

# Acting CNO Kilby Visits BlackSea Technologies in Baltimore, Observes Small USV Operations



BALTIMORE, Md. – Acting Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby visited the Black Sea Technologies (BlackSea) personnel to explore ways to enhance the U.S. Navy’s Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC) program, during a visit to the BlackSea facilities, June 18, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communications Specialist 1st Class Joe J. Cardona Gonzalez)

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Acting Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby visited the BlackSea Technologies (BlackSea) headquarters and production facilities in Baltimore, June 18, to see first-hand how BlackSea supports the U.S. Navy’s Small Unmanned Surface Vehicles (sUSV) program and how it plans to continue to expand its capabilities to support fleet operations.

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The Navy is procuring sUSVs for fleet operations and experimentation to advance robotic maritime strategies and tactics.

"These systems will play a critical role in the future of naval warfare by extending fleet reach, improving situational awareness, and increasing combat effectiveness," said Kilby. "We see unmanned systems as a force multiplier for traditional vessels, not a replacement."

During the visit, Kilby met with BlackSea personnel to explore ways to enhance and grow the U.S. Navy's Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC) program. GARCs are 16-foot USVs that enable research, testing, and operations that will allow integration throughout the surface, expeditionary, and joint maritime forces.

Small unmanned surface vehicles are part of the Navy's family of unmanned maritime systems, designed to complement and support the traditional fleet across a range of missions. Small USVs are assigned to Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron (USVRON) Three and USVRON Seven for testing and experimentation, including launch and recovery from Navy platforms.

Through analysis, simulation, prototyping, and demonstration, the Navy plans to field and operate progressively more capable unmanned maritime systems that enhance fleet endurance and resilience while minimizing risk to human life. Small USVs are rapidly integrating into the fleet exercises such as Fourth Fleet's [Hybrid Fleet Campaign Event \(FLEX\)](#) international

exercises such as the recent [Baltic Operations \(BALTOPS\)](#).

“The development and deployment of unmanned systems, including the small USV, is a strategic acquisition for the Navy,” Kilby added. “A strong partnership with industry is critical as we seek to maintain technological superiority and operational advantage in an increasingly complex maritime environment.”

Kilby concluded his visit by observing a demonstration of the GARC and the BlackSea Seabased Petroleum Discharge System and conducting a comprehensive tour of the manufacturing facility. During the tour, he engaged with BlackSea workforce and subject matter experts to gain deeper insights into the versatility and innovative capabilities of these advanced systems.

Strong partnerships with industry are essential to accelerating these advancements and delivering cutting-edge technologies. These innovations are shaping the future of naval operations and strengthening our maritime advantage.