

# Navy Confident Strike Fighter Shortfall Will Be Gone by 2025, Admiral Says



Sailors conduct pre-flight checks on an F/A-18E Super Hornet, assigned to the “Stingers” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 113, on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), July 9, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Sophia Simons*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy’s director of air warfare told the Congress that the Navy is on track to eliminate its shortfall of strike fighter aircraft by 2025.

Testifying July 13 before the Tactical Air and Ground Forces subcommittee of the House Armed services Committee, Rear Adm. Andrew J Loiselle, the director of air warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, was questioned by Rep. Vicky Hartzler, (R-Missouri) – in whose state the Boeing F/A-18E/F

Super Hornet strike fighter is built – about the Navy’s decision not to seek additional procurement of more Super Hornets in fiscal 2022 and the effect on the Navy’s current strike fighter shortage.

“We have taken the F-35C portion of our 44 strike fighters [per carrier air wing] and reduced that from two squadrons of F-35s down to a single squadron but then increased then number of [aircraft] from 10 to 14,” Loiselle said.

The admiral pointed out that the Navy’s adversary aircraft requirements changed to replace some legacy F/A-18s with ex-Air Force F-16s and ex-Swiss Air Force F-5 fighters instead of Super Hornets. He also said the Fleet Readiness Center at Naval Air Station North Island, California, “has been able to return 28 Super Hornets from long-term down status and put those back in the fleet.

“We believe that those improvements [will] reduce our strike fighter shortfall to zero by 2025 based on current year analysis,” Loiselle said.

The admiral said the two Service Life Modernization (SLM) for the Super Hornets “will have the additional capacity at the 2025 period in question to take additional SLM [aircraft] should our current analysis be revised, and we require that additional capacity. We believe the infrastructure will support additional modifications to the Block III” version of the Super Hornet.

Hartzler asked about the Super Hornets being inducted for SLM having more corrosion evident than was predicted, noting that alleviating the corrosion would add time to conduct an SLM.

Loiselle said the SLM line was about halfway through modifying the first 30 of the Block II Super Hornets planned for the process, noting the first 30 aircraft were intended to enable the artisans to learn the needs of the aircraft.

"I agree 100% that there was damage beyond expectations from a corrosion perspective on some of the initial aircraft," he said. "However, Boeing has seen significantly improved condition in the aircraft that we are now submitting for SLM. So, with the number of Block II Super Hornets in our inventory, compared with the number of Block II Super Hornets that we intend to conduct SLM on, that allows us some selectivity in those [aircraft] we put through the modification line. We're learning in this process and we're now conducting inspections prior to induction looking at these hard areas to identify whether or not the corrosion present in those aircraft justifies inclusion in our SLM process or whether or not we might look at a different to conduct that on.

"But right now, we're continuing to learn and continuing to bring down the time associated with getting the aircraft through the SLM process," he said. "We anticipate that by the 2025 timeframe we should be in full swing on two lines at one year per SLM aircraft at that point in time in 2023 and after, coming off the line in a full 10,000-hour modification in full Block III configuration."

Loiselle also said the Navy "currently is executing a multi-year procurement of F/A-18s – 78 total. We've got 70 left to deliver and [those will be delivered] between now and fiscal year '25. So they are continuing to add to our total of F/A-18s. That's why I think we can get to SLM and modifications of current F/A-18s after that time frame."

He noted the Navy lists an unfunded priority of five F-35Cs to accelerate transition to its desired mix of fourth- and fifth-generation fighters.

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# Navy Details 2022 Ship Retirement Schedule



The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723), shown here in 2012, has been listed for recycling according to the Navy's planned ship retirement schedule for fiscal 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Chris Salisbury*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has determined its planned ship retirement schedule for fiscal 2022. The list includes 22 ships, including 15 battle force ships.

In a July 2 administrative message, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations announced the plans to decommission 19 ship ships from the fleet and remove from service three ships from the Military Sealift Command.

The list includes two Los Angeles-class attack submarines (SSNs); seven Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers (CGs);

five Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships (PCs) and four littoral combat ships (LCSs) – three Freedom-class and one Independence-class LCS. The PCs are forward deployed to the Persian Gulf; they are not considered battle force ships.

The Navy is proposing to retire seven Ticonderoga-class CGs during fiscal 2022, including two – USS Hue City and USS Anzio – which were not previously planned for retirement. The material condition of the cruisers' hull and mechanical systems has attracted considerable concern while the cost of keeping the cruisers in service has risen.

Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities, testified June 17 before the Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee that retaining the seven CGs would cost roughly \$5 billion across the Future Years Defense Plan. Retaining the ships for two years would cost more than \$2.87 billion. He said the cost to modernize Hue City and Anzio alone would cost approximately \$1.5 billion.

Extending the service lives of the cruisers "is costing more than we thought it would be," he said. "Initially it was \$2.4 billion, but we're adding a lot of money to do that."

The proposed cruiser retirements have been criticized by some in Congress as antithetical to growing the fleet to meet the demands of great power competition.

The decommissioning of some littoral combat ships also has attracted congressional attention, given that they are relatively new ships.

Congressional mark-ups of defense bills may challenge some of the proposed retirements.

The ships to be retired and the dates in 2022 by which they scheduled for retirement are listed below:

Ship Name	Inactive Status	Projected Inactivation
(All dates in 2022 except where noted)		
USS Tempest (PC 2)	Foreign Military Sales	March 29
USS Typhoon (PC5)	Foreign Military Sales	March 14
USS Squall (PC 7)	Foreign Military Sales	April 10
USS Firebolt (PC 10)	Foreign Military Sales	March 1
USS Whirlwind (PC 11)	Foreign Military Sales	April 24
USS San Jacinto (CG 56)	Reserve	Sept. 30
USS Lake Champlain (CG 57)	Reserve	March 31
USS Monterey (CG 61)	Reserve	Feb. 22
USS Hue City (CG 66)	Reserve	March 31
USS Anzio (CG 68)	Reserve	March 31
USS Vella Gulf (CG 72)	Reserve	Feb. 18
USS Port Royal (CG 73)		March
31	Reserve	

USS Fort Worth (LCS 31)	Reserve	March 31
USS Coronado (LCS 4)	Reserve	March 31
USS Detroit (LCS 7)	Reserve	March 31
USS Little Rock (LCS 9)	Reserve	March 31
USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41)	Reserve	April 30
USS Providence (SSN 719)	Recycle	Dec. 2 (2021)
USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723)	Recycle	June 21
USNS Apache (T-ATF 172)	Disposal	June 30
USNS 1st LT Harry L. Martin (T-AK 2015)	Disposal	Dec. 30
USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat (T-AK 3016)	Disposal	Dec. 31

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**Navy Orders MH-60R  
Helicopters to Replace**



# Transfers to Greece



An MH-60R Seahawk helicopter assigned to the Swamp Foxes of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 74 flies in front of the guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto (CG 56). *U.S. NAVY / FRENCH NAVY / Chief Petty Officer Bruno Gaudry*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has ordered three MH-60R helicopters from the manufacturer to replace three transferred to the government of Greece.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded Lockheed Martin a \$129 million contract modification for the production and delivery of three MH-60R Seahawk helicopters “as replacement-in-kind for the Navy,” the Defense Department said in a June 29 contract announcement.

The three replacement-in-kind (RIK) aircraft are in support of the Hellenic navy Foreign Military Sales, said Liz Mildenstein, a spokeswoman for the Naval Air Systems Command. “The U.S. Navy issued three ‘green’ exportable MH-60Rs to the Hellenic navy in order to support the stated delivery schedule



in the FMS case. The RIK aircraft are to replenish the U.S. Navy inventory.”

The Naval Air Systems Command, through the Foreign Military Sales Program, originally awarded a \$194 million contract modification to Lockheed Martin for four MH-60Rs and three airborne low-frequency sonar systems to be used by the helicopters for Greece, according to an Oct. 26 Defense Department contract announcement.

The MH-60R is the U.S. Navy’s maritime strike and anti-submarine helicopter. The helicopter type also has been ordered and/or exported to the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal Danish Air Force, and the Royal Saudi Navy, the Republic of Korea Navy and the Indian Navy.

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## **Congressman Asks SECDEF to Direct Recission of SLCM-N Cancellation Memo**



The crew of the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Annapolis (SSN 760) successfully launches Tomahawk cruise missiles off the coast of southern California as part of a Tomahawk Flight Test (TFT) June 26, 2018. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ronald Gutridge*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The ranking member of the Strategic Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) said he asked Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to direct the acting Navy Secretary to rescind a directive that cancels a sea-launched nuclear cruise missile program, the SLCM-N.

The Defense Department's (DoD's) 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) said the department would pursue a Sea-Launched Cruise Missile-Nuclear (SLCM-N) "leveraging existing technologies to help ensure its cost effectiveness. SLCM will provide a needed non-strategic regional presence, an assured response capability. It also will provide an arms-control compliant response to Russia's non-compliance with the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, its non-strategic nuclear arsenal, and its other destabilizing behaviors."

The review asserted an SLCM "will not require or rely on host nation support to provide deterrent effect. They will provide additional diversity in platforms, range, and survivability,

and a valuable hedge against future nuclear 'break out' scenarios."

The president's 2022 budget would, if approved by Congress, fund the SLCM-N in 2022. But a memorandum by Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Harker – issued before the summit meeting in Switzerland between U.S. President Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin – directed that the SLCM-N be defunded in the 2023 budget, said Rep. Mike Turner, R-Ohio, speaking July 7 in a webinar of the Hudson Institute.

"The acting secretary of the Navy issues a memorandum that instructed the staff constructing the budget for 2023 to defund this sea-launched cruise missile," Turner said. "It is currently funded in this [2022] budget as it came over from President Biden's submission. In his testimony, he [Harker] claimed to not have spoken to anyone" and made the decision "just on his own."

Turner pointed out the need for a flexible deterrent, that SLCM-N is "a weapon that is absolutely needed" to counter Russia's INF treaty violations.

"The acting secretary, in saying that he didn't speak to anyone, the secretary of defense and the chief of staff have all said that they were not involved officially," Turner said. "Now, what's horrible about this is that Biden was on his way to go meet with Putin to have their so-called summit, and on Biden's agenda was, of course, arms control, and here we have the acting secretary of the Navy basically telling Russia that we're not going to field this, we're not going to develop it, we're going to defund it. And it really undermined the president that the acting secretary admitted that he understood that his actions had undermined the president of the United States."

In June 15 testimony before the HASC, Harker said that, in considering the 2023 budget in work, "my initial guidance was

based on the fact that the overall posture review and the [updated] National Defense Strategy have not been completed, so I didn't want anyone to assume that [SLCM-N] would be in until we had further guidance from the Nuclear Posture Review."

Turner said he sees an undercurrent of within DoD that is undermining the U.S. nuclear strategic deterrent through universal disarmament of the United States.

"Here we have a missile that has a capability that we need and that we have this desire for arms control," Turner said, noting that canceling a needed capability "would unilaterally concede and get nothing from the Russians or Chinese in any concessions in their systems. But that undercurrent of policy at DoD really has to be brought forward. ... The [next] Nuclear Posture Review is ongoing; even the assessment of alternatives for the SLCM itself is ongoing.

"Now I've asked the secretary of defense to direct the acting secretary of the Navy to rescind this direction," Turner said. "I certainly hope that he does that. It sends the wrong message."

The HASC chairman, Rep. Adam Smith, D-Washington, has stated his opposition to the SLCM as being destabilizing to the nuclear balance.

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## **Saildrone USVs Set for 7th Arctic Mission**



A Saildrone Explorer at work. *SAILDRONE*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Saildrone is set to conduct an Arctic research mission for the seventh consecutive year with its autonomous unmanned surface vessels (USVs) powered by wind and sun. The company is conducting the missions with six of its smallest USV, the 23-foot-long Explorer.

The six USVs are being launched from Dutch Harbor, a port in the Aleutian Islands. Four will collect data in the Bering Sea and two will collect data in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas in the Arctic Ocean.

The voyages are being conducted to collect atmospheric, oceanographic and bathymetric data for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and NASA. The sensors on board the Saildrones will be collecting data on carbon dioxide dissolved in the water; bathymetry; climate and weather – including heat, radiation, carbon and atmospheric variables; wind speed and direction; and radiation and temperatures.

“Every year we have increased our capabilities,” said Rich Jenkins, Saildrone’s CEO, who noted that the Explorer USVs have “incredible reliability.”

For maritime domain awareness, the Explorers also are fitted with 360-degree cameras that record visual information 24/7 using machine learning algorithms to spot anomalies, such as a passing vessel, imaging every five seconds.

“We’ve amassed hundreds of millions of images of the open ocean from the Arctic down to the Southern Ocean,” Jenkins said. “We train the machine-learning model to recognize things visually” such as vessels, icebergs, birds, whales, dolphins, etc.

Data on vessels can be fused with data from the Automatic Information System for increased maritime domain awareness. Saildrone leases the services of Iridium commercial satellites for transmitting data between a USV and a ground station.

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## **CH-53K Helicopter Cost Trending Downward, Marine General Says**



U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Michael S. Cederholm flies the CH-53K “King Stallion” at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, June 12, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Yuritzy Gomez*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The unit cost of the Marine Corps’ new heavy-lift helicopter is trending in the right direction as the

helicopter prepares for its Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E), a senior Marine Corps officer told Congress.

Rep. Vicki Hartzler, R-Missouri, during a June 30 hearing of the subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces for the House Armed Services Committee, asked Lt. Gen. Mark Wise, the Corps' deputy commandant for aviation, about the cost of a CH-53K King Stallion being \$125 million, more than the cost of an F-35 strike fighter. She noted the proposed 2022 budget requested nine CH-53Ks, down from the 11 planned earlier for 2022. She also asked if the Marine Corps' requirement for 200 CH-53Ks would be reduced in light of the Corps' planned reduction of heavy helicopter squadrons from eight to five.

Wise replied that unit cost for the CH-53Ks in Low-Rate Production Lot 5 in fiscal 2021 was \$97 million and for Lot 6 in fiscal 2022 was projected to be \$94 million, lower than the cost of an F-35, "and trending in the right direction."

The general also said the Corps originally determined the requirement for CH-53Ks to be about 220 aircraft but reduced the official number to 200 because of affordability. He said the requirement will remain at 200 aircraft for the foreseeable future.

"If there is a reduction, it will probably be less than we would normally think had we actually bought the program of record that was the requirement to begin with," Wise said. "As we get to determining what that number is, any reduction would not happen until the end of program buys. That would reduce the likelihood that the cost would rise, depending on the last lot buys."

The general noted the 200 number was based on an projected attrition rate that had not been updated.

"So, it could go below 200 – and it ma y– but I'm not sure



it's going to go grossly below" 200, he said.

Wise said progress has been made through risk-reduction initiatives in dealing with technical issues such as engine gas re-ingestion.

"As we get ready to start into IOT&E – we're actually starting next month – we're seeing some fairly impressive readiness rates for the test birds that are going to be doing that operational test," he said.

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## Air Boss: Navy-Marine TACAIR Integration 'Alive and Well'



An F-35C Lightning II assigned to the "Black Knights" from the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314 makes an arrested landing on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Michael Singley*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's plan to deploy Marine Corps fighter-attack squadrons (VMFAs) on its aircraft carriers is very much in force as the two services continue to equip some of their tactical jet squadrons with F-35C Lightning II strike fighters.

"TACAIR Integration is alive and well," said Vice Adm. Kenneth R. Whitesell, commander, Naval Air Forces, answering a question during a June 29 webinar of the West 21 symposium of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association and the U.S. Naval Institute.

He noted that VMFA-314, the Marine Corp's first F-35C squadron, is beginning workups this summer with Carrier Air

Wing 9 on board USS Abraham Lincoln for a deployment in 2022. It will be the second deployment of the F-35C on a carrier.

The USS Carl Vinson is deploying this summer with the Navy's first fleet F-35C squadron, Strike Fighter Squadron 147 (VFA-147). VFA-97 has been in transition to the F-35C since April to become the fleet's second F-35C squadron.

Whereas Marine Corps VMFA squadrons have deployed on carriers with some frequency for decades, the practice was institutionalized two decades ago with the implementation of the TACAIR Integration plan, which originally planned for four VMFA squadrons embedded in carrier air wings, with some Navy VFA squadrons serving in sequence with a Marine aircraft group in Japan under the Unit Deployment Plan.

Whitesell said that the TACAIR Integration Plan was modified four or five months ago to provide a total of two VMFA squadrons to embed in the Navy's carrier air wings.

"It's critical for us as we keep that naval warfighting concept alive and well," Whitesell said.

The latest deployment of a VMFA squadron ended Feb. 25 when VMFA-323 returned to its home base after a deployment with Carrier Air Wing 17 on board USS Nimitz. It was the last deployment of the legacy F/A-18C Hornet on an aircraft carrier.

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## **Marine Corps Retires UC-35C Operational Support Airlift**

# Jets



A UC-35C operational support airlift jet, now retired. *FLICKR / Cliff1066*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Marine Corps has retired its two UC-35C operational support airlift (OSA) jets.

Last month, the two UC-35Cs – military versions of the Cessna Citation V Ultra business jet – were sent to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base to be placed in storage.

The UC-35Cs, were based at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Louisiana, and were “responsible for the transport of high-priority passengers and cargo with time, place or mission sensitive requirements,” according to the Naval Air Systems Command said.

The first UC-35C was delivered on Nov. 22, 1999. The aircraft replaced Beech UC-12B Huron turboprop aircraft in the OSA role.

Ten of 11 UC-35D Citation Encore versions continue in service with the Marine Corps in the operational support airlift role.

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## Coast Guard Increasing Engagement with Pacific Allies, Partners, U.S. Navy



Adm. Karl Schultz, Coast Guard Commandant addressed the Coast

Guard 8th District personnel and guests attending a change-of-command ceremony June 25, 2021 at the Port of New Orleans.  
*U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class John Michelli*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard's top officer said the service has taken steps to increase its integration with allies and partners in the Western Pacific Ocean area to provide more effective cooperation and provide more presence.

In a June 28 webinar discussion with the Brookings Institution's Michael O'Hanlon, Adm. Karl Schultz, commandant of the Coast Guard, detailed some of the ways in which the Coast Guard is reaching out to promote international cooperation.

Schultz said the Coast Guard assigned an attaché to Australia in 2020 who will represent the service in that nation plus New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Australia has new patrol boats, some of which will operate in Oceania, and the U.S. Coast Guard could provide training on law enforcement on the high seas. New Zealand has a new auxiliary ship that could provide opportunities for cooperation.

Next summer the Coast Guard will assign an attaché to Singapore. It already has an adviser in Vietnam, to which the Coast Guard has or will transfer three Secretary-class high-endurance cutters.

The service also has transferred three Secretary-class cutters to the Philippines, which is growing its own coast guard from 5,000 personnel to 40,000 personnel.

The Coast Guard also is helping Indonesia set up a new training center.

Schultz also has assigned a captain to the operations/plans directorate of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and a captain and a commander to the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawaii.

"We've got mobile training teams that operate through the region," the admiral said. "We bring Indo-Pacific partners into our schoolhouses here [to the United States], to the International Maritime Officers Course."

The Coast Guard also has been backing up the U.S. Pacific Fleet, providing two national security cutters in 2019 and one in 2020 to help fill a void left while the USS John McCain and USS Fitzgerald were being repaired following their collisions. These cutters performed sanction work against the North Koreans. The USCGC Kimball also conducted a patrol of the South Pacific this year, calling in Fiji. In the future, the USCGC Kimball will patrol in the Western Pacific on patrol against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The three fast response cutters [FRCs] assigned or slated for Guam, combined with the ocean-going buoy tender assigned there, will give the Coast Guard an increased reach and presence in the Western Pacific.

"I anticipate our being throughout the Oceania region with those patrol boats [FRCs], [and] a periodic national security cutter," Schultz said.

The commandant stressed the value of the Coast Guard presence in providing "human-to-human partnership to counter Chinese checkbook diplomacy.

"The Chinese Coast Guard is antagonistic, running down Philippine, Indonesian, Malaysian fishermen in dispute," he said, also noting the abusive maritime actions of the Chinese Peoples Armed Militia.

"We don't use our Coast Guard as an arm of the government to press in coercively over disputed regions," he said.

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# Berger: Funds Reallocation Will Add Key Capabilities for Force Design



U.S. Marines load rockets into a High Mobility Artillery Rockets System (HIMARS) in 2017. The Marines have shown the system can hold naval vessels at risk and is broadening that capability. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Aaron James B. Vinculado*  
ARLINGTON, Va. – The Marine Corps’ top officer told Congress that the Corps requires three key capabilities to bring to pass the expeditionary force needed to counter threats of the future and support the naval and joint force. Those capabilities and modernizations and others can be paid for with internal budget reallocations, he said.

“First is long-range precision fires for sea denial and sea control,” said Gen. David Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, testifying 24 June before the Defense subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. “For several years we’ve proven that our existing HIMARS [High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System] vehicles can hold naval vessels at risk with ground-based anti-ship missiles. Through aggressive experimentation, we have further enhanced that capability.

“This year, we have successfully launched the [RGM-184] Naval Strike Missile from a modified Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, hitting a target at sea underway,” Berger said. “This system, which we call the Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System – or NMESIS – is exactly the capability the combatant commanders are calling for to enhance their deterrence posture.”

Unmanned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) is the second of the key capabilities.

“In 2020, we began a transition to a mixed capability of long-range ship and ground-based unmanned aerial systems to include the MQ-9 Reaper,” Berger said. “The Reaper is a proven capability that will significantly expand our organic ISR and enable us to better support fleet and joint operations, including anti-submarine operations.

“We’ve also initiated a partnership with industry to develop a future, autonomous, long-range unmanned surface vessel,” he said. “That is going to significantly improve the reconnaissance capability of our Marine expeditionary units, or MEUs.”

The Corps also is investing in loitering munitions.

“These swarming aerial munitions, which employ automatic target recognition, have proven exceptionally lethal in recent global conflicts, most recently in Europe,” Berger said. “Our own tests have also demonstrated this technology to be effective, with five of five successful shots during testing. We plan to equip our infantry and reconnaissance Marines with this loitering capability, mounting those munitions on both ground vehicles and long-range unmanned surface vessels. We will make a final decision on vendors this year.”

Berger added that in the current budget climate, the Corps will pay for its Force Design 2030 initiatives by retiring some legacy systems and shifting the savings to new programs.

“We will self-fund our modernization,” he said. “To ensure the success of this approach, I will ask for your support in reducing the total procurement of some platforms commensurate with the recent reductions in our end-strength.

“The fact is, our Marine Corps is significantly smaller than it was a decade ago, about 24,000 Marines smaller,” he said.



“That means we won’t need as many ground vehicles; we won’t need as many aircraft as we thought we did when initial procurement decisions were made decades ago. With the reductions outlined in our Force Design report, I believe we will have sufficient resources to create the modern capabilities required for competition, deterrence and crisis response without a further reduction in our end-strength.

“That approach, however, relies 100 percent on this committee’s confidence on allowing the Marine Corps to retain and reallocate the internal resources we generate through end-strength reductions, cutting legacy platforms and right-sizing programs of record for new capabilities like the F-35 [strike fighter], the CH-53K [heavy-lift helicopter] and the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle,” he said.