American Submariners Inc.
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 445
Chula Vista, CA

The Silent Sentinel

February 2009

Our Creed

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation towards greater accomplishment and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

U.S. Submarine Veterans
San Diego Base

Base Commander
Bob Bissonnette
1525 Walbollen Street
Spring Valley, CA 91977
(H) 619-644-8993
(CELL) 619-251-7095
RBisson250@aol.com

Membership -- Change of Address
Ron Gorence
2563 Roseview Place
San Diego, CA 92105
Home--(619) 264-6995. Cell: (619) 264-3327
mgorence@yahoo.com

Treasurer
David Ball
3804 Wildwood Road
San Diego, CA 92107-3750
619-225-0304
davidball@cox.net

Senior Vice Commander
Bill Earl
2251 Vancouver Ave
San Diego, CA 92104-5350
619-2804053
dinkysan@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor
Mike HYMAN
3639 Midway Drive, B-320
San Diego, CA 92110-5254
Voice/Fax/Message: (619) 223-9344
stamps@fortunesofwar.com

Assistant Editor / Photographer
Jack Kane
619-602-1801
jkane32@cox.net

Junior Vice Commander
Jim Bilka
310 E. Bradly Ave., Apt 42
El Cajon, CA
92021-8929
619-277-5758
sashanman@yahoo.com

Base Storekeeper
Mike Hyman
3639 Midway Drive, B-320
San Diego, CA 92110-5254
Voice/Fax/Message: (619) 223-9344
stamps@fortunesofwar.com

Chief of the Boat
Fred Fomby
858-735-0026

Secretary
Manny Burciaga
8406 Alado Place
El Cajon, CA 92021-2003
619-921-5877
MannyBurciaga@pointloma.edu

Chaplain
CJ Glassford
4905 Coconino Way
San Diego, CA 92117-2619
858-204-8323
"Cjtmatlarge@san.rr.com

The Silent Sentinel via Email

To all of my Shipmates and families who currently receive our Great newsletter via the mail who would like it sent via email or continue to receive it via mail, please fill out the form and mail it to the base or myself. We are trying to cut the cost of the newsletter down from $3700 to about $1900 a year. By receiving the Silent Sentinel via email will cut down the printing and mailing cost. The other plus to receiving it via email is you can save it on your computer and not have the paper lying around the house.

A subscription to the Silent Sentinel newsletter will be available to surviving family members via internet email, at no charge, upon notification of the Membership Chairman. If a printed hard-copy is preferred, via US Post Office delivery, an annual donation of $5.00 will be requested to cover costs.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES_____ NO_____

Robert Bissonnette
1525 Walbollen St.
Spring Valley, CA 91977-3748

USSVI Base Commander
c/o VFW Post 3787
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404

*DUE TO LOGISTICS CONSTRAINTS, ALL INPUTS FOR THE SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND NO LATER THAN **ONE WEEK** AFTER THE MONTHLY MEETING. IF I DO NOT RECEIVE IT BY THIS TIME, THE ITEM WILL NOT GET IN. NO EXCEPTIONS! MIKE*

February Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our January meeting will be on 10 February, 2009. The post is located one-half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. The E-Board meets one hour earlier at 6 p.m.

Check us out on the World Wide Web
www.ussvisandiego.org

BINNACLE LIST

Ron Gorence (intestinal surgery--Grossmont Hospital)
Richard Fullen (recuperating in Santee)
Mike Hyman (Crohn's Disease)
C J Glassford (had pacemake put in and recuperating at home)
Larry Freske
Al Strunk (now recuperating at home and doing much better)
Bob Coates (doing well at home)

Submitted by Mike Hyman

Submarine Losses in January

Submitted by C J Glassford

SCORPION (SS278) - 76 Men on Board: Probably Sunk, on 15 Janauary 1944, by Japanese Mine, in Yellow or East China Sea: " ALL HANDS LOST "

SWORDFISH (SS 193) – 89 Men on Board: Possibly Sunk, on 9 January 1945, by Japanese Coastal Defense Vessel or Mine, Off Okinawa : ALL HANDS LOST "

SAN FRANCISCO (SSN 711) - 127 Men on Board: Struck a Sea Mount, on 8 January 2005, while Traveling Submerged at High Speed, South of Guam : " 1 MAN LOST " – " 23 MEN INJURED "

ARGONAUT (SS 166) – 105 Men on Board: Sunk, on 10 January 1943, by Japanese Aircraft, and Destroyers,Southeast of New Britain in the Solomon Sea: " ALL HANDS LOST "

S –34 [Bell] (SS 139) - 43 Men on Board: Accidental Signal Cartridge Explosion, on 11 Jan 1934: " 1 MAN LOST "

E – 2 (SS 27) Battery Explosion, on 15 Jan 1916, In New York Navy Yard: " 4 MEN LOST "

S – 36 (SS 141) - 45 Men on Board: Scuttled, on 20 January 1943, after running aground, in Makkasar Straits : " NO LOSS OF LIFE "

S – 26 (SS 131) - 46 Men on Board: Sunk, on 24 January 1942, after Collision with USS (PC 460), In the Gulf of Panama: " ALL HANDS LOST "

Wheelchairs for Veterans

Tom Warner, one of our members and also a member of *Knights of Columbus* wants us to know that as a Knight, he has access to some wheelchairs for veteranss. The caveat is that the chairs have to go to veterans who need them for non military reasons (the VA will take care of them if it is military related injury).

If you or any other veteran has a need such as this, please do not hesistate to let Tom know. He may be reached at 619-884-8471.

Commander's Corner

Feb 2009

Hello All, and welcome to 2009! Hope everyone had a Great Christmas and New Years. I'm looking forward to this year with the National Convention just around the corner and all. I would like to take this time to Thank, all the e-board members and all the committee chairmen and the folks on the committees or special jobs. As some of you all know I'm back with the Arctic Submarine Laboratory as a Civil Service. I will be on travel during the next meeting and for the month of March. I will be passing information on to Bill Earl (Senior Vice Commander) for the meeting and for the membership. If anyone needs to contact me, please call my cell phone at 619-251-7095.

Just a reminder to anyone who pays their dues annually, it's the time again. Please get your dues in to Ron Gorance.
Yes, it's that time of year again for National and our Scholarship applications to be submitted. The applications can be found online at the National and our websites. The members (in good standings) children and grandchildren are eligible to apply. If their just starting the application process, they maybe behind the 8 ball for getting the application in on time. If there are any questions, please contact Charlie Marin or the National Scholarship Chairman.

There are a few more upcoming events that everyone should know about…The Submarine Birthday Ball in April. I don't have the information at this time, but I will have it this coming week and get it out to the membership. I do know the cost for the dinner is $55 per person. I would like to see if we (San Diego Base, Scamp Base and SubVets WWII) could fill 2-3 tables (8-10people per table). More information to follow.

Lets not forget about our Breakfast at the end of March. Fred will need help doing the serving, setting-up, and getting the food.

Please lets give him a hand so we can have a great day.

Well all, until we meet again, Stay Safe, be healthy, and steer a steady course.

Base Commander
Bob Bissonnette

Election of Base Commander

It's time again to elect a Base Commander. He is elected on the off-year from the rest of the E-Board, as voted on previously.

At our last meeting, nominations were opened and Bob Bissonnette was nominated for the position of Base Commander. At that point a call was made to close nominations, so nominations were closed. We will have another opportunity at our February meeting when nominations will once again be opened. You may than nominate the candidate of your choice. When all nominations are submitted they will be closed. Voting will take place after the nominations are closed. The candidate elected will be sworn in at our March meeting. Come to the meeting and cast a ballot for the nominee of your choice.

Thanks - Charlie Marin

Submarine Veteran's Monument/Memorial

Recently Cuttlefish Base caused a Submarine Veteran's monument/memorial to be placed, in the Northern Califiifornia Veteran's Cemetery, here in Shasta County. On April 4th 2009 at 1100 this beautiful Monument/Memorial will be dedicated.

It is requested that you place a notice, in your base newsletter, both in the Feb. and the March issues, announcing this event. The dedication will be as I said at 1100 on the 4th of April. The event will be followed by a "no host luncheon," at a local restaurant. This cemetery is located in a most beautiful setting in the mountains here near the small (very small) town of IGO, near Redding, Ca. For people who plan to attend, please let me know dorado72@charter.net and I will send a detailed map on how to get to the dedication and the luncheon.

We would like to make this a good show for submariners through out Northern California.

Jim Gibson

Trees going to memorial to 52 submarines lost in WWII

By Emmet Pierce **(**Contact**) Union-Tribune Staff Writer**
2:00 a.m. January 11, 2009

POINT LOMA, Calif. — A group of World War II submarine veterans gathered at Chicago and Edison streets in Bay Park yesterday morning to witness the removal of 52 American Liberty elm trees from a yard where they had been stored for more than two years.

The trees were taken to the grounds of the former Naval Training Center in Point Loma, where they will become part of a planned memorial to 52 U.S. submarines that were lost during the global conflict that raged between 1939 and 1945.

"It means paying tribute to all of the people who weren't as fortunate as we were," said retired submariner Bob Oswald, 85, of San Diego. "We were the lucky ones."

Leaning on a cane, submarine veteran Art Carter, 89, watched workers muscle containers holding the trees to the street and load them onto a truck.

"It's something we've been looking forward to, to honor the guys who never got back," said Carter, president of the San Diego chapter of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II. "San Diego is one of the oldest sub bases in the country."

The 52 Boats Memorial will be incorporated into a plaza at the 40-acre NTC Park at Liberty Station, a mixed-use development taking shape on the grounds of the former training center, said submarine veteran Douglas Smay, 66. The trees will line two parallel walkways, separated by a wide lawn.

Beneath each tree, the veterans group plans to place a granite monument to a submarine. Each will include a picture of the sub and tell its story, including the names of the missing crewmen. More than 3,500 U.S. submariners lost their lives during World War II.

Smay, who has been leading the fundraising campaign for the memorial, had been keeping the trees in the yard of his Bay Park home. Since 2006, the trees'height has increased from about 12 feet to about 25 feet, he said. The drive to raise money continues.

"We have paid for the trees and we have about $110,000 in the bank," Smay said. "We need another $20,000 to $30,000 to set up a trust to maintain the memorial."

Smay said the effort to build the memorial has been going on for 13 years. The project is reaching the end of the government-approval process.

Since the project began, many local submariners from World War II have died, Smay said. His goal is to get the memorial finished in time for those who remain to attend the opening ceremony – among them his 90-year-old father, Howard C. Smay of National City.

"These are the guys it is all about," Douglas Smay said. "They are my heroes."

Clay Bingham, a deputy director of community parks for the city of San Diego, said the memorial is expected to open in the fall. The work will be completed by the Corky McMillin Cos., which has developed Liberty Station.

DSRV 40 Year Ceremony

The ceremony to honor the nearly 40 years of the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) Program and name its successor, the Pressurized Rescue Module (PRM), will be held Friday afternoon, 6 March 2009, at 1300 on the DSU Compound on Naval Base Coronado. Formal invitations will be sent to all who have provided me with mailing addresses.

Mr. Will Longman, a former pilot and COB of DSRV-1 MYSTIC, is coordinating DSRV reunion activities for the remainder of the weekend. Interested parties are encouraged to contact him at wlongman@wavecable.com.

Very respectfully,
LT Tim Householder
Operations Officer
Deep Submergence Unit
W: (619) 545-6873
DSN: 735-6873
timothy.householder@navy.mil

Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) Fund

Naval Base Coronado (Bldg 497)
(P.O. Box 357018)
San Diego, CA 92135-7018

Greetings,

The Submarine Rescue Reception Committee is organizing a celebration of the deactivation of the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) afternearly 40 years of service and the naming of the Pressurized Rescue Module (PRM) as the newest and most advanced submarine rescue vehicle in the world today. This reception will follow DSU's official Inactivation/Naming Ceremony. Over the decades, dedicated men in the Submarine community have maintained a constant state of readiness to deploy the DSRV worldwide at a moment's notice to aid in submarine rescue of not just our nation's submarines, but those of other navies.

This reception will honor the many retired and active Submarine Sailors, Navy Divers, and their families along with the many friends of the Submarine force who serve in the submarine rescue community. It is an event that will provide our community the opportunity to celebrate the retiring of one ship and the birth of another as well as the opportunity to reunite with old shipmates, pass on traditions, learn from "Old Salts" and to build esprit de corps.

The committee is raising money through various small scale fundraisers and solicitations to defray the cost of the tickets for all attendees. Today, I invite you to make an immediate impact and help boost attendance at the Submarine Rescue Reception by providing a monetary donation that will be used to reduce ticket prices. For a frame of reference, each $200 donated will save about 16 cents on the price of each ticket. Though this may seem small, every dollar donated will help. With any donation, small or large, your company will be recognized as a sponsor in our event program as a gesture of thanks and recognition of your valued support.

Very respectfully,
LT Tim Householder, USN
Chairman, Submarine Rescue Reception Committee
C: (619) 518-7949
householdertj@gmail.com

The Submarine Rescue Reception Committee is comprised of Officers and Sailors acting in their personal capacity and it is not an official Department of the Navy organization and there is no official U.S. Navy endorsement of this committee.

USS Barb – The Sub That Sank a Train

Submitted to the Sentinel by Dennis Mortensen

Only the Navy would nickname a guy 'Lucky' who has the last name Fluckey. To be sure, though, Lucky Fluckey lived up to his name. It is an amazing true story. You can check it by putting USS Barb or Eugene Fluckey in the search engine.

In 1973 an Italian submarine named Enrique Tazzoli was sold for a paltry $100,000 as scrap metal. The submarine, given to the Italian Navy in 1953 was actually an incredible veteran of World War II service with a heritage that never should have passed so unnoticed into the graveyards of the metal recyclers. The U.S.S. Barb was a pioneer, paving the way for the first submarine launched missiles and flying a battle flag unlike that of any other ship. In addition to the Medal of Honor ribbon at the top of flag identifying the heroism of its captain, Commander Eugene 'Lucky' Fluckey, the bottom border of the flag bore the image of a Japanese locomotive. The U.S.S. Barb was indeed, the submarine that 'SANK A TRAIN'.

July, 1945 (Guam)

Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz looked across the desk at Admiral Lockwood as he finished the personal briefing on U.S. War ships in the vicinity of the northern coastal area of Hokkaido, Japan. 'Well, Chester, there's only the Barb there, and probably no word until the patrol is finished. You remember Gene Fluckey:'

'Of course. I recommended him for the Medal of Honor,' Admiral Nimitz replied. 'You surely pulled him from command after he received it?'

July 18, 1945 (Patience Bay, off the coast of Karafuto, Japan).

It was after 4 A.M. and Commander Fluckey rubbed his eyes as he peered over the map spread before him. It was the twelfth war patrol of the Barb, the fifth under Commander Fluckey. He should have turned command over to another skipper after four patrols, but had managed to strike a deal with Admiral Lockwood to make one more trip with the men he cared for like a father, should his fourth patrol be successful. Of course, no one suspected when he had struck that deal prior to his fourth and what should have been his final war patrol on the Barb, that Commander Fluckey's success would be so great he would be awarded the Medal of Honor. Commander Fluckey smiled as he remembered that patrol. 'Lucky' Fluckey they called him. On January 8th the Barb had emerged victorious from a running two-hour battle after sinking a large enemy ammunition ship. Two weeks later in Mamkwan Harbor he found the 'mother-lode' . . . more than 30 enemy ships. In only 5 fathoms (30 feet) of water his crew had unleashed the sub's forward torpedoes, then turned and fired four from the stern. As he pushed the Barb to the full limit of its speed though the dangerous waters in a daring withdrawal to the open sea, he recorded eight direct hits on six enemy ships. Then, on the return home he added yet another Japanese freighter to the tally for the Barb's eleventh patrol, a score that exceeded even the number of that patrol.
What could possible be left for the Commander to accomplish who, just three months earlier had been in Washington, DC to receive the Medal of Honor? He smiled to himself as he looked again at the map showing the rail line that ran along the enemy coast line. This final patrol had been promised as the Barb's 'graduation patrol' and he and his crew had cooked up an unusual finale. Since the 8th of June they had harassed the enemy, destroying the enemy supplies and coastal fortifications with the first submarine launched rocket attacks. Now his crew was buzzing excitedly about bagging a train.

The rail line itself wouldn't be a problem. A shore patrol could go ashore under cover of darkness to plant the explosives . . . one of the subs 55-pound scuttling charges.. But this early morning Lucky Fluckey and his officers were puzzling over how they could blow not only the rails, but one of the frequent trains that shuttled supplies to equip the Japanese war machine. Such a daring feat could handicap the enemy's war effort for several days, a week, perhaps even longer.

It was a crazy idea, just the kind of operation 'Lucky' Fluckey had become famous . . . or infamous . . . for. But no matter how crazy the idea might have sounded, the Barb's skipper would not risk the lives of his men. Thus the problem . . . How to detonate the charge at the moment the train passed, without endangering the life of a shore party. PROBLEM? Not on Commander Fluckey's ship. His philosophy had always been, 'We don't have problems, only solutions.'

11:27 AM

'Battle Stations!' No more time to seek solutions or to ponder blowing up a train. The approach of a Japanese freighter with a frigate escort demands traditional submarine warfare. By noon the frigate is laying on the ocean floor in pieces and the Barb is in danger of becoming the hunted.

6:07 PM

Solutions! If you don't look for them, you'll never find them. And even then, sometimes they arrive in the most unusual fashion. Cruising slowly beneath the surface to evade the enemy plane now circling overhead, the monotony is broken with an exciting new idea. Instead of having a crewman on shore to trigger explosives to blow both rail and a passing train, why not let the train BLOW ITSELF up. Billy Hatfield was excitedly explaining how he had cracked nuts on the railroad tracks as a kid, placing the nuts between two ties so the sagging of the rail under the weight of a train would break them open. 'Just like cracking walnuts,' he explained. 'To complete the circuit (detonating the 55-pound charge) we hook in a micro switch . . . between two ties. We don't set it off, the TRAIN does.' Not only did Hatfield have the plan, he wanted to be part of the volunteer shore party.

The solution found, there was no shortage of volunteers; all that was needed was the proper weather . . . a little cloud cover to darken the moon for the mission ashore. Lucky Fluckey established his own criteria for the volunteer party: No married men would be included, except for Hatfield . . . The party would include members from each department . . . The opportunity would be split between regular Navy and Navy Reserve sailors . . . At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts, experienced in how to handle themselves in medical emergencies and in the woods . . . FINALLY, 'Lucky' Fluckey would lead the saboteurs himself.

When the names of the 8 selected sailors were announced it was greeted with a mixture of excitement and disappointment. Among the disappointed was Commander Fluckey who surrendered his opportunity at the insistence of his officers that 'as commander he belonged with the Barb,' coupled with the threat from one that 'I swear I'll send a message to ComSubPac if you attempt this (joining the shore party himself).' Even a Japanese POW being held on the Barb wanted to go, promising not to try to escape. In the meantime, there would be no more harassment of Japanese shipping or shore operations by the Barb until the train mission had been accomplished. The crew would 'lay low', prepare their equipment, train, and wait for the weather.

July 22, 1945 (Patience Bay, off the coast of Karafuto, Japan)

Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had built their micro switch. When the need was posed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed tools. The only thing beyond their control was the weather . . . and

time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol. Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. This would be the night.

MIDNIGHT, July 23, 1945

The Barb had crept within 950 yards of the shoreline. If it was somehow seen from the shore it would probably be mistaken for a schooner or Japanese patrol boat. No one would suspect an American submarine so close to shore or in such shallow water. Slowly the small boats were lowered to the water and the 8 saboteurs began paddling toward the enemy beach. Twenty-five minutes later they pulled the boats ashore and walked on the surface of the Japanese homeland. Having lost their points of navigation, the saboteurs landed near the backyard of a house. Fortunately the residents had no dogs, though the sight of human AND dog's tracks in the sand along the beach alerted the brave sailors to the potential for unexpected danger.

Stumbling through noisy waist-high grasses, crossing a highway and then stumbling into a 4-foot drainage ditch, the saboteurs made their way to the railroad tracks. Three men were posted as guards, Markuson assigned to examine a nearby water tower. The Barb's auxiliary man climbed the ladder, then stopped in shock as he realized it was an enemy lookout tower . . . an OCCUPIED tower. Fortunately the Japanese sentry was peacefully sleeping and Markuson was able to quietly withdraw and warn his raiding party. The news from Markuson caused the men digging the placement to for the explosive charge to continue their work more slowly and quietly.

Suddenly, from less than 80 yards away, an express train was bearing down on them. The appearance was a surprise, it hadn't occurred to the crew during the planning for the mission that there might be a night train. When at last it passed, the brave but nervous sailors extricated themselves from the brush into which they had leapt, to continue their task. Twenty minutes later the holes had been dug, and the explosives and batteries hidden beneath the fresh soil. During the planning for this mission the saboteurs had been told that, with the explosives in place, all would retreat a safe distance while Hatfield made the final connection. If the sailor who had once cracked walnuts on the railroad tracks slipped during this final, dangerous procedure, his would be the only life lost. On this night it was the only order the saboteurs refused to obey, all of them peering anxiously over Hatfield's shoulder to make sure he did it right. The men had come too far to be disappointed by a switch failure.

1:32 AM

Watching from the deck for the Barb, Commander Fluckey allowed himself a sigh of relief as he noticed the flashlight signal from the beach announcing the departure of the shore party. He had skillfully, and daringly, guided the Barb within 600 yards of the enemy beach. There was less than 6 feet of water beneath the sub's keel, but Fluckey wanted to be close in case trouble arose and a daring rescue of his saboteurs became necessary.

1:45 AM

The two boats carrying his saboteurs were only halfway back to the Barb when the sub's machine gunner yelled, "CAPTAIN! Another train coming up the tracks!" The Commander grabbed a megaphone and yelled through the night, 'Paddle like the devil!', knowing full well that they wouldn't reach the Barb before the train hit the micro switch.

1:47 AM

The darkness was shattered by brilliant light and the roar of the explosion. The boilers of the locomotive blew, shattered pieces of the engine blowing 200 feet into the air. Behind it the cars began to accordion into each other, bursting into flame and adding to the magnificent fireworks display. Five minutes later the saboteurs were lifted to the deck by their exuberant comrades as the Barb turned to slip back to safer waters. Moving at only two knots, it would be a while before the Barb was into waters deep enough to allow it to submerge. It was a moment to savor, the culmination of teamwork, ingenuity and daring by the Commander and all his crew. 'Lucky' Fluckey's voice came over the intercom. 'All hands below deck not absolutely needed to maneuver the ship have permission to come topside.' He didn't have to repeat the invitation. Hatches sprang open as the proud sailors of the Barb gathered on her decks to proudly watch the distant fireworks display. The Barb had 'sunk' a Japanese TRAIN!

On August 2, 1945 the Barb arrived at Midway, her twelfth war patrol concluded. Meanwhile United States military commanders had pondered the prospect of an armed assault on the Japanese homeland. Military tacticians estimated such an invasion would cost more than a million American casualties. Instead of such a costly armed offensive to end the war, on August 6th the B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a single atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. A second such bomb, unleashed 4 days later on Nagasaki, Japan, caused Japan to agree to surrender terms on August 15th. On September 2, 1945 in Tokyo Harbor the documents ending the war in the Pacific were signed.

The story of the saboteurs of the U.S.S. Barb is one of those unique, little known stories of World War II. It becomes increasingly important when one realizes that the 8 sailors who blew up the train at near Kashiho, Japan conducted the ONLY GROUND COMPAT OPERATION on the Japanese 'homeland' of World War II. The eight saboteurs were:

Paul Saunders, William Hatfield, Francis Sever, Lawrence Newland, Edward Klinglesmith, James Richard, John Markuson, and William Walker. Eugene Bennett Fluckey retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral, and wears in addition to his Medal of Honor, FOUR Navy Crosses . . . a record of awards unmatched by any living American. In 1992 his own history of the U.S.S. Barb was published in the award winning book, THUNDER BELOW. Over the past several years proceeds from the sale of this exciting book have been used by Admiral

Fluckey to provide free reunions for the men who served him aboard the Barb, and their wives. Admiral Fluckey was born in Washington, D.C. in 1913 and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1935. He died 28 June 2007 in Annapolis, Maryland.

Trieste Base Meeting

Our next meeting will be on January 18th 2009 at 1500 at Carrows Restaurant, 24640 Madison Avenue, Murrieta, CA 92562 (951) 461-2411. The room is reserved from 1500 to 1700.
Copy of the menu available on our website. www.triestebase.org

The next meetings after that will be February 15th then March 15th at the same location.

Fraternally yours,
Kent Weekly
Trieste Base Commander
www.triestebase.org
EMCS(SS), USN, ret.

SS-582, SS-574, DSV-3

THE DBF PIN

By Patrick Meagher TMC(SS) USN RET. (submitted to the Sentinel by Alan Cabot)

Probably none of today's submariners know the origin or the significance of the Diesel Boats Forever (DBF) pin. Most former Diesel boat sailors are also ignorant of its origins even though it is worn with pride on many SubVets vests.

The last diesel attack boat built for the US Navy was commissioned in October 1959 (1). At that time there were five classes of nuke boats along with two "one off" designs in various stages of construction and precommissioning trials along with USS Nautilus SSN-571, and the four Skate class boats in operational status (2). The diesel boat force made up predominantly of modernized fleet boats (Fleet Snorkels, Guppy 1A's, Guppy 2 's, Guppy 2A's, Radar picket, Regulus missile, troop carrier, and hunter-killer conversions), six Tang's plus Darter, Growler, Greyback, the two Salmon's and the three "B" girls had become the source of pr e-commissioning crews for the nuke boats. There was a steady stream of 9901's passing through the diesel boat force, spending seven months onboard learning the boat and earning their dolphins before departing for nuke school. A smaller number of career enlisted electricians, machinist mates, enginemen, and electronic technicians also volunteered for the nuke program.

Admiral Hyman Rickover personally interviewed all officers applying for the nuclear power program as well as many of the senior enlisted submariners. Tales of Rickover's interviews consistently reported on his efforts to intimidate and discredit the accomplishments of the officer interviewee's, alienating many who interviewed with him. Disturbing reports from senior enlisted veterans of the nuke boat navy in favorite submarine "watering holes" ashore indicated Rickover's new operating philosophy was at work in the engineering spaces. "Don't trust enlisted engineers." Nuke trained officers consistently checked, double checked, and triple checked the work and system lineups of the enlisted engineers, a major change to the long standing professional relationship between enlisted and officer submariners. In addition, "front-enders" the non-nukes, were reporting excessive wardroom focus on the engineering plant at the expense of the historic mission of the submarine. They were also describing the "no-touch" rule from the reactor compartment aft. If you were not a nuke, you couldn't touch any part of the engineering plant-period. You could learn it in theory, identify major components, valves and panels, but that was it. Gone was the traditional submarine qualification program that demanded standing all watches under instruction as well as rigging all compartments for all evolutions. Lost on most submariners was the reason Rickover imposed the new operational Philosophy which is best summarized by Gary E. Weir (3)

"The potential for major disaster in the nuclear propulsion program caused him (Rickover) to elevate professional competence, discipline, and responsibility to the rank of absolute virtues required of every naval and private participant…..Unfortunately for a great many people, Rickover's personal and professional manner made the lesson difficult to learn." (pg. 168)

By early 1967 total nuclear submarine crews numbered in excess of one hundred counting blue and gold SSBN crews with sixty four nuke boats (forty one of which were SSBN's) in commission. The thirty seven Sturgeon class nuke boats would start to commission with the lead ship in March of that year. The Diesel boat fleet in contrast numbered slightly over one hundred in commission with most of the modernized fleet type boats nearing the end of their useful lives. Former SSR's, SSK's, and Fleet Snorkels would start to decommission within eighteen months to be followed shortly by the guppy conversions.

More and more Rickover trained officers were appearing on squadron and force staffs bringing with them Rickover's operational philosophy. It was apparent to all that the diesel boat navy were dinosaurs soon to be extinct along with their officer community who were either unwilling to become nukes or passed over by Rickover as unfit to become nuke boat engineers in order to ascend to command of a nuke boat (4). Diesel boats were still conducting most of the non-deterrent submarine operations including "special missions." Nuke attack boats were "wowing" many with their performance and potential along with occasional contributions such as "a mission of great value to the government of the United States of America." The nukes were not without their teething problems however. It was not uncommon for a nuke boat to be unable to get underway as scheduled due to an "engineering problem." A

refueling every t hree to four years also required a shipyard stay of from eighteen months to two years again reducing the number of nuke boats available for operations. So it was left to the diesel boats to pick up the slack.

'Dex' Armstrong (5) describes the thinking of the enlisted smokeboat sailor during these years.

"We were it…One crew. Nobody took over our boats when we came in. When the old girl went to sea, we were there. The same names, same faces, same officers forward. If someone failed to maintain a system or piece of equipment, the Chief of the Boat knew precisely what butt to put his boot into when ass-kicking time rolled around. Those were great days… Didn't know it then, that came later…much later. We knew nuclear boats represented progress but we didn't think much about it……We could see the future of submarining floating in the after nest. The big, fat, black monsters getting all the attention. High speed, deep-diving ugliness rapidly sending our smokeboat fleet up the river to the scrapyard. To us nuke boats were like elephants… They were big as hell, uglier than sin and none of us had any idea what went on inside of the damn things. They were just there." (pg.5)

This brings us to the DBF pin. In 1969 USS Barbel SS-580, the lead ship of the last class of diesel boats built for the US Navy was deployed to WesPac. While on a "special mission" in early 1970 the control room gang got into one of those nuke boat vs. diesel boat discussions.

It was pointed out during the discussion that on a number of occasions a diesel boat would have to get underway for a "broke-down" nuke boat again proving the superiority of smokeboats over unreliable nuke boats. Someone suggested there ought to be a pin for smokeboat sailors, something like the new Polaris Deterrent Patrol Pin for "boomer" sailors, for the times you had to take a nuke boat commitment because they were broke- down. A contest was commissioned to design the pin. ETR3(SS) Leon Figurido's winning design was a broadside view of a guppy boat with SS superimposed on the North Atlantic sail. There were two bare breasted mermaids, one on the bow and one on the stern facing in with arms extended. Completing the design was a ribbon underneath the boat with holes for stars, and centered on the ribbon the letters "DBF". ETR3(SS) Figurido received appropriate recognition for his winning de sign along with a prize of some sort, now long forgotten. Upon Barbel's return to Yokosuka the design of the DBF pin was hand carried to a local manufacturer of nautical gewgaws where a batch were cast and brought back to the ship and sold at cost to Barbel crewmembers that began to wear them ashore. As the DBF pin grew in popularity within the diesel boat community it continued to be cast and sold in shops around Yokosuka eventually making its way to Pearl Harbor, San Diego, and on to the east coast. Most "smokeboat" sailors assumed a gold star would be placed in the ribbon for each diesel boat served on. However, it was confirmed to the author years later by Capt. John Renard, USN RET. Skipper of Barbel at that time, a star was to be placed on the ribbon for each time a diesel boat you served on had to get underway for a broke-down nuke.

The DBF pin continued to gain in popularity among current and former smokeboat sailors who wore them with pride as either a pin or on a belt buckle, all the while collecting the ire of the senior nuke officer community. As the wholesale decommissioning of the fleet type boats occurred during the early 70's scores of career electricians and enginemen were forced to "surface" as there was no room for them on Rickover's boats. Their designation was changed by BUPERS from "SS" to "SQ" indicating they were excess to submarine force manning requirements although they were still allowed to wear their dolphins. Soon they too would be gone along with their collective histories. In 1973 Rickover issued an edict that Midshipmen would no longer go on summer cruises on diesel boats. Rumor had it that too many were showing up at his interviews with "bad attitudes" about nuke boats picked up on their summer cruise on the smokeboats. It was reported in favorite submarine hangouts ashore that on more than one occasion nuke boat skippers banned the wearing of DBF pins by their crew members, typically "front enders" the non-nukes, implying that to do so would indicate disloyalty to the nuke submarine force. In the mid 70's the DBF pin went into the display of submarine insignia maintained at the Pacific Submarine Museum then located at the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor. The caption alluded to an "unofficial" insignia worn by a disappearing breed of submariner nostalgic for the days of diesel boats.

In July 1975 the last guppy submarine in US service, USS Tiru SS-416, decommissioned in Charleston SC. A handful of the guppies sailed on in foreign service into the late 90's with two, ex-USS Cutlass SS-478, and ex- USS Tusk SS-426 continuing to serve today in the Republic of China (Taiwan) navy as training boats. The last diesel attack boats in US service were USS Darter SS-576, USS Barbel SS-580, USS Blueback SS-581, and USS Bonefish SS-582. They decommissioned between 1988 and 1990. Two Tang class boats, ex-USS Tang SS-563, and ex-USS Gudgeon SS-567, recently decommissioned in the Turkish Navy with ex-Gudgeon slated to be Turkey's museum submarine. The Turkish skipper of ex-Tang when asked about the difference between the German designed and built replacement boats for their retiring ex-US boats is reported to have said, "American submarines are built for war, German submarines are built for export." (6)

It's ironic that 15 years after decommissioning of USS Blueback SS-581 at the Submarine Base in San Diego, a Swedish Navy Type A-19 Gotland Class Air Independent Diesel Boat is conducting weekly ops there to "familiarize" US Navy ASW forces with the operating characteristics of advanced non-nuclear submarines. When the Swedish crew comes ashore on Friday after a week at sea they still look and smell like the smokeboat sailors of old. Our current crop of submariners avoids them.

The DBF pin, originally designed by a USS Barbel SS-580 crewmember as an unofficial insignia to recognize the diesel boats ability to fill-in on very short notice for broke-down nuke boats, now resides with pride on the blue vests of Submarine Veterans who qualified and served on smokeboats. Today the DBF pin is the unique symbol of the professionalism, discipline, and camaraderie of American smokeboat sailors who sailed on, unloved, unwashed, and underpaid as their era was coming to a close. DBF!

Submarine Related News

Sub, Fishing Boat In Minor Collision
The Japan Times, January 12, 2009

KAGOSHIMA (Kyodo) – A surfacing submarine and a fishing boat were involved in a minor collision Saturday off Kirishima, Kagoshima Prefecture, but nobody was injured, the Japan Coast Guard said.

The 2,700-ton Oyashio was on a training exercise at the time of the 8 p.m. accident, while the fishing boat was carrying a Maritime Self-Defense Force officer on the lookout to prevent any collisions between the sub and other vessels during the drill, the coast guard said.

After the incident, the fishing boat went to an MSDF facility under its own power.

Russia Plans To Use Nuclear-Powered Drilling Submarine In The Arctic
Barents Observer, Jan. 9, 2009

The Russian program for oil production in Arctic includes plans on using a nuclear-powered drilling submarine.

This appears in a report written by the Russian oceanographer and expert on Russian energy safety Vladislav Lavin on behalf of the Environmental Foundation Bellona. Mr. Lavin emphasizes that this information is open, and has been presented at a conference on nuclear power in Russia organized by the Ministry of Atomic Energy.

According to the report, the plan for development of the Leningradskoye Field in the Kara Sea includes use of a manned, nuclear-powered submarine that can move between one well to another, attached to a fixed frame on the sea bottom. When the drilling is finished, underwater installations for production can be attached.

The submarine in the plan is 99 meters long, 31 meters wide and 33 meters high. The design is based on post-soviet rejected plans to reconstruct navy submarines into underwater container ships.

The benefits of being under water during drilling is that one can escape weather and ice, which make a big challenge to everyone planning oil and gas exploration in the Arctic. But Bellona believes the disadvantages of using nuclear power exceed the benefits. It is neither profitable, smart or environmentally justifiable, Vladislav Lavin says and adds that it is up to Gazprom's international partners to refuse this practice.

Korea, Germany Sign Contract for 6 More Subs
By Jung Sung-ki, The Korean Times, Jan. 9, 2009

The Defense Acquisition Program Administration has signed a contract with Germany's Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) to build six more 1,800-ton Type-214 submarines, agency officials said Friday.

The conventional submarines will be supplied as packages for assembly by local shipyards, they said.

The first of the batch is to be built by Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering. Tenders for the production of the second vessel will be submitted this summer.

South Korea has built three Type-214s designated as the Son Won-il class.

Features of the submarine include an air-independent propulsion system based on hydrogen fuel cells and a modular construction principle that can be adapted to customer requirements.

DSRV Ceremony to Honor 40 Years of Service March 6, 2009

The US Navy Deep Submergence Unit will host a ceremony to honor the 40 years of service of the DSRV Program and to name its successor, the Pressurized Rescue Module, on Friday, 6 March 2009.

The ceremony will be held at DSU, Naval Base Coronado in the early afternoon, followed by a dinner reception at a location to be confirmed in San Diego.

All interested parties are encouraged to visit the DSU website at www.dsu.navy.mil or to provide mailing address to LT Tim Householder at timothy.householder@navy.mil for a formal invitation.

Report: USN Nuke Forces 'Fraying'
By Michael Hoffman, Defense News, Jan. 12, 2009

The U.S. Navy has been a much better steward of its strategic nuclear mission than the Air Force, according to a top-level report released Jan. 8, but the Navy's nuclear forces are "fraying at the edges" and threatened by the potential loss of experienced leaders.

The Defense Department's Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management, led by former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, issued the second part of its report on the military's nuclear mission. The first part, issued in September, focused squarely on the Air Force and criticized the service's oversight of its nuclear mission.

The follow-up report says the Navy and other joint agencies with nuclear responsibilities let the nuclear mission slide after the end of the Cold War, just like the Air Force did, but not to the same extremes.

However, the slip in performance of the other services exacerbated the Air Force's problems, the latest report said.

"The lack of interest in and attention to the nuclear mission ... goes well beyond the Air Force. This lack of interest and attention have been widespread throughout DoD and contributed to the decline of attention in the Air Force," according to the report.

Are We Battle Ready: Submarine repair that takes forever
By Vishal Thapar, CNN-IBN, Jan. 13, 2009

New Delhi: Over-emphasis on indigenous work is hurting India's readiness for war.

As India's vital submarine arm struggles with dangerously low numbers, a top-end submarine has been taken out of the fleet for a repair programme.

The shocking part is that the repair schedule will last 10 years. Such upgrades have previously been done overseas in two years. One could compare this to a submarine being laid comatose, at least in the case of the INS Sindhukirti, a frontline Kilo class attack submarine of the Indian Navy.

It's been in dry dock at Vizag for a refit programme for close to five years now. It seems that Hindustan Shipyards, the government-owned contractor with little experience in submarine upgrades, will take at least another five years before the submarine can be put to water again.

Unavailable to the submarine-starved Navy for 10 of the 30 years of its useful life, the Sindhukirti is as good as a write off.

"How viable is a surgery which requires a healthy patient to be in a hospital bed for one-third of his life? That is the approximate analogy for the mid-life upgrade for this submarine INS Sindhukirti, the Dry Dock Queen. Four submarines are stuck in such protracted upgrades. Not surprisingly, just nobody is accountable," said our defence correspondent.

Russia took just two years each to upgrade six similar Kilo class submarines for the Indian Navy.

The government insists that it is now building national capability with inhouse upgrades.

"That kind of expertise did not exist in India before and this is for the first time that we are trying it out here. Instead of sending them to Russia all the way, this one is being offloaded to Hindustan Shipyards. There are some problems in their procurement procedures. It takes a little longer than is expected," said Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Suresh Mehta.

What this trade-off on time does to India's military readiness is anybody's guess. It took a recent CAG report to blow the lid of the Indian Navy's worst kept secret: that the vital submarine arm faces a crisis of numbers.

The shocking revelations of the report were:

- Only seven of India's 16 submarines are available for combat at any time.
- 10 of these 16 ageing submarines will be due for phase-out by 2012.
- To maintain current numbers, one submarine needs to be inducted every two years but there's been no addition since 2001.
- India's only submarine-making facility in Mumbai was kept idle for 12 years.

The gaping hole in India's naval capability is showing.

Vital defence jobs being lost forever
Western Morning News (UK), Jan. 13, 2009

VITAL defence jobs could be being lost forever because ministers have delayed expensive military projects, the Liberal Democrats warned last night, writes Matt Chorley, London Editor.

North Devon MP Nick Harvey, the party's defence spokesman, said delays in the programmes, including the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers and a major Army armoured vehicle system, could lead to redundancies in the British arms industry.

Any job losses would hit hard in the West country where thousands of people are employed in defence industries, including submarine and surface fleet maintenance in Plymouth, shipbuilding in Appledore, North Devon, and helicopter construction in Yeovil.

But Defence Secretary John Hutton insisted the review of the military equipment programme was designed to safeguard jobs.

Last month, the Ministry of Defence said the £4 billion carrier programme would be put back by up to two years.

The MoD spending review will also mean delays in the Army's Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) armoured vehicle programme and the provision of fleet tankers under the MARS (Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability) project.

In the Commons, Mr. Harvey said MPs were "aware of the pressures on the defence budget". He urged Mr. Hutton to lobby Gordon Brown and Cabinet colleagues in support of the defence industry.

Mr. Harvey said: "Will you stress to your Government colleagues the warnings from the defence industry and the fact that if you would invest in the defence programme now, durable jobs could be saved for the long-term and if you don't, some of them will be lost forever?"

But Mr. Hutton insisted the Government was committed to safeguarding jobs.

"The outcome of the equipment examination was designed to save and protect and preserve jobs in the defence manufacturing base and it will do that."

The Future Lynx helicopter project will safeguard "hundreds of jobs" in Yeovil, Somerset and "thousands" more in the supply chain.

Navy Gets 1-Year OK To Train With Sonar Off Hawaii
By Audrey McAvoy, Associated Press, Jan. 13, 2009

HONOLULU — The U.S. Navy was granted a one-year permit to train with sonar and bombs in Hawaii waters so long as it tries to protect whales and other marine animals from harm.

The Navy warned that whales and other marine life may be harmed, or even killed, though that wasn't expected. Some marine species – particularly beaked whales – appear much more vulnerable to harm from sonar, and scientists are not sure why.

The National Marine Fisheries Service still is considering Navy requests to train with mid-frequency active sonar in waters off Southern California, the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act requires the Navy to ask for the fisheries service's permission to carry out activities that may affect marine mammals.

The authorization that took effect Jan. 5 also allows the Navy to set off bombs and fire guns during Hawaii drills.

The fisheries service said Monday it will reissue a permit each of the next five years so long as the Navy follows a list of measures to protect the animals. It is requiring sailors to shut off sonar when marine mammals are nearby, use extra caution near Maui where humpback whales breed and calve, and avoid detonating explosives within certain areas.

The fisheries service said it carefully balanced the need to protect marine mammals with the Navy's need to maintain military readiness. The Navy must reapply to train with sonar after 2014.

Paul Achitoff, an Earthjustice attorney in Honolulu who has sued the Navy over sonar in the past, said Tuesday that the fisheries service should have required the Navy to do more.

"What the National Marine Fisheries Service is doing is basically the same as the status quo, which is to allow the Navy to conduct sonar exercises with a minimum of precautions," Achitoff said. "The fisheries service has acceded to the demands of the Navy with little critical oversight."

Achitoff said Earthjustice was examining the fisheries service's decision to determine whether it should be challenged in court.

For the past two years, the Pentagon has used another federal law – the National Defense Authorization Act – to exempt the Navy from the permit requirements.

The Defense Department said then that the Navy needed time to study how sonar affects the environment before it sought regulators' permission to use the technology.

The Navy has spent the past few years conducting environmental studies for underwater training ranges around the country.

Sailors use sonar to track enemy submarines. Sonar operators send pulses of sound through the ocean and then listen for objects, such as submarines, that the sound strikes.

Scientists say the sound may disrupt the feeding patterns of marine mammals. The sound may also startle some species of whales, causing them to surface rapidly.

The Navy has been using mid-frequency active sonar for some 40 years, but its military importance has been growing even as concerns about the environmental effects of sonar have increased.

The Navy is particularly worried about being able to track a growing fleet of quiet diesel-electric submarines – owned by China, Iran and North Korea among other countries – that are difficult to spot and follow underwater.

New Anglo-American Boomer Design

Strategypage.com, Jan. 14, 2009

Britain has hired an American submarine builder (General Dynamics) to design a Common Missile Compartment (CMC) for Britains next class of ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), which are to begin replacing the current Vanguard class boats in 2022. The assignment specifically mentions that the U.S. Navy will use the CMC for its next class of SSBNs. This makes sense, because Britain buys the ballistic missiles for its SSBNs from the United States. It would be too expensive for Britain to design and build its own SSBN ballistic missiles. Thus the CMC will have to be designed by an American firm, with access to data on the characteristics (especially the dimensions) of future missiles for SSBNs.

Britain and the United States have long cooperated on designing nuclear submarines, especially SSBNs. The U.S. and Britain are designing two different SSBNs. But each sub will have many common features, like the CMC, and that will save a lot of money for both nations. The 18 U.S. Ohio class SSBNs were built between 1979 and 1997. The Ohios were built to serve for twenty years, but that has been extended at least 15, and possibly 30 years. In the next 5-10 years, work on a new class of U.S. SSBNs will have to begin.

The Defense Stimulus

By Tom Donnelly, Weekly Standard, Jan. 14, 2009

The politics of the current economic crisis are fluid – the Bush administration's original diktats for bailing out the troubled financial sector and the auto industry have generated growing resistance – but it's likely that Barack Obama will be able to produce a stimulus package quickly after his inauguration. Even House Republican leader Rep. John Boehner "believe[s] Washington has to act." Indeed, the stimulus debate that remains was succinctly framed by his counterpart in the upper house, Sen. Mitch McConnell: "The question is: How big and in what form?"

A key part of the answer on the spending side of the equation is increased defense spending, by at least $20 billion per year, particularly on procurement and personnel. These kinds of expenditures not only make economic good sense, but would help close the large and long-standing gap between U.S. strategy and military resources. If bridges need fixing, so too do the tools with which our military fights. A critical element in any recovery will be strengthening the foundations of the globalized economy, built upon U.S. worldwide security guarantees.

There is a strong historic correlation between defense spending and past recoveries. Increasing defense spending now would also satisfy the stimulus principles advanced by President-elect Obama: Military service and employment in the defense industry are jobs "that pay well and can't be outsourced."

Defense investments also meet the definition of a sensible stimulus according to mainstream economists: Government should spend where private resources are slack; though the defense industry was trimmed down in the 1990s, there is tremendous excess capacity in major sectors like aircraft and shipbuilding. Defense spending would also meet other critical benchmarks:

Domestic content: Direct employment in the U.S. aerospace industry – an imperfect but indicative measure of defense employment – stands at more than 650,000 jobs, a number that grew by 10,000 in 2008. All major weapons systems are made in the U.S. and have a huge secondary effect. The F-18 fighter, for example, relies on 445 suppliers and has as total economic effect of an estimated $4.6 billion per year.

Nationwide effect: Major programs depend upon a nationwide manufacturing base. Lockheed Martin is the prime contractor on the F-22 fighter, but the program is the effort of 1,000 suppliers who employ 95,000 people – including an efficient, unionized manufacturing workforce – in 44 states.

Bring forward or extend previously funded projects. There is ample opportunity to preserve "hot" production lines that face termination – such as the F-22 – or to extend "warm" lines. Boeing is on the verge of issuing a "stop work" order to its suppliers for the C-

17 cargo aircraft (a workhorse in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world) and we are only using half of the country's shipbuilding infrastructure to build one Virginia class (SSN-744) submarine a year, while defense requirements make it clear that we will need more submarines, not less, in the years ahead.

Timely spending. As former director of the National Economic Council Lawrence Lindsey has written, defense programs more than meet the "shovel ready" threshold set for infrastructure projects in the stimulus package. Defense procurements have very high "spend rates," and almost all personnel spending occurs in the year of appropriation. These are quick-return investments.

Strength for the future. Defense manufacturing is among the most competitive elements in the U.S. manufacturing sector. Foreign military sales in 2008 were $32 billion, up from $24 billion in 2007 – more than twice the level of Russian defense exports and five times that of Great Britain or France. The defense sector is also the source of much technological innovation – the Internet is the product of defense research and development – and the home of a highly-educated, American workforce, led by engineers.

Inherent value. Economist Martin Feldstein has argued that the stimulus spending needs to be directed toward projects "that should be done anyway." The gap in military spending of the past 15 years – more than $150 billion in deferred projects in the 1990s alone – has created a "defense deficit" that has resulted in a wholesale obsolescence in front-line systems: U.S. troops are still fighting with planes, ships and land combat vehicles designed in the late 1970s and purchased during the Reagan buildup.

Larger public good. The value of American global leadership in an era of economic and geopolitical uncertainty cannot be stressed too highly. The security of worldwide commerce depends upon safe, cheap and uninterrupted flows of goods and service through a variety of "commons" – the seas, air, space and cyberspace – that are protected every day by U.S. military forces. Their presence helps to preserve the industrial world's access to natural resources and protect the interests of allies and trading partners.

By any measure, defense should comprise a vital component of any stimulus package. This is a matter of economic good sense and, frankly, fairness to the men and women serving our country in a time of war. The Pentagon can intelligently and easily support $20 billion in additional spending per year; critically, this would continue the program to expand the Army, which will remain stretched by deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, by 30,000 soldiers per year. Such investments would not only create thousands of jobs across the country – and preserve jobs at risk from premature program terminations – but promote American exports and create a secure environment for global economic recovery.

Six Modest Proposals For A Defense Stimulus

As will be the case with all stimulus spending proposals, it will be necessary to integrate defense stimulus plans with the normal Pentagon budget process to minimize programmatic mischief and ensure the best value for the taxpayer. Nonetheless, based upon the Defense Department's current budgets and five-year plan, it is possible to suggest obvious areas where additional spending makes sense; adding $20 billion to the baseline defense budget, approximately $520 billion for 2009, is an increase of less than 4 percent, an easily "digestible" amount. Potential additions include:

The Army's "Grow the Force" initiative. Recruiting and training an additional 20,000 soldiers per year would cost about $3.5 billion. The pace of current operations – driven by the requirements of Afghanistan and Iraq – has proved the need for more troops.

Creating and equipping an additional 4 Stryker brigades. This family of wheeled combat vehicles has done yeoman service in Iraq and as the Army expands it should add more Stryker units. An additional 250 per year would cost about $550 million annually.

Maintain F-22 production. The Air Force originally wanted 750 Raptors, but the line will end in 2009 after the purchase of just 183. Close allies like Japan and Australia would like to purchase the fighter. Renewing the final 3-year procurement would secure an additional 20 aircraft per year at $4 billion annually.

Sustain C-17 production. The cargo aircraft has been key to the deployment of U.S. forces around the world. With no new production, "stop work" orders will be issued to suppliers in 2009. Restoring a rate of 12 per year would cost $3 billion annually.

Accelerate attack submarine production. The U.S. fleet of attack submarines will shrink from about 80 boats to approximately 35, too few to counter the rapid increase in Chinese submarine production and meet the Navy's own stated global requirements. Expanding production to three boats per year would not only restore an adequate force, but better utilize excess U.S. submarine-building capacity.

Build more Littoral Combat Ships. The Navy's fleet of surface combatants is also too small, both for traditional missions like antisubmarine warfare and the demands of irregular warfare such as anti-piracy patrols. The LCS is an effective and relatively inexpensive solution to these multiple requirements. Building three per year, to be split competitively between several shipyards, might cost $1 billion per year.

Tom Donnelly is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

China's Missile Plans Put US Naval Power In A Weaker Spot

By Michael Richardson, The Canberra Times (Australia), Jan. 14, 2009

Outgoing US President George W. Bush commissioned America's newest aircraft carrier last Saturday at the Norfolk naval base in Virginia. Named after his father, former President George H. W. Bush, the ship, which carries 85 planes and a crew of nearly 6000, is a potent symbol of America's global power and presence, despite recent economic and foreign policy failures.

It is also the last of 10 nuclear-powered Nimitz-class carriers to enter service with the United States Navy. They are the largest warships in the world. However, by 2015 the first of an even bigger and more advanced class of carrier, also nuclear-powered, is scheduled to start replacing the Nimitz vessels.

Two years ago, US Vice-President Dick Cheney said that the successor ships ''will help ensure the sea power of the United States for the next half century''.

To defend its interests in Asia, the US has been steadily transferring more aircraft carriers and other warships from its Atlantic fleet to the Pacific.

As a result, the Pacific fleet's share of the 280 ships in the navy has risen from 45 per cent in earlier years to about 54 per cent and continues to increase. The US Pacific fleet now includes six of the navy's 11 aircraft carriers, almost all of the 18 Aegis cruisers and destroyers that have been modified for ballistic missile defence operations, and 26 of the 57 attack submarines.

To counter the Asia-Pacific focus of the US Navy, China is reportedly planning to deploy ballistic missiles with non-nuclear warheads and special guidance systems to hit moving surface ships at sea in the western Pacific before they can get within range of Chinese targets. If China fielded such a weapon, one that could reliably sink or cause heavy damage to aircraft carriers and other major warships far from its shores, it would make a potential adversary think long and hard before sending naval forces to intervene in a crisis over Taiwan or any other regional conflict in which China was involved.

This would reduce the value and deterrent effect of US alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, including its mutual defence pacts with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. Taiwan is often seen as the prime potential flashpoint between China and the US. Fortunately, China and Taiwan have greatly improved their relations recently and an armed confrontation between them that could bring the US into the fighting on the side of Taiwan seems less likely.

Still, a specialist in naval affairs for the Congressional Research Service, Ronald O'Rourke, told US lawmakers in November that the US Defence Department and other analysts believed that China was developing anti-ship ballistic missiles, or ASBMs. They would have a range of up to 3000km and carry manoeuvrable re-entry vehicles with warheads designed to hit moving naval ships. The missiles would be launched by rocket propulsion from land in an arc-like trajectory high into the atmosphere and travel at speeds of up to 24,000km/h when coming down, making them very hard to defend against.

Ballistic missiles have traditionally been used to attack fixed targets on land and O'Rourke noted that the US Navy had ''not previously faced a threat from highly accurate ballistic missiles capable of hitting moving ships at sea. Due to their ability to change course, MaRVs [manoeuvrable re-entry vehicles] would be more difficult to intercept than non-manoeuvring ballistic missile re-entry vehicles.''

Some analysts are sceptical and doubt that China has made all the technical breakthroughs for an accurate ASBM system. The US Office of Naval Intelligence concluded in 2004 that it would be ''very difficult'' for China to field an ASBM force that could successfully track faraway aircraft carriers and other major warships, which can travel at sustained speeds of more than 30 knots and then hit them with MaRV warheads. The Bush Administration has spent billions of dollars to develop defences against ballistic missiles. But President-elect Barack Obama, who takes office next Tuesday, says that while he supports missile defence, he wants to be sure programs are affordable and proven.

One of the more successful parts of the US program, the Aegis ship-based system to defend against shorter-range missiles, experienced two recent test failures, bringing its record to 13 hits in 17 intercept attempts. Even so, it is not designed to provide a shield against the longer-range missiles China is reportedly trying to turn into weapons for use against naval vessels. The Pentagon's latest annual report to Congress on Chinese military power, published last year, said that when incorporated into a sophisticated command and control system, China's ASBMs would be a key component of its strategy to give its armed forces ''the capability to attack ships at sea, including aircraft carriers, from great distances'' so as to deny access to waters around China.

Some analysts say that China already operates over-the-horizon radar installations to detect and track ships far out at sea and is backing this up with maritime surveillance using its own satellites in space. They say that China will soon test an ASBM. If they are correct and the new system works, it could turn potent symbols of naval power into sitting ducks.

Michael Richardson, a former Asia editor of the International Herald Tribune, is a visiting senior research fellow at Singapore's Institute of South-East Asian Studies.

Russia Creates New-Generation Diesel Submarine

Russia IC News, Jan. 14, 2009

Russia has been creating new diesel submarines named Lada. This was reported January 13 by the first deputy CEO of Russian Technology state corporation Alexei Aleshin.

According to Alexei Aleshin, the submarine has become the Navy's "brightest innovative project". He also marked that "it will be an absolutely new product". 120 new technologies are being used for its creation.

Construction of the first submarines within Lada 667 project started in 1977. Their functions include enemy submarines and ships destruction, protection of navy bases, coasts and sea communications, and reconnaissance operations. The combination of a low noise level, small size and power is the main feature of Lada submarines.

We'd Get More Recruits If Female Sailors Wore Bikinis, Claims Navy Commander

The Daily Mail, January 14, 2009

A British-born navy submarine commander is in deep water among women's groups after suggesting that female sailors would help recruitment if they posed in bikinis.

Politicians and feminists have joined in condemning 37-year-old Commander Tom Phillips, who joined the Australian navy in 1990 as a Seaman Officer.

Appointed to the 'hunter-killer' submarine HMAS Farncomb last year, Commander Phillips went even further by suggesting that the submariner's equivalent of the notorious 'mile high club' for people having sex on a plane was the 'going down club.'

Commander Phillips made his remarks in an interview in a raunchy men's magazine, Ralph, and navy officials are now scrambling to defend him by insisting his remarks were totally tongue in cheek and not meant to be taken seriously.

He was asked: 'If female sailors all had to be hot and had to wear bikinis, would that help, recruitment?'

He replied: 'It would certainly get the right demographic of young men in. I'm not sure how feasible it is.'

Asked what having sex on a submarine was known as, he said: 'I call it the going down club' - then added that he was 'not aware of any sex on board.

'It's not the most romantic place. But I could be really naive here - maybe crew have brought their partners on.'

Commander Phillips made his comments as part of an interview on what it was like to work in a submarine.

Defence politicians have been horrified at the publicity, with Defence Minister Warren Snowden saying the comments were 'utterly unacceptable.'

He added: 'I will be calling for a review into the criteria for media approvals and how Defence ensures articles match the values of the ADF (Australian Defence Force).'

Even the Liberal (conservative) opposition party have added to the Commander's sinking feeling, with shadow Defence Minister Bob Baldwin describing the comments as 'totally inappropriate and absolutely offensive.'

Feminists have joined in delivering a broadside to the commander.

The chairwoman of the Women's Lobby Australia, Eva Cox, said his comments reflected the 'Navy's limited view of women as bodies rather than brains.'

But rescue is at hand for the commander.

The Deputy Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Davyd Thomas said the remarks were a response to a flippant question and 'not intended to be serious.'

The navy is suffering a recruitment crisis and during Christmas had to virtually close down because of a lack of available sailors.

The mission of the Jamestown Foundation is to inform and educate policy makers and the broader policy community about events and trends in those societies which are strategically or tactically important to the United States and which frequently restrict access to such information.

Author Seeking Sea Stories for Next Book

Submitted by Jim Schenk, Jan. 13, 2009

I plan to write another book, this one of the long-promised submarine genre, after I finish the one I am now working on re-writing. If you have any stories, from your U. S. submarine force experience, I would love to hear them.

These stories can be amusing, scary, heroic, BOHICA moments (Bend Over Here It Comes Again),

They can be stories of ill-treatment, when you were lied to, funny and/or appropriate nicknames of shipmates, brushes with skimmers, airedales or jarheads, PCU anecdotes, belly-burglars, Adm. Rickover, watch-standing, Captain's Mast, mess cooking, supply SNAFUs, practical jokes (such as hiding the XOs door), quals, ORSE or Weps exams, visiting brass, in port or at sea, home on leave or in transit, NQP nub baiting, bridge lookout, yardbirds, sand crabs, sub tender personnel, near misses, visiting ship duty, unauthorized ship's newsletters, drydock, fishing off the pier, deployments, shakedown cruises, dependents cruises, fast cruises, or anything amusing or entertaining that the Dolphin-bejeweled crowd would find entertaining and would be interested in purchasing a book to read them.

With your permission, your name will be included in the bibliography of the book.

Items must not compromise National Security Laws that you have previously signed off on when you left the "Silent Service." Suggestions for a title are also graciously considered prior to publication, and all published donor stories used will get a signed copy at a special rate.

This is a special project for me, as I am a stage-4 cancer patient, currently in remission, trying to use my bonus time constructively, and pay off exorbitant bills in order to remain alive a while longer. And maybe, at least once, I can buy something nice for my new and only granddaughter.

To keep items from public eyes, please send them to my home email – submareener@msn.com. Please don't forget to include the code word "Submarine Book" in the subject title so it won't get inadvertently deleted prior to reading and logging. I created this email address to insure correct pronunciation by British sailors, and the many uninformed. If I do not finish this book as intended, I have made arrangement with those that are pre-selected to follow my dream through publication. Thanks and God bless.

China Flaunts Growing Naval Capabilities

By Willy Lam, Jamestown Foundation, January 12, 2009

The year 2009 is set to become a watershed in the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) development into a force capable of long-distance, multi-pronged power projection. This is despite the perception that owing to the global recession, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership under President Hu Jintao is preoccupied with its multi-billion dollar effort to resuscitate the economy and generate jobs. Even as three ultra-modern naval vessels (two destroyers and a supply ship) are steaming around the Gulf of Aden on an "anti-piracy mission," the Ministry of National Defense (MND) has indirectly admitted that the country is building aircraft carriers. Various PLA officers have waxed eloquent on the imperative of enhancing the forces' "combat-readiness"—and their ability to win high-tech warfare. Moreover, a gargantuan military parade is being planned for October 1, when Beijing will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (Yangtze Evening Post [Nanjing], January 4).

Less than a month after President Hu celebrated with big fanfare the 30th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's reform and open door policy, the Hu leadership seems to have jettisoned two key Deng dogmas. Firstly, the late patriarch said in the early 1990s that China must "keep a low profile and never take the lead" in foreign and national-security issues. Deng, who presided over the demobilization of a million soldiers through the 1980s, also told the party's top brass that frugality must be observed because army-building must sub-serve the overall national goal of economic construction. Yet, since the Beijing Olympics last August, China's military establishment seems to have been unreservedly showing off its hard-power projection capabilities. This is despite the fact that flaunting the country's military muscle in the apparent pursuit of national glory could stoke the "China threat" theory. Given the PLA's propensity for acquiring big-ticket, state-of-the-art hardware, the armed forces will likely enjoy double-digit annual budget boosts in the foreseeable future.

First came the Shenzhen astronauts' ultra-ambitious moon mission, including a 15-minute "space walk" accomplished in late September 2008. While the naval expedition to waters off Somalia was billed as China's contribution to the global effort against piracy, it seems clear that the top brass is also using the mission to test the long-distance capability of China's inchoate blue-water navy. According to military expert Qing Yan, the sortie into the Gulf of Aden could become "a major milestone in China's attainment of blue-water navy capacities." Qing said that the trip would help China's best naval vessels adapt themselves to the climate, magnetic fields and geopolitics of faraway waters. It could also be a trial run for China's future aircraft carrier battle group in terms of logistics, information gathering, IT warfare, and so forth (Ming Pao [Hong Kong], December 26, 2008; Nanfang Weekly [Guangzhou], December 25, 2008). Indeed, while revealing details about the naval maneuver, MND spokesman Huang Xueping indirectly admitted that China was putting together its first aircraft carrier. "An aircraft carrier is a symbol of a nation's comprehensive strength," he said. "It also meets the basic requirements of a nation's navy." PLA experts have since reported that naval shipbuilders are constructing at least two flattops for possible deployment after 2015 (Asahi Shimbun [Tokyo], December 31, 2008; Ming Pao, January 1).

There are also signs that Beijing is making subtle revisions of the so-called "peaceful rise" theory, which was advanced by the Hu Jintao leadership in 2003 to reassure Asia-Pacific nations that the emerging quasi-superpower would not pose a threat to its neighbors. Official military analysts are now saying that to attain a global status commensurate with China's comprehensive strength, the PLA should not only seek sophisticated weapons but also be constantly primed for warfare to defend China's core interests. According to General Zhang Zhaoyin, the PLA must abandon the outdated doctrine of "building a peace-oriented army at a time of peace." Writing in the official Liberation Army Daily, General Zhang pointed out that "preparing for battle, fighting wars, and winning wars have always been the fundamental tasks of the army." "The PLA must never deviate from the doctrine of 'being assiduous in preparing for warfare, and seeking to win wars'," added Zhang, who is the deputy commander of a Group Army in the Chengdu Military Region. According to Zhang, "Army construction must revolve around the core of raising our ability to win wars." (Liberation Army Daily, December 2, 2008)

At the same time, well-known military commentator Jin Yinan posited the theory that "China can not emerge in the midst of nightingale songs and swallow dances," a reference to the placid pleasures of peacetime. Jin, a Professor of International Relations at National Defense University, indicated that China had to "hack out a path through thorns and thistles" in its search for greatness. "When a country and a people have reached a critical moment, the armed forces often play the role of pivot and mainstay [in ensuring that national goals are met]," Jin noted. "Even in peace time, soldiers need to be ever-ready for battles, so that they can throw themselves into action at any time." Referring to China's domestic and international goals in the 21st century, Jin pointed out that PLA personnel should "acquit themselves of the responsibility of history and become the vanguard of the Chinese race" (Liberation Army Daily, December 31, 2008). In another controversial article, Liberation Army Daily commentator Huang Kunlun raised the notion of "the boundaries of national interests." Huang argued that China's national interests had gone beyond its land, sea and air territories to include areas such as the vast oceans traversed by Chinese freighters as well as outer space. "Our armed forces need to defend not only 'territorial boundaries', but also the 'boundaries of national interests'," Huang wrote. "We need to safeguard not only national-security interests but also interests relating to [future] national development" he added (Liberation Army Daily, December 4, 2008). This novel concept would vastly increase the "legitimate" areas where the PLA can operate.

What does one make of this pugilistic rhetoric? These belligerent remarks may solely represent the "hawkish wing" of the national-security establishment, particularly given the apparent fear among generals that the military budget could be cut in times of economic difficulties. Yet, in view of the long-established tradition that PLA officers will not talk about policy issues without

authorization from the Central Military Commission (CMC), which is headed by President Hu, it seems clear that opinions about bolstering the PLA's combat-readiness represent the thinking of the very top.

While touring the Shenyang Military Region in mid-December, Hu Jintao, acting in his capacity as CMC Chairman, asked officers and soldiers to prepare themselves for impending "military struggles." "New and complicated changes have taken place globally, and our domestic task regarding reform, development and stability has become difficult," Hu told the military personnel. "The new situation and responsibilities have made even higher demands on army construction and on the forces' preparation for 'military struggle'." Apart from traditional goals such as defending national boundaries and safeguarding territorial integrity, Hu asked the PLA to get ready for "non-war related combat missions" and to "comprehensively raise its ability to tackle different types of threat to [national and social] security." President Hu ended his tour by asking the officers to "make enthusiastic contribution to maintaining the stable and relatively speedy development of the economy, as well as upholding social harmony and stability" (Xinhua News Agency, December 16, 2008; People's Daily, December 17, 2008).

In a New Year talk to senior officers of the People's Armed Police (PAP), which is also under the direct control of the CMC, President Hu called upon them to "boost their ability for tasks such as handling emergency [mass] incidents and combating terrorism." Moreover, the commander-in-chief commended the PAP's role in "safeguarding national security and unity, and maintaining social harmony and stability" (Xinhua News Agency, January 4). Hu's highly positive assessment of the PLA and PAP would seem to buttress arguments by the top brass that in light of their invaluable contribution to safeguarding socio-political stability—a prerequisite for not only economic development but also the perpetuation of the CCP's ruling party status—the armed forces are justified in continuing to enjoy a disproportionately large share of national resources. Last year, the PLA was awarded a budget of $57.23 billion, a whopping 17.6 percent over that of 2007; moreover, most Western analysts think the armed forces' actual expenditure is up to three times the official budget.

To be sure, the Hu-led Politburo has pulled out all the stops to reinforce the perception of the party's "absolute control over the gun." At year-end, President Hu laid down five "core values" for officers and soldiers: "be loyal to the party, love the people, serve the country, be ready to sacrifice yourself, and value honor." He also instructed that officers and soldiers must augment their "ideological and political construction" to ensure that PLA personnel would not deviate from their serve-the-people credo (Xinhua News Agency, December 30, 2008). Yet, there is no questioning the fact that the foremost priority of the party-and-state apparatus is to indefinitely prolong the CCP's mandate of heaven through snuffing out dissent and other challenges to its monopoly on power. In his speech marking the 30th anniversary of the reform era, Hu reiterated that "stability is our overriding task, because nothing can be accomplished without stability." With reference to maintaining the party's ruling party status, the supremo also warned that "What we possessed in the past doesn't necessarily belong to us now; what we possess now may not be ours forever" (People's Daily, December 19, 2008; Xinhua News Agency, December 18, 2008). Hu's amazing statement has been interpreted as a frank admission that in light of the severe economic downturn and the rise in "mass incidents" such as riots and disturbances, the party's political dominance is under unprecedented threat. As the CCP becomes more and more dependent on the armed forces to uphold its supremacy, it may have no choice but to grant the generals not only generous budget boosts but also a bigger say in national-security policy-making.

The mission of the Jamestown Foundation is to inform and educate policy makers and the broader policy community about events and trends in those societies which are strategically or tactically important to the United States and which frequently restrict access to such information.

Russia's Naval Exports Boom, Especially In Asia

By Martin Sieff, United Press International, January 15, 2009

WASHINGTON — The world may be in recession, but the Russian naval shipbuilding industry is still booming.

RIA Novosti reported Tuesday that naval shipbuilding last year accounted for $7 billion of Russia's record $8.5 billion in arms sales around the world funneled through the state-owned Rosoboronexport arms export corporation.

"This sum relates to the Rosoboronexport portfolio of orders. This is the maritime share of the portfolio of orders," Rostekhnologii First Deputy General Director Alexei Alyoshin told the news agency.

RIA Novosti said Russian arms exports soared in 2008 to $8.5 billion — double the figure of nine years ago. That allowed Russia to shoot ahead of Britain to become the world's second-largest arms exporter after the United States. Rosoboronexport currently has on its books arms exports worth $33 billion, the report said.

Russia currently sells weapons to no less than 80 nations around the world, RIA Novosti said. While sales are slowly growing in Africa and the Middle East, the main success stories are with the major nations of Asia: India, China, Vietnam and Indonesia all are buying large quantities of Russian-built warships and submarines.

RIA Novosti noted that India and China have continued to buy Russian submarines, frigates and destroyers. Vietnam has signed a contract for new Svetlyak-class fast attack boats and frigates, and Indonesia has ordered corvettes from Russia to be built with the help of Spanish shipbuilding companies.

As we have monitored in these columns, India's much-touted strategic relationship with the United States during the eight years of the Bush administration never translated into any significant conventional arms purchases from American companies. This was

especially the case with the Indian navy, which showed no interest in receiving the old U.S. aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk in return for agreeing to buy Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet combat aircraft to operate from it.

Instead, the Indians patiently renegotiated their troubled contract with Russia to refurbish the old Soviet-era aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov for the Indian navy, even though Russia's Sevmash shipyard was hundreds of millions of dollars and years behind schedule on the project.

Russia remains reluctant to sell state-of-the-art ground forces weaponry, transportation systems and tactical close air support weapons to China, a reluctance that has put a serious strain on Sino-Russian relations in recent years. However, this reluctance has not translated into selling to Beijing warships, Kilo-class diesel submarines and lethal Mach 2.8 state-of-the-art sea-hugging anti-ship cruise missiles that could devastate U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

Meanwhile, Rosoboronexport officials remain optimistic about their sales prospects, even in the current troubled global economic climate. They project their foreign weapons exports to soar by no less than 8 percent to 10 percent per year over the next three to four years, RIA Novosti said.

Russia's arms export successes certainly have not been limited to naval surface warships and submarines. RIA Novosti also noted that Sukhoi and Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG combat aircraft, air defense systems, helicopters, battle tanks, armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles have all proved popular, highly successful export items.

We Should Build a Bigger Navy

By Seth Cropsey, Weekly Standard, January 21, 2009

About a decade ago the foreign policy establishment was busy dismissing China's efforts to build a powerful, modern military. Writing in the Washington Post in 1997, Michael Swaine, a China specialist then at the RAND corporation, declared that the "enduring deficiencies in China's military logistics system call into question its ability to operate [naval and aviation] weapons over a sustained period, particularly outside China's borders." Well, right now, Chinese naval vessels are deploying in the Gulf of Aden to assist in the international anti-piracy mission. It's 4,000 miles from China to the Gulf of Aden.

Swaine further predicted that China "will remain at least a full generation behind the world's leading military powers." In January 2007, Beijing used a ground-based medium range ballistic missile to destroy one of its own aging weather satellites—an impressive technological accomplishment that only two other nations, the United States and the Soviet Union, have ever achieved.

In 1999, the Brookings scholars Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon concluded in an article—"Power Plays .??.??. While There's Less to the Chinese Threat than Meets the Eye," also in the Washington Post—that China's "ballistic missiles will be hard-pressed to defeat Taiwan's military or sink nearby U.S. ships." Yet the Defense Department's 2008 assessment of China's military noted that "PLA planners are focused on targeting surface ships at long ranges from China's shores. .??.??. One area of investment involves combining conventionally-armed ASBMs [anti-ship ballistic missiles] based on .??.??. C4ISR [DoD-speak for command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] for geo-location and tracking of targets, and onboard guidance systems for terminal homing to strike surface ships or their onshore support infrastructure." China's effort to threaten U.S. ships at sea is taken seriously today, as is shown by the debate over whether the Navy's next generation of carrier-based aircraft has sufficient range to accomplish their missions without forcing U.S. carriers to sail within areas of the Pacific to which China seeks to deny access.

A 1998 Foreign Policy Research Institute article written by Avery Goldstein asserted that Beijing was so far behind other advanced industrial states that "successful modernization will leave China with forces by the second or third decade of the next century most of which would have been state of the art in the 1990s." This observation retains some validity, but there is nothing primitive about China's effort to deny the U.S. Navy access to large strategic swaths of the Western Pacific. Indeed, the last few weeks have produced the prospect of another particularly important advance in the Chinese military's steady transformation into a modern, serious, powerful force.

On the last day of 2008, the Asahi Shimbun reported that China is planning to begin construction of two medium-sized aircraft carriers—a contemporary navy's most flexible instrument of power projection—in its Shanghai yards this year. They are scheduled for launch in 2015. The article also repeated widely circulated information that the shipyards in the Yellow Sea port of Dalian are putting the finishing touches on a refurbishment of the 55,000 ton Soviet-built Kuznetsov-class carrier, the Varyag, a vessel that a Chinese company with connections to the People's Liberation Army purchased in 1998 and then towed to China from the Black Sea in 2002.

The Soviet carrier was a good platform to learn—in established Chinese tradition—the architecture, design, and gross characteristics of the aircraft carrier. As a training platform, the Varyag will provide indispensable experience for future carrier pilots and support personnel in the demanding business of naval carrier aviation. China should have three operational aircraft carriers to add to its submarine and surface fleets around the midpoint of the next decade.

All this tracks with the Pentagon's 2008 evaluation of Chinese military power, which noted: "China has an active aircraft carrier research and design program," and "if the leadership were to so choose, the PRC shipbuilding industry could start construction of an indigenous platform by the end of this decade." In November, the director of the foreign affairs office of China's defense ministry, Major General Qian Lihua, told the Financial Times that "the question is not whether you have an aircraft carrier, but what you do with your aircraft carrier." The following month China's defense ministry spokesman, Huang Xueping, offered similar public comments, observing that the protection of national interests required China to undertake carrier aviation.

Aircraft carriers are not only important as a symbol of a great or growing military power. They are useful and tremendously adaptable instruments of force. We are still only witnessing the beginning of China's naval build-up, but the carriers will have a profound impact on her ability to project military force as disputes with its neighbors, including Japan, over potentially energy-rich sea beds and islands in the South and East China Seas fester. The carriers will also give China greater control over the passage of oil from the Middle East and increase Beijing's military influence in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. They will support possible future Chinese claims to Asian hegemony. They will force Japan to consider construction of similar instruments of naval force. The successful operation of the midsize carriers China envisions would lay the operational, logistic, command and control, and tactical foundation for building vessels with the—much greater—striking power and range of the U.S. Navy's Nimitz-class carriers.

That's not all, though. The initial focus of China's carriers is likely to be to the south and west, but the vast Pacific lies immediately beyond the chain of islands and land formations that extend south from Japan through the Philippines. The wide but penetrable moat between these islands and the Chinese mainland offers bastions for her growing force of nuclear-propelled, intercontinental ballistic missile-carrying submarines, as the islands themselves shield China from the open ocean. But the eventual passage of her carriers eastward, beyond the moat, re-establishes the potential for naval competition in the Pacific that disappeared with the defeat of the Imperial Japanese navy in 1945.

This challenge did not appear suddenly like a dragon from the mists of China's famous stone forests. The Chinese have been working towards a naval aviation capability for many years. A summer 2008 Congressional Research Service report noted an Indian naval analyst's observation that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has been planning for large naval combatants like carriers and amphibious vessels for a quarter of a century.

A safe and effective naval aviation capability requires mastery of a host of design, operational, logistic, training, and command skills. China has been addressing these deliberately and methodically. Courses for future carrier and amphibious ship commanding officers began at the Guangzhou Naval Academy in 1985. Two years later, the same academy, in sensible imitation of the U.S. Navy's tradition of selecting qualified pilots to command aircraft carriers, initiated a program for young PLAN pilots to prepare them to command ships. These officers are reaching the correct seniority, level of experience, and age to become the PLAN's first carrier commanders. Negotiations with European companies for construction of large amphibious ships took place in the late 1990s. A little over two years ago, the Russian press reported that China was negotiating to purchase as many as 48 SU-33 fighter aircraft, which are built to be launched and recovered by aircraft carriers and can be refueled in flight. In September 2008, an article in Jane's Defence Weekly reported that 50 students had begun a course of study at the Dalian Naval Academy intended to prepare them to become the PLAN's first fixed-wing aircraft carrier pilots.

The Chinese carriers will build on one of the PLAN's most significant accomplishments: the creation of a fleet of attack and ballistic missile submarines. This began, as the carrier program did with the Varyag, with the purchase of Russian subs in the 1990s, specifically the Kilo-class conventional-powered attack submarine of which China now possesses 12 (the Chinese have also acquired powerful surface combatants from Russia). The PLAN's submarine force continues to experience significant growth, in both size and capability, as several new classes of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines armed with rockets of increasing range are being added to its force.

If we assume the year 2020 as a reasonable target for China's gaining genuine competency at naval aviation—particularly the joint operation of carriers with the rest of a fleet—it will have taken just 35 years for China to transform its navy from a large collection of aging World War II landing ships, patrol boats, shore-based aircraft, and submarines with very limited range into a modern naval force with an offensive ballistic missile capability. It will be able to project power and will offer the U.S. Navy a serious challenge in the Pacific. The span is about the same amount of time that it took Japan to turn its coastal defense navy into the battle fleet that destroyed a Russian rival at the Battle of Tsushima Strait in May 1905.

There are numerous similarities between China's and Japan's rise as naval powers. Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution and Great Leap Forward isolated and impoverished China—leaving it with a technologically backward military—as two centuries of Tokugawa rule had isolated and impoverished Japan. Both countries looked abroad for help. China depended initially on Russian naval technology. Japan looked to Holland, France, and especially England to acquire large modern ships as a precursor to developing their own naval industrial base. Both countries depend heavily on the seaborne delivery of critical natural resources. China and Japan—at different times, of course, and at significantly different degrees of national assertiveness—looked to naval forces as the symbol and instrument of broader regional and international ambitions. Japan built a world-class navy in three and a half decades with large strategic consequences for America and the world. China is well on its way toward a similar accomplishment, with the potential for similar consequences.

The U.S. Navy's response to the PLAN's deliberate and steady progress has been diffident. Dismissive of increasing Chinese naval capabilities at first, U.S. naval commentators have lately adopted a more harmonious position as the gulf between the PLAN's reach and grasp has narrowed. Admiral Dennis Blair, former commander of the U.S. Pacific Command and now in line to become the new administration's director of national intelligence, wrote in 2007 that "China is on a positive trajectory" and argued that "the U.S. should offer to involve China in bilateral and multilateral military operations for the common good." Thomas Barnett, a researcher and a professor at the Naval War College until 2004, urged in a 2005 article ("The Chinese Are Our Friends") in Esquire that the president stop the "rising tide of Pentagon propaganda on the Chinese 'threat' and tell Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld .??.??. that our trigger pullers on the ground today deserve everything they need to conduct counterinsurgency operations."

Whether or not it shares these views of Chinese benignity, the Navy has drifted in recent years. At about 280 combatants, fleet size today is less than half its level during the Reagan administration. The Navy says it needs an additional 33 ships to carry out its various global missions, but the needed increase eludes its leadership. The costs of shipbuilding have increased without effective restraint, and one new class of large surface combatants—the Zumwalt class of destroyers—was cancelled. Another—the Littoral Combat ship—saw overruns double the cost of the first ship and the number to be purchased fall by nearly a fifth. (The price remains stratospheric for a vessel whose most immediate mission would be to chase speedboat-borne pirates.) The programs to replace aircraft carriers as they reach the end of their useful service lives are in irons as a result of a clash between previous DoD decisions that restrict the size of the next carrier and the expansive requirements of the critical systems planned for the next generation of carriers.

Even without the likelihood that China's next large step in developing its navy is the addition of aircraft carriers, the United States needed to increase its combatant fleet. Continued missteps that result in a diminishing U.S. Navy at the same time that China's naval force grows are an invitation to change the balance of power in Asia, the Pacific, and the world.

The Obama administration should use part of its proposed economic stimulus package to begin a naval restoration program that will increase the combatant fleet by at least 15 percent before 2016, and the program should not be relegated to future budget years, which are as changeable as the weather. A Naval Recovery Act should include an immediate advance in the schedule for constructing a new carrier, thus eliminating the undesirable possibility that the Navy will be short one for several years. Similar efforts should aim at drawing Japan closer, developing our connections with the Indian navy, reestablishing a naval base in the Philippines, and building a relationship with Vietnam that could eventually support a U.S. naval presence. Offsetting China's efforts to deny the United States access to our Western Pacific friends and allies requires thoughtful statecraft as well as effective naval forces.

Allowing the current U.S. naval slippage to continue will result in a combat fleet of a size we haven't seen since 1911. Combined with the parallel growth in the Chinese navy and the certainty that Beijing's leadership will use it to fill the vacuums created by a diminishing U.S. naval presence, this would be more damaging and strategically far-reaching than any of the Bush administration's mistakes. The PLAN's likely entry into carrier aviation is interesting for what it says about China's long-term strategy and objectives. How we respond is far more important.

Iran Buids New Submarine

Trend.az (Azerbaijan), January 21, 2009

Iranian technical university student Hassan Sharifzadeh drafted a new reconnaissance submarine that can avoid radar detection, the Iranian Fars news agency said.

No crew will man the submarine which will be controlled remotely.

The submarine can reach a depth of up to 8 meters and carry 8 kilograms of explosives to place near enemy positions. A SIM card connects the controller to the submarine.

The submarine also makes photos and videos and sends the data to the control center, Sharifzadeh said.

Two Years After Putting Aside $40M For Sub Base, State Ready To Spend It

Rell wants to show commitment to facility despite lack of guarantee from the Navy

By Jennifer Grogan, The Day, January 22, 2009

Groton - The governor has decided that it is time to start spending some of the $40 million the legislature authorized in 2007 for improvements to the Naval Submarine Base.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell said Wednesday she expects the State Bond Commission to approve $7.65 million in grants to the Navy at its Jan. 30 meeting, $4.65 million of which will be used to upgrade to the base's facility for its divers and the remainder used to replace the aging boilers at the power plant.

The state is planning to bond about $525 million for a variety of infrastructure improvements statewide, including $3.8 million for scheduled upgrades to Camp Rell in Niantic, in what is being called a "Connecticut Stimulus Package" aimed at providing jobs and relief to cities and towns.

The Pentagon proposed closing the submarine base in Groton in 2005, a decision that was later overturned by an independent commission.

Rell initially said she would only support a state investment in the base if it came with assurances from the Navy that such spending would ensure the base's future.

The Navy did not make any such guarantees.

But Rell decided to spend the money now anyway to "improve the submarine base and preserve quality defense jobs in Connecticut" and show the federal government that the state's "commitment to keeping the submarine base right here in Groton has never been stronger," she said in a statement.

State economists estimate that 31,500 jobs are linked in various ways to the base, a figure that includes employees at hundreds of small, private subcontractors and at local submarine manufacturer Electric Boat.

”I’m delighted that some money has finally been released,” state Sen. Andrew Maynard said. “We fought hard to have funds made available for the base.”

Brian Farber, spokesman for U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, said that “when combined with the nearly $80 million the congressman has helped to secure to improve its infrastructure in the past two years, the state funding will help make the base a truly enduring and critical post for our Navy.”

The current diver facility is housed in one of the oldest buildings on the base, built in 1918. The new building, with more space and better heating and insulation, will support 40 Navy divers, who help inspect and repair the submarines.

The power plant upgrade is part of an effort to replace boilers from the 1960s with ones that better meet environmental standards and cost less to run.

Capt. Mark S. Ginda, base commander, said he is “certainly excited about any opportunity to improve the services, infrastructure and work environment” at the base, which will help with the dual mission of deploying combat-ready submarines and crews and training a corps of professional submariners.

State officials have not yet determined what the rest of the $40 million will be spent on, said Justin Bernier, executive director of the state’s Office of Military Affairs.

”The money was not meant to be spent all in one chunk,” he said. “It makes more sense to do military construction projects as they become available.”

Spending some of the money now is a strategic move, Bernier said, because if the base closes “we’ll be facing a much greater deficit than $7.65 million.”

If the bond commission approves the expenditure, the state and the Navy will sign an agreement stipulating that the money will be used for these specific base improvements and then the state will transfer the money to the Navy, Bernier said.

Quoting Humphrey Bogart in “Casablanca,” John C. Markowicz, chairman of the Subase Coalition, said, “I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”

Secnav Sounds Off On Firings, Crew Size

By Philip Ewing, Navy Times, January 20, 2009

The Navy’s long-term ability to take on its worldwide missions depends on maintaining a force of 11 carriers, according to the service’s top civilian.

The force can make do with fewer flattops for a while, Navy Secretary Donald Winter added, but in the long run, the Navy may not be able to fulfill its commitments if the permanent number drops to 10.

“We have a series of commitments that we’ve made. Those have been worked out with the combatant commanders. On average, we believe that we can meet all of those commitments with 11 carriers,” Winter said.

Winter reaffirmed his support for the Navy’s current carrier force in a Jan. 12 interview with Navy Times reporters and editors, less than a month before the Navy is expected to request a short-term exemption from its legal requirement to maintain 11 carriers.

The Navy is seeking an official sanction for the 33-month gap between the scheduled decommissioning of the Enterprise in 2012 and the commissioning of the Gerald Ford in 2015. It will be the second year the Navy has made that request, after Congress turned down the first one, and it will be a time in which fiscal hardship and a strengthened Democratic Congress appear likely to generate discussion of fewer carriers.

The Navy can drop to 10, Winter said, for “a short period of time.”

“It’s a matter of managing how many carriers are in various availabilities at any given period of time,” Winter said. “But that doesn’t mean that we’re prepared to reduce the number of carriers from a long-term perspective.”

During the interview, Winter announced that he has agreed to stay on as Navy secretary for two more months at the most to keep continuity in the Pentagon early in President Barack Obama’s term. Winter said he has committed to stay until March 13 unless a replacement is nominated and confirmed before then.

Reflecting on his time in office, Winter said he had “no regrets whatsoever” and called it “an absolutely incredible experience.” He said he was “incredibly impressed” by the sailors and Marines he has met throughout the fleet and on his trips to the war zones in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

Shipbuilding, crew size

Winter’s tenure included cost overruns and delays for the amphibious transport docks San Antonio and New Orleans; the littoral combat ships Freedom and Independence; and the amphibious assault ship Makin Island, although the design and planning for each preceded his time as secretary.

Still, Winter battled the shipbuilders, even sending a public letter in 2007 to the head of Northrop Grumman complaining about the Navy’s problems with the San Antonio. As Winter looked back on his term in his interview with Navy Times, he said he was trying to steer the service away from unnecessarily complex programs and incorporate better quality into Navy ships from the outset.

“One of the things I want to emphasize is that when I talk about quality, I’m not just talking about the normal [quality assurance]-type deviation assessment and inspection. We need to design end-quality. And we’ve lost a lot of that over the last several years,” Winter said. Instead of building in margin for changes, the Navy and its contractors have focused on a single selling point — a ship’s speed, or the resolution of an unmanned plane’s sensors. “A rebalancing is needed here,” he said.

He reiterated his support for crew reductions, saying it was important to take advantage of technological advances without sacrificing safety.

He cited the Freedom's ability to operate with fewer personnel on the bridge and in engineering because of automation. When asked how older, legacy ships — which weren't designed with today's crew numbers in mind — can be expected to steam with fewer sailors, Winter said the solution lies in modernizations.

"There are very few ships that have stayed the way they were originally designed, and we continue to modernize those ships as we bring in new capabilities. We're doing that with the cruisers right now. We do that with the carriers every time they come in through [a refueling complex overhaul]. We do it with the submarines.

"And when we do that, we need to reflect those changes in modernization in the crew structure."

Skipper firings

Winter also oversaw a series of high-profile punishments of senior leaders, in what is easily the strictest environment compared with the other armed services. But he defended the Navy's methods for selecting commanding officers, despite a relatively steady line of firings across the service — from admirals to surface ship captains to squadron commanders to sub skippers. In 2008, the Navy fired a range of officers, including a three-star admiral; the heads of recruiting districts; the skipper and executive officer of the carrier George Washington after a shipboard fire; the one-star program executive officer for ships; and the skipper of a ballistic-missile submarine.

"We've had a long-standing history and tradition of maintaining high standards, and holding people accountable," Winter said. "That said, you can't always get it right and mistakes happen, or sometimes it's just not a mistake of promoting or positioning the right individual. Sometimes situations change, and when it proves not to work, I think it is incumbent upon the service to take the corrective action."

He contrasted the Navy with the Marine Corps and the Army — which have had fewer reliefs — by saying that land forces have "a different structure, if you will, where you have multiple individuals engaged in command."

The Navy demands more of its commanding officers, Winter said, because "when a ship goes over the horizon, that ship and its crew [are] totally and completely dependent on the captain of the ship, and you damn well better have the utmost confidence in that individual."

He said he examines each relief for "root causes," but declined to acknowledge any patterns.

"I'd say again we have a history and a tradition of strict accountability, and I believe that has served our Navy well, and I see no reason to change that approach," he said.

Donald Winter

Secretary, U.S. Navy

Defense News, January 19, 2009

When Donald Winter was appointed Navy secretary in 2006, his service's shipbuilding efforts were facing soaring costs and perenially tardy deliveries. Winter moved quickly. In his first public speech, he struck at what he saw as one of the problems: shipyards that weren't doing their best to keep programs moving along on time and budget. Since then, he has continued to push the shipbuilding industry to modernize and cut costs. He has also criticized his own service's penchant for adding or changing requirements.

Winter, who holds a doctorate in physics, was a program manager at the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the CEO of TRW, and the head of Northrop Grumman's Mission Systems sector before being tapped as the Navy's top civilian leader. Asked to stay in his job until incoming President Barack Obama can replace him, Winter has announced plans to leave by March 13.

Q. Are there more Navy tasks that should be outsourced? Are there outsourced tasks the Navy should reclaim?

A. I'd hate to ever say there were no jobs that we're doing right now within the department that couldn't be outsourced. At the same time, my greater concern is that there are a number of areas that we have chosen to outsource through various mechanisms that we need to take a good hard look at.

You need to really understand what you're buying - what's important, what can be traded off -and participate in the real development of the specifications that say what it is that you want to buy and why, and not just worry about the hardware, but worry about the hardware and the people and the concepts of operations.

I've been pushing very hard to expand the acquisition work force in terms of those areas where we need the competency, from systems engineering to contract specialists to program monitors. If we're able to do this right, it will make life easier and more profitable for industry, because we can go ahead and identify what we want, what's important, what's tradeable - and do it once, not with a lot of changes.

Q. You sound dissatisfied with the Navy's ability to say what it needs.

A. Well, I think this is something that has transpired throughout the entirety of the [Pentagon]. We've gone from an era in which we specified things, perhaps to too great an extent, and told contractors not only what we wanted, but how we wanted them to do every little thing, all the way to the point of saying, "Well, we won't tell you what we want; we'll just tell you what our needs are."

One of the problems with that is that there are multiple decisions in any acquisition process.

Nowadays, on many of these programs, you're lucky to get two, maybe three bidders, and it's all in there - the technology, the suppliers, the development process, the price, the contractors. And so you've got hundreds of decisions that are all important, but we, the Navy, get only one decision: buy from this or buy from that.

It can't be optimum. And it invariably is not optimum. Just the logistic support - I'm trying to remember offhand how many thousand different valve types we maintain in Pennsylvania for the various ships. We don't specify. We don't have a preferred supplier, a preferred parts list, and so every ship comes along, the contractor tries to do the best they can, minimize the price, improve the schedule.

I'm perfectly comfortable with the commercial off-the-shelf computers that we're able to get because, by the way, they have been developed and refined through a highly competitive process that's at the heart of our economic system, but I also note that there is no equivalent highly competitive process that is part and parcel of the development of technology for a warship or a combat helicopter or an armed vehicle.

Q. Are you happy with the level of funding and other resources that support warships?

A. I'm going to continue to push very hard on the quality issues that I see in the original production and delivery. One of the things I want to emphasize is that when I talk about quality, I'm not just talking about the normal Quality Assurance-type deviation assessment and inspection. We need to design end quality. And we've lost a lot of that over the last several years.

Q. How so?

A. There was a time where we knew what we knew and what we didn't know, and we were concerned that we didn't know a lot, and so we designed a lot of margin.

I maintain that one reason why we have so many DC-3s with so many flight hours on them is that we knew back then we didn't know what we were doing. And we designed in a lot of margin that provided value in terms of environments that we couldn't quite anticipate. It provided value in terms of extra life.

Nowadays, we have a tendency to believe that we know exactly how everything is going to work, and we develop these extremely intricate, very capable mathematical models of everything from ships to aircraft to land vehicles, and we put a lot of effort into them.

Now, the models themselves are in many cases very, very good, and very capable, but they're really only as capable as the assumptions we can put into them, and you always have to wonder: Have we gotten all the assumptions right? Do we know not only how the particular component or system was designed, but how it was built? Do we truly understand all of the environmental factors, the way in which that individual system is being used?

If we don't understand all these things, then there's a certain degree of uncertainty, and yet we have a tendency right now to push so much for performance. There is this sense that we're going to pick whoever comes up with the highest performance factor, whether that's the greatest endurance, greatest speed, greatest load-carrying capability, however performance is defined. We tend to put things like maintainability, reliability and availability in a secondary consideration in many cases because it's a lot harder, frankly, to measure and determine it.

Q. Can you give examples?

A. If you look at our needs in theater, we need UAVs. It's more important the number of UAVs that we can put up at any given point in time, number of orbits that we can maintain, than it is to worry about the resolution that the sensor package on a given UAV can achieve. Yet we often have a tendency to focus on that performance factor, whether it's resolution or endurance or whatever. We don't worry about the availability considerations. And you can get availability through many mechanisms, but most of those mechanisms start with design.

Q. Could the Navy make do with fewer than 11 aircraft carriers? If Congress says you should have more or less, how hard will you fight to keep this level?

A. What's really important is not the number of ships I have on the Naval Register at any given point in time, but, getting back to some of the quality discussions, it's availability. How many ships are available at any given time? How many are ready to go to sea? We have a series of commitments that we've made. Those have been worked out with the combatant commanders.

On average, we believe that we can meet all of those commitments with 11 carriers, and that's the reason we have taken the size and the commitment that we've made, the agreement with Congress.

Can you deal with fewer carriers for a short period of time? Certainly you can. It's a matter of managing how many carriers are in various availabilities at any given period of time. But that doesn't mean we're prepared to reduce the number of carriers in the long term.

Q. What should your successor be thinking about in terms of shipbuilding?

A. We have to recognize the alternative of developing what I sometimes refer to as a portfolio strategy. You don't need to have a multibillion-dollar ship to confront pirates. But you do need to be able to maintain a presence off the Horn of Africa, off the Gulf of Guinea, off many other locales around the world. And, oh, by the way, you may have to adjust that presence as time and situations warrant. Now that doesn't mean you can give up on the high-end capabilities, because there are other people out there who are continuing to invest in very advanced and sophisticated naval platforms.

So the whole question is, how do you build that balance between capability, performance and numbers? That's something that we've got to be very, very careful of in the future. If we keep on pushing everything to be the most capable platform, we will wind up with a cost per ship, even on an average basis, that limits our ability to achieve the fleet size that we're looking for.

Q. Sounds like you're pushing something like the Northrop Grumman patrol frigate, a gray-hulled national security cutter.

A. There are many issues with that particular offering. I've seen that one - at least, I saw a version awhile ago. I wasn't all that impressed by it.

We've got a very good program with the Littoral Combat Ship. I am convinced that it provides us with a very good and flexible capability, and in particular the modularity of LCS compared to this alternative provides us the ability to adapt both in the short and the long term, to be able to evolve. Any time we look at the flexibility of that platform and compare the two, we see the tremendous advantage. We also believe that LCS, if produced in quantity, can be brought in for a good price point.

Q. How much would that be?

A. I'm not going to get into the specific numbers, but considerably less than what we're paying now.

Go and take a look at any aircraft and you never ever take a look at the first flight articles that are used for test purposes and say, "Well, that's what it's going to cost for production."

Q. You have two LCS contracts ready to award, supposedly, in January. Should we still be thinking January?

A. Well, I hope so.

Iran Found To Amass Key Substances For Ballistic Missiles Production:

Defense Daily, January 21, 2009

Iran is amassing materials such as tungsten copper and specialized aluminum and titanium sheets that are key to production of missiles, including long-range weapons, The Wall Street Journal reported.

The report comes as Iran continues to flout world opinion and United Nations resolutions by producing nuclear materials that, with reprocessing, can be used to build nuclear weapons.

Some leaders in the outgoing Bush administration fear Iran is just two to three years from developing nuclear weapons, and the technology to build intercontinental ballistic missiles as well, weapons that could strike Europe or the United States. Iran also has fired multiple missiles in a salvo test, fired a missile from a submerged submarine, and announced plans for a space program.

That is why Bush proposed that the United States construct the European Missile Defense (EMD) system in the Czech Republic (radar) and Poland (interceptors in ground silos). The Boeing Co. [BA] would lead the EMD program, basing it on the Boeing Ground-based Midcourse Defense missile shield now installed in Alaska and California. However, first some hurdles must be surmounted, including restrictions imposed by Congress.

But as Barack Obama moves into the White House, the new president has nominated key defense officials who say the Department of Defense should review whether the EMD should be built, as part of the Quadrennial Defense Review that will be undertaken later this year.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said that Israel should be wiped from the map, and that it soon shall cease to exist. He also has sprayed hatred toward the United States.

Financing for the Iranian materials purchases must flow through financial institutions, including those in major industrialized countries, and U.S. authorities are probing to see whether legal restrictions were violated, according to the report.

Beijing Takes Aim At U.S. Aircraft Carriers

By Michael Richardson, Japan Timews, January 22, 2009

SINGAPORE — U.S. President George W. Bush commissioned America's newest aircraft carrier Jan. 10 at the Norfolk naval base in Virginia. Named after his father, former President George H.W. Bush, the giant ship, which carries 85 planes and nearly 6,000 crew, is a potent symbol of America's global power and presence, despite recent U.S. economic and foreign policy failures.

It is also the last of 10 nuclear-powered Nimitz-class carriers to enter service with the U.S. Navy. They are the largest warships in the world. However, by 2015 the first of an even bigger and more advanced class of carrier, also nuclear-powered, is scheduled to start replacing the Nimitz vessels. Two years ago, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney said that the successor ships "will help ensure the sea power of the United States for the next half century.?

To defend its interests in Asia, the U.S. has been steadily transferring more aircraft carriers and other warships from its Atlantic fleet to the Pacific. As a result, the Pacific fleet's share of the 280 ships in the Navy has risen from 45 percent in earlier years to around 54 percent and continues to increase. The U.S. Pacific fleet now includes six of the Navy's 11 aircraft carriers, almost all of the 18 Aegis cruisers and destroyers that have been modified for ballistic missile defense operations, and 26 of the 57 attack submarines.

To counter the Asia-Pacific focus of the U.S. Navy, China is reportedly planning to deploy ballistic missiles with nonnuclear warheads and special guidance systems to hit moving surface ships at sea in the Western Pacific before they can get within range of Chinese targets.

If China fielded such a weapon, one that could reliably sink or cause heavy damage to aircraft carriers and other major warships far from its shores, it would make a potential adversary think long and hard before sending naval forces to intervene in a crisis over Taiwan or any other regional conflict in which China was involved.

This would reduce the value and deterrent effect of U.S. alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, including its mutual defense pacts with Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. Fortunately, Beijing and Taipei have greatly improved their relations in recent months and an armed confrontation between them that could bring the U.S. into the fighting on the side of Taiwan seems less likely to happen.

Still, Ronald O'Rourke, a specialist in naval affairs for the Congressional Research Service, told U.S. lawmakers in November that the U.S. Defense Department and other analysts believed that China was developing anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs). They would have a range of up to 3,000 km and carry maneuverable re-entry vehicles with warheads designed to hit moving naval ships. The missiles would be launched by rocket propulsion from land in an arc-like trajectory high into the atmosphere and travel at speeds of up to 24,000 km per hour when coming down, making them very hard to defend against.

Ballistic missiles have traditionally been used to attack fixed targets on land and O'Rourke noted that the U.S. Navy had "not previously faced a threat from highly accurate ballistic missiles capable of hitting moving ships at sea. Due to their ability to change course, maneuverable re-entry vehicles (MRVs) would be more difficult to intercept than nonmaneuvering ballistic missile re-entry vehicles."

Some analysts are skeptical and doubt that China has made all the technical breakthroughs needed for an accurate ASBM system. The U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence concluded in 2004 that it would be "very difficult" for China to field an ASBM force that could successfully track faraway aircraft carriers and other major warships, which can travel at sustained speeds of over 30 knots (55 km) per hour, and then hit them with MRV warheads.

The Bush administration spent billions of dollars to develop defenses against ballistic missiles. However, President Barack Obama says that while he supports missile defense, he wants to be sure that programs are affordable and proven.

One of the more successful parts of the U.S. program, the Aegis ship-based system to defend against shorter-range missiles, experienced two recent test failures, bringing its record to 13 hits in 17 intercept attempts. Even so, it is not designed to provide a shield against the longer range missiles China is reportedly trying to turn into weapons for use against naval vessels.

The Pentagon's latest annual report to Congress on Chinese military power, published last year, said that when incorporated into a sophisticated command and control system, China's ASBMs would be a key component of its strategy to give the Chinese armed forces "the capability to attack ships at sea, including aircraft carriers, from great distances" so as to deny access to waters around China. Some analysts claim that China already operates over-the-horizon radar installations to detect and track ships far out at sea and is backing this up with maritime surveillance using its own satellites in space. They say that China will soon test an ASBM.

If they are correct and the new system works, it could turn potent symbols of naval power into sitting ducks.

Michael Richardson is a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

China Plays Maritime Chess

By Cesar Chelala, Japan Times, January 22, 2009

The start of Chinese patrols in the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden is intended to extend China's naval role and presence far from its shores while demonstrating, under United Nations rules of engagement, a capability to conduct complex operations in distant waters.

Today, taking on pirates under the placard of internationalism offers China a welcome opportunity to add force to its global power ambitions. The antipiracy plank earlier made it handy for Beijing to agree to joint patrols with Pakistan in the Arabian Sea and extend cooperation to ASEAN. Another Chinese objective is to chip away at India's maritime dominance in the Indian Ocean — a theater critical to fashioning a Sino-centric Asia. If China can assert naval power in the Indian Ocean to expand its influence over the regional waterways and states, it will emerge as the preeminent Asian power.

The geopolitical importance of the Indian Ocean today is beginning to rival that of the Pacific. Much of the global oil-export supply passes through the Indian Ocean rim region, particularly through two constricted passageways — the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman, and the piracy-plagued Strait of Malacca.

In addition, the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the nuclear standoff with Iran undergird the critical importance of the Indian Ocean region. Asserting naval presence in the Indian Ocean and expanding maritime power in the Pacific are part of the high-stakes game of maritime chess China is now ready to play. Its buildup of naval forces directly challenges Japan and India and impinges on U.S. interests.

China, undergirding its larger geostrategic motives, says it is "seriously considering" adding to its navy fleet a first aircraft carrier — a symbol of "a nation's comprehensive power," as a military spokesperson put it.

Now, with Chinese President Hu Jintao publicly calling for rapid naval modernization and the last defense White Paper disclosing that "the Navy aims to gradually extend its strategic depth," naval expansion and greater missile prowess are clearly at the core of China's force modernization. Since 2000 alone, China has built at least 60 warships. Its navy now has a fleet of 860 vessels, including at least 60 submarines.

There is a clear strategic shift under way in China on force planning. Historically a major land power, China is now putting the accent on building long-range maritime power to help underpin geopolitical interests, including winning new allies and safeguarding its energy and economic investments in distant lands. China has been in the lead in avariciously acquiring energy and mineral assets in Sudan, Nigeria, Iran, Venezuela, Burma, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and other states that have a record of showing scant respect for international contracts. Through naval power-projection force capability, Beijing intends to dissuade such states from reasserting control over Chinese-held assets.

More significantly, rising naval power arms China with the heft to pursue mercantilist efforts to lock up long-term energy supplies, assert control over transport routes, and assemble a "string of pearls" in the form of listening posts and special naval-access arrangements along the great trade arteries.

Just as China's land-combat strategy has evolved from "deep defense" (luring enemy forces into Chinese territory to help garrote them) to "active defense" (a proactive posture designed to fight the enemy on enemy territory, including through the use of forces stationed in neighboring lands or seas), a shift in its sea-warfare posture has emerged, with the emphasis on greater reach and depth and expeditionary capability.

And just as Beijing has used its energy investments in Central Asia as justification to set up at least two offensively configured, armor-heavy mechanized corps — with Xinjiang as their springboard — to fight deep inside adversarial territory and secure strategic assets, China's growing oil imports from the Persian Gulf and Africa have come handy to rationalize its growing emphasis on the seas.

Chinese naval power is set to grow exponentially. This will become evident as Beijing accelerates its construction of warships and begins to deploy naval assets far from its exclusive economic zone. In fact, Chinese warships inducted in recent years have already been geared for blue-sea fleet operations. China is on track to deploy a fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines (known as SSBNs). It has already developed its new Jin-class (Type 094) SSBN prototype, with satellite pictures showing one such submarine berthed at the huge new Chinese naval base at Sanya, on the southern coast of Hainan Island. Within the next 25 years, China could have more nuclear assets at sea than Russia.

Against that background, it is no surprise that the Chinese Navy is extending its operations to a crucial international passageway — the Indian Ocean. China indeed has aggressively moved in recent years to build ports in the Indian Ocean rim, including in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Burma. Besides eyeing Pakistan's Chinese-built port of Gwadar as a naval anchor, Beijing has sought naval links with the Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar.

India, with its enormous strategic depth in the Indian Ocean, is in a position to pursue a sea-denial strategy, if it were to adopt a more forward-thinking naval policy designed to forestall the emergence of a Beijing-oriented Asia. It has to start exerting naval power at critical chokepoints, in concert with the Japanese, U.S. and other friendly navies. In essence, that entails guarding the various "gates" to the Indian Ocean. More broadly, Japanese-Indian naval cooperation and collaboration have become inescapable.
Brahma Chellaney, a professor of strategic studies at the privately funded Center for Policy Research in New Delhi, is the author, most recently, of "Asian Juggernaut: The Rise of China, India and Japan."

New Russian Diesel Submarines: Innovative and Very Scary

By M Dee Dubroff, Inventorspot.com, Jan. 26, 2009

In the words of Alexei Aleshin, the first deputy CEO of Russian Technology state corporation:
"Lada will be an absolutely new product. One hundred and twenty new technologies are being used for its creation."

Construction of the first Lada submarines started in 1977. The Lada's main feature is its offering of a combination of a low noise level, small size and power. Functions include those similar to others of its ilk, namely, the destruction of enemy submarines and ships, the protection of navy bases, coasts and sea communications, and reconnaissance operations. The Lada submarine is able to perform independently on naval communications against enemy submarines and ships and to protect coastal regions and straight zones from other subs.

Due to the reduction of all physical fields, the Lada is almost invisible. It features a new anti-sonar coating for its hull, an extended cruising range, and advanced anti-ship and anti-submarine weaponry. This submarine is also equipped with an inertial navigation system (INS), which allows for safer control of the vessel. The control of weapons and technical equipment is fully automated.

The Admiralty Shipyard is building another three Lada-class submarines, and plans to launch between four and six of them by 2015. Russia has ensured high export potential by developing state-of-the-art Project 636 and Project 677 diesel submarines. These subs are thought to be of the most silent submarine classes anywhere in the world and they have been specifically designed for anti-shipping and anti-submarine operations in relatively shallow waters. Russia has already built submarines for India, China and Iran. The free world awaits the Lada and…shivers.

Pittsford woman recalls loss of brother in sunken sub

Democrat & Chronicle, Jan. 26, 2009

PITTSFORD – Lila Pancoast Beardsley was only 7 years old when her big brother Jack enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1936.

Six years later, Jack Pancoast was among a crew of 70 men who died aboard the USS Grunion, a 312-foot submarine that sank during a skirmish with a Japanese cargo ship during WWII. Before it went down, the submarine torpedoed two Japanese submarine chasers.

Jack Edwin Pancoast was 25 years old.

Beardsley doesn't remember a lot about her brother. She distinctly remembers her mother, also named Lila, weeping when the family received the news.

"Like any other mother, she took it hard," Beardsley said.

The Navy confirmed that the submarine had disappeared, but for years couldn't determine its location. Most thought the story of the Grunion sank with the submarine. The bodies of the crew weren't recovered; the families couldn't bury their dead.

More than six decades later, the adult sons of Lt. Mannert Abele, commander of the USS Grunion, located the vessel. Machines with sonar and high definition camera capability were used to find the Grunion buried 3,000 feet underwater near the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. Trips were conducted in 2006 and 2007 to authenticate that it was in fact the submarine.

The vessel was too deep to be raised, but the discovery motivated three women – known affectionately as the "sub ladies" – to spend two years tracking down a relative for each member of the Grunion crew. The sub ladies lost a relative on the Grunion as well.

Carmine Parziale was a torpedo man on the Grunion. His niece, Mary Bentz, a sub lady from Bethesda, Md., has been intimately involved with the Grunion project.

"I feel that my immediate family grew by 70 families," she said.

Volunteers found Lila Beardsley through another brother, Robert Knight, who lives in Beardsley's home state of Pennsylvania. When Knight called his sister with the news, she was shocked to find out someone knew what happened to Jack.

The weekend of Oct. 10-12, Lila Beardsley, 79, and her husband, Raymond, 83, were among 300 people who attended a three-day memorial ceremony in Cleveland, the location of the USS Cod, a submarine similar in design to the Grunion.

Guests were honored at a banquet, and ventured through the Cod. At a memorial service, Bentz read the name of each of the 70 members of the Grunion crew.

Beardsley, gripping a red carnation, stood on the deck of the Cod with the other relatives and threw her flower overboard, wishing a final farewell to her brother.

"You could hear a pin drop," she said. "There weren't any dry eyes."

Wanting to know more about a brother-in-law he never met, Raymond Beardsley secured the military personnel records of Jack Pancoast, who received a Purple Heart from the Navy. The Beardsleys knew Pancoast married a Filipino woman named Julia, but found out the couple had a son. The boy was born June 17, 1940.

Raymond Beardsley, and the sub ladies, are now looking for the son but haven't found his whereabouts.

Connections to the Grunion have also extended abroad. Bentz said contact has been made with the wife of a commander of one of the Japanese submarine chasers sunk by a Grunion torpedo.

A Web site, ussgrunion.com, has been created, detailing the history of the submarine and the extraordinary story that led to its discovery, said Bruce Abele of Massachusetts, who updates the site.

Unbelievable coincidences and connections ultimately lead to discovery of the Grunion, a tale that continues to unfold. "In all honesty, unless you've experienced it, it's hard to describe," Abele said.

LR Helps ROKS Navy Achieve Deep-Dive Record

Seadiscovery.com, Jan. 22, 2009

Lloyd's Register reports that it has chalked up a hat-trick of firsts in cooperation with the Republic of Korea Navy.

ROKS DSRV II, a rescue submersible built by UK underwater defence systems specialists, James Fisher Defence (JFD), based at Renfrew in Scotland, is the first submarine in Korea to be classed with Lloyd's Register, marking the first involvement by Lloyd's Register Asia with the ROK Navy. Also, the submersible's final dive during its sea acceptance tests – to a depth of 507 m – is the deepest recorded dive in the history of the Korean Navy.

ROKS DSRV II was built to a design based on the Glasgow-based JFD's Deep Search and Rescue (DSAR) 500 Class submarine rescue vehicle platform.

Its construction, which draws on the JFD's experience in global submarine rescue operations and participation in submarine rescue, was overseen by Lloyd's Register. Surveyor Paul Marshall from the Glasgow office, dealt with most of the production and testing during construction and Liz Kennedy from the Hull office, coordinated the global involvement of Lloyd's Register in the project.

The test dives, from the Chung-Hae-Jin, the ROK Navy's multipurpose salvage and submarine rescue ship, were monitored by Lloyd's Register Asia's Korean surveyors Jae Sun Kim and Hein Leemhuis.

The submersible is capable of locking onto the escape hatch of a disabled submarine and transferring up to 16 submariners under pressure, recovering them to the surface where they are then transferred into the decompression facility onboard Chung-Hae-Jin.

Sailors Refuse To Board Cursed Boat

StrategyPage.com, Jan. 27, 2009

The Russian Akula II SSN (nuclear attack submarine) that was supposed to be delivered to India this year, is being delayed by difficulty in completing its sea trials. The problem is that Russians can't get enough qualified sailors and civilian technicians to serve on the boat. This is because, while undergoing sea trials last November, there was an accidental activation of the fire extinguisher system. This killed twenty sailors and civilians, and injured more than twenty. There were 208 people aboard the sub at the time, most of them navy and shipyard personnel there to closely monitor all aspects of the sub as it made its first dives and other maneuvers. The source of the fatal accident was poor design and construction of the safety systems on the sub. This accident led to sailors and shipyard technicians being fearful of going to sea on the boat. So the sea trials have been suspended, making the sub ineligible for transfer to the Indian Navy. A year ago, Indian officials acknowledged that it is leasing at least one Russian Akula II, which was to enter Indian service in 2009.

Late last year, Indian submarine sailors went to Vladivostok, the Russian city on the Pacific, near the naval base where the new Akula II boat is based. These Indian submariners are apparently the crew of the leased boat, that apparently will be called the INS Chakra (the same name used by the Charlie class Russian sub India leased from 1988-91. It's believed that the Indians have the option to back out if the sea trials don't work out. Traditionally, when a new ship losses lots of people during sea trials, it is regarded as "cursed" and unlucky. Sailors can be a superstitious, especially when there are dead bodies involved.

The 7,000 ton Akula IIs are recently built, and each requires a crew of 51 highly trained sailors. The Indian money enabled Russia to complete construction on at least two Akulas. These boats were less than half finished at the end of the Cold War. This was another aftereffect of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Several major shipbuilding projects were basically put on hold (which still cost a lot of money), in the hopes that something would turn up. In this case, it was Indians with lots of cash. The Indian crew was, apparently, to take possession of the INS Chakra this Summer, and take it back to India. But until Russia can lift the curse from this boat, and get enough sailors on board to complete the sea trials, the Indians will have to wait. Talk around the Russian shipyard is that the trials will not resume until next year. Apparently the design of the Akula II is being reviewed, and modifications are planned.

India also expects to complete construction of its own nuclear sub design in a year or two, and begin sea trials and tests. This boat is based on Russian technology, but is basically Indian designed and built. The Russian Akula will basically serve as a training boat for India's new nuclear submarine force.

The new Indian SSN is called the ATV (Advanced Technology Vessel) class. There are to be five boats in the class, assuming that the first one works well. That first ATV SSN (nuclear attack sub) is not expected to enter service for at least another 3-5 years. In the late 1980s, India leased a Russian nuclear sub for three years, providing Indian sailors with an opportunity to become very familiar with the technology.

The ATV will be a 5,000 ton boat, and comparisons are being made to the new Chinese 093 (Shang) class, which is a 6,000 ton boat that entered service two years ago, after more than a decade of construction. That was China's second class of SSNs. The first, the Han class, was a disaster. India is trying to learn from Chinas mistakes. That's one reason the ATV project has been kept so secret. Another reason for the secrecy was that so much of the ATV project involved developing a compact, light water reactor technology that would fit in a submarine. One of these Indian reactors is being installed in a 5,000 ton Charlie II class submarine that was leased from Russia. This boat will be ready for sea trails next year. If that goes well, the reactor will be installed in the first ATV.

Once the ATV SSN is proven, a modified version will be built as a SSBN (ballistic missile carrying sub). This was how everyone else did it, including the Chinese. Get an SSN operational, then modify the design to include some SLBM launch tubes.

Hearings Set On Navy Plan For Dolphin Patrols

Associated Press, Jan. 27, 2009

BANGOR, Wash. – A Navy plan to use dolphins and sea lions to patrol its Hood Canal submarine base is set for environmental hearings next month.

Nearly two years ago, Navy officials announced the start of work on an environmental impact statement for the Swimmer Interdiction Security System at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

The resulting draft impact statement, listing five options for securing the four-mile waterfront, is the subject of hearings Feb. 11 in Silverdale and Feb. 12 in SeaTac.

The Navy's preference is for a combination of trained California sea lions and Atlantic bottlenose dolphins to guard against swimmers breaching the base's water perimeter. Other alternatives are to use sea lions only, human swimmers, remotely operated equipment, and no change, although the final option would fail to meet anti-terrorism requirements were adopted after Sept. 11, 2001.

A final impact statement is expected in late July and a final decision by the secretary of the Navy is expected in October, Navy spokeswoman Sheila Murray said.

Under the preferred plan, dolphins would be used only at night and would be accompanied by handlers in small power boats. The dolphins would be trained to return to the boat and alert the handler if they noticed an intruder. The handler would then place a strobe light on a dolphin's nose, and the creature would return and bump the intruder, causing the light to come free and float to the surface as a location marker.

Guards would then be sent to find and subdue the intruder.

Murray said the sea lion-only option was added in response to public suggestions after the use of dolphins was proposed in 2007.

Sea lions would be trained to carry in their mouths a special cuff attached to a long rope and clamp the cuff around the leg of a suspicious swimmer, who then could be reeled in for questioning.

Effects on the environment from the five options range from none to minor and fall within federal and state standards, according to the draft impact statement.

Eight nuclear missile-carrying Trident submarines, two subs with conventional missiles and a spy sub are based at Bangor.

The Navy has been training marine mammals for about four decades, mostly in San Diego, and dolphins are used for patrolling the nation's only other Trident base at Kings Bay, Ga.

In public meetings two years ago, however, opponents of a similar move at Bangor said Hood Canal is too cold for bottlenose dolphins.

Murray said the problem is the temperature of the air in winter rather than the water, adding that the Navy's latest plan is for two-hour dolphin shifts and to keep them in heated enclosures when they are off duty.

M'sia Receives First Sub

AFP, Jan. 28, 2009

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysia has taken delivery of its first submarine as part of a plan to establish a fleet of the vessels, according to the French company that built it.

The Royal Malaysian Navy received the Scorpene submarine in the French port of Toulon and a second is scheduled for delivery in late 2009, French contractor DCNS said in a statement late on Tuesday.

It said the sub had completed its final sea trials in December, including the successful firing of torpedoes and missiles.

The sub's delivery again raised opposition claims that a RM540 million (S$225 million) commission was paid to a close associate of deputy premier Najib Razak in brokering the deal.

The deputy premier, who is slotted to take over as prime minister when Abdullah Ahmad Badawi steps down in March, has denied any improper involvement in the deal when he was defence minister.

But senior opposition leader Lim Kit Siang called on Malaysia's new anti-corruption commission to investigate the allegation.

Sri Lankan Forces Seize Crude Submarine From LTTE

The Hindu (India), Jan. 29, 2009

Colombo (PTI): Smashing through LTTE's last positions, Sri Lankan forceson Thursday seized a submarine-type craft from Tamil Tigers-held area revealing that the outfit was probably the only terrorist organisation in the world which possessed such a capability.

Troops stumbled upon the submarine during search operations in the village Udayarakattu, an Army spokesman said. Along with the sub-surface craft, the Lankan forces also seized two naval crafts and a single person craft, which could have been used in suicide attacks by 'Sea Tigers'.

"This was the most startling recovery made by troops so far during the ongoing operations against the LTTE," the Defence Ministry said in a report on its website. "With this discovery the LTTE will go down in the history as the first terrorist organization to develop underwater weapons," it said.

It was not known whether the submarine was indigenous or had been assembled from parts procured clandestinely from abroad. Only a handful of advanced countries have the capability and know-how to manufacture submarine. So far, in the military offensive Lankan forces have seized a number of mine-producing factories as well as establishments which were making light weapons and even mortars.

Three suicide boats and a large haul of LTTE maritime equipment were also found at the location, the Ministry quoted sources as saying. The Army also seized other vessels owned by the LTTE as it forces its way into the remaining strongholds of the Tamil Tigers in the island's northern region.

DOT&E: Diesel Sub Training For VA-Class Hindered By Security Rules

Rules Also Delay Testing, Threaten Milestone

By Dan Taylor, Inside the Navy, Feb. 2, 2009

The Pentagon's testing arm warns that the Virginia-class submarine is getting inadequate training against "a primary threat of record" in diesel submarines because of security rules that restrict operations around subs sent by allied nations, according to the latest Defense Department operational test and evaluation report released last week.

The proliferation of diesel submarines (SSKs) worldwide are a growing concern in Pentagon circles because their engines are quiet, making them difficult to detect. Since the Navy does not have any diesel subs of its own, it relies on allied nations to send their subs to train with the U.S. fleet.

However, security rules restrict operations around foreign vessels, resulting in inadequate testing involving diesel submarines, the 2008 DOT&E report states.

"Navy security rules for the Virginia prevent realistic ASW [anti-submarine warfare] testing using allied SSKs," the report states. "As a result, the Virginia-class submarine will complete IOT&E [initial operational test and evaluation] without resolving performance against a primary threat of record."

The report goes on to note that the rules also restrict sub operations near allied ASW-capable warships.

The agency recommends that the Navy "propose and resource an appropriate surrogate and adequate test strategy to resolve performance against the SSK threat of record" and "establish procedures where Virginia submarines can operate with and train for both their peacetime and wartime missions with our allies."

The Navy had trained alongside the Swedish diesel sub Gotland for two years until mid-2007. The service had difficulty tracking the sub during exercises.

Adm. Jonathan Greenert, head of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, told reporters in March 2008 that ASW was the Navy's "No. 1 working priority" in 2008 and the service needs to do a much better job tracking diesel subs.

The security rules that inhibit diesel sub training are also causing delays for IOT&E testing, which could lead to problems in the program's schedule, the report notes.

"The Navy has invoked special security rules for all test data containing Virginia signature-related information that significantly delays the transport, reconstruction and analysis of test data," it states. Along with other testing obstacles, "these factors have delayed IOT&E completion, will delay test analysis and reporting and could postpone the milestone," the document adds.

DOT&E recommends defining clear rules for what Virginia-class data requires special classification and handling.

Additional operational testing was set to take place over the last four months to make up for incomplete, canceled and inadequate test events, according to the report.

New MCPON's To-Do List

By Mark Faram, Navy Times, Feb. 2, 2009

If you're a slouch, and you've got anchors on your collars, it's time to go. That's the word from the service's new top sailor, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/SW) Rick West. His predecessor, Joe Campa, built a reputation as a boat rocker in a boat that needed rocking. And before leaving, he talked about the need to toughen up evaluations and warfare qualifications. He also set clear guidelines for chiefs and first classes, and for how to give power to the goat locker.

And now, with West in the big chair, he's not backing off from Campa's hard-charging to-do list, but he is adding some items of his own.

First on the list: weeding out low-performing chiefs.

"I'm very interested in creating a means to let the poor performers go," West told Navy Times in a wide-ranging interview. "Our focus should be on performance, particularly at the CPO level. It's time we looked real hard at our chief ranks and the importance of high performance at that level."

Timing is important. As the Navy pauses its drawdown with plans to hold steady at roughly 329,000 sailors, and as the troubling economy is causing more to stay in uniform, something has to give. With more people wanting to stay than the Navy can accommodate, the service must unclog its upper ranks so others can move up.

The problem is worst among sailors with more than 20 years of service. In this group, three out of four ratings are overmanned at 110 percent or more, far worse than any other re-enlistment zone.

Starting in September, most chiefs, senior chiefs and master chiefs with more than 20 years in will go before an annual continuation board. Some will stay. Others will be forced to retire.

So don't get comfortable.

"What I will say is, if you're ever comfortable in the position you're at, then it's time for you to move on and prove something someplace else," West said. "Those chiefs who aren't performing out there know who they are and they also know what to do to fix that."

He also said sailors need to try new things to prove their worth.

"Sailors need to challenge themselves and those around them to be better every day," he said. "What I'm saying is, get out of your comfort zone."

Here are West's takes on other top issues facing sailors today.

New uniforms

Properly managing the switch to the Navy Working Uniform – a massive effort affecting all ranks – is one of the Navy's top priorities.

The blue-and-gray digital uniform went on sale in January in the Norfolk, Va., area and will be phased in over the next two years. The rules have been confusing and controversial, especially when it came to off-base wear.

Sailors wearing the uniform will not be able to get out of their car when commuting to and from work, unless it's a road or medical emergency. That's a stricter policy than the one in place for the uniforms it's replacing – utilities for sailors and wash khakis for chiefs and officers.

Adding to the problem is the fact that sailors for years were told the rules would be looser, not tougher, when it came to off-base wear.

After announcing the strict rules, Navy leadership clarified the policy, saying the rules may be loosened if senior enlisted leaders decide sailors have gotten the hang of the new cammies.

For West, helping manage the policy for the NWU was a job he wasn't looking forward to, until he actually put the blue digital cammies on.

And it didn't help that he initially was not in favor the uniform.

"I was against this uniform at first," because he thought the Navy's existing working uniforms were good enough, he said.

West changed his mind after wearing it, deciding it's comfortable and hearing a lot of positive feedback from sailors who are anxious to wear it.

But the work associated with the rollout and the rules is just beginning.

"Right now, we have to focus on getting our wear policy on the street," West said, acknowledging complaints regarding the new rules and saying he didn't want to get into the decision process, which took place before he became MCPON. "But, we're past the point of questioning how the policy was created. We need to get down to enforcing the regulations."

Chiefs are crucial to the process, he said, since they have to be the experts on how to wear it.

He said he fully supports the four-week phase-in just announced by Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. For the first four weeks, only command leadership will be allowed to wear the NWU while training sailors on the rules. After that, the rank and file can put it on.

"Sailors have a lot of questions about how to wear this uniform," he said. "I think we need to make sure those questions are answered before we start putting our sailors into the uniforms."

He also said he knows that sailors are anxious to get the Navy to relax the strict wear rules. It may be sooner than they think.

"After ... the mess has come back to me and let me know the sailors are wearing it correctly, that's when I'll start thinking about a recommendation to the [Chief of Naval Operations] about broadening the wear policy."

Because providing training and guidance to officers has always been part of a chief's duty, West said, this will also require chiefs to ensure the wardroom is properly schooled in the new uniform.

Still, he thinks the transition will go quickly.

"I think the mess is a pretty powerful group, and I think they want that ability to bring forward some more recommendations," he said. "I don't think it will take two years to do that."

Discipline power for chiefs

Right now, when sailors get into trouble, they go before a disciplinary review board, then to executive officer screening and eventually to captain's mast, if the offense warrants it. At mast, a sailor may receive nonjudicial punishment and a permanent blot on his record.

West says a more positive alternative to that process will be approved within the next few months.

The new "standards and conduct board" will be the first line of Navy discipline – and the responsibility of the chiefs' mess. In it, chiefs will screen every potential captain's mast case and have the authority to provide alternative or lighter punishments that will not go on a sailor's permanent record. Think of it as a cop giving a speeding driver a warning, instead of writing him a ticket. "It standardizes the [disciplinary review] process," West said.

"Before, it was different wherever you went," he said. "This allows interaction between the sailors, leading petty officers and the mess to catch things early."

By putting these issues before the board, leaders will see patterns of misbehavior before they create permanent trouble for sailors.

If a sailor goes before the board in case that normally would lead to mast, the board can recommend the sailor receive a "voluntary diversion." These punishments include extra military instruction, surrendering civilian clothes privileges or restriction. But to avoid mast and take the punishment, the sailor must agree to the board's recommendations.

The idea was tested from October 2007 to January 2008 onboard two cruisers and an aircraft carrier, and with a patrol squadron and two training commands.

That pilot was expanded to even more commands last year, after getting a preliminary go-ahead from Navy leadership.

"I think it provides focus for the mess, and it also empowers the mess by engaging them with the sailors early," West said. "Right now, the instruction is awaiting signature, and we need to get that out there as soon as we can."

West says it should be approved and in the fleet by "late spring or early summer."

Warfare qual overhaul

West wants to kick into high gear a top-down examination of warfare qualifications. The goal is to make them a requirement for survival in the Navy, a part of every sailor's job.

"There are many examples of why knowing a ship and command is important. The program needs to give the sailor a base knowledge of how to fight a ship at sea," West said. "Start early, provide focus throughout their career – I come from a community that mandates it early and it's successful."

The submarine warfare qualification is integrated into the training pipeline, starting at sub school and continuing into their first few months at their command, where sailors must qualify during their first 10 months onboard the boat – along with learning their job.

Compare that with the surface force, where warfare qualifications aren't encouraged at most commands for most junior sailors, West said, and sometimes not al-lowed until someone has become a petty officer.

Petty officers second class onboard ship must qualify within a year, or they won't be allowed to compete for advancement.

"No matter where it starts, I think we need to ensure our programs are where we need to be," he said. "I agree with MCPON Campa that they're not where we need them to be, and we need to move forward."

He gave no timetable for the review. The preliminary discussions on what to do began under Campa with work already being done by the leadership mess.

"I really think there's a lot of goodness to the programs, and we just need to keep going," he said. "We'll take the momentum that's already there and move forward on it. I feel strongly about this one."

Seaman, petty officer evals

West says he'll continue the development of a new set of grading criteria for E-6 and below, but says it's far from a done deal. The move is a follow-on to last year's overhaul of chief petty officer fitness reports, which are now more deck-plate-focused and called "evaluations."

He added that he's not in a hurry to pull the trigger.

"I want the chiefs' eval to take hold and I want us to get lessons learned and feedback from the fleet on how that progressed before we make any decisions on this thing," West said. "It's not a huge priority until we get it right at the chief level, before we move out on the E-6 and below"

The plan is to create two eval forms – one for E-1 through E-3 and the other for E-4 through E-6.

For the E-1 through E-3, the idea is to grade them on how well they are learning to be a sailor as well as how proficient they have become in their rating.

More is expected of petty officers, so their criteria will be more specific.

For example, junior sailors will be graded on their leadership potential and how they follow orders, as well as how much supervision they need. They also could be graded on how well they've learned to stand watch and adhere to the Navy's core values.

Petty officers, on the other hand, will be graded on leadership and how well they develop their sailors, along with their organizational skills, goal setting and how they operate under stress.

But West said the idea has a long way to go and he's not going to put a proposal in front of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead until he's sure his homework is done.

"I don't want to set a timetable," he said. "I think it will be within the year, but I need to see the feedback from the mess [on the chief eval] and take it and apply it to the E-6 and below. It's a good product. I just don't want to rush it."

China Increases Submarine Patrols

Agence France-Presse, February 3, 2009

WASHINGTON – China nearly doubled the number of patrols by its fleet of attack submarines last year, surpassing Russia but still far behind the United States, the Federation of American Scientists reported Tuesday.

The report, based on declassified information provided by US naval intelligence, said Chinese attack submarines conducted 12 patrols in 2008, compared to seven in 2007, two in 2006 and none in 2005.

"While the increase in submarine patrols is important, it has to be seen in comparison with the size of the Chinese submarine fleet," said Hans Kristensen, director of the organization's nuclear information project.

"With approximately 54 submarines, the patrol rate means that each submarine on average goes on patrol once every four and a half years," he said.

The patrols may have been carried out by just the most modern and capable types of submarines in the Chinese fleet, the report said, noting that a new class of nuclear-powered Shang-class attack submarines is replacing the aging Han-class.

In an interview, Kristensen said the information, although sketchy, was a window into how Chinese naval operations are changing as it builds up its forces.

"We don't know where they went or for how long. But it certainly seems to be a new mission. They have been very modest in their patrols in the past," he said.

"The fact that from one year to another they have doubled their patrols seems that they have something new to do," he said.

"It could be, as we've heard for the last four years or so, an attempt to expand their naval defense barrier further eastward into the Pacific," he said.

In comparison with other major navies, a dozen patrols a year "are not much," the report said.

"The patrol rate of the US attack submarine fleet, which is focused on long-range patrols and probably operate regularly near the Chinese coast, is much higher with each submarine conducting at least one extended patrol per year," it said.

"But the Chinese patrol rate is higher than that of the Russian navy, which in 2008 conducted only seven attack submarine patrols, the same as in 2007," it said.

China has yet to conduct a single patrol by a ballistic missile submarine, according to the report.

"The old Xia, China's first SSBN, completed a multi-year overhaul in late-2007 but did not sail on patrol in 2008," it said.

"Neither the Xia-class (Type-092) ballistic missile submarine nor the new Jin-class (Type-094) have ever conducted a deterrent patrol," it said.

Dolphin Scholarship Foundation Applications Available

Tomi Roeske, Scholarship Administrator, Dolphin Scholarship Foundation

The Dolphin Scholarship Foundation offers annual scholarships of $3,250 to children/stepchildren of members or former members of the U.S. Navy Submarine Force. High school seniors and college undergraduates may apply. Applications are now available and must be received by March 15, 2009.

Established in 1960 by Submarine Officers' Wives' Clubs throughout the Submarine Force, the first scholarship of $350.00 was awarded in June 1961. Today, the Dolphin Scholarship Foundation provides a total of $445,250 in scholarship assistance to 137 students at colleges and universities. Students must attend full-time and must be working toward a Bachelor's degree at a four-year undergraduate institution.

Complete eligibility requirements and applications are available online at www.dolphinscholarship.org or by contacting the Scholarship Administrator at 757-671-3200 ext. 111 or scholars@dolphinscholarship.org.

Norway To Raise Toxic Nazi Submarine

By Thorleifur Petursson on Feb 5, 2009 in General, Norway, Science & Technology

Norway's government has decided to raise a Nazi submarine that sank off its shores in the North Sea during World War II because it contains a massive quantity of mercury. The U-864 German sub was hit by torpedoes from the British submarine HMS Venturer as it tried to get to Japan with its cargo in 1945.

The Norwegian government wants to remove the sub because it is an obvious environmental hazard. "The fact that the wreck contains about 67 tons of mercury poses a significant threat to the environment," Norwegian Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs Helga Pedersen told AFP. "We took this decision out of concern for the environment, the fishermen and the local population," she added.

In addition to the mercury that was destined to be turned into weapons in Japan, the sub was carrying blueprints for a new class of German jet fighter, the Messerschmitt Me 262. When the Nazi sub was sank, the vessel broke in two pieces killing all 73 sailors on board. The sub now lies two nautical miles off Fedje Island at a depth of 150 metres.

The sub was located in 2003, and was discovered to have been leaking several kilograms of mercury per year. This will eventually be an ecological disaster, so Norway will remove the sub in 2010 at an estimated cost of one billion kroner. The same outfit that lifted the Russian Kursk submarine will handle this operation.

India Denies Chinese Sub Reports

BBC News, Feb. 5, 2009

Indian naval officials have denied media reports that Chinese warships forced an Indian submarine to surface in a stand-off in waters off Somalia.

Reports in China said that after the submarine was detected by sonar, it was pursued by two Chinese destroyers and an anti-submarine helicopter.

The Chinese ships had been on passage to take part in anti-piracy patrols.

The two sides were reportedly trying to test each other's sonar systems for weaknesses.

However, the Indian navy says none of its submarines was forced to surface in the area.

"None of our submarines surfaced in the Gulf of Aden region as reported in a section of the Chinese media," a naval official told Indian reporters.

Several Indian newspapers reported the allegations, and cited Indian naval sources as admitting their submarine had tracked the Chinese warships. "Every nation does it," one was quoted as saying.

Chinese submarines surprised the US navy in October 2006, by successfully tracking the USS Kitty Hawk in the Pacific Ocean.

Stand-off?

Several versions of one report on the incident were circulating on Chinese websites this week, including Sina.com and QQ.

These claimed that a tense stand-off occurred between Chinese warships and an Indian submarine on 15 January near the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, which separates Yemen and Djibouti, at the western end of the Gulf of Aden.

The Chinese destroyers had picked up an unidentified submarine on their sonar, the reports said.

The Chinese navy soon identified it as a 70m-long (230ft) vessel armed with 20 torpedoes.

The Chinese reports said the Chinese ships had sent an anti-submarine helicopter to help track the submarine, which had tried to jam the Chinese warships' sonar system.

But the two destroyers eventually cornered the submarine and forced it to surface, reports said. The Indian vessel then apparently left without further confrontation.

Chinese media said the submarine had been trailing the Chinese ships since they had entered the Indian Ocean on the way to Somalia.

But India has denied the reports, which have also not been carried by China's official news outlets, Xinhua and the China Daily.

There were more than 100 pirate attacks in 2008 in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean, in what is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

An EU anti-piracy task force set up in December was the first such naval operation of its kind. India, Iran, the US and China are among other nations with naval forces off Somalia.

Chinese Double Sub Patrols; Threat Increase?

From DoD Buzz Blog, by Colin Clark , Feb. 4, 2009

It's not often that the military tells us how many subs are chasing our aircraft carriers but Naval intelligence has released data showing that China's fleet of more than 50 attack submarines conducted 12 patrols in 2008, twice as many as in 2007, and the highest rate recorded.

The data was obtained by the Federation of American Scientists, FAS writer Hans M. Kristensen says there were seven patrols in 2007, two in 2006, and none in 2005. In four years since 1981, China has not sent out any patrols. Its strategic ballistic missile submarines have never conducted a deterrent patrol, according to Kristensen. He also writes that the increased Chinese rate pales in comparison to that of the US Navy. "In comparison with other major navies, twelve patrols are not much. The patrol rate of the U.S. attack submarine fleet, which is focused on long-range patrols and probably operates regularly near the Chinese coast, is much higher with each submarine conducting at least one extended patrol per year. But the Chinese patrol rate is higher than that of the Russian navy, which in 2008 conducted only seven attack submarine patrols, the same as in 2007," Kristensen writes.

Still, the information would seem on the face of it to provide pretty good ammunition for those who believe we face a rising Chinese threat.

But an expert at the Naval War College, Nikolas Gvosdev, believes the increase in Chinese sub patrols may not be indicative of a threat.

"I think that this is a good example of framing–once you set the headline a certain way, you create a certain buzz. We are also seeing this with regard to Russia's naval deployments, which are 'the largest since the fall of the Soviet Union.' Sounds threatening, but then you count 13 total ships including supply vessels, and it isn't so threatening," the professor said in an email. Gvosdev is probably better known as the author behind the Washington Realist blog.

He goes in to says that, "Unless we want to argue that the very existence of a Chinese submarine force is an existential threat to the United States, it should be expected that the PLAN wants to gain greater experience and conduct more missions, and this by itself shouldn't be a major concern to us–especially if they aren't engaged in missions off of the U.S. coast or designed to test their ability to block our SLOCs."

What we'd really like to see, of course, are the official Chinese figures on the number of sub patrols that occurred. Hello? Anyone listening at the Wisconsin Avenue Chinese military complex?

A note from our 2009 Convention Chairman: Mike Hacking

Now that we are all awaiting our tax return from the Feds and our IOU from the State, the 2009 Convention Committee would appreciate it if you would consider being a sponsor for the convention. There are sponsorship levels for as little as $25 and every sponsor will help us put on a great show this September. A form is provided below. Thanks, Mike

SPONSOR REGISTRATION

2009 United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.
National Convention

September 8 – 12, 2009
Town & Country Resort and Convention Center
San Diego, CA

Name of Company / Organization _____

Contact Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

☐	$ _____	Admiral Sponsor	$ 25,000 Level
☐	$ _____	Captain Sponsor	$ 15,000 Level
☐	$ _____	Commander Sponsor	$ 10,000 Level
☐	$ _____	Lieutenant Sponsor	$ 5,000 Level
☐	$ _____	Ensign Sponsor	$ 1,000 Level
☐	$ _____	Warrant Sponsor	$ 500 Level
☐	$ _____	CPO Sponsor	$ 250 Level
☐	$ _____	Petty Officer Sponsor	$ 100 Level
☐	$ _____	Seaman Sponsor	$ 25 Level

Make checks payable to: "2009 USSVI Convention"

Mail to:

2009 USSVI Convention
P.O. Box 420159
San Diego, CA 92142-0159

For Credit Card payments – contact us!

Note: **To support preparation of Convention Program and recognition items the deadline for all donations is May 1, 2009. American Submariner publication deadlines are: Oct 1, 2008; Dec 15, 2008; Apr 1, 2009; and Jun 15, 2009.**

Website: www.ussvisandiego.org/Convention2009/index.htm