

Atlantic Council Launches Task Force to Bolster US Maritime Industrial Base

Task Force brings together leaders across government, industry, labor, and academia to advance a bold vision for US naval shipbuilding and maintenance

[Release From the Atlantic Council](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 16, 2025 – The Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security and its Forward Defense program announced today the launch of the Revitalizing US Shipbuilding Task Force in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL).

Galvanized by momentum in the shipbuilding sector, the Task Force will develop actionable recommendations to strengthen US shipbuilding. It will develop novel approaches to design, construction, and sustainment, while balancing those innovative steps with proven measures to address persistent gaps across the sector.

“The United States has a highly capable Navy, but to remain competitive, it needs to modernize its shipbuilding industry,” said Christine Fox, former acting deputy secretary of defense and a co-chair of the Task Force. “It is vital that the United States regains its ability to rapidly repair and produce ships today, while simultaneously preparing to take advantage of modern technology. Only with the adoption of new technology and processes will it be able to produce new, more capable ships, rapidly and affordably.”

The Revitalizing US Shipbuilding Task Force is co-chaired by Fox; Mark Esper, the 27th secretary of defense; and Kenneth Braithwaite, the 77th secretary of the Navy. It will explore, among other aspects, how the United States can:

Integrate advanced manufacturing capabilities in shipbuilding and maintenance;

Develop workforce incentives to energize the maritime industrial base; and

Evaluate the role that ally-headquartered shipbuilding firms can play in increasing US shipbuilding capacity.

Over the next twelve months, this high-level Task Force will convene a bipartisan group of senior leaders to generate practical steps that ensure the maritime industrial base can restore US naval primacy and ensure the nation can effectively compete with China in the Indo-Pacific through sustained maritime presence and power projection.

The Task Force's world-class leaders will include former government officials, private-sector executives, academics, and experts in manufacturing, acquisition, and naval operations. They will convene for the first time on Tuesday, December 16.

Task Force Members

- Doug Beck, former director of the Defense Innovation Unit
- Meredith Berger, formerly performed the duties of US under secretary of the Navy; former assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations, and environment

- Admiral James Foggo, US Navy (retired), former commander, United States Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Force Command Naples

- Admiral Lisa Franchetti, US Navy (retired), 33rd chief of naval operations

- Vice Admiral William Galinis, US Navy (retired), former commander, Naval Sea Systems Command

- Nickolas Guertin, former assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development, and acquisition

- Ellen Lord, former under secretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment

- Erik Raven, former under secretary of the Navy

- Admiral John Richardson, US Navy (retired), 31st chief of naval operations

- Russell Rumbaugh, former assistant secretary of the Navy for financial management and comptroller

- Christopher Watkins, chief mission engineering and integration officer, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory

Industry Task Force Members:

- George Moutafis, chief executive officer, Fincantieri Marine Group (foundational partner)

- Rear Admiral Tom Anderson, US Navy (retired), president of US shipbuilding, Hanwha Defense USA

- Nicholas Galanos, vice president, navy and maritime industrial base, C3 AI

- Hank Holland, chairman and chief executive officer, Amaero

- John Lehman, vice president of strategy, corporate development and government relations, Abyss Defense

- Rob Lehman, co-founder and chief commercial officer, Saronic Technologies

- Vice Admiral Thomas Moore, US Navy (retired), senior vice president, government relations, HII

- Danny Poisson, federal aerospace and defense chief technology officer, PTC

- Dennis Pyatt, president and chief executive officer, Element US Space & Defense

- Robert Smith, executive vice president, marine systems, General Dynamics

- Vince Stammetti, executive vice president and chief operating officer, BlueForge Alliance
- Jordan Webb, president and general manager, Colonna's Shipyard
- Brooke Weddle, senior partner, McKinsey & Company
- Austal USA representative

The Task Force is directed by Stephen Rodriguez and is managed by Mark Massa, Theresa Luetkefend, and Gabrielle Ellicott.

The lead authors will be Michael Presley and Steven Wills. This work will build on the success of the Atlantic Council's previous [Commission on Software Defined Warfare](#), [Commission on Defense Innovation Adoption](#), and [Hypersonic Capabilities Task Force](#), and work in collaboration with the recently launched [ReForge Commission](#).

More information is available on [the Task Force's website](#). To follow its progress and receive updates, subscribe to Forward Defense. For press inquiries, please contact: press@atlanticcouncil.org.