

# Coast Guard crew offloads \$166 million worth of counternarcotics in San Diego



[Release from Coast Guard 11th District](#)

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SAN DIEGO – The Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) crew offloaded more than 6,325 pounds of cocaine and more than 13,220 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$166 million, Wednesday, in San Diego.

The five interdictions occurred in international waters in the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Central and South America in February and March.

“The Coast Guard is dedicated to preventing illicit drugs from entering our country via the maritime environment,” said Rear

Adm. Andrew Sugimoto, Eleventh District commander. "These transnational criminal networks will be met on the water by our vigilant service members, like the crew of the Waesche, at every turn and brought to justice by the U.S. Attorney's office."

The counternarcotics were interdicted by the following U.S. Coast Guard cutters:

- Waesche's crew was responsible for two interdictions seizing approximately 881 pounds of cocaine and 9,500 pounds of marijuana.
- Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) crew was responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 3,300 pounds of cocaine.
- Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) crew was responsible for two interdictions seizing approximately 2,116 pounds of cocaine and 3,716 pounds of marijuana.

"This marks Waesche's first counter-narcotics patrol in several years and the crew did an outstanding job to work with international and inter-agency partners to successfully prevent \$166 million dollars' worth of illicit drugs from entering our country, cities, and neighborhoods," said Capt. Robert Mohr, commanding officer of the Waesche. "I am extremely impressed with the crew's dedication throughout this dynamic patrol. They overcame multiple challenges with collective hard work, ingenuity, and positive attitudes to keep us in pursuit of these cartels and their dangerous drugs. I couldn't be prouder of this remarkable crew and what they do to protect our communities."

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperate in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along

with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counternarcotic operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Like the United States Coast Guard and our other law enforcement partners, we are always ready to bring drug smugglers to justice in court," said Sean P. Costello, United States attorney for the Southern District of Alabama. "Disrupting and dismantling the organizations responsible for transporting and distributing this poison remains among our highest priorities."

The Waesche is the second Legend-class cutter of the U.S. Coast Guard and is homeported at Coast Guard Island in Alameda. The Waesche is 418 feet long with a top speed of 28 knots and a range of 12,000 nautical miles. It is equipped with a flight deck and hangars capable of housing two multi-mission helicopters, and outfitted with the most advanced command, control, and communications equipment.

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## **USMC Use GA-ASI MQ-9A for**

# Training Exercise



[Release from General Atomics](#)

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## *MQ-9A Used for Live-Fire and Simulated Exercises*

SAN DIEGO – 30 March 2023 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) is working with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) on a series of Service-Level Training Exercises (SLTE) using a company-owned MQ-9A Unmanned Aircraft System to support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC). The SLTE 2-23 is being conducted near Twentynine Palms, Calif. with participation from Joint Forces. The training ensures participants are prepared for the future dynamic environment.

Contracting the use of MQ-9A enabled USMC to begin integrating Group 5 unmanned aircraft into the Marine Air-Ground Task Force for the first time within the various exercises. GA-ASI began flying the MQ-9A on Feb. 3, 2023, with a combination of GA-ASI and VMU-3 pilots and sensor operators. The aircraft flew out of GA-ASI's facility at the Yuma Proving Ground,

Ariz., with flights over training ranges in Southwest-Continental United States (CONUS). The MQ-9A is providing its proven Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) data package – including GA-ASI's Lynx® Multi-mode Radar – to provide the USMC with extraordinary situational awareness and simulated close air support.

"GA-ASI is always ready and willing to support the USMC exercises," said GA-ASI Vice President of DoD Strategic Development, Patrick Shortsleeve. "We know that being able to utilize an actual MQ-9A is critical to the success of these exercises and helps the USMC ramp-up their training program."

The SLTE Program consists of a series of exercises, including the live-fire Integrated Training Exercise (ITX), Marine Littoral Regiment Training Exercise (MLR TE), and Force-on-Force (FoF) MAGTF Warfighting Exercise (MWX). MAGTFTC executes the SLTE Program, which includes simulated and live-fire armed exercises, to enhance the readiness of the Fleet Marine Forces and support the Marine Corps' responsibilities to national security.

GA-ASI was [contracted by the USMC](#) in 2022 to deliver eight MQ-9A Extended Range (ER) UAS as part of the ARES Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity (ID/IQ) contract.

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## **Raytheon Technologies awarded \$619 million US Navy contract**

# for SPY-6 family of radars



[Release from Raytheon Technologies](#)

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*Contract includes the first Flight IIA destroyers to be modernized with an upgraded radar*

TUCSON, Ariz., (March 29, 2023) –Raytheon Technologies was awarded a \$619 million contract to continue to produce AN/SPY-6(V) radars for the U.S. Navy. This is the second option exercised from the [March 2022 hardware, production and sustainment contract](#) that is valued up to \$3 billion over five years.

“SPY-6 is the most advanced naval radar in the world providing unprecedented integrated air and missile defense capabilities,” said Kim Ernzen, president of Naval Power at Raytheon Missiles & Defense. “Integration into the U.S. fleet is well underway with SPY-6 operating on the Navy’s first, new Flight III destroyer. This contract enables the radar to be added to more ships including the first of existing Flight IIA

destroyers that will be modernized.”

The [SPY-6 family of radars](#) can defend against ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, hostile aircraft and surface ships simultaneously. They provide several advantages over legacy radars, including significantly greater detection range, increased sensitivity and more accurate discrimination. Their scalable and modular radar arrays reduce cost and sustainment needs, while meeting the mission requirements of seven classes of ships.

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## **Congressman Questions Navy's Delay in Super Hornet Contract**



PHILIPPINE SEA (March 21, 2023) An F/A-18F Super Hornet from the “Mighty Shrikes” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 94 approaches for an arrested landing aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68). Nimitz is in U.S. 7th Fleet conducting routine operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with Allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Justin McTaggart)

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WASHINGTON – The delay in the Navy’s award of a contract for the service’s final procurement of 20 F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters is exacerbating the service’s strike fighter shortage, a congressman said, and is reducing the Navy’s future warfighting capacity.

Rep. Mike Garcia, R-California, a former Navy F/A-18 pilot and a member of the House Appropriations Committee’s defense subcommittee (HAC-D), questioned Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro about the delay in a March 29 hearing.

Garcia said the Navy currently is, “effectively two air wings short [of strike fighters] over the next 10 years” which will not be resolved until 2031.

The congressman noted that the [12 Super Hornets approved in fiscal 2022](#) and the eight approved in fiscal 2023 are not yet on contract. He noted that there are discussions between the Navy and [Boeing, the Super Hornet’s manufacturer](#) regarding the technical data package for the aircraft.

### **Data Package Negotiations**

“The Department of the Navy is committed to putting on contract those 20 additional F/A-18E/Fs,” Del Toro said. “In fact, we’ve extended an RFP [Request for Proposal] to the Boeing Corporation. They have told us that they will come back to us with a proposal sometime in the June time frame. In the meantime, what we’re trying to actually do is to ensure that Boeing does deliver to us the data rights are essential for us to be able to in the future maintain and repair those aircraft.

“And what I’m most concerned about, Congressman, is that if we do actually get into a conflict with China, we’re not going to be able to send those aircraft back to the continental United States to get repaired at a manufacturing plant,” he said. “We’re going to have to repair those things ourselves. Which means the government – we need on behalf of the American people and our service members the data rights – the full data package that we paid for and deserve to have in order to be able to repair and sustain those aircraft in combat. That’s our major concern. [...] Our engineers are meeting with their engineers to get the full definition of what the data package actually calls for.”

Del Toro also said he instructed the respective general counsels to meet to have parallel discussions on the issue.

### **Get the Jets Delivered**

Garcia noted his own experience on the warfighting side and the defense contracting side and that he has read Super Hornet contracts specifically.

"I would submit that I agree with you the Navy has a requirement to maintain and repair and the tech data package to support that, not to manufacturing, and there is a clear bifurcating line there," he said. "You are calling right now an IP [intellectual property] that is not within the government's domain. Boeing has been very supportive in the SLM [F/A-18E/F Service-Life Modernization] projects and making sure that the FRCs [Fleet Readiness Centers] – the 0-level depot maintenance is actually functional.

"And I would submit that the IP that you're calling for right now – the manufacturing know-how, which is not only Boeing but their entire supply chain is not nearly as valuable in closing the strike fighter as the 20 jets," Garcia said. We have mandate – it's not formal, but we should – to be ready for something in 2025. Closing the gap in 2023 (sic) would be interesting, but your gap by that point will be significantly higher because our carriers will be schwacked, our air wings will be missing, and our warfighters will be dead.

"I think this conversation between the lawyers and the contracting officers is screwing the customer," Garcia said. "The customer is the warfighter, the customer is the taxpayer, and I implore you sir, with all the power and levers at your disposal, to compartmentalize this IP conversation, get these jets so they can get delivered. They're already going to be late. I don't know if we're going to get 20 for the amount of money that we allocated at this point."

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# Navy moves forward with hypersonic, carrier-based weapon



[Release from Naval Air Systems Command](#)

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Mar 28, 2023

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, Patuxent River, Md. –

The Navy awarded two contracts to Raytheon Missiles and Defense and Lockheed Martin March 27 for the initial development for a carrier suitable long range, high-speed missile designated Hypersonic Air Launched Offensive Anti-Surface (HALO).

The contracts, valued at a total of \$116 million, is the first step to fielding a critical capability over the next decade that will address advanced threats and allow the Navy to operate in and control contested battle space in littoral waters and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) environments.

The initial contracts to Raytheon and Lockheed Martin will provide technical maturation and development through preliminary design review of the propulsion system required for a carrier suitable hypersonic weapon system. The contract period of performance for each award will end in December 2024 with each company's preliminary design review working towards a prototype flight test.

HALO will be a carrier-based, high speed, long range air-launched weapon that will provide greater anti-surface warfare capability than what's available today.

"As threat capability continues to advance, additional range, warfare capability and capacity is required to address the more demanding threat environment," said Capt. Richard Gensley, Precision Strike Weapons (PMA-201) program manager.

The program is part of the Navy's Long Range Fires investment approach to meet objectives of the National Defense Strategy where hypersonic weapons are a top priority, he said.

"Our team is leveraging science and technology and rapid prototyping arenas to support aggressive schedule execution," said Gensley.

These contracts are the first of potentially additional development and production contracts based on initial designs and supplier performance that will inform Navy leadership on future program decisions.

HALO's predecessor, the Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM), is currently fielded on the Navy's F/A-18 and Air Force B-1B. To bridge the gap until HALO is operational, the Navy recently funded an upgrade to the existing weapon which will incorporate missile hardware and software improvements to enhance targeting capabilities.

The Navy plans to pursue a competitive acquisition strategy leveraging LRASM requirements and concept of operations to meet future maritime threats beyond mid-2020s. Initial operational capability for HALO is planned to field late this decade.

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## U.S. Navy Launches USNS Cody

[Release from Naval Sea Systems Command](#)

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By Team Ships Public Affairs

MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Navy's newest Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessel, USNS Cody (EPF 14), launched at Austal USA's shipyard, Mar. 20.

Capable of transporting 600 tons of personnel and cargo up to 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots, each EPF vessel includes a flight deck to support day and night aircraft launch and recovery operations. The ships are also capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge

facilities, and can load and off-load heavy vehicles such as a fully combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank.

“Today’s launch marks another successful milestone for the EPF 14, and it demonstrates the strength of the Navy-Austal USA partnership,” said Strategic and Theater Sealift Program Manager, Program Executive Office, Ships, Tim Roberts. “EPFs provide capability and capacity for a variety of missions, when and where our fleet needs support.”

Launching an EPF is a multi-step process, conducted over two full days. The ship is moved from the Modular Manufacturing Facility where it was constructed to a docking barge, and then transported to a floating dry dock. Submerging the dry dock into the water then launches the ship to float on its own.

EPFs operate in shallow waterways. These versatile, non-combatant transport ships are used to quickly transport troops, military vehicles, and equipment needed to support:

- Overseas contingency operations
  - Humanitarian assistance
  - Disaster relief
  - Special operations forces efforts
  - Theater security cooperation activities
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- Emerging joint sea-basing concepts

As one of the Defense Department’s largest acquisition organizations, Program Executive Office, Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, and special warfare craft.

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# Navy Decommissions Last Coastal Patrol Ships



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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has decommissioned its last two Cyclone-class patrol coastal ships in March 28 ceremonies at Naval Support Activity, Bahrain, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said in a release. The USS Monsoon (PC 4) and USS Chinook (PC 9) were the last of the class. They are scheduled to be transferred to the Philippine Navy.

The event marked the end of service with the 14-ship Cyclone class and the end of the coastal patrol ship – which the Navy called the patrol coastal ship – in the U.S. Navy, at least for the foreseeable future. The ships were designed to support

special operations forces in coastal operations.

In early 2022, the Navy decommissioned and transferred five patrol craft to the Royal Bahrain Naval Force: USS Tempest (PC 2), USS Typhoon (PC 5), USS Squall (PC 7), USS Firebolt (PC 10) and USS Whirlwind (PC 11). Last week, on March 21, the U.S. Navy decommissioned and transferred USS Hurricane (PC 3), USS Sirocco (PC 6) and USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) were decommissioned and transferred to the Egyptian Navy during a formal ceremony in Alexandria, Egypt.

In February and March 2021, the Navy decommissioned three PCs used for training PC crews based in Mayport, Florida, and deployed to man the 10 deployed PCs: USS Shamal, USS Zephyr, and USS Tornado.

The lead ship of the class, the former USS Cyclone, was commissioned in August 1993. It was decommissioned on February 28, 2000, and eventually transferred to the Philippine Navy during a time when the U.S. Navy and U.S. Special Operations Command saw little use for the ships. That changed with the terrorist attacks of 9-11. The PCs were tasked with homeland security missions and three were transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard, being returned to the Navy in 2011. Ten of the Navy's PCs eventually were transferred to the U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain for maritime security patrols.

"I'm honored to be a part of the legacy on this waterfront," said Lieutenant Commander Dre Johnson, Monsoon's last commanding officer during the ceremony, according to the Navy release. "PC Sailors are a unique bunch, and only they can understand the amount of work they've done and the pride they have in what they've accomplished."

"With 28 years of crew covering multiple generations, each one was dedicated to the mission, adapting to rapidly changing mission sets, and working together as a team to accomplish whatever obstacle that came their way," said Lieutenant

Commander David Hartmann, Chinook's commanding officer.

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# Saildrone Scales Production of New Mid-size USV



[Release from Saildrone](#)

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To meet the growing demand for advanced data-collection capabilities at sea, Saildrone has developed the 33-foot Voyager designed for near-shore ocean mapping and maritime security missions.

(March 28, 2023 – ALAMEDA, CA) – Saildrone, the world leader in providing near real-time maritime intelligence using small uncrewed systems, announced today a new, mid-size class of uncrewed surface vehicles (USVs). The 33-foot (10 m) Voyager is specifically designed for near-shore ocean and lakebed mapping, and to meet the challenges of IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing), ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance), law enforcement and maritime safety, drug interdiction, and border and harbor security.

Saildrone's three USV models—the Voyager along with the 23-foot (7 m) Explorer and 65-foot (20 m) Surveyor—have been developed to balance mission payload flexibility and endurance. The Voyager's larger size, compared to the Explorer, allows for a more persistent datalink, increased power available for ocean mapping and ISR payloads, and versatile payload integration options.

The ocean mapping sensor suite includes multibeam sonar equipment capable of seafloor mapping of depths to 900 feet (300 m), and the ISR sensor suite includes a smart camera array, digital radar, and sub-surface passive acoustics. Primarily powered by wind and solar, the Voyager also features an electric propulsion alternative, useful for low-wind and near-shore operations.

“With our Voyager platform, Saildrone helps to eliminate maritime gaps above and below the ocean surface, reducing risk to mission and risk to force. We want to be a force-multiplier for our partners and allies when it comes to ISR capabilities,” said Richard Jenkins, Saildrone founder and CEO.

To date, Saildrone has built 100 23-foot Explorer-class USVs at its headquarters in Alameda, CA. To meet the increasing demand for the new Voyager platform, Saildrone has elected to outsource the production of the wing, hull, and keel to composite specialists: [Janicki Industries](#) will manufacture the

wing and keel in Washington, and [Seemann Composites](#) will manufacture the hull in Mississippi. Saildrone will continue to produce, install, and service internal components in Alameda.

“One of the truly exceptional aspects of working at a company like Saildrone is the fact that hardware and software engineering, manufacturing, mission operations, and G&A are all housed under one roof—in a former airplane hangar on a site known for aviation and naval innovation,” said Saildrone COO Mark Cuyler. “But with the rapidly increasing demand for ocean data collection across the fleet, it is necessary to outsource some of our production. Saildrone is proud to work with great US-based companies like Janicki and Seemann, whose expertise in the marine composites industry will help us to more rapidly meet the demanding challenges of the world’s oceans.”

Saildrone has been conducting sea trials of the Voyager in the San Francisco Bay and offshore of California since late 2022, and the first operational maritime security and ocean mapping missions will begin this spring. The company is currently producing new Voyagers at a rate of one per week.

The data collection capabilities of Saildrone’s autonomous vehicles have been proven in numerous operational missions, covering almost 1 million nautical miles from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The company looks forward to its continued and close partnership with the US Government and its allies in boosting maritime security around the globe.

Visit Saildrone at 2023 IPF, March 28-30, at the Baltimore Convention Center and at the Navy League’s Sea Air Space 2023 at the Gaylord National Convention Center in National Harbor, MD.

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# Fairbanks Morse Defense Launches Accelerator Program to Support Emerging



## Release from Fairbanks Morse

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*Defense contractor dedicating mentors and additional resources to*

*foster promising mission-critical technologies*

BELoit, Wis. – March 28, 2023 – [Fairbanks Morse Defense](#) (FMD), a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management (Arcline), has launched the FM Defense Accelerator program to identify and nurture emerging technologies with mission-critical applications for the future of maritime defense. The defense contractor is now accepting applications for participants.

“As a principal supplier of best-in-class maritime defense technology, we are well positioned to recognize and foster pioneering solutions that have the potential to solve challenges faced by the industry,” said FMD CEO George Whittier. “The FM Defense Accelerator is open to eligible entrepreneurs with a great idea, a plan for bringing it to fruition, and an appetite to work with us and benefit from our expertise and relationship with the Navy, Coast Guard, and Military Sealift Command (MSC).”

Once selected, participants will work with FMD mentors selected from the defense contractor’s Technology Center of Excellence specifically for their expertise. In addition to the dedicated mentors assigned to FM Defense Accelerator participants, program benefits include the following:

- Individual programs created specifically for each technology ranging from three months to several years
  - Access to broader FMD resources, including technical experts and a worldwide service network
  - Brand exposure opportunities and marketing support
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- Route to market advice and support

Once a technology reaches a predetermined development milestone, it has the opportunity to be demonstrated at various industry events, giving FM Defense Accelerator participants exposure to representatives from the Navy, Coast Guard, MSC, and other key stakeholders.

FMD has recently been working with technology collaborators through the Technology Center of Excellence, and a selection of these companies will be transitioned into the FM Defense Accelerator program.

The FM Defense Accelerator will be featured at the FMD booth (837) at the [Sea-Air-Space](#) Exposition from April 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at National Harbor, MD, along with live demonstrations of naval defense technologies being developed by FMD and its technology collaborators.

Companies interested in applying for a place on the program can visit the landing page at <https://rb.gy/f4qogd> to complete the online application.

## About Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD)

Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD) builds, maintains, and services the most trusted naval power and propulsion systems on the planet. For more than 100 years, FMD has been a principal supplier of a growing array of leading marine technologies, OEM parts, and turnkey services to the Navy, Coast Guard, Military Sealift Command, and Canadian Coast Guard. FMD stands ready to rapidly support the systems that power military fleets without compromising safety or quality. In times of peace and war, the experienced engineers, sailors, and technicians of FMD demonstrate our commitment to supporting the mission and vision of critical global naval operations wherever and whenever needed. FMD is a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management.

To learn more, visit [www.FairbanksMorseDefense.com](http://www.FairbanksMorseDefense.com)

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**Senate Seapower Chair:  
Committee Will Drill Down on  
Navy's Amphib Issue**



SASEBO, Japan (Sept. 15, 2021) The amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown (LSD 42) departs Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan (CFAS), Sept. 15, 2021. Germantown will shift home ports from Sasebo to San Diego after serving as a forward-deployed ship in U.S. 7th Fleet since Jan. 5, 2011. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jasmine Ikusebiala)

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WASHINGTON – The new chairman of the Senate’s Seapower subcommittee said he plans to drill down on the issue of the Navy’s requirement for 31 large and medium amphibious warships and why the 2024 budget does not apparently support that requirement, which is law.

“I’m still mystified with the reticence of the president’s budget with respect to meeting our 31 amphib requirement,” said Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Virginia, speaking March 2 in his first online press conference since becoming chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee’s Seapower subcommittee.

In the 2024 budget proposal, the Navy plans to decommission three old Whidbey Island-class dock landing ships (LSDs) but declined to fund any more Flight II San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ships (LPDs) over the next five years.

The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act requires the Navy to sustain a force level of 31 large and medium amphibious warships.

“Last year, when we had the hearing, all three – the SECNAV, the [Marine Corps] commandant, the CNO – all said, ‘Look, we’re all on the same page,” Kaine said. “There’s no difference between us. They promised that a study would be forthcoming soon. That showed that the requirement that the Marines need to basically meet their objectives and our national security objectives is 31 amphibs.”

“The president’s budget doesn’t suggest that they’re making that kind of investment to get us to 31,” he said. “I’ve heard testimony from our Navy and Marine leadership enough to know that the 31 amphibs is the requirement and somebody’s going to have to do a pretty amazing job to convince me otherwise at this point. They have been so consistent on that for a significant period of time.”

Kaine said, “The Navy should know that we’re really going to dig into this. We have been convinced that the number is 31 and we’ve yet to be told by anybody that it’s not 31. So, is there a mismatch between the SECNAV, commandant, and CNO? And with the OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] is there a mismatch with OMB [Office of Management and Budget]? I don’t know exactly where the mismatch is, but I think it’s above the Navy. I think the Navy and Marines are completely on board on this. The consistency of this testimony has been notable. If that’s the case, you’re going to see a really strong bias on the committee to make sure [the Navy] has the funds for 31 and not drop below it.

The senator said he has seen "tentative suggestion" that the level of 31 could be reached if the funds were made available next beginning next year "But that is sending a confusing message that suggests that they're not really committed to 31. I think the committee is committed to 31."