the shipbuilder and major component providers, implemented a series of actions and initiatives in the management and oversight of CVN 78 that crossed the full span of contracting, design, material procurement, GFE, production planning, production management and oversight. The Secretary of the Navy directed a detailed review of the CVN 78 program build plan to improve end-to-end aircraft carrier design, material procurement, production planning, build and test, the results of which are providing benefit across all carriers. These corrective measures include:

• CVN 78 design was converted from a 'level of effort, fixed fee' contract to a completion contract with a firm target and incentive fee. Shipbuilder cost performance has been on-target or better since this contract change.

• CVN 78 construction fee was reduced, consistent with contract provisions. However, the shipbuilder remains incentivized by the contract shareline to improve upon current cost performance.

• Contract design changes are under strict control; authorized only for safety, damage control, and mission-degrading deficiencies.

• Following a detailed "Nunn-McCurdy-like" review in 2008-2009, the Navy converted the EMALS and AAG production contract to a firm, fixed price contract, capping cost growth to each system.

• In 2011, Naval Sea Systems Command completed a review of carrier specifications with the shipbuilder, removing or improving upon overly burdensome or unneeded specifications that impose unnecessary cost on the program. Periodic reviews continue.

Much of the impact to cost performance was attributable to shipbuilder and government material cost overruns. The Navy and shipbuilder have made significant improvements upon material ordering and delivery to the shipyard to mitigate the significant impact of material delays on production performance.

These actions include:

• The Navy and shipbuilder instituted optimal material procurement strategies and best practices (structuring procurements to achieve quantity discounts, dual-sourcing to improve schedule performance and leveraging competitive opportunities) from outside supply chain management experts.

• The shipbuilder assigned engineering and material sourcing personnel to each of their key vendors to expedite component qualifications and delivery to the shipyard.

• The shipbuilder inventoried all excess material procured on CVN 78 for transfer to CVN 79.

• The Program Executive Officer (Carriers) has conducted quarterly Flag-level GFE summits to drive cost reduction opportunities and ensure on-time delivery of required equipment and design information to the shipbuilder.

The CVN 78 build plan, consistent with the NIMITZ Class, had focused foremost on completion of structural and critical path work to support launching the ship on-schedule. Achieving the program's cost improvement targets required that CVN 78 increase its level

of completion at launch, from 60 percent to 70 percent. To achieve this and drive greater focus on system completion:

• The Navy fostered a collaborative build process review by the shipbuilder with other Tier 1 private shipyards in order to benchmark its performance and identify fundamental changes that are yielding marked improvement.

• The shipbuilder established specific launch metrics by system and increased staffing for waterfront engineering and material expediters to support meeting those metrics. This ultimately delayed launch, but drove up pre-outfitting to the highest levels for CVN new construction which has helped stabilize cost and improve test program and compartment completion performance relative to CVN 77.

• The shipbuilder linked all of these processes within a detailed integrated master schedule that has provided greater visibility to performance and greater ability to control cost and schedule performance across the shipbuilding disciplines.

These initiatives, which summarize a more detailed list of actions being implemented and tracked as a result of the end-to-end review, were accompanied by important management changes.

• In 2011, the Navy assigned a second tour Flag Officer with considerable carrier operations, construction, and program management experience as the new Program Executive Officer (PEO).

• The new PEO established a separate Program Office, PMS 379, to focus exclusively on CVN 79 and CVN 80, which enables the lead ship Program Office, PMS 378, to focus on cost control, schedule performance and the delivery of CVN 78.

• In 2012, the shipbuilder assigned a new Vice President in charge of CVN 78, a new Vice President in charge of material management and purchasing, and a number of new general ship foremen to strengthen CVN 78 performance.

• The new PEO and shipyard president began conducting bi-weekly launch readiness reviews focused on cost performance, critical path issues and accomplishment of the targets for launch completion. These bi-weekly reviews will continue through delivery.

• Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development, and Acquisition) (ASN (RD&A)) conducts quarterly reviews of program progress and performance with the PEO and shipbuilder to ensure that all that can be done to improve on cost performance is being done.

The series of actions taken by the Navy and the shipbuilder are achieving the desired effect of arresting cost growth, establishing stability, and have resulted in no changes in the Government's estimate at completion over the past four years. The Department of the Navy is continuing efforts to identify cost reductions, drive improved cost and schedule performance, and manage change. The Navy has established a rigorous process with the shipbuilder that analyzes each contract change request to approve only those change categories allowed within the 2010 ASN(RD&A) change order management guidance. This guidance only allows changes for safety, contractual defects, testing and trial deficiencies, statutory and regulatory changes that are accompanied by funding and value engineering change proposals with instant contract savings. While the historical average for contractual change level is approximately 10 percent of the construction cost for the lead ship of a new class, CVN 78 has maintained a change order budget of less than four percent to date despite the high degree of concurrent design and development.

Finally, the Navy has identified certain areas of the ship whose completion is not required for delivery, such as berthing spaces for the aviation detachment, and has removed this work from the shipbuilder's contract. This deferred work will be completed within the ship's budgeted end cost and is included within the $12,887 million cost estimate. By

performing this deferred work in the post-delivery period using CVN 78 end cost funding, it can be competed and accomplished at lower cost and risk to the overall ship delivery schedule....

The CVN 79 cost cap was established in 2006 and adjusted by the Secretary of the Navy in 2013, primarily to address inflation between 2006 and 2013 plus $325 million of the allowed increase for non-recurring engineering to incorporate design improvements for the CVN 78 Class construction.

The Navy and the shipbuilder conducted an extensive affordability review of carrier construction and made significant changes to deliver CVN 79 at the lowest possible cost. These changes are focused on eliminating the largest impacts to cost performance identified during the construction of CVN 78 as well as furthering improvements in future carrier construction. The Navy outlined cost savings initiatives in its Report to Congress in May, 2013, and is executing according to plan.

Stability in requirements, design, schedule, and budget, are essential to controlling and improving CVN 79 cost, and therefore is of highest priority for the program. Requirements for CVN 79 were "locked down" prior to the commencement of CVN 79 construction. The technical baseline and allocated budget for these requirements were agreed to by the Chief of Naval Operations and ASN(RD&A) and further changes to the baseline require their approval, which ensures design stability and increases effectiveness during production. At the time of construction contract award, CVN 79 has 100 percent of the design product model complete (compared to 65 percent for CVN 78) and 80 percent of initial drawings released. Further, CVN 79 construction benefits from the maturation of virtually all new technologies inserted on CVN 78. In the case of EMALS and AAG, the system design and procurement costs are understood, and CVN 79 leverages CVN 78 lessons learned....

A completed FORD Class design enabled the shipbuilder to fully understand the "whole ship" bill of materials for CVN 79 construction and to more effectively manage the procurement of those materials with the knowledge of material lead times and qualified sources accrued from CVN 78 construction. The shipbuilder is able to order ship-set quantities of material, with attendant cost benefits, and to ensure CVN 79 material will arrive on time to support construction need. Extensive improvements have been put in place for CVN 79 material procurement to drive both cost reductions associated with more efficient procurement strategies and production labor improvements associated with improved material availability. Improved material availability is also a critical enabler to many construction efficiency improvements in CVN 79.

The shipbuilder has developed an entirely new material procurement and management strategy for CVN 79. This new strategy consists of eight separate initiatives....

The shipbuilder and the Navy have performed a comprehensive review of the build strategy and processes used in construction of CVN 78 Class aircraft carriers as well as consulted with other Navy shipbuilders on best practices. As a result, the shipbuilder has identified and implemented a number of changes in the way they build aircraft carriers, with a dedicated focus on executing construction activities where they can most efficiently be performed. The CVN 79 build sequence installs 20 percent more parts in shop, and 30 percent more parts on the final assembly platen, as compared to CVN 78. This work will result in an increase in pre-outfitting and work being pulled to earlier stages in the construction process where it is most efficiently accomplished....

In conjunction with the Navy and the shipbuilder's comprehensive review of the build strategy and processes used in construction of CVN 78 Class aircraft carriers, a number of design changes were identified that would result in more affordable construction. Some of these design changes were derived from lessons learned in the construction of CVN 78 and others seek to further simplify the construction process and drive cost down....

> In addition to the major focus discussed above, the shipbuilder continues to implement capital improvements to facilities that serve to reduce risk and improve productivity....
>
> To enhance CVN 79 build efficiency and affordability, the Navy is implementing a two-phase delivery plan. The two-phase strategy will allow the basic ship to be constructed and tested in the most efficient manner by the shipbuilder (Phase I) while enabling select ship systems and compartments to be completed in Phase II, where the work can be completed more affordably through competition or the use of skilled installation teams....
>
> The CVN 80 planning and construction will continue to leverage class lessons learned in the effort to achieve cost and risk reduction for remaining FORD Class ships. The CVN 80 strategy seeks to improve on CVN 79 efforts to frontload as much work as possible to the earliest phases of construction, where work is both predictable and more cost efficient....
>
> While delivery of the first-of-class FORD has involved challenges, those challenges are being addressed and this aircraft carrier class will provide great value to our Nation with unprecedented and greatly needed warfighting capability at overall lower total ownership cost than a NIMITZ Class CVN. The Navy has taken major steps to stem the tide of increasing costs and drive affordability into carrier acquisition.[90]

GAO Testimony

The prepared statement of the GAO witness at the hearing states the following in part:

> The Ford-class aircraft carrier's lead ship began construction with an unrealistic business case. A sound business case balances the necessary resources and knowledge needed to transform a chosen concept into a product. Yet in 2007, GAO found that CVN 78 costs were underestimated and critical technologies were immature—key risks that would impair delivering CVN 78 at cost, on-time, and with its planned capabilities. The ship and its business case were nonetheless approved. Over the past 8 years, the business case has predictably decayed in the form of cost growth, testing delays, and reduced capability—in essence, getting less for more. Today, CVN 78 is more than $2 billion over its initial budget. Land-based tests of key technologies have been deferred by years while the ship's construction schedule has largely held fast. The CVN 78 is unlikely to achieve promised aircraft launch and recovery rates as key systems are unreliable. The ship must complete its final, more complex, construction phase concurrent with key test events. While problems are likely to be encountered, there is no margin for the unexpected. Additional costs are likely.
>
> Similarly, the business case for CVN 79 is not realistic. The Navy recently awarded a construction contract for CVN 79 which it believes will allow the program to achieve the current $11.5 billion legislative cost cap. Clearly, CVN 79 should cost less than CVN 78, as it will incorporate lessons learned on construction sequencing and other efficiencies. While it may cost less than its predecessor, CVN 79 is likely to cost more than estimated. As GAO found in November 2014, the Navy's strategy to achieve the cost cap relies on optimistic assumptions of construction efficiencies and cost savings—including unprecedented reductions in labor hours, shifting work until after ship delivery, and delivering the ship with the same baseline capability as CVN 78 by postponing planned mission system upgrades and modernizations until future maintenance periods.

[90] Statement of The Honorable Sean J. Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), Rear Admiral Donald E. Gaddis, Program Executive Officer, Tactical Aircraft, Department of the Navy, Rear Admiral Thomas J. Moore, Program Executive Officer, Aircraft Carriers, Department of the Navy, Rear Admiral Michael C. Manazir, Director, Air Warfare (OPNAV), Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Procurement, Acquisition, Testing, and Oversight of the Navy's Gerald R. Ford Class Aircraft Carrier Program, October 1, 2015, 22 pp.

> Today, with CVN 78 over 92 percent complete as it reaches delivery in May 2016, and the CVN 79 on contract, the ability to exercise oversight and make course corrections is limited. Yet, it is not too late to examine the carrier's acquisition history to illustrate the dynamics of shipbuilding—and weapon system—acquisition and the challenges they pose to acquisition reform. The carrier's problems are by no means unique; rather, they are quite typical of weapon systems. Such outcomes persist despite acquisition reforms the Department of Defense and Congress have put forward—such as realistic estimating and "fly before buy." Competition with other programs for funding creates pressures to overpromise performance at unrealistic costs and schedules. These incentives are more powerful than policies to follow best acquisition practices and oversight tools. Moreover, the budget process provides incentives for programs to be funded before sufficient knowledge is available to make key decisions. Complementing these incentives is a marketplace characterized by a single buyer, low volume, and limited number of major sources. The decades-old culture of undue optimism when starting programs is not the consequence of a broken process, but rather of a process in equilibrium that rewards unrealistic business cases and, thus, devalues sound practices.[91]

July 2015 Press Report

A July 2, 2015, press report states the following:

> The Navy plans to spend $25 million per year beginning in 2017 as a way to invest in lowering the cost of building the services' new Ford-class aircraft carriers, service officials said.
>
> "We will use this design for affordability to make new improvements in cost cutting technologies that will go into our ships," said Rear Adm. Michael Manazir, Director, Air Warfare....
>
> "We just awarded a contract to buy long lead item materials [for CVN-79] and lay out an allocated budget for each of the components of that ship. We want to build the ship in the most efficient manner possible," Rear Adm. Thomas Moore, Program Executive Officer, Carriers, said.
>
> Navy leaders say the service is making positive strides regarding the cost of construction for the USS Kennedy and plans to stay within the congressional cost cap of $11.498 billion....
>
> The $25 million design for affordability initiative is aimed at helping to uncover innovative shipbuilding techniques and strategies that will accomplish this and lower costs.
>
> Moore said the goal of the program is to, among other things, remove $500 million from the cost of the third Ford-class carrier, the USS Enterprise, CVN 80.
>
> "It is finding a million here and a million there and eventually that is how you get a billion dollars out of the ship from (CVN) 78 to (CVN) 79. The goal is to get another $500 million out of CVN 80. The $25 million dollars is a pretty prudent investment if we can continue to drive the cost of this class of ship down," Moore told reporters recently.
>
> Moore explained that part of the goal is to get to the point where a Ford-class carrier can be built for the same amount of man-hours it took to build their predecessor ships, the Nimitz-class carriers.

[91] Government Accountability Office, *Ford Class Aircraft Carrier[:] Poor Outcomes Are the Predictable Consequences of the Prevalent Acquisition Culture*, GAO-16-84T, October 1, 2015, summary page. (Testimony Before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Statement of Paul L. Francis, Managing Director Acquisition and Sourcing Management.)

> "We want to get back to the goal of being able to build it for historical Nimitz class levels in terms of man hours for a ship that is significantly more capable and more complex to build," Moore added.
>
> The money will invest in new approaches and explore the processes that a shipyard can use to build the ship, Moore added.
>
> "They've made a significant investment in these new welding machines. These new welding machines allow the welder to use different configurations. This has significantly improved the throughput that the shipyard has," Moore said, citing an example of the kind of thing the funds would be used for.
>
> The funds will also look into whether new coatings for the ship or welding techniques can be used and whether millions of feet of electrical cabling can be installed in a more efficient manner, Moore added.
>
> Other cost saving efforts assisted by the funding include the increased use of complex assemblies, common integrated work packages, automated plate marking, weapons elevator door re-design and vertical build strategies, Navy officials said.
>
> Shipbuilders could also use a new strategy of having work crews stay on the same kind of work for several weeks at a time in order to increase efficiency, Moore said. Also, some of the construction work done on the USS Ford while it was in dry dock is now being done in workshops and other areas to improve the building process, he added.[92]

June 2015 Press Reports

A June 29, 2015, press report states the following:

> Newport News Shipbuilding will see cost reduction on the order of 18 percent fewer man hours overall from the first Ford-class aircraft carrier to the second, according to a company representative.
>
> Ken Mahler, Newport News vice president of Navy programs, touted the shipyard's cost savings on the John F. Kennedy (CVN-79) during a June 15 interview with *Inside the Navy*. This reduction was facilitated by the investments the shipyard is making in carrier construction, as well as lessons learned from the first ship, the Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78), which will deliver next year.[93]

A June 23, 2015, press report states the following:

> The Pentagon's cost-assessment office now says the Navy's second aircraft carrier in a new class will exceed a congressionally mandated cost cap by $235 million.
>
> That's down from an April estimate that the USS John F. Kennedy, the second warship in the new Ford class, would bust a $11.498 billion cap set by lawmakers by $370 million.[94] The Navy maintains that it can deliver the ship within the congressional limit.
>
> "The original figure was a draft based on preliminary information," Navy Commander Bill Urban, a spokesman for the Pentagon's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation office,

[92] Kris Osborn, "Navy Launches New Affordability Plan for Ford-Class Carriers," *DOD Buzz*, July 2, 2015.

[93] Lara Seligman, "Newport News See 18 Percent Fewer Man Hours On Second Ford Carrier," *Inside the Navy*, June 29, 2015.

[94] See Anthony Capaccio, "Aircraft Carrier $370 Million Over Congressional Cost Cap," *Bloomberg News*, May 19, 2015.

> said in an e-mail. As better information, such as updated labor rates, became available, the office "revised its estimate to a more accurate number," he said.[95]

A June 15, 2015, press report states the following:

> [Rear Admiral Tom] Moore [program executive officer for aircraft carriers]. said the program would save a billion dollars by decreasing the man hours needed to construct the ship by 18 percent from CVN-78 to 79—down to about 44 million manhours. He said this reduction is only a first step in taking cost ouot of the carrier program. The future Enterprise (CVN-80) will take about 4 million manhours out, or another 10 percent reduction, for a savings of about $500 million.
>
> But beyond seeking ways to take cost out, the contract itself reduces the risk to the government, Moore said.
>
> "The main construction of the ship is now in a fixed price environment, so that switchover really limits the government's liability," he said.
>
> Without getting into specific dollar amounts due to business sensitivities, Moore explained that "this is the lowest target fee we've ever had on any CVN new construction. Look at tghe shape of the share [government-contractor cost] share lines, because the share lines at the end of the day are a measure of risk. So where we'd like to get quickly to [a] 50/50 [share line], in past carrier contracts we've been out at 85/15, 90/10—which basically means for every dollar over [the target cost figure, up to the ceiling cost figure], the government picks up 85 cents on the dollar. And this contract very quickly gets to 50/50. The other thing is ceiling price—on a fixed-price contract, the ceiling price is the government's maximum liability. And on this particular contract, again, it is the lowest ceiling price we've ever had [for a CVN]."[96]

February 2015 Navy Testimony

At a February 25, 2015, hearing on Department of the Navy acquisition programs, Department of the Navy officials testified the following:

> The Navy is committed to delivering CVN 78 within the $12.887 billion Congressional cost cap. Sustained efforts to identify cost reductions and drive improved cost and schedule on this first-of-class aircraft carrier have resulted in highly stable performance since 2011.
>
> Parallel efforts by the Navy and shipbuilder are driving down and stabilizing aircraft carrier construction costs for the future John F Kennedy (CVN 79) and estimates for the future Enterprise (CVN 80). As a result of the lessons learned on CVN 78, the approach to carrier construction has undergone an extensive affordability review. The Navy and the shipbuilder have made significant changes on CVN 79 to reduce the cost to build the ship as detailed in the 2013 CVN 79 report to Congress. The benefits of these changes in build strategy and resolution of first-of-class impacts on CVN 79 are evident in metrics showing significantly reduced man-hours for completed work from CVN 78. These efforts are ongoing and additional process improvements continue to be identified.
>
> The Navy extended the CVN 79 construction preparation contract into 2015 to enable continuation of ongoing planning, construction, and material procurement while capturing lessons learned associated with lead ship construction and early test results. The continued negotiations of the detail design and construction (DD&C) contract afford an opportunity to incorporate further construction process improvements and cost reduction efforts.

[95] Anthony Capaccio, "Second New Carrier Now Seen Busting a Cost Cap by $235 Million," *Bloomberg News*, June 23, 2015.

[96] Megan Eckstein, "Navy: CVN-79 Contract Has Lowest Ceiling Price Ever; R&D Investment Will Take Out Further Cost," *USNI News*, June 15, 2015.

> Award of the DD&C contract is expected in third quarter FY 2015. This will be a fixed price-type contract.
>
> Additionally, the Navy will deliver the CVN 79 using a two-phased strategy. This enables select ship systems and compartments to be completed in a second phase, wherein the work can be completed more efficiently through competition or the use of skilled installation teams responsible for these activities. This approach, key to delivering CVN 79 at the lowest cost, also enables the Navy to procure and install shipboard electronic systems at the latest date possible.
>
> The FY 2014 NDAA adjusted the CVN 79 and follow ships cost cap to $11,498 million to account for economic inflation and non-recurring engineering for incorporation of lead ship lessons learned and design changes to improve affordability. In transitioning from first-of-class to first follow ships, the Navy has maintained Ford class requirements and the design is highly stable. Similarly, we have imposed strict interval controls to drive changes to the way we do business in order to ensure CVN 79 is delivered below the cost cap. To this same end, the FY 2016 President's Budget request aligns funding to the most efficient build strategy for this ship and we look for Congress' full support of this request to enable CVN 79 to be procured at the lowest possible cost.
>
> Enterprise (CVN 80) will begin long lead time material procurement in FY 2016. The FY 2016 request re-phases CVN 80 closer to the optimal profile, therefore reducing the overall ship cost. The Navy will continue to investigate and will incorporate further cost reduction initiatives, engineering efficiencies, and lessons learned from CVN 78 and CVN 79. Future cost estimates for CVN 80 will be updated for these future efficiencies as they are identified.[97]

May 2013 Navy Testimony

In its prepared statement for a May 8, 2013, hearing on Navy shipbuilding programs before the Seapower subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Navy stated that

> In 2011, the Navy identified spiraling cost growth [on CVN-78] associated with first of class non-recurring design, contractor and government furnished equipment, and ship production issues on the lead ship. The Navy completed an end-to-end review of CVN 78 construction in December 2011 and, with the shipbuilder, implemented a series of corrective actions to stem, and to the extent possible, reverse these trends. While cost performance has stabilized, incurred cost growth is irreversible....
>
> As a result of lessons learned on CVN 78, the approach to carrier construction has undergone an extensive affordability review; and the Navy and the shipbuilder have made significant changes on CVN 79 that will reduce the cost to build the ship. CVN 79 construction will start with a complete design, firm requirements, and material economically procured and on hand in support of production need. The ship's build schedule also provides for increased completion levels at each stage of construction with resulting improved production efficiencies....
>
> Inarguably, this new class of aircraft carrier brings forward tremendous capability and life-cycle cost advantages compared to the NIMITZ-class it will replace. However, the design,

[97] Statement of the Honorable Sean J. Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) and Vice Admiral Joseph P. Mulloy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources and Lieutenant General Kenneth J. Glueck, Jr., Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration & Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Before the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces of the House Armed Services Committee on Department of the Navy Seapower and Projection Forces Capabilities, February 25, 2015, pp. 5-6.

> development and construction efforts required to overcome the technical challenges inherent to these advanced capabilities have significantly impacted cost performance on the lead ship. The Navy continues implementing actions from the 2012 detailed review of the FORD-Class build plan to control cost and improve performance across lead and follow ship contracts. This effort, taken in conjunction with a series of corrective actions with the shipbuilder on the lead ship, will not recover costs to original targets for GERALD R. FORD [CVN-78], but should improve performance on the lead ship while fully benefitting CVN 79 and following ships of the class.[98]

In the discussion portion of the hearing, Sean Stackley, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition (i.e., the Navy's acquisition executive), testified that

> First, the cost growth on the CVN-78 is unacceptable. The cost growth dates back in time to the very basic concepts that went into take in the Nimitz-class and doing a total redesign of the Nimitz class to get to a level of capability and to reduce operating and support cost for the future carrier. Far too much risk was carried into the design of the first of the Ford-class.
>
> Cost growth stems to the design was moving at the time production started. The vendor base that was responsible for delivering new components and material to support the ship production was (inaudible) with new developments in the vendor base and production plan do not account for the material ordering difficulties, the material delivery difficulties and some of the challenges associated with building a whole new design compared to the Nimitz....
>
> Sir, for CVN-79, we have—we have held up the expenditures on CVN-79 as we go through the details of—one, ensuring that the design of the 78 is complete and repeated for the 79s [sic] that we start with a clean design.
>
> Two, we're going through the material procurement. We brought a third party into assessment material-buying practices at Newport News to bring down the cost of material. And we're metering out the dollars for buying material until it hits the objectives that we're setting for CVN-79 through rewriting the build plan on CVN-79.
>
> If you take a look at how the 78 is being constructed, far too much work is being accomplished late in the build cycle. So we are rewriting the build plan for CVN-79, do more work in the shops where it's more efficient, more work in the buildings where it's more efficient, less work in the dry dock, less work on the water. And then we're going after the rates—the labor rates and the investments needed by the shipbuilder to achieve these efficiencies.[99]

Later in the hearing, Stackley testified that

> the history in shipbuilding is since you don't have a prototype for a new ship, the first of class referred to as the lead ship is your prototype. And so you carry a lot of risk into the construction of that first of class.
>
> Also, given the nature that there's a lengthy design development and build span associated with ships, so there is a certain amount of overlap or concurrency that occurs between the development of new systems that need to be delivered with the first ship, the incorporation

[98] Statement of The Honorable Sean J. Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) and Vice Admiral Allen G. Myers, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources and Vice Admiral Kevin M. McCoy, Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, Before the Subcommittee on Seapower of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Department of the Navy Shipbuilding Programs, May 8, 2013, p. 8.

[99] Transcript of hearing.

> of the design of those new systems and the actual construction. And so to the extent that there is change in a new ship class then the risk goes up accordingly.
>
> In the case of the CVN-78, the degree of change compared to the Nimitz was fairly extraordinary all for good reasons, good intentions, increased capability, increased survivability, significant reduction in operating and support costs. So there was a determination that will take on this risk in order to get those benefits, and the case of the CVN-78, those risks are driving a lot of the cost growth on the lead ship.
>
> When you think about the follow ships, now you've got a stable design, now your vendor base has got a production line going to support the production. Now you've got a build plan and a workforce that has climbed up on the learning curve to drive cost down. So you can look at—you can look at virtually every shipbuilding program and you'll see a significant drop-off in cost from that first of class to the follow ships.
>
> And then you look for a stable learning curve to take over in the longer term production of a ship class.
>
> Carriers are unique for a number of reasons, one of which we don't have an annual procurement of carriers. They're spread out over a five and, in fact, in the case of 78 as much as seven-year period. So in order to achieve that learning, there are additional challenges associated with achieving that learning. And so we're going at it very deliberately on the CVN-79 through the build plan with the shipbuilder to hit the line that we've got to have—the cost reductions that we've got to have on the follow ships of the class.[100]

March 2013 Navy Report

A March 2013 report to Congress on the Navy's plan for building CVN-79 that was released to the public on May 16, 2013, states the following in its executive summary:

> As a result of the lessons learned on CVN 78, the approach to carrier construction has undergone an extensive affordability review and the Navy and the shipbuilder have made significant changes on CVN 79 that will significantly reduce the cost to build the ship. These include four key construction areas:
>
> — CVN 79 construction will start with a complete design and a complete bill of material
>
> — CVN 79 construction will start with a firm set of stable requirements
>
> — CVN 79 construction will start with the development complete on a host of new technologies inserted on CVN 78 ranging from the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), the Dual Band Radar, and the reactor plant, to key valves in systems throughout the ship
>
> — CVN 79 construction will start with an 'optimal build' plan that emphasizes the completion of work and ship outfitting as early as possible in the construction process to optimize cost and ultimately schedule performance.
>
> In addition to these fundamentals, the Navy and the shipbuilder are tackling cost through a series of other changes that when taken over the entire carrier will have a significant impact on construction costs. The Navy has also imposed cost targets and is aggressively pursuing cost reduction initiatives in its government furnished systems. A detailed accounting of these actions is included in this report.

[100] Transcript of hearing.

> The actions discussed in this report are expected to reduce the material cost of CVN 79 by 10-20% in real terms from CVN 78, to reduce the number of man-hours required to build the CVN 79 by 15-25% from CVN 78, and to reduce the cost of government furnished systems by 5-10% in real terms from CVN 78.[101]

For the full text of the Navy's report, see the **Appendix D**.

March 2012 Navy Letter to Senator McCain

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, in a letter with attachment sent in late March 2012 to Senator John McCain on controlling cost growth in CVN-78, stated the following:

> Dear Senator McCain:
>
> Thank you for your letter of March 21, 2012, regarding the first-of-class aircraft carrier, GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78). Few major programs carry greater importance or greater impact on national security, and no other major program comprises greater scale and complexity than the Navy's nuclear aircraft carrier program. Accordingly, successful execution of this program carries the highest priority within the Department of the Navy.
>
> I have shared in the past my concern when I took office and learned the full magnitude of new technologies and design change being brought to the FORD. Requirements drawn up more than a decade prior for this capital ship drove development of a new reactor plant, propulsion system, electric plant and power distribution system, first of kind electromagnetic aircraft launching system, advanced arresting gear, integrated warfare system including a new radar and communications suite, air conditioning plant, weapons elevators, topside design, survivability improvements, and all new interior arrangements. CVN 78 is a near-total redesign of the NIMITZ Class she replaces. Further, these major developments, which were to be incrementally introduced in the program, were directed in 2002 to be integrated into CVN 78 in a single step. Today we are confronting the cost impacts of these decisions made more than a decade ago.
>
> In my August 29, 2011 letter, I provided details regarding these cost impacts. At that time, I reported the current estimate for the Navy's share of the shipbuilder's construction overrun, $690 million, and described that I had directed an end-to-end review to identify the changes necessary to improve cost for carrier design, material procurement, planning, build and test. The attached white paper provides the findings of that review and the steps we are taking to drive affordability into the remaining CVN 78 construction effort. Pending the results of these efforts, the Navy has included the 'fact of life' portion of the stated overrun in the Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget request. The review also highlighted the compounding effects of applying traditional carrier build planning to a radically new design; the challenges inherent to low-rate, sole-source carrier procurement; and the impact of external economic factors accrued over 15 years of CVN 78 procurement—all within the framework of cost-plus contracts. The outlined approach for ensuring CVN 79 and follow ship affordability focuses equally upon tackling these issues while applying the many lessons learned in the course of CVN 78 procurement.
>
> As always, if I may be of further assistance, please let me know.
>
> Sincerely, [signed] Ray Mabus
>
> Attachment: As stated

[101] *Aircraft Carrier Construction, John F Kennedy (CVN 79), Report to Congress*, March 2013, p. 3. An annotation on the report's cover page indicates that the report was authorized for public release on May 16, 2013. The report was posted at InsideDefense.com (subscription required) on June 21, 2013. See also Megan Eckstein, "Navy Plan To Congress Outlines New Strategies To Save On CVN-79," *Inside the Navy*, June 24, 2013.

Copy to: The Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman

[Attachment]

Improving Cost Performance on CVN 78

CVN 78 is nearing 40 percent completion. Cost growth to-date is attributable to increases in design, contractor furnished material, government furnished material (notably, the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching System (EMALS), Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), and the Dual Band Radar (DBR)), and production labor performance. To achieve the best case outcome, the program must execute with zero additional cost growth in design and material procurement, and must improve production performance. The Navy and the shipbuilder have implemented a series of actions and initiatives in the management and oversight of CVN 78 that cross the full span of contracting, design, material procurement, government furnished equipment, production planning, production, management and oversight.

CVN 78 is being procured within a framework of cost-plus contracts. Within this framework, however, the recent series of action taken by the Navy to improve contract effectiveness are achieving the desired effect of incentivizing improved cost performance and reducing government exposure to further cost growth.

- CVN 78 design has been converted from a 'level of effort, fixed fee' contract to a completion contract with a firm target and incentive fee. Shipbuilder cost performance has been on-target or better since this contract was changed.
- CVN 78 construction fee has been retracted, consistent with contract performance. However, the shipbuilder is incentivized by the contract shareline to improve upon current performance to meet agreed-to cost goals.
- Contract design changes are under strict control; authorized only for safety, damage control, mission-degrading deficiencies, or similar. Adjudicated changes have been contained to less than 1 percent of contract target price.
- The Navy converted the EMALS and AAG production contract to a firm, fixed price contract, capping cost growth to that system and imposing negative incentives for late delivery.
- Naval Sea Systems Command is performing a review of carrier specifications with the shipbuilder, removing or improving upon overly burdensome or unneeded specifications that impose unnecessary cost on the program.

The single largest impact to cost performance to-date has been contractor and government material cost overruns. These issues trace to lead ship complexity and CVN 78 concurrency, but they also point to inadequate accountability for carrier material procurement, primarily during the ship's advance procurement period (2002-2008).

These effects cannot be reversed on CVN 78, but it is essential to improve upon material delivery to the shipyard to mitigate the significant impact of material delays on production performance. Equally important, the systemic material procurement deficiencies must be corrected for CVN 79. To this end, the Navy and shipbuilder have taken the following actions.

- The Navy has employed outside supply chain management experts to develop optimal material procurement strategies. The Navy and the shipbuilder are reviewing remaining material requirements to employ these best practices (structuring procurements to achieve quantity discounts, dual-sourcing to improve schedule performance and leverage competitive opportunities, etc.).
- The shipbuilder has assigned engineering and material sourcing personnel to each of their key vendors to expedite component qualifications and delivery to the shipyard.

- The shipbuilder is inventorying all excess material procured on CVN 78 for transfer to CVN 79 (cost reduction to CVN 78), as applicable.
- The Program Executive Officer (Carriers) is conducting quarterly flag-level government furnished equipment summits to drive cost reduction opportunities and ensure on-time delivery of required equipment and design information to the shipbuilder.

The most important finding regarding CVN 78 remaining cost is that the CVN 78 build plan, consistent with the NIMITZ class, focuses foremost on completion of structural and critical path work to support launching the ship on-schedule. This emphasis on structure comes at the expense of completing ship systems, outfitting, and furnishing early in the build process and results in costly, labor-intensive system completion activity during later; more costly stages of production. Achieving the program's cost improvement targets will require that CVN 78 increase its level of completion at launch, from current estimate of 60 percent to no less than 65 percent. To achieve this goal and drive greater focus on system completion:

- the Navy fostered a collaborative build process review by the shipbuilder with other Tier 1 private shipyards in order to benchmark its performance arid identify fundamental changes that would yield marked improvement;
- the shipbuilder has established specific launch metrics by system (foundations, machinery, piping, power panels, vent duct, lighting, etc.) and increased staffing for waterfront engineering and material expediters to support meeting these metrics;
- the shipbuilder has linked all of these processes within a detailed integrated master schedule, providing greater visibility to current performance and greater ability to control future cost and schedule performance across the shipbuilding disciplines;
- the Navy and shipbuilder are conducting Unit Readiness Reviews of CVN 78 erection units to ensure that the outfitted condition of each hull unit being lifted into the dry-dock contains the proper level of outfitting.

These initiatives, which summarize a more detailed list of actions being implemented and tracked as result of the end-to-end review, are accompanied by important management changes.

- The shipbuilder has assigned a new Vice President in charge of CVN 78, a new Vice President in charge of material management and purchasing, and a number of new general shop foreman to strengthen CVN 78 performance.
- The Navy has assigned a second tour Flag Officer with considerable carrier operations, construction, and program management experience as the new Program-Executive Officer (PEO).
- The PEO and shipyard president conduct bi-weekly launch readiness reviews focusing on cost performance, critical path issues and accomplishment of the target for launch completion.
- The Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development, and Acquisition) conducts a monthly review of program progress and performance with the PEO and shipbuilder, bringing to bear the full weight of the Department, as needed, to ensure that all that can be done to improve on cost performance is being done.

Early production performance improvements can be traced directly to these actions, however, significant further improvement is required. To this end, the Navy is conducting a line-by-line review of all 'cost to-go' on CVN 78 to identify further opportunity to reduce cost and to mitigate risk.

Improving Cost Performance on CVN 79

CVN 79 Advance Procurement commenced in 2007 with early construction activities following in 2011. Authorization for CVN 79 procurement is requested in Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget request with the first year of incremental funding. Two years have been added to the CVN 79 production schedule in this budget request, afforded by the fact that CVN 79 will replace CVN 68 when she inactivates. To improve affordability for CVN 79, the Navy plans to leverage this added time by introducing a fundamental change to the carrier procurement approach and a corresponding shift to the carrier build plan, while incorporating CVN 78 lessons learned.

The two principal 'documents' which the Navy and shipbuilder must ensure are correct and complete at the outset of CVN 79 procurement are the design and the build plan.

Design is governed by rules in place that no changes will be considered for the follow ship except changes necessary to correct design deficiencies on the lead ship, fact of life changes to correct obsolescence issues, or changes that will result in reduced cost for the follow ship. Exceptions to these rules must be approved by the JROC, or designee. Accordingly, the Navy is requesting procurement authority for CVN 79 with the Design Product Model complete and construction drawings approximately 95 percent complete (compared to approximately 30 percent complete at time of lead ship authorization).

As well, first article testing and certification will be complete for virtually all major new equipments introduced in the FORD Class. At this point in time, the shipbuilder has developed a complete bill of material for CVN 79. The Navy is working with the shipbuilder to ensure that the contractor's material estimates are in-line with Navy 'should cost' estimates; eliminating non-recurring costs embedded in lead ship material, validating quantities, validating escalation indices, incorporating lead ship lessons learned. The Navy has increased its oversight of contractor furnished material procurement, ensuring that material procurement is competed (where competition is available); that it is fixed priced; that commodities are bundled to leverage economic order quantity opportunities; and that the vendor base capacity and schedule for receipt supports the optimal build plan being developed for production.

In total, the high level of design maturity and material certification provides a stable technical baseline for material procurement cost and schedule performance, which are critical to developing and executing an improved, reliable build plan.

In order to significantly improve production labor performance, based on timely receipt of design and material, the Navy and shipbuilder are reviewing and implementing changes to the CVN 79 build plan and affected facilities. The guiding principles are:

- maximize planned work in the shops and early stages of construction;
- revise sequence of structural unit construction to maximize learning curve performance through 'families of units' and work cells;
- incorporate design changes to improve FORD Class producibility;
- increase the size of erection units to eliminate disruptive unit breaks and improve unit alignment and fairness;
- increase outfitting levels for assembled units prior to erection in the dry-dock;
- increase overall ship completion levels at each key event.

The shipbuilder is working on detailed plans for facility improvements that will improve productivity, and the Navy will consider incentives for capital improvements that would provide targeted return on investment, such as:

- increasing the amount of temporary and permanent covered work areas;
- adding ramps and service towers for improved access to work sites and the dry-dock;

- increasing lift capacity to enable construction of larger, more fully outfitted super-lifts:

An incremental improvement to carrier construction cost will fall short of the improvement necessary to ensure affordability for CVN 79 and follow ships. Accordingly, the shipbuilder has established aggressive targets for CVN 79 to drive the game-changing improvements needed for carrier construction. These targets include:

- 75 percent Complete at Launch (15 percent> [i.e., 15 percent greater than] FORD);
- 85-90 percent of cable pulled prior to Launch (25-30 percent> FORD);
- 30 percent increase in front-end shop work (piping details, foundations, etc);
- All structural unit hot work complete prior to blast and paint;
- 25 percent increase to work package throughput;
- 100 percent of material available for all work packages in accordance with the integrated master schedule;
- zero delinquent engineering and planning products;
- resolution of engineering problems in < 8 [i.e., less than 8] hours.

In parallel with efforts to improve shipbuilder costs, the PEO is establishing equally aggressive targets to reduce the cost of government furnished equipment for CVN 79; working equipment item by equipment item with an objective to reduce overall GFE costs by ~$500 million. Likewise, the Naval Sea Systems Command is committed to continuing its ongoing effort to identify specification changes that could significantly reduce cost without compromising safety and technical rigor.

The output of these efforts comprises the optimal build plan for CVN 79 and follow, and will be incorporated in the detail design and construction baseline for CVN 79. CVN 79 will be procured using a fixed price incentive contract.[102]

[102] Letter and attachment from Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus to Senator John McCain, undated but posted at InsideDefense.com (subscription required) on March 27, 2012. InsideDefense.com's description of the letter states that it is dated March 26, 2012.

Appendix D. March 2013 Navy Report to Congress on Construction Plan for CVN-79

This appendix reprints a March 2013 Navy report to Congress on the Navy's construction plan for CVN-79.[103]

[103] *Aircraft Carrier Construction, John F Kennedy (CVN 79), Report to Congress*, March 2013, 17 pp. An annotation on the report's cover page indicates that the report was authorized for public release on May 16, 2013. The report was posted at InsideDefense.com (subscription required) on June 21, 2013. See also Megan Eckstein, "Navy Plan To Congress Outlines New Strategies To Save On CVN-79," *Inside the Navy*, June 24, 2013.

AIRCRAFT CARRIER CONSTRUCTION
JOHN F KENNEDY (CVN 79)
Report to Congress
March 2013

The estimated cost of report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately $13,000.00. This includes $0.00 in expenses and $13,000.00 in DoD labor.

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PUBLIC RELEASE
AUTHORIZED ON MAY 16, 2013

Enclosure 2

AIRCRAFT CARRIER CONSTRUCTION
JOHN F KENNEDY (CVN 79)
Report to Congress

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2013, Public Law 112-239 contained specific language regarding acquisition of the JOHN F KENNEDY (CVN 79). The language follows:

SEC. 124. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS FOR SECOND FORD CLASS AIRCRAFT CARRIER.

(a) LIMITATION.-Of the funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2013 for shipbuilding and conversion for the second Ford class aircraft carrier, not more than 50 percent may be obligated or expended until the Secretary of the Navy submits to the congressional defense committees a report setting forth a description of the program management and cost control measures that will be employed in constructing the second Ford class aircraft carrier.

(b) ELEMENTS.-The report described in subsection (a) shall include a plan with respect to the Ford class aircraft carriers to-

(1) maximize planned work in shops and early stages of construction;
(2) sequence construction of structural units to maximize the effects of lessons learned;
(3) incorporate design changes to improve producibility for the Ford class aircraft carriers;
(4) increase the size of erection units to eliminate disruptive unit breaks and improve unit alignment and fairness;
(5) increase outfitting levels for assembled units before erection in the drydock;
(6) increase overall ship completion levels at each key construction event;
(7) improve facilities in a manner that will lead to improved productivity; and
(8) ensure the shipbuilder initiates plans that will improve productivity through capital improvements that would provide targeted return on investment, including-

(A) increasing the amount of temporary and permanent covered work areas;
(B) adding ramps and service towers for improved access to work sites and the drydock; and
(C) increasing lift capacity to enable construction of larger, more fully outfitted superlifts.

This document constitutes the report requested by Congress.

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2 Enclosure 2

Executive Summary

The GERALD R FORD (CVN 78) Class, the first new aircraft carrier design in over 40 years, represents a quantum advance in operational capability, survivability, and flexibility to accommodate future improvements in technology and war fighting capability over a 50-year service life, all while lowering total ownership costs by $4B when compared to the standard-bearing NIMITZ class. However, the scope of the CVN 78 "clean sheet" design, which touched virtually every element of the ship has presented challenges to the designer, supplier and shipbuilder for the lead ship both in terms of cost and schedule. The scope and volume of first of class issues on CVN 78 has been the primary factor driving growth in ship construction cost and schedule performance.

As a result of the lessons learned on CVN 78, the approach to carrier construction has undergone an extensive affordability review and the Navy and the shipbuilder have made significant changes on CVN 79 that will significantly reduce the cost to build the ship. These include four key construction areas:

- CVN 79 construction will start with a complete design and a complete bill of material
- CVN 79 construction will start with a firm set of stable requirements
- CVN 79 construction will start with the development complete on a host of new technologies inserted on CVN 78 ranging from the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), the Dual Band Radar, and the reactor plant, to key valves in systems throughout the ship
- CVN 79 construction will start with an 'optimal build' plan that emphasizes the completion of work and ship outfitting as early as possible in the construction process to optimize cost and ultimately schedule performance.

In addition to these fundamentals, the Navy and the shipbuilder are tackling cost through a series of other changes that when taken over the entire carrier will have a significant impact on construction costs. The Navy has also imposed cost targets and is aggressively pursuing cost reduction initiatives in its government furnished systems. A detailed accounting of these actions is included in this report.

The actions discussed in this report are expected to reduce the material cost of CVN 79 by 10-20% in real terms from CVN 78, to reduce the number of man-hours required to build the CVN 79 by 15-25% from CVN 78, and to reduce the cost of government furnished systems by 5-10% in real terms from CVN 78. The following table provides an executive summary of the cost reductions anticipated in the key focus areas described in this report.

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3 Enclosure 2

Focus Area	Anticipated reduction from CVN 78 to CVN 79
Improvements in material availability and pricing	10-20% in material cost
Major changes in build strategy and processes	10-15% in man-hours to build ship
Design changes for greater producibility	5-10% in man-hours to build ship
Government furnished equipment	5-10% in system costs

Detailed Discussion

IMPROVEMENTS IN MATERIAL AVAILABILITY AND PRICING
(10-20% Reduction in material cost)

As previously discussed, many of the first in class issues experienced during construction of CVN 78 were driven by material availability, vendor qualifications, and material costs. A completed Class design enables the shipbuilder to fully understand the whole ship bill of materials for CVN 79 construction and more effectively manage the procurement of those materials with the knowledge of material lead times and qualified sources accrued from CVN 78 construction. The myriad of vendor first article testing and certification issues which contributed to delays in material delivery on CVN 78 should not recur for CVN 79. The shipbuilder is able to order complete ship-set quantities of material, with attendant cost benefits, and to ensure CVN 79 material will arrive on time to support construction need. Extensive improvements have been put in place for CVN 79 material procurement to drive both cost reductions associated with more efficient procurement strategies and production labor improvements associated with improved material availability. The improved procurement strategies being employed on CVN 79 are expected to yield in real terms a material cost reduction as compared to the CVN 78 of 10-20%. Improved material availability is also a critical enabler to many construction efficiency improvements in CVN 79 discussed later in this report.

In order to maximize material availability and minimize material costs the shipbuilder has developed an entirely new material management strategy for CVN 79. This new strategy consists of eight separate initiatives:

a. **Define the "whole ship" bill of material -** This allows the shipbuilder to maximize opportunities for economic order quantity buy of material items from sub vendors. Reduced material costs will be realized and procurement effort is reduced – with an estimated 30% reduction in total number of purchase order lines as compared with CVN 78.
b. **Establish a "ship view" of equipment by supplier to help incentivize suppliers and correlate supplier priorities based on construction progress and need -** Some sub vendors produce multiple types of components in different geographic locations. Grouping orders by component type and sub vendor subdivision and location helps the shipbuilder define and communicate material priorities to the sub vendor across his enterprise, thereby improving material availability and reducing cost. This also reduces shipbuilder procurement support effort.

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4 Enclosure 2

c. **Accelerated production cost avoidance** - The shipbuilder has identified key components that can be purchased earlier than just-in-time construction need, allowing suppliers to level load their production lines and avoid incurring fees for accelerated production.
d. **Multi-ship material buys to leverage economic order quantity pricing** - The shipbuilder is investigating opportunities to procure parts common to multiple ship programs (e.g. CVN 79, Virginia Class Submarines, NIMITZ Class Refueling Complex Overhaul) in a grouped manner to leverage better pricing for all programs. This concept could further be expanded to pursue grouped procurement of material for more than one FORD Class carrier at a time (such as CVN 80 and CVN 81).
e. **Improved material ordering schedule** - Development of, and management to, a comprehensive material procurement plan that considers construction, sequencing, timing, and most recent experience with vendor procurement lead time to schedule a bundled or combined procurement to ensure material is available at the first instance of use.
f. **Soliciting and implementing vendor cost reduction ideas** - The shipbuilder is working with its suppliers to identify cost reduction ideas that may simplify material production and reduce procurement cost. An example is encouraging vendors to recommend changes to ship specification requirements to achieve technical equivalency at reduced cost.
g. **Leveraging supplier competition for cost avoidance** - An example is developing competition for steel supply by establishing a new supplier/source for non-armor steel plate.
h. **Procuring commodity equipment from the original equipment manufacturer** - In many cases the shipbuilder can bulk order commodity equipment for a lower price than an individual sub vendor due to a larger order quantity. The shipbuilder would then provide the commodity material back to the sub vendor to assemble into the finished product at a lower cost. An example would be bundled procurement of motor controllers at a reduced price, some of which would then be provided to a system manufacturer such as the provider of air conditioning plants.

The shipbuilder has undertaken these initiatives in a multi-faceted approach with the objective of driving material cost down, and material availability up to support an optimized construction schedule, within the constraints of the funding available for each fiscal year. In addition the shipbuilder has an ongoing process to inventory all excess material procured on CVN 78 for transfer to CVN 79.

The Navy has also employed outside supply chain management experts to help develop additional optimal CFE material procurement strategies. Furthermore, the Navy has increased its oversight of contractor furnished material procurement, ensuring that material procurement is competed (where competition is available); that it is fixed priced; that commodities are bundled to leverage economic order quantities; and that the vendor base capacity and schedule for receipt supports the optimal build plan being developed for production of CVN 79. The increased oversight has included visits to several key vendors to ensure a deeper, first hand understanding of cost drivers and issues.

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MAJOR CHANGES IN BUILD STRATEGY AND PROCESSES
(10-15% Reduction in man-hours to build ship)

The shipbuilder and the Navy have performed a comprehensive review of the build strategy and processes used in construction of Ford Class aircraft carriers as well as consulted with other Navy shipbuilders on best practices. As a result, the shipbuilder has identified and is implementing a number of changes in the way they build aircraft carriers, with a determined focus on executing construction activities where they can most efficiently be performed. This tends to result in moving production effort earlier in the value stream and in grouping similar work to enhance the effects of learning. Improved material availability as discussed above is a critical element to the success of this approach. The major changes in build strategy and process described below and being employed on CVN 79 are expected to yield a man-hour reduction as compared to the CVN 78 of 10-15%.

1. Maximizing planned work in shops and early stages of construction

Ship construction is most efficiently performed in a shop environment due to ease of access, lifting and handling gear, and environmental controls. The goal for CVN 79 is a 30% increase in front end shop work as compared to CVN 78. This work will result in an increase in pre-outfitting and work pulled to an earlier point in the construction process. It can be broken into two different measureable categories:

a. Work that was originally planned to be performed in the shop on CVN 78, but was deferred due to late material, design maturity, etc. Implementation of lessons learned, a mature design, whole ship bill of materials ordering and more timely delivery of CFE all enable this work to be moved back into the shops on CVN 79 as part of the optimal build strategy.
b. Work that was originally planned in the drydock on CVN 78 that will be moved to an earlier stage of construction for CVN 79 as an improvement to the optimal build strategy. CVN 79 superlift reviews are ongoing to determine what outfitting work should be moved earlier in the construction process. The results of this continuing effort will move a significant amount of work from the drydock back into the platen area (area where module assembly occurs) or the shops.

As part of this strategy, the shipbuilder has begun the shop construction of complex assemblies. These are assemblies of piping, valves, pumps, etc., that would previously have been 'stick built' on the final assembly platen or on the ship. Building these assemblies in a shop environment is far more efficient, allows shop testing and painting currently being done on the platen or ship to be done in the shop environment, and optimizes the eventual transportation of the complex assembly to the ship. The ship design is being reviewed to identify candidates for this complex assembly process with an expectation that over 1,000 assemblies could be shop built shifting hundreds of thousands of hours of work into more efficient shop construction areas. As an example, the first of these assemblies moved to the shop for CVN 79 are fire pumps. On CVN 78, fitting out a fire

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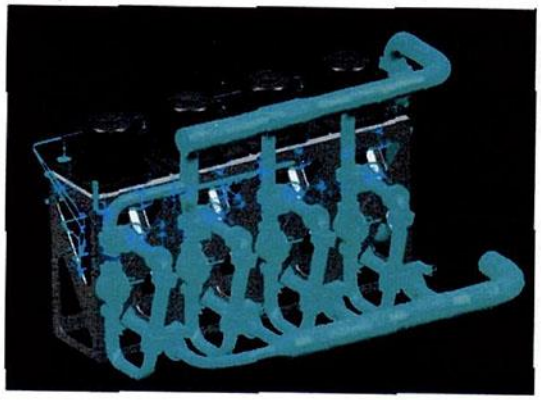
pump room consisted of stick building multiple pumps, valves, actuators, pipe details, and foundations (approximately 250 pieces of material) in a constrained shipboard environment. The goal on CVN 79 is to build out the pump room as a complex assembly in the shop and then land, install, and connect the complex assembly as a single unit into the ship (see figure below).



Example of Complex Assembly – Fire Pumps

2. Sequence construction of structural units to maximize the effects of lessons learned

The shipbuilder has developed a 'family of units' concept to maximize the effects of lessons learned within construction of CVN 79 (in addition to lessons learned from construction of CVN 78). This concept is enabled on CVN 79 by the level of design completion and material availability present at the start of ship's construction. Currently, structural units are built in numerous locations and are sequenced to support the ship's schedule, not to best utilize the structural shop footprint and resources. By building units in families, the ship's schedule will still be met, but the structural shop will be better able to shop-load their limited footprint, better utilize equipment, and better assign skilled resources.

The family of units concept allows two distinct execution methods. First, units of a similar construction are set up into flow lanes such that the unit is moved from station to station as various repeated work items are completed, very similar in concept to an assembly line of large components. This concept allows workers to perform repeated tasks on similar units, maximizing learning within a work cell. Unit family production reduces set-up time between units because the jigs and fixtures which support the unit and/or facilitate its construction do not have to be set up again until a new unit family is started. In addition, by organizing into an assembly line process structure, many of the 'lean manufacturing' assembly line controls can be implemented further increasing the efficiency of the process.

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Some structural units in CVN construction are too large to be efficiently moved in an assembly line fashion, but have similar construction methodologies. In these cases, the shipbuilder has established a process where a work cell of individuals is moved from unit to unit to accomplish the same repeatable work in a unit's build cycle, thereby maximizing the learning curve within the individual work cells. Many of the same benefits of the flow lane concept will be realized via this methodology as well.

3. Increase outfitting levels for assembled units before erection in the drydock

Pre-outfitting is a key element for driving cost out of ship construction. This occurs prior to ship erection or ship launch. Installation efficiency increases and construction costs are reduced the earlier in production that piping, valves, ventilation, foundations, cabling, and other outfitting type items can be installed. This plan offers several advantages from easier installation access, to improved trade coordination, to the ability to load more complete assemblies into each unit prior to erection.

The shipbuilder has formed a team consisting of construction, planning, engineering and government personnel to challenge every item installed (or planned to be installed) in the dry-dock or after launch on CVN 78, and to incorporate all lessons learned into the build plan for CVN 79. To date these reviews have resulted in 12% of pipe and ventilation items in the units (totaling about 200 thousand hours) assessed being moved back to the pre-outfitting period on the final assembly platen or in the shop. The shipbuilder also expects to achieve improved performance in pre-outfitting by improving material availability.

4. Increase overall ship completion levels at each key construction event

Fundamental changes to the build processes for CVN 79 and beyond, as described in the preceding paragraphs, are all designed to support accomplishment of work in a more efficient manner and lead to increased overall ship completion levels at each key construction event. The following paragraphs describe additional affordability initiatives being implemented that also facilitate this key focus area:

a. **Batch manufacturing -** An additional benefit of the completed ship design is that the shipbuilder is able to plan for ship set quantity batched production of like items that are used in construction of the ship. The batched production leads to increased efficiency and decreased cost through reductions in planning, production control, material movement, and set up/ tear down times. An example of this is filter housings that are installed in the ship's ventilation system. A filter housing is a relatively simple structure that is inserted into ventilation ducting to retain an air filter. With the class design completed the shipbuilder has an exact requirement for the type and quantity of filter housings needed and can set up small assembly lines to produce these efficiently, whereas on CVN 78 many of these housings were built on

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an as needed basis as the design developed. The total number of work packages for CVN 79 filter housings will be reduced from 88 to 10.

b. **Common Integrated Work Package -** One of the areas the shipbuilder is implementing to drive production costs out of CVN 79 is the common integrated work package. In the current state multiple work packages are developed to construct a single portion of the ship, there may be design, engineering, and production work packages that are all used to describe the assembly process. This system forces many handoffs between the various departments within the shipyard, increasing the likelihood of inefficiency, transcription errors, and production problems. The goal of integrating the various work packages into a common document is to provide the shipyard mechanic doing the actual work the information they need in a user-friendly, producible format to improve first time quality, overall productivity, innovation and job knowledge capture and transfer.

c. **Flexible Infrastructure -** Flexible infrastructure is rapidly-reconfigurable, modular open systems and standards used in the design and construction of ship's spaces. It facilitates equipment installation, reconfiguration, technology insertion, and improved mission flexibility, while decreasing acquisition and life cycle costs. Flexible infrastructure, including flexible decking, overhead, and bulkhead mounting elements are being employed in the combat systems spaces in the FORD Class design. The shipbuilder is currently studying areas where flexible infrastructure for bulkhead installation of items such as electrical panels can be used in other areas of the ship to drive out construction costs.

d. **Improved cable installation -** The FORD Class design has substantially more electrical cable than NIMITZ Class carriers (9.1M feet for CVN 78 versus 5.5M feet for CVN 77). The shipbuilder is working to improve the various processes associated with cable installation to allow as much cable as possible to be installed at each phase of construction. This includes employing additional analysis to accurately identify cabling with routes wholly contained within units or superlifts to ensure cable installation on platen. Also, analysis is being done to identify logical candidates for "coil and stow" options for cables runs not wholly confined to a unit or superlift. This would allow installation of much of the cable, with the portion crossing the erection break being coiled up and stowed for final installation after erecting the unit. The shipbuilder is also leveraging efforts to improve material availability and increase pre-outfitting of items such as hangers, shell-banks, and wireways to increase the amount of cable that can be installed during each phase of construction.

e. **Pre-outfitting panels -** Steel bulkhead panels and decks are currently fabricated in the shop and then assembled to create units and superlifts. Once they are welded in place, holes are cut in the bulkheads and decks to install a wide variety of components such as coamings, penetrations and hangers. This requires hotwork on the ship, which is accomplished in a poor ergonomic work condition and impacts the start of outfitting. Pre-outfitting bulkheads and decks with these items before they are assembled into units and decks will allow the

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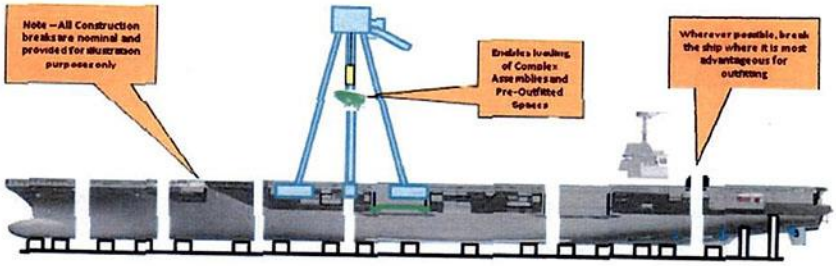
work to be accomplished in a shop environment, instead of on the ship, and will significantly improve the shipbuilder's ability to start outfitting work earlier.

f. **Further advancing CVN construction** - There is a steady strain on identification and implementation of producibility enhancements targeted for CVN 79. There are also some additional initiatives under consideration whose developmental timelines or infrastructure requirements preclude implementation on CVN 79, but are expected to yield marked shipbuilder construction cost reductions for CVN80 and follow FORD Class ships. An example is the Vertical Build Methodology - a methodology which will achieve full potential for shipbuilding cost reduction in CVN 80 and follow ships. When fully implemented, the Vertical Build Methodology will erect the ship in vertical sections thereby allowing easier access for installation of systems, components, equipment, and complex assemblies into the erection units which comprise each vertical section. When the vertical sections are complete, they will be "slid" together to complete assembly of the ship. The graphic below illustrates the concepts of Vertical Build Methodology.



Vertical Build Methodology

Overall, the efforts described in the preceding sections and above serve to move more work into the areas in which it can be most efficiently performed. For CVN 79 construction, an aggressive target has been established to increase the percent complete at launch above that of the CVN 78. The following table shows the planned increase in front end shop and platen work for CVN 79 construction.

Manufacturing & Assembly		
SFA	**CFA**	**FAP**
5-10%	20-30%	5-10%
SFA = Steel Fabrication and Assembly CFA = Component Fabrication and Assembly FAP = Final Assembly Platen		

Estimated Increase in CVN 79 Front End Work

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DESIGN CHANGES FOR GREATER PRODUCIBILITY
(5-10% Reduction in man-hours to build ship)

In conjunction with the Navy and the shipbuilder's comprehensive review of the build strategy and processes used in construction of Ford Class aircraft carriers a number of design changes were identified that would result in more affordable construction. Some of these design changes were derived from lessons learned in the construction of CVN 78 and others seek to further simplify the construction process and drive cost down. The design changes described below and being employed on CVN 79 are expected to yield a man-hour reduction as compared to the CVN 78 of 5-10%.

1. Incorporate design changes to improve producibility for FORD Class aircraft carriers

The completion of the FORD Class design and ongoing construction experience on CVN 78 has allowed the shipbuilder to examine ways to improve the producibility of CVN 79. As a part of the design rollover from CVN 78 to CVN 79, shipbuilder design engineers are identifying specific improvements based on these lessons learned to reduce the cost of CVN 79.

One such example addresses CVN 78 producibility problems stemming from the use of thinner plate scantling decks and bulkheads as compared with those of NIMITZ Class. Thinner, lighter weight plate was selected as part of a design objective to reduce overall ship weight and restore growth margin in the ship's lifecycle – a KPP for the ship class. Use of the thinner steel plate has necessitated unplanned use of temporary bracing, as shown in the illustration below, to allow handling of modules during assembly as well as causing rework to flame straighten plates. While a normal evolution in shipbuilding, a greater degree of flame-straightening has been required on CVN 78. The thinner steel plate has also required additional work and structural reinforcement associated with some large heavy component and equipment foundations to achieve proper fit up. Light scantlings also detract from greater outfitting prior to module erection without incurring further deformation. The thinner plate has caused nearly twice the hours in installing temporary bracing and supports as compared to the CVN 77, and incurred indirect additional rigging costs associated with the added difficulty in moving and erecting units. The interference of the temporary bracing is also delaying planned elements of pre-outfitting from being installed on platen.

A multitude of efforts will be utilized on CVN 79 and future hulls to mitigate these disruptions to include: increased thicknesses of platforms and decks, redesigned elevator trunks reducing welding volume and parts, optimized temporary backing structure during lifting and handling, and improved straightening methods (induction heating). These changes will also enable increased pre-outfitting and joining of construction units to build more and larger superlift modules which will reduce the number of erectable modules and improve outfitting of those units. The additional weight associated with these changes can be accommodated within the design margin reserve such that the class KPP for weight service life allowance will still be met.

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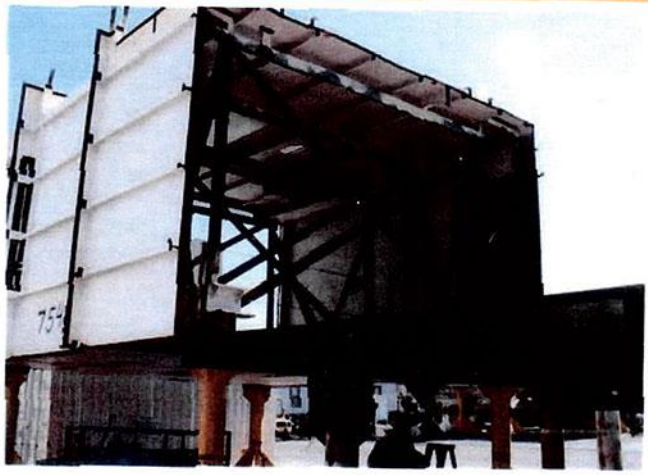

Example of Temporary Bracing Required During Erection Due to Thin Scantling

Another example of design changes improving producibility is associated with a seawater piping system. The original ship design called for a 3 degree bend in a particular pipe to route it around an obstruction. When construction trades tried to produce this section of piping on CVN 78, they found the 3 degree bend extraordinarily hard to produce and properly fit into the piping assembly. Upon completion of the work, the shop foreman suggested the particular piping run be extended by two inches so that a more typical 45 degree piping bend could be inserted into the system. This suggestion is incorporated into the CVN 79 design, making it more producible. In another example, some of the seawater inlets on CVN 78 were produced via a casting process, which resulted in some downstream manufacturing challenges. For CVN 79, the shipbuilder is now producing these seawater inlets via a forging process which has resulted in a more efficient production of this component.

In addition to making design changes to address producibility issues encountered on CVN 78, the CVN 79 design is being reviewed for opportunities to drive out further cost through producibility enhancing design changes. One such opportunity being exploited on CVN 79 is in reducing the number of welded fittings required in the ship's piping systems. Below is a graphic which highlights this concept.

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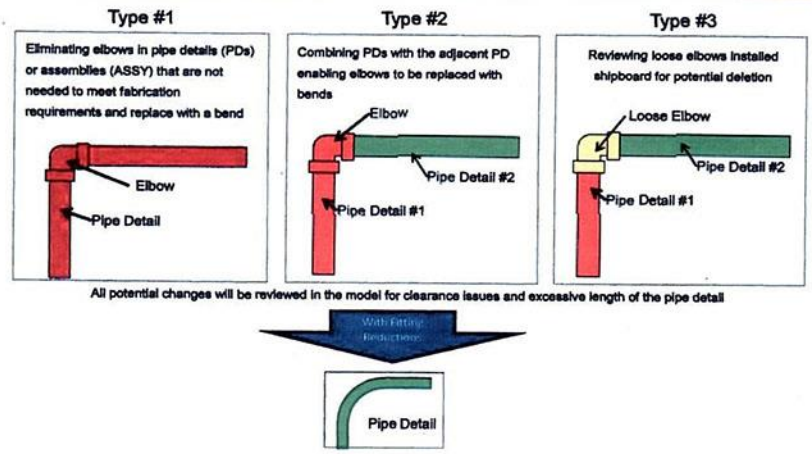

Illustration of Fitting Elimination Concept

Due to the incompleteness of the design during initial construction of CVN 78, many piping systems were built with temporary terminations, with a fitting added later to complete the piping as the follow on compartment was designed/built out. Now that the class design is complete, the shipbuilder is examining where fittings were used in piping systems with the goal of removing as many as possible by replacing the fitting with a bend. To date, more than 30 percent of the total number of elbows has been evaluated, with nearly 2,000 elbows being eliminated from the design, which in turn eliminates nearly 4,000 welds and reduces construction hours by 6 hours per joint on average. Each fitting eliminated removes the requirement for procuring and tracking the fitting as well as for performing two welds and a broad range of production activities.

Shipbuilder producibility reviews are not limited to the outfitting areas, but include structural and welding areas. As shown in the below graphic illustrating a portion of the island, 56 ft of butt weld joint is eliminated from this one area by simply extending thicker plate. There are numerous opportunities like this throughout the ship. These types of seemingly simple ideas when taken over the entire carrier have a significant impact on construction manhours and costs.

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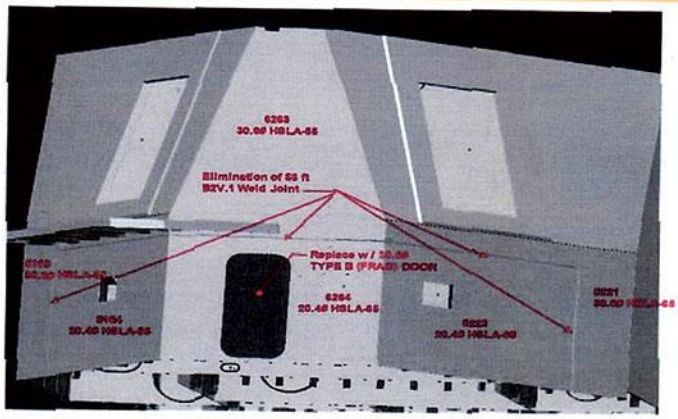

Illustration of Welding Reduction Studies Using 3D Product Model

2. Increasing the size of erection units to eliminate disruptive unit breaks and improve unit alignment and fairness

A completed class design allows the shipbuilder to evaluate the placement of 'construction breaks' between units that will eventually be erected into the drydock. In an ideal scenario, these construction breaks are minimized to allow for additional outfitting of material into construction units during preassembly and on the platen prior to their erection into the drydock. In reality, construction breaks are forced into construction by realistic limits on how much of a unit module can be transported around the shipyard and the weight of a unit module that can be lifted by the gantry crane into the drydock. However, on CVN 78, more construction breaks were used in the original design because of unknowns associated with the first of class build than were actually needed. For CVN 79, the shipbuilder has reduced the number of construction breaks by approximately 5% to allow piping, cabling and ventilation trunks to be extended to the maximum extent feasible. These efforts are raising the level of pre-outfitting on CVN 79 well above that for CVN 78.

As part of the study to remove unnecessary construction breaks from the design, the shipbuilder is evaluating where previously first and final erectable units can be combined onto existing superlifts or combined together to create new superlifts. Creating new superlifts has multiple benefits. A superlift is built from multiple smaller units, and contains piping, machinery, electrical, and ventilation. Each new superlift thus lowers the number of units that need to be independently erected into the drydock, helping to alleviate demands on the gantry drydock crane and decreasing the number of times welders have to work in a constrained environment to weld construction units into the ship. Superlifts allow for more pre-outfitting on the final assembly platen and shops, prior to ship erection, thereby increasing ship construction efficiency.

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CVN 79 superlift reviews are ongoing and will continue. To date, the shipbuilder has decreased the number of erectable units from CVN 78 by 20 –nearly a 5% reduction. Decreasing the number of erectable units has multiple benefits including reducing the number of lifts required by the 1,050 ton crane – a natural bottleneck in the CVN construction process. Fewer erectable units also reduces the number of unit breaks between sections thereby allowing additional outfitting and improving unit alignment and fairness.

FACILITIES

In addition to the material procurement improvements, build strategy and construction process changes, and design changes described in the preceding sections, the shipbuilder is evaluating capital improvements to facilities that would serve to reduce risk and improve productivity.

Improve facilities in a manner that will lead to improved productivity; and ensure the shipbuilder initiates plans that will improve productivity through capital improvements that would provide targeted return on investment

The shipbuilder is considering what additional facilities, or modifications to existing facilities could be employed to further enhance efficient manufacturing and construction. The shipbuilder has developed a plan to renovate existing facilities to support shop manufacture and assembly of small complex assemblies as well as building a new facility to accomplish the same for large complex assemblies. Additional facilities are also being considered for pre-outfitting structural panels and decks and possibly for increasing the covered work areas on the Final Assembly Platen. Due to the amount of welding involved in carrier construction, the shipbuilder continues to add to its mechanized welding capability.

The shipbuilder is studying capital investment opportunities that could result in reduced risk and additional cost reductions for CVN 79 and/or follow ships in the class. Some initiatives include:

a. **Increasing the Amount of Temporary and Permanent Covered Work Areas -** The shipbuilder has identified the need to increase the amount of covered workspace for the construction of CVN 79. This supports build strategy changes that will move significant outfitting work from the ship to the final assembly platen. These facilities could include both permanent and temporary (moveable) structures. This would include a facility for pre-outfitting structural panels and decks before they are used to build units and superlifts. A recent improvement was made where the shipbuilder tripled the amount of space they had available for blast and coat of assembly units by building two additional blast and coat facilities.

b. **Adding Ramps and Service Towers for Improved Access to Work Sites and the Drydock -** The shipbuilder has added a drydock elevator to allow easier access to drydock num-

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ber 12. This addition was done toward the later stages of CVN 78 drydock construction and therefore had limited benefit for CVN 78, but is expected to increase the efficiency of movement of material into the drydock for CVN 79 and alleviate the bottleneck imposed by the limited number of lifting cranes. Additional ramps and elevators could further improve the movement of material from material laydown areas to the ship as well as reducing the number of required crane lifts.

c. **Increasing Lift Capacity to Enable Construction of Larger, More Fully Outfitted Superlifts** - Prior to construction of CVN 78, the lifting capacity of the gantry crane used to erect superlifts was increased from 900 to 1050 tons. While this upgrade did show some benefit on CVN 78, many of the superlifts for CVN 78 were not able to fully utilize the capacity increase due to the incompleteness of the design. With the class design complete and the true weight of erectables determined, the shipbuilder is able to plan more efficient combinations of erectables into superlifts to allow for fuller utilization of this increased capacity.

GOVERNMENT FURNISHED EQUIPMENT (GFE)
(5-10% Reduction in GFE cost)

In addition to the substantial improvements being implemented to address shipbuilder costs, aggressive measures have been put in place for cost control in GFE. Recurring engagement and review at the Flag Officer level between Program Executive Officer Aircraft Carriers (PEO CV) and those executives responsible for providing GFE to CVN 79 establishes and maintains the framework in which this occurs.

a. **"Will Cost" / "Should Cost" Management** – For providers of platform GFE (non-reactor plant GFE), "should cost" targets are established at the system level. Specific initiatives to drive cost out of the GFE systems, as well as timelines for realization of the savings for each of the initiatives, are identified and captured on scorecards. These scorecards are evaluated and reviewed between the CVN 79 Program Office and the GFE providers on a routine, recurring basis to ensure actions are on track realize the identified cost reduction opportunities and to identify additional opportunities. Examples of these opportunities include: bundling of procurements with other ship programs, refurbishment of assets recovered from decommissioning ships in lieu of procurement of new assets, reductions in projected systems engineering and installation support based on anticipated lessons learned from CVN 78 installations, and continued or expanded use of fixed price production contracts where appropriate.

b. **Ship Project Directives** – Detailed agreements are being established between the CVN 79 Program Office and platform GFE providers to provide a greater degree of control in management of on-time delivery of expected equipment, critical for avoiding shipbuilder disruption, and for control of cost.

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c. **Stringent restrictions on change** – Changes from the CVN 78 baseline are being minimized to limit their disruption to the shipbuilder and the potential impact on cost. Where change is unavoidable, such as in the case of systems no longer being available due to obsolescence, a rigorous change control process is in place to fully explore alternatives and mitigate potential cost impacts. Where a GFE system change is proposed to provide additional capability to the ship, a disciplined resource and requirements review process at the senior Flag Officer level within the Pentagon is followed to thoroughly vet the proposed change.

The FORD Class aircraft carrier brings tremendous new capability to 21st century naval aviation with reduced manpower and sustainment requirements leading to a substantially reduced total ownership cost. This is in large part due to advanced government furnished systems incorporated in the design. As described in the preceding paragraphs, the Navy is focused on delivering these capabilities with costs reduced 5-10% in real terms from CVN 78.

COMPARISON TO CVN 77 AND CVN 78

After accounting for the $3.2B non-recurring cost to design the FORD Class aircraft carrier, the cost of the first of class CVN 78 is, in real terms, 18% more than the tenth NIMITZ Class aircraft carrier, the CVN 77, for a class of ship that will provide a 33% increase in warfighting capability, unmatched flexibility for future missions, and cost the taxpayer approximately $4B per ship less than a NIMITZ class carrier over its 50-year service life. Recognizing the responsibility to build aircraft carriers in the most affordable way possible, the Navy and shipbuilder have taken the actions described in this report to drive down the construction cost for CVN 79. These actions are expected to reduce the material costs for CVN 79 by 10-20% in real terms from CVN 78, and to reduce the man-hours required to build the CVN 79 by 15-25% from CVN 78. The man-hours required to build CVN 79, the second ship of the FORD Class, are expected to be 5-10% less than those required to build CVN 77.

Conclusion

The Navy and HII-NNS have made fundamental changes in the manner in which the JOHN F KENNEDY (CVN 79) will be built to eliminate the key roadblocks that were realized and were the largest impacts to cost performance during the construction of CVN 78. Simply addressing lessons learned and working harder is not good enough. The approach to carrier construction has undergone an extensive affordability review. As described in this report, the Navy and HII-NNS are committed to making the fundamental changes necessary to drive down and stabilize aircraft carrier construction costs for CVN 79 and beyond.

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Appendix E. Shock Trial

An earlier oversight issue for Congress for the CVN-78 program was whether to conduct the shock trial for the CVN-78 class in the near term, on the lead ship in the class, or years later, on the second ship in the class. This appendix presents background information on that issue.

A shock trial, known formally as a full ship shock trial (FSST) and sometimes called a shock test, is a test of the combat survivability of the design of a new class of ships. A shock trial involves setting off one or more controlled underwater charges near the ship being tested, and then measuring the ship's response to the underwater shock caused by the explosions. The test is intended to verify the ability of the ship's structure and internal systems to withstand shocks caused by enemy weapons, and to reveal any changes that need to be made to the design of the ship's structure or its internal systems to meet the ship's intended survivability standard. Shock trials are nominally to be performed on the lead ship in a new class of ships, but there have also been cases where the shock trial for a new class was done on one of the subsequent ships in the class.

The question of whether to conduct the shock trial for the CVN-78 class in the near term, on the lead ship in the class, or years later, on the second ship in the class, has been a matter of disagreement at times between the Navy and the office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The Navy has wanted to perform the shock trial on the second ship in the class, because performing it on the lead ship in the class, the Navy has argued, will cause a significant delay in the first deployment of the lead ship, effectively delaying the return of the carrier force to an 11-ship force level and increasing the operational strain on the other 10 carriers. The Navy has argued that the risks of delaying the shock trial on the CVN-78 to the second ship in the class are acceptable, because the CVN-78 class hull design is based on the Nimitz (CVN-68) class aircraft carrier hull design, whose survivability against shocks is understood, because systems incorporated into the CVN-78 design have been shock tested at the individual component level, and because computer modeling can simulate how the CVN-78 design as a whole will respond to shocks.

OSD has argued that the risks of delaying the CVN-78 class shock trial to the second ship in the class are not acceptable, because the CVN-78 design is the first new U.S. aircraft carrier design in four decades; because the CVN-78 design has many internal design differences compared to the CVN-68 design, including new systems not present in the CVN-68 class design; and because computer modeling can only do so much to confirm how a complex new platform, such as an aircraft carrier and all its internal systems, will respond to shocks. The risk of delaying the shock trial, OSD has argued, outweighs the desire to avoid a delay in the first deployment of the lead ship in the class. OSD in 2015 directed the Navy to plan for conducting a shock trial on the lead ship. The Navy complied with this direction but has also sought to revisit the issue with OSD.

The issue of the shock trial for the CVN-78 class has been a matter of legislative activity—see the provisions shown earlier in "Recent Related Legislative Provisions," particularly the most recent such provision, Section 121(b) of the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2810/P.L. 115-91 of December 12, 2017).

An April 5, 2018, press report states the following:

> The Pentagon's No. 2 civilian has said the Navy should perform shock-testing soon to determine how well its new $12.9 billion aircraft carrier—the costliest warship ever—could withstand an attack, affirming the service's recent decision to back down from a plan for delay.
>
> "We agree with your view that a test in normal sequence is more prudent and pragmatic," Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said in a newly released March 26 letter to

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain. The Arizona Republican and Senator Jack Reed, the panel's top Democrat, pressed for the shock-testing to go ahead as originally planned.

James Guerts, the Navy's chiefs weapons buyer, told reporters last month that the Navy was acquiescing to the testing after initially asking Defense Secretary James Mattis to delay it for at least six years. In its push to maintain an 11-carrier fleet, the Navy wanted to wait and perform the test on a second carrier in the class rather than on the USS Gerald Ford.[104]

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[104] Anthony Capaccio, "Pentagon Endorses Shock-Testing Carrier After Navy Backs Down," *Bloomberg*, April 5, 2018. See also Craig Hooper, "The Navy Obfuscates On Shock Testing The $13 Billion USS Ford," *Forbes*, October 23, 2019; Jason Sherman and Lee Hudson, "Navy to Conduct Full Ship Shock Trials of CVN-78 in '19 or '20," *Inside the Navy*, March 26, 2018; Anthony Capaccio, "Navy Presses Mattis to Delay 'Shock Testing' Costliest Carrier," *Bloomberg*, February 7, 2018; Jason Sherman, "Lawmakers Rraise Ford-Class Carrier Cost Cap, Grant Navy Wiggle Room to Avoid Shock Testing," *Inside the Navy*, November 13, 2017.