

Indonesia Cleared for Possible Acquisition of MV-22s



An MV-22B Osprey conducts deck landing qualifications aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan on June 28. The State Department has approved the sale of the MV-22 to Indonesia. U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Tanner Seims

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. State Department has approved the possible sale of Bell-Boeing MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft to the Indonesian government, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a release.

If concluded, Indonesia would be the third nation to procure the MV-22, the others being the United States and Japan.

Indonesia requested eight Block C Ospreys as well as engines, various avionics, and machine guns, including spares. Also included in the deal, estimated to cost \$2 billion, is the Joint Mission Planning System, publications, repair for parts, aircraft ferry and tanker support, support and test equipment, and U.S. government and contractor engineering support.

“The proposed sale of aircraft and support will enhance Indonesia’s humanitarian and disaster relief capabilities and support amphibious operations,” the release said. “This sale will promote burden sharing and interoperability with U.S. Forces. Indonesia is not expected to have any difficulties absorbing these aircraft into its armed forces.”

The prime contractors for the Osprey are a joint venture of Bell Textron Inc. of Amarillo, Texas, and The Boeing Co. Of Ridley Park, Pennsylvania.

France Cleared for Possible E-2D Procurement



An E-2D Advanced Hawkeye is cleared for takeoff from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford. France would become the third nation to fly the E-2D after the U.S. and Japan. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman 3rd Class Zachary Melvin

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. State Department has approved the possible sale of Northrop Grumman-built E-2D Advanced Hawkeye command-and-control aircraft to the government of France, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a release.

If concluded, France would become the third nation to procure the E-2D after the United States and Japan.

The French navy operates E-2C Hawkeyes from its aircraft carrier, the Charles De Gaulle.

The estimated \$2 billion sale includes three E-2Ds and their engines and avionics, including spares. Major components include Rolls-Royce T-56-427A turboprop engines, Lockheed Martin APY-9 radars and ALQ-217 electronic surveillance systems.

The sale also would include the Joint Mission Planning System as well as “air and ground crew equipment; support equipment; spare and repair parts; publications and technical documentation; transportation; training and training equipment; U.S. government and contractor logistics, engineering and technical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support,” the release said.

“The proposed sale will improve France’s capability to meet

current and future threats by providing its naval air forces with a sustainable follow on capability to their current, legacy E-2C Hawkeye aircraft,” the release said.

“The E-2D aircraft will continue and expand French naval aviation capabilities and maintain interoperability with U.S. naval forces. As a current E-2C operator, France will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment and support into its armed forces.

The prime contractor for the E-2D is Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. Aerospace Systems in Melbourne, Florida.

Navy Will Inactivate 9 Ships in 2021



An MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned helicopter (right) conducts operations with an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter and the USS Coronado, which is one of nine ships the Navy will inactivate next fiscal year. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob I. Allison

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy plans to inactivate nine ships in fiscal 2021, the service said in a message to the fleet.

According to a June 30 message from the chief of naval operations, four littoral combat ships (LCS), three coastal patrol ships (PC) and one dock landing ship (LSD) are to be decommissioned. The Military Sealift Command will remove from service one fleet ocean tug (T-ATF).

As planned in the Navy’s 2021 budget proposal, the service plans to decommission the first two Freedom-class LCSs – USS Freedom and USS Fort Worth – and first two Independence-class

LCSs – USS Independence and USS Coronado. Three of these ships have made major deployments to the western Pacific and all have been used as development platforms to mature the type's concept of operations. The four LCSs, all based in San Diego, will be placed in reserve status.

The three Cyclone-class PCs to be decommissioned are all based in Mayport, Florida, and used to train crews for the 10 PCs based in the Persian Gulf with the U.S. 5th Fleet. The three PCs being decommissioned – USS Zephyr, USS Shamal and USS Tornado – will be scrapped.

The Whidbey Island-class LSD being decommissioned is USS Fort McHenry, which will be placed in reserve. The move will leave seven ships of the class still in service.

The Powhatan-class T-ATF being removed from service is USS Sioux, which will be scrapped. Its removal will leave two T-ATFs in service. The class is being replaced by the Navajo-class towing, salvage and rescue ships.

All eight commissioned ships listed above are to be decommissioned by March 31, 2021. The Sioux is to be removed from service by Sept. 30, 2021.

Navy Prepping More Prospective Minority Students for NROTC



Senior Chief Damage Controlman Shaun Thompson, a recruit division commander from Officer Training Command, inspects a NJROTC cadet during a personnel inspection at the 2018 NJROTC

Nationals Academic, Athletic and Drill Championship at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida. U.S. Navy/Scott A. Thornbloom
ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy is expanding its program to prepare more minority students for the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, a senior Navy admiral said, to increase officer accessions of more black officers.

Speaking at a July 2 media roundtable about the Navy's new Task Force One Navy, which was established on June 30 "to address the issues of racism, sexism and other destructive biases and their impact on naval readiness," Vice Adm. John B. Nowell Jr., chief of naval personnel, said the Navy is increasing its efforts to increase the percentages of racial minorities in the officer corps.

Nowell said the Navy has made efforts for years to make the officer ranks more representative of the racial make-up of the U.S. population but has still fallen short.

He said that officers of African-American origin fill 8% to 9% of the officer corps, somewhat less than the 13% of the U.S. population. In the enlisted ranks, the Navy has been much more successful, with African-Americans making up 19% to 20% of the force.

"We want to look like the nation," Nowell said. "If we don't bring enough African-American officers in the front door, then I don't have any hope of the person sitting here talking to you as CNP being African-American. ... How do we mentor them prior to coming in?"

He said the Navy's past studies of underserved communities that "they just don't compete as well in getting in the officer corps, for some of the tests that [they] then have to do, for a community like aviation or like the SEALs," he said.

At the U.S. Naval Academy, the Navy has long had the Naval Academy Preparatory School, "designed for folks who need just a little bit more of a leg up from the academic side,

typically based upon the kind of education they received prior to [entering] and then compete for and then do well at the Naval Academy,” he said.

“We didn’t have something like that for ROTC,” Nowell said. “So, three years ago, we started a pilot called our NROTC Prep Program.”

Under the program, universities were asked to provide one year of education, room and board to a student and, if the student succeeds, the Navy would guarantee a four-year NROTC scholarship at the participating university.

“We went from four [students] the first year, to 67 last year, and we’ll have probably between 100 and 150 this coming year,” he said. “The goal is about 200 per year.”

Howell said that “while that certainly will help any underserved community, whether you’re white or African-American, the diversity we see there is one of the ways we’ll try to get more African-American officers into ROTC.”

He also said that sometimes a lack of awareness of opportunities hampers efforts to recruit minorities. “So, we are partnering with the National Naval Officers Association, an African-American affinity group of officers, to help us in those local communities to get that word out,” he said.

Navy Orders Four F-35C Strike Fighters



Two F-35C Lightning IIs fly in formation over the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range in February 2019. U.S. Navy/Lt. Cmdr.

Darin Russell

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has ordered four F-35C Lightning II joint strike fighters from Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., the Defense Department said in a release.

Naval Air Systems Command awarded Lockheed Martin a \$360.8 million not-to-exceed undefinitized contract modification to previously awarded fixed-price-incentive-firm-target contract for the procurement of four Lot 14 F-35Cs.

The aircraft are being procured with fiscal 2020 funds.

The Navy operates one fleet F-35C squadron, Strike Fighter Squadron 147 (VFA-147). The service also operates one F-35C fleet replacement squadron, VFA-125.

The Marine Corps' first F-35C squadron, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, completed transition this year.

On June 29, Lockheed Martin also received a \$67.7 million contract modification for long-lead materials parts, and components to "maintain on-time production and delivery of nine lot 16 F-35A Lightning II aircraft for the government of The Netherlands, as well as seven F-35A semiconductors and two F-35B Lightning II aircraft for the government of Italy," the release said.

Marine Corps Activates Second F-35B Fleet Replacement Squadron



Lt. Col. Carlton A. Wilson and Sgt. Maj. Gary L. Weller

assumed command of Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 502 during an activation and redesignation ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort on June 26. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Nicholas Buss

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps has activated a second fleet replacement squadron to train aviators to fly its F-35B Lightning II strike fighters.

Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 502 (VMFAT-502) was activated on June 26 at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina, and eventually will help carry the load of F-35B training as the Marines increase the number of F-35Bs in the Corps.

Beaufort also is the location of the first F-35B replacement training squadron, VMFAT-501. Sometime in the future, the VMFAT-502 will move to MCAS Miramar, California.

VMFAT-502 actually is a reactivation of Marine Attack Squadron 513 (VMA-513), an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in 2013. Upon reactivation, VMA-513 was redesignated VMFAT-502 the same day of the reactivation ceremony.

VMFAT-502 will be known as the “Nightmares,” carrying on the traditions of VMA-513. The squadron originally was activated in 1944 and in its various iterations over the years has seen combat in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lt. Col. Carlton A. Wilson is the first commanding officer of VMFAT-502.

Foggo: Fourth 'Battle of the Atlantic' Underway



Adm. James G. Foggo III, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, speaks at a Council on Competitiveness dinner in December. During a June 25 webinar, Foggo said the U.S. Navy and other NATO sea services need to extend operations in the North Atlantic to counter Russian and Chinese expansion. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kyle Moore ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in command of U.S. Naval Force in Europe and Africa said the U.S. Navy and other NATO naval forces need to extend operations in the North Atlantic to ensure the security of Europe and North America.

“We’ve entered what I call the Fourth Battle of the Atlantic,” said Adm. James Foggo III, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Africa, speaking June 25 in a webinar sponsored by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, a U.K.-based think tank.

Foggo, soon to complete his assignment in Europe, pointed to the increased Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea and the increasing Russian and Chinese activity in the Arctic regions as a rising threat in an era of Great Power Competition.

He noted the deployment of 10 Russian submarines simultaneously in the North Atlantic in October 2019 – detected by Norwegian forces – and the Russian construction of an icebreaker armed with the Kalibr cruise missile.

Foggo said that NATO still has a competitive advantage over Russia but that advantage is under increasing challenge. He noted Russia is fielding an array of new submarine classes.

The admiral said that Russian forces have reopened some old Cold War Soviet bases in the Arctic and have deployed the

S-400 surface-to-air missile system in the region.

“NATO needs to be able to operate in the far north,” Foggo said, noting the recent NATO surface action group that operated in the Barents Sea and the October 2018 operation of the USS Harry S. Truman carrier strike group, the first carrier strike group to operate above the Arctic Circle in two decades.

“As for the seas in the high north, you can expect to see us operating there and ensuring freedom of the seas and adherence to international norms and customs again and again,” he said.

“We need to look at new and innovative approaches to the Arctic,” he said, noting that Russia is not a member of the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative – representing seven of the eight Arctic nations – at the Naval War College but should be. “We all benefit when we engage in dialogue – deter, defend, and dialogue.”

Foggo said the Newport group is trying to restart the Arctic Chiefs of Defense meetings, “establishing an Arctic maritime symposium to bring together key stakeholders in the region’s navies and coast guards to better understand the challenges of the regions.”

He said a Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), similar to the Incidents at Sea agreement and the 2014 CUES in the Far East, should be implemented in the Arctic to reduce escalatory mistakes.

“Russia has the right to defend itself and protect its interests, but it needs to exercise that right in accordance with international norms, customs and traditions,” Foggo said. “What I’ve seen from them so far give me pause. Russia already is attempting to use the rules of the Northern Sea Route to violate international maritime laws and protocols.”

He also said that “lest we forget, China also is seeking to

exploit the Arctic. They are eying investment opportunities that range from natural resource exploitation to future commercial maritime traffic potential of the 'Polar Silk Road.' With China having its own precedent for making bogus claims over international waterways in the South China Sea, it's possible that China will also seek to bend the rules in their favor in the Arctic."

Russia also has increased naval activity in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean in recent years, particularly in support of Syria in the latter case. Syrian-based Russian jet fighters have harassed U.S. Navy P-8A maritime patrol aircraft. The Kalibr cruise missiles that arm the Russian Kilo-class submarines are capable of striking any capital city in Europe. Russia also has deployed fighter aircraft in Libya, which is in the throes of civil war.

Navy Base in Diego Garcia Welcome to Stay After Transfer of Sovereignty, Official Says



Logistics Specialist 1st Class Joanna Caldwell, the officer of the deck, and Master-at-Arms 2nd Class James Wilson raise the ensign at Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia on June 4. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Carlos W. Hopper
ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy base in Diego Garcia, an outpost in the Chagos archipelago in the Indian Ocean, would be welcome to remain if Mauritius succeeds in its sovereignty claim over the archipelago, currently known as

the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT), a Mauritian official said.

Diego Garcia, located in the middle of the Indian Ocean, hosts an air and naval base that have been strategically important to U.S. military operations in the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia since the mid-1970s.

The Chagos archipelago in which Diego Garcia is located has been claimed by the United Kingdom, which in 1965 moved the Chagocian population from the islands to Mauritius and the Seychelles. Mauritius, an island group to the southwest between the Chagos and Madagascar, disputes the sovereignty over the Chagos by the U.K. The British have claimed the islands since 1814.

Speaking in a June 24 online discussion sponsored by Arlington, Virginia-based think tank CNA, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, the permanent representative of Mauritius to the United Nations, said the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared in February 2019 that the Chagos Archipelago "is and always has been an integral part of Mauritius."

Last May, the UN General Assembly voted 116-6 in favor of the Chagos being returned to Mauritius. The ICJ gave the British until last November to withdraw, which did not occur.

The British partitioned the Chagos from Mauritius in 1965 when the U.K. purchased the Chagos for 3 million pounds. Mauritius claimed the separation was forced in order for Mauritius to gain its independence from Britain, finalized in 1968.

The U.S. has a lease on the facilities there until 2036. Koonjul said Mauritius would propose a 99-year lease for the U.S. to retain the facility and would even allow the British to maintain facilities there if such an agreement

were reached. But he said the current impasse is unsustainable.

As part of an agreement, Mauritius would insist that any Chagocians wishing to re-locate back to the Chagos be allowed to do so, excluding Diego Garcia, but that Mauritians and Chagocians be allowed to seek employment on Diego Garcia.

Koonjul noted that Mauritius favors the stability that the U.S. base brings to the Indian Ocean and that, as a close partner of India, it favors the increasingly close defense relationship of the United States with India.

"Mauritius stands ready to be a reliable partner to the United States," Koonjul said.

Also speaking in the discussion was Mark Rosen, senior vice president and general counsel for CNA, who said that Diego Garcia was "already developed" and "very precious from a logistics standpoint" and that its isolation from civilian populations gave it "more operational freedom."

Rosen said the United Kingdom's position has substantially weakened" in light of the ICJ decision and UN resolution and that the "political optics" for Britain were "not good" in an era of anti-colonialism.

He said that time is not on the side of the United States and the U.K. and that the U.S. needs to be proactive in seizing the opportunity to resolve the impasse.

Koonjul said that Mauritius has "no objection whatsoever to the U.S. base in Diego Garcia. ... The importance of the base cannot be underestimated."

He stressed the endurance of an agreement between the U.S. and Mauritius in that all Mauritian political parties support the base in Diego Garcia.

By an earlier agreement, the United States is not allowed to base nuclear weapons in Diego Garcia, although nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered ships are allowed in and out of the port facilities.

Commandant Honors Cutter John Midgett as Decommissioning Approaches



The John Midgett is the 12th and last high-endurance cutter to be built. U.S. Coast Guard

WASHINGTON – The commandant of the Coast Guard saluted the cutter John Midgett as the ship heads for decommissioning after 48 years of service.

In a June 23 message to the Coast Guard, Adm. Karl L. Schultz commended the John Midgett crew as having embodied the cutter's motto – dedication, service, excellence.

"The John Midgett was named in honor of Chief Warrant Officer John Allen Midgett Jr., who served for nearly 40 years with the U.S. Lifesaving Service and the Coast Guard," the commandant said.

"He was one of five Midgett family members awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal for heroic action during the rescue of 36 crewmen from the torpedoed British tanker Mirlo in 1918."

The high-endurance cutter – the 12th and final of the Hamilton class – is in an "In-Commission Special" status as it is prepared for transfer to another nation. It was named

simply “Midgett” until a new Legend-class national security cutter, the Midgett, was commissioned, upon which the older Midgett’s name was changed to John Midgett.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eu5cP3E1EIE>

The John Midgett was built by Avondale Shipyard in Louisiana and commissioned on March 17, 1972. The cutter was homeported in Alameda, California, until it was temporarily decommissioned in 1991 to undergo fleet renovation and modernization (FRAM). Upon completion of FRAM in 1992, the cutter changed its homeport to Seattle.

“Throughout the cutter’s distinguished career, John Midgett served in domestic and international theaters, from the Bering Sea to the South China Sea, and from the eastern Pacific Ocean to the Arabian Gulf,” the commandant’s message said.

Schultz said that the John Midgett’s “proud legacy of honorable service to the nation spanned nearly five decades.” He noted some highlights of that service:

- On Christmas Day 1996, the cutter’s crew conducted a “power rudder” tandem tow of the disabled M/V Banasea to Adak, Alaska, with the tug Agnes Foss.
- In 1999, John Midgett became the first Coast Guard cutter to deploy to the Arabian Gulf with a U.S. Navy battle group, helping to enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions against Iraq.
- From September 2006 to March 2007, the cutter deployed as part of Expeditionary Strike Group 5 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, circumnavigating the globe and transiting the Suez and Panama canals.
- While deployed to the eastern Pacific in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South from December 2016 to March 2017, John Midgett’s crew seized more than three tons of cocaine.
- During the cutter’s last year of service, it patrolled

the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska for more than 200 days, boarding 67 fishing vessels and prosecuting 16 search-and-rescue cases, ultimately assisting 20 mariners and four vessels in distress.

Large, Medium USVs to Enhance Distributed Maritime Operations



The medium-displacement unmanned surface vehicle prototype Sea Hunter pulls into Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Oct. 31, 2018. There is currently one Sea Hunter operating with Surface Development Squadron One and a second is planned. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Corwin M. Colbert

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy is working hard and making progress in developing concepts and making technological advances in developing its planned large and medium unmanned surface vessels (USVs), said the admiral in charge of their development.

“USVs are one of the centerpieces of distributed maritime operations,” said Rear Adm. Casey Moton, program executive officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO-USC), speaking June 23 at an event sponsored by the U.S. Naval Institute, Huntington Ingalls Industries and the Center for Strategic and International Studies – a Washington think tank.

Moton said the Navy views the future Large USV (LUSV) and Medium USV (MUSV) as platforms that will enable the fleet to operate in a more distributed manner either as part of a

carrier strike group or as vessels pressed forward with an acceptable risk of attrition.

The LUSV and MUSV are envisioned as distributed platforms with lower cost than manned warships that will have sensors and/or missiles and that normally will operate under the protection of a carrier strike group. Both types of USVs will need to be capable of open-ocean transits, Moton said.

The LUSV, for example, is envisioned to be a node in the Aegis protective network and could function as an "add-on magazine" of missiles, Moton said.

Moton's office is "laying a lot of the foundational work" for USV operations by developing mission autonomy; navigation and control systems; hull, mechanical and electrical reliability; cyber and anti-tamper protection; and integration of the USV into the Aegis Combat System, with a focus on retiring risk in the prototype phase of development. Moton said the LUSV to be equipped with vertical-launch systems.

The Navy's Surface Development Squadron One in San Diego now operates the single Sea Hunter USV, which he said has been exercising with guided-missile destroyers. A second Sea Hunter is under construction.

The Navy's two Overlord commercial-standard vessels with unmanned systems also have been busy with concept and systems development. One of the Overlord vessels made two long transits of 1,400 nautical miles from the Gulf of Mexico to Norfolk, Virginia, and back, in an autonomous mode, Moton said.

One of the concepts being worked on is the degree to which people will be involved in servicing the LUSV, for example. Personnel will need to be involved in maintenance, resupply, protection, and moving the vessel in and out of port. The need for personnel to temporarily board and stay onboard these vessels for a period is one of the areas being studied.

Redundancy of some systems may reduce the need for unscheduled maintenance. A goal is to have a 30-day threshold of operation between preventative maintenance periods.

“Our starting point for those two vessels [LUSV and MUSV] is we are driving from a technology standpoint to try and automate everything that we can,” Moton said.

He said the Navy has two more Overlord vessels under construction that will be delivered in fiscal 2021.

“The plan is to push our prototypes out to the West Coast [for the Surface Development Squadron One] but we’re looking for opportunities for the East Coast as well,” Moton said.

The first program-of-record LUSV is planned for procurement in fiscal 2023.