Australia, Canada, and U.S. conduct multilateral operations in South China Sea

A Royal Canadian Air Force Super Puma assigned to Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Charlottetown (FFH 339) prepares to land on the flight deck of U.S. Navy Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) during a multilateral exercise with the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Canadian Armed Forces in the South China Sea, April 18, 2026. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Maliq J. Martin)

By CTF-76 Public Affairs, April 20, 2026

SOUTH CHINA SEA — Ships from the Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Armed Forces, and U.S. Navy conducted multilateral operations in support of a free and open Indo-

Pacific in the South China Sea, April 12-18.

Participants included Royal Australian Navy Anzac-class frigate HMAS Toowoomba (FFH 156), Royal Canadian Air Force Super Puma helicopter, Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Charlottetown (FFH 339), and U.S. Navy Whidbey Island-class amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) with embarked Marines from Task Force Ashland.

During the exercise, ships conducted tactical maneuvers, helicopter cross-decks, and personnel exchange during the combined transit through the South China Sea.

“We embrace any chance to engage with our allies and friends in the region to learn from each other and build upon our strong relationships,” said Cmdr. Adam Peeples, commanding officer of Ashland. “These exercises provide an opportunity to increase interoperability, information-sharing, and access with our allies and partners across the globe. The Sailors and Marines of Task Force Ashland are dedicated to supporting regional security and committed to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

This operation builds on numerous other engagements, such as Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024, where the three U.S. allies were part of 29 nations training to foster and sustain cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world’s oceans.

Multilateral operations such as this provide valuable opportunities to improve combined readiness and promote peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. Navy regularly operates alongside our allies in the Indo-Pacific region as a demonstration of our shared long-term commitment to the region.

Ashland and embarked Marines from Task Force Ashland are a flexible crisis response force, purpose-built to integrate with allies and partners in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Their forward deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet demonstrates the unwavering U.S. commitment to regional security and stability.

U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Kaine Discusses AUKUS Agreement During SASC Hearing

From the Office of Senator Tim Kaine, D-Virginia, April 21, 2026

WASHINGTON – Today, during a Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing on U.S. posture in the Indo-Pacific, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) asked Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, Jr., USN, Commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), about the progress of the Australia-U.K.-U.S. (AUKUS) agreement.

"I was in Australia recently … 37 events in seven days in four cities," **said Kaine.** "I heard a lot. Answered some tough questions on our end. And I was impressed, but I wonder – are you satisfied with the pace of upgrades to [HMAS] Stirling that could support the increased rotational presence of *Virginia*-class submarines?"

Admiral Paparo responded, "From a shore power standpoint and for the capability that they have, with a tender and Marine Security Detachment, we could move submarines to Stirling today. That's been the progress at Stirling. I laid eyes on it multiple times. The commitment is there. The progress is there. The place where we have to make the most progress is in the defense industrial base to deliver the capability, but our partners in Australia [and the] U.K. through Pillar One and Two … has been full throttle. It's now as much up to industry as anyone else to deliver."

During the hearing, Kaine also discussed today's announcement that the Japanese government will allow the sale of more weapons abroad and the benefits to U.S. defense agreements with Japan and security in the Indo-Pacific.

Full video of the exchange is available here.

Kaine, who is Ranking Member of the SASC Subcommittee on Seapower and also a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), has been a strong champion of AUKUS in Congress. In February, Kaine held a series of bilateral meetings with Australian local, state, and federal lawmakers and defense industrial base partners in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, and Darwin to discuss the AUKUS partnership. Kaine has helped get signed into law provisions to implement and strengthen the AUKUS agreement. He has played a key role in securing more resources for the submarine industrial base, including additional funding for the *Virginia*-class submarine program.

Leidos, HavocAI Join Forces to Advance UAV Interoperability Across Domains

One of HavocAI's USVs, displayed on the Gaylord Pier. Credit: Erika Fitzpatrick.

By Erika Fitzpatrick, Seapower Correspondent

Leidos (Booth 1125)and HavocAI (D 17) have teamed to test a new fleet of autonomous uncrewed surface vehicles that offer unique capabilities in multidomain environments, company leaders said April 20 at Sea-Air-Space 2026.

"Warfare is changing rapidly," said Cindy Gruensfelder, president of Leidos Defense, a global defense contractor with

9,000 employees. “It’s really requiring systems to connect together even more than normal and collaborate across all domains.”

She noted that the Navy can best deploy USVs that are integrated within a larger ecosystem that enables real-time collaboration with greater reach. She said the new partnership pairs Leidos’s proven autonomy at scale with HavocAI’s “all-domain collaborative autonomy” to deliver the Navy autonomy at speed and scale.

The defense sector has dived headlong into the USV space in the hopes of securing some of the billions of dollars the military is expected to allocate for small, medium, and large USVs in the coming years.

The Navy’s 2025 shipbuilding plan calls for spending $40 billion per year to create a 381-ship battle force by 2054, about 85 more ships than it has now, and an additional 130 unmanned surface and undersea vessels. This combined fleet would result in a “more lethal and distributed naval force,” the Navy has said.

To expand access to innovation, more traditional defense firms like Leidos are pairing with upstart players such as HavocAI, a Providence, Rhode Island-based aerospace and defense company founded in 2024.

HavocAI specializes in collaborative autonomy, CEO and cofounder Paul Lwins said at the event.

“What that means is making thousands of autonomous systems work together and work with the humans to do very sophisticated things,” Lwin said.

So far, Lwin said, HavocAI’s 100 or so USVs have shown they can work together. The company also acquired an aerial drone company to integrate those types of systems with autonomous surface vessels.

This fall, the Leidos-HavocAI team will conduct an on-the-water operational evaluation of about 10 UAVs at disparate locations. The test aim to prove the hybrid vessels are interoperable at sea, undersea and in the air, across far-flung locations.

CH-53K lifts CH-53K expanding capabilities

A CH-53K from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 21 (HX-21) performs a recovery rigging evaluation of a CH-53K Engineering Development Model without engines, most gearboxes and tail pylon. This expansion of the aircraft’s capabilities, including understanding the flight characteristics and load dynamics in such a heavy lift, ensures the Marine Corps can

safely execute a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission in the future. U.S. Navy Photo by Erik Hildebrandt.
From Naval Air Systems Command, Apr 20, 2026

NAS PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The CH-53K King Stallion helicopter, under the direction of H-53 Heavy Lift Helicopters Program Office (PMA-261), achieved a major milestone by successfully lifting another CH-53K King Stallion. The test, performed by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 21 (HX-21), is part of the CH-53K aircraft recovery rigging evaluation and a critical step toward developing new operational capabilities and procedures for the CH-53K fleet.

“This is a capability we hope will never be needed in the fleet,” said Col. Kate Fleeger, Program Manager, PMA-261. “However, the continued expansion of the aircraft’s capabilities ensures a faster response to emerging requirements and highlights its ability to perform.”

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to validate the specialized rigging and procedures required to safely recover a downed or disabled CH-53K aircraft, a capability that is not yet standardized in the U.S. Navy’s official salvage manuals. During the test, the team aimed to understand the flight characteristics and load dynamics involved in such a heavy lift, ensuring that the Marine Corps can safely execute a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission in the future.

“The insights and data gathered from this test will directly inform updates to the Aircraft Salvage Operations manual, providing the fleet with standardized procedures for a dual-point external lift of a CH-53K,” said Fleeger.

The lifted aircraft was an Engineering Development Model (EDM) used in the King Stallion program early years of test. The three engines, most gearboxes and the tail pylon were removed prior to the lift to reduce weight to approximately 28,000

lbs., still well within the CH-53K's current external lift envelope of 36,000 lbs. The EDM will continue to serve the program as it will be transferred to Marine Heavy Helicopter Training Squadron 302 (HMHT-302), New River, North Carolina, where it will be used as a Ground Operations Aircrew Trainer, helping to educate and train the next generation of King Stallion aircrew and maintainers.

This test underscores the remarkable lift capabilities of the CH-53K and highlights the innovative efforts of the CH-53 Test team at HX-21 to continuously evaluate new fleet capabilities.

PMA-261 manages the cradle to grave procurement, development, support, fielding and disposal of the entire family of H-53 heavy lift helicopters.

Changing Polar Region Presents New Challenges and Opportunities for Navy, Coast Guard, Industry

Coast Guard Cutter Storis (WAGB-21) transits past West Seattle on its way to its temporary homeport at Coast Guard Base Seattle, Oct. 3, 2025, after its August 2025 commissioning in Alaska. The cutter is the Coast Guard's first polar icebreaker acquired in over 25 years, but more icebreakers are on the way. Credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 3rd Class Daylan M. Garlic-Jackson

By Erika Fitzpatrick, Seapower Correspondent

The U.S. military and allied nations are ramping up their strategic offensive and defensive capabilities in the Arctic to confront an expanding presence from adversaries such as China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, said Vice Admiral Doug Perry, U.S. Navy Commander of Joint Force Command Norfolk, at Sea-Air-Space on Monday, April 20.

"We have to acknowledge that is not a situation we want to allow to continue, to the detriment of free nations and certainly [of] the United States," Perry said during a polar issues panel moderated by Dr. Abbie Tingstad, professor of Arctic Research at the Center for Arctic Study and Policy at

the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

The Arctic polar region is primarily ocean, surrounded on its edges by the eight member states of the Arctic Council: Canada; the Kingdom of Denmark, which includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands; Finland; Iceland; Norway; the Russian Federation; Sweden; and the United States, where Alaska includes a 1.5-million-square-mile exclusive economic zone in its surrounding waters.

Council decisions are achieved in agreement with six "permanent participants" that represent Aleut, Arctic Athabaskan, Gwich'in, Inuit, Saami, and Russian Indigenous people, who have inhabited the Arctic for millennia and are about 10% of the 4 million Arctic residents.

The Arctic in the last four decades has warmed three times faster than the worldwide average, according to a 2024 Arctic Council report, by its Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme. The has led to new concerns, collaborations, and potential conflicts among Arctic nations, all touched on by the Sea-Air-Space panelists.

For instance, Russia is revitalizing assets throughout the high north, including air bases; granting oil and gas rights to China; and refilling liquid natural gas tankers that are now built for the Arctic's northern sea route. Although some of the Russian Federation's long-range aviation is focused elsewhere, Perry said its northern fleet is "large unimpacted by the Ukrainian fight."

A More Arctic NATO

Those are emerging threats, Perry said, but on the plus side: "Also what has changed in the last couple years is that Finland and Sweden joined NATO."

With the exception of Russia, Perry works directly with these and other Arctic nations in his other role as the director

of the U.S. 2nd Fleet Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence (CJOS COE), established in May 2006. Representing 13 nations, CJOS is the only such center based in the United States and one of 27 NATO-accredited COEs worldwide to collaborate on maritime-based joint operations.

Perry said Arctic allies and partners in his geography under NATO are shoring up defenses against new Russian capabilities; increasing domain awareness and readiness through synchronized, scheduled exercises; and providing deterrence through an enhanced presence in the region.

Cooperation is key because it's an "ugly endeavor" to operate ships, icebreakers and submarines in the harsh Arctic climate "all the time," Perry said, adding that it's not feasible to operate foot patrols across Greenland and Canada. "It's not achievable and it would be really expensive."

But allies must be a regular show of force in the region. "That's where the missiles are going to fly – they're going to fly over the polar region," Perry said, "whether they're coming from North Korea or China or Russia, and so we need to understand how to defend against that."

Icebreakers on the Way

And "the icebreakers are coming," said an excited Vice Admiral Nathan Moore, deputy commandant of Operations at the U.S. Coast Guard. "For us in the Coast Guard, that is something that we have not been able to say – well, ever." Two of three planned heavy icebreakers, being built at "world record speed," should be operational in fiscal 2028.

This bigger fleet – including 11 Arctic Security Cutters – expands USCG patrol capabilities amid a 37% rise in U.S. Arctic maritime traffic, including of foreign military vessels traversing the area. "There's a lot of icebreaker capacity coming," Moore said. He added that allies have

broadened their focus beyond search and rescue and pollution response to safety and sovereignty.

USCG still has to designate Arctic-trained personnel to command the new vessels and figure out how to supply, maintain and sustain the fleet in the remote region. For instance, Dutch Harbor, on Alaska's Amaknak Island in Unalaska, is seven or eight days away by sea from the deep waters of the high north.

That's why it's essential to maintain relationships with allies, who operate deep water ports and bases the United States needs to use, Perry said.

Although there are challenges, the United States and partner nations still have immense knowledge that positions them well to compete in the region, said retired Navy Vice Admiral Bill Merz, a former submarine commander who is now senior vice president of Aerospace and Defense Technologies at Oceaneering.

"It's a fascinating place to operate," Merz said of the Arctic, teaming with life and spectacular visuals above and below the ice. But the operational environment is ever-changing and dangerous, he said, describing a cacophonous riot of crashing and shifting floes of varying thicknesses in areas that are almost impossible to map.

Leverage the Magic

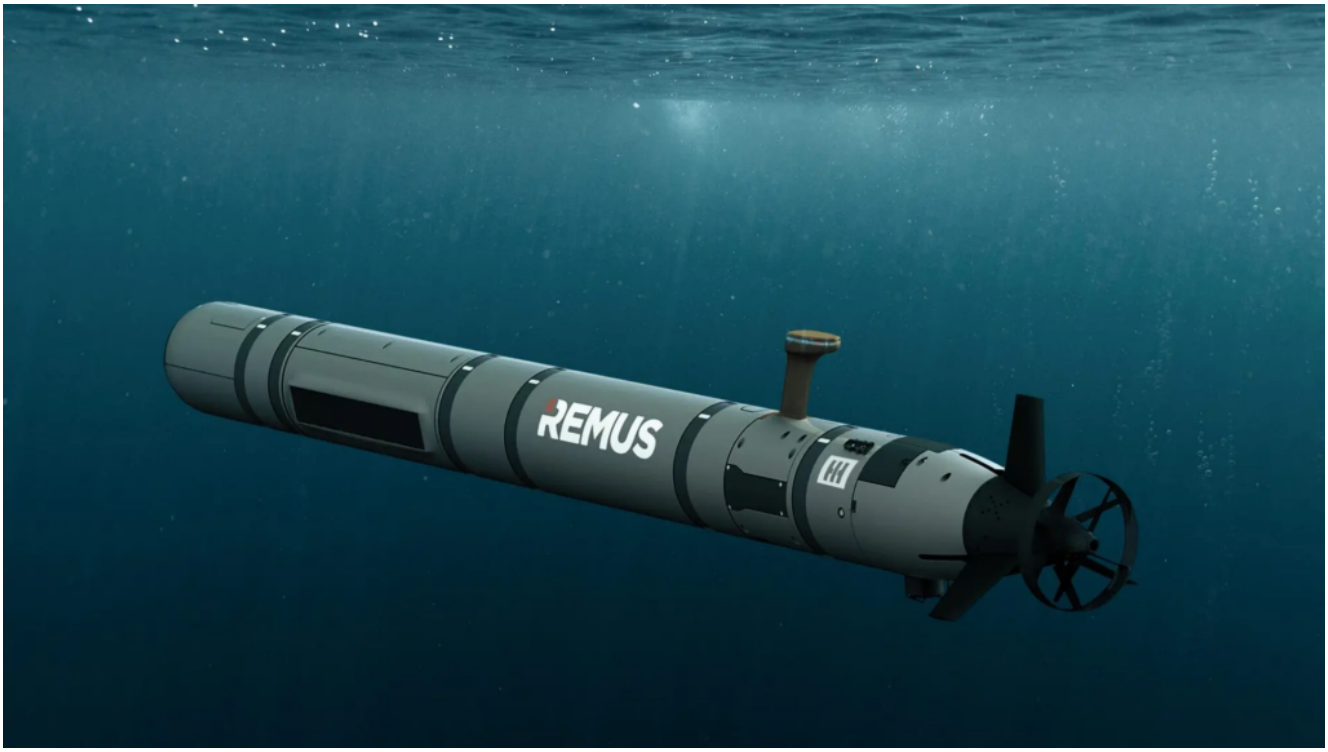
Allied Arctic nations can partner with industry to gain even more intelligence of the region. The U.S. oil and gas industry, he said, has unparalleled experience operating on the ocean floor for long stretches, including with uncrewed vehicles that can function without human intervention for months. "So, there's a lot of magic there," he said.

He conceded that China's Navy is disciplined and will be a regional player eventually. "But I tell you, they got a lot to

learn," Merz said. "There's a difference between showing up at the Arctic and living and sustaining yourself in an environment where … communications are horrible, navigation's tough" and there's very little, if any, infrastructure.

"That understanding is a tremendous advantage that we have and that we need to take advantage of," he said. "And as we bring industries and the navies together, that's a powerful partnership."

Launched From Submarines, Trusted by 30 Navies: REMUS Marks 25 Years Beneath the Surface



From HII

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md., April 20, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) today celebrated the 25th anniversary of the REMUS unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) family during the 2026 Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition, marking a quarter century of innovation, reliability and mission versatility that has made REMUS the world's leading autonomous underwater vehicle platform.

Originally funded by the Office of Naval Research (ONR) and developed by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, REMUS began as a research vehicle designed to advance ocean science and undersea exploration. Over the past 25 years, HII has expanded that pioneering technology into the most widely produced and adopted autonomous unmanned underwater systems in the world, supporting defense, commercial and scientific missions.

"REMUS has endured for 25 years because it was designed to evolve," said Duane Fotheringham, president of the Unmanned Systems group in HII's Mission Technologies division. "Its reliability, modularity, and open architecture allow operators to quickly adapt the platform to new missions while maintaining the performance and trust customers rely on."

Today, more than 750 REMUS vehicles have been delivered to over 30 nations. They are currently used by 14 NATO navies, including the U.S., United Kingdom, Norway and Germany, as well as allied partners across the Indo-Pacific. REMUS vehicles support mine countermeasures, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and seabed mapping missions. More than 90% of all REMUS systems deployed in the past 25 years remain in active service, a testament to their durability, reliability and lifecycle value.

Among REMUS's notable capabilities and recognition:

- **The REMUS family supports modern naval operations with unmatched reliability.** Its autonomous systems enable independent and teamed operations. In a recent breakthrough, REMUS 600 vehicles were successfully launched and recovered from the torpedo tubes of an HII-built U.S. Navy *Virginia*-class submarine, extending mission reach while reducing exposure risk and enhancing stealth for submarine forces.

- **REMUS' open-architecture design enables rapid integration of new payloads as missions evolve, maximizing platform modularity while controlling lifecycle costs.** The REMUS product line includes multiple variants designed for specific mission profiles and operating depths. Vehicle designations reflect operational depth capability and generational improvements, from the compact REMUS 130 optimized for shallow-water operations, to the REMUS 6000 designed for deep-sea exploration and recovery operations. REMUS 620, a medium unmanned underwater vehicle (MUUV), features modernized electronics, modular upgrades, and endurance of up to 110 hours with a range of approximately 275 nautical miles.

- REMUS vehicles have played critical roles in high-profile global search operations, including the deep-ocean search for Air France Flight 447, post-tsunami maritime surveys in Japan, and the historic discovery of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) in the Philippine Sea.

- Research institutions and environmental organizations continue to rely on REMUS vehicles for oceanographic research, marine archaeology, and ecosystem monitoring. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA) is currently deploying REMUS 620 vehicles to map seafloor habitats impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, while universities and marine laboratories use the systems to conduct long-duration environmental surveys.

The U.S. Navy's Lionfish Program

The U.S. Navy's current Lionfish UUV is based on HII's REMUS 300 platform, a modular, open-architecture small unmanned underwater vehicle (SUUV) engineered for multi-mission adaptability. The program was developed in collaboration with the U.S. Navy and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) to accelerate the adoption of dual-use commercial technologies in U.S. Department of Defense programs.

Lionfish has been recognized as the U.S. Navy's first successful transition from an Other Transaction Authority (OTA) prototype to full-rate production. It is also the first – and currently *only* – cyber-compliant UUV.

Strategic Partnerships and Future Capabilities

HII continues to invest in next-generation capabilities and strategic partnerships that expand how unmanned systems operate across the maritime domain. In a recent initiative, HII and Babcock International Group signed a strategic agreement to integrate REMUS UUVs with Babcock's submarine weapon handling and launch systems, enabling autonomous launch and recovery of UUVs through submarine torpedo tubes and unlocking new deployment options for allied submarine forces.

In the U.S. Navy's future fleet, and together with HII's ROMULUS unmanned surface vehicle (USV), REMUS systems enable integration of manned and unmanned platforms.

Nacelle Improvement Elevates Bell Boeing V-22 Readiness

From Bell Textron

Bell announces results of Nacelle Improvement Program showing dramatic reduction in maintenance hours and maintainer time to improve readiness

AMARILLO, Texas (April 20, 2026) – Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) company, announced initial results and benefits from more than 10,000 flight hours of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) CV-22 Ospreys with the Nacelle Improvement (NI) Program. The first of nine CV-22s with the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base received the NI upgrade in 2021, and the program has

produced a 75 percent reduction in maintenance hours resulting in a significant boost in operational readiness and maintainability.

The V-22 Osprey nacelle houses critical power components to the V-22's vertical take-off and landing capabilities and transition to forward flight. The NI program is a targeted upgrade designed to modernize the V-22's nacelles. By simplifying wiring, enhancing structural components, and integrating fleet maintainer-informed feedback, NI improves the Osprey's reliability, readiness, and sustainability for any mission for the next 30 years.

"Since the initial rollout, the CV-22 Nacelle Improvement has saved AFSOC more than 24,000 maintenance hours, equating to a savings of more than 1,000 days of maintainer time that can be used toward other high-priority needs," said V-22 Joint Program Office Principal Military Deputy Program Manager and CV-22 Senior Materiel Leader. "CV-22 readiness saw more than a 10 percent increase; meaning more mission capable CV-22s on the flightline, which allows for further training and improved safety."

Bell completes the NI modification at its Amarillo Assembly Center (AAC), which actively produces V-22s for the U.S. Department of War. The AAC assembles all variants of the Bell Boeing V-22 model – MV, CMV, and CV.

"The Nacelle Improvement Program enhances the V-22s reliability, flexibility, and global reach for combat and humanitarian missions alike," said Kurt Fuller, senior vice president, Military Fielded Programs, Bell. "We are pleased to see these remarkable results from the NI program and look forward to continued collaboration to enhance focus on V-22 safety, sustainability, and readiness."

RTX’s Raytheon delivers first Next Generation Jammer shipsets to the Royal Australian Air Force

Technology will enhance country’s electronic warfare capabilities

From RTX

ARLINGTON, V.A. (April 20, 2026) – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, has delivered its first Next Generation Jammer (NGJ) pods to the Royal Australian Air Force.

NGJ is a cooperative development and production program with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). It is an airborne electronic attack system containing active electronically

scanned arrays that radiate in the mid-band frequency range. By disrupting enemy radars and communication systems, NGJ enables aircrew to remain undetected while airborne, allowing them to execute their missions with greater safety and effectiveness.

“This delivery marks a significant milestone in our collaborative efforts with the U.S. Navy and RAAF on NGJ,” said Barbara Borgonovi, president of Naval Power at Raytheon. “This advanced technology will greatly enhance RAAF’s electronic warfare capabilities, safeguarding vital assets on its aircraft and more effectively neutralizing adversary technologies across a wide range of missions.”

Raytheon has been partnering with the U.S. Navy and RAAF since the inception of the NGJ program. This first delivery of shipsets occurred ahead of schedule in September 2025, with future deliveries continuing through 2026. Raytheon is also providing on-site deployment and maintenance support in Australia to help support operational and mission readiness.

New long-range smart weapon flies hundreds of miles in first test

The first JDAM LR cruises above the U.S. Navy's Point Mugu Sea Range, California, on April 1, 2026. (U.S. Navy photo)
From Chris Bishop at Boeing, April 20, 2026

Boeing, U.S. Navy complete initial flight tests of the JDAM LR, validating powered flight and long-range capability.

Boeing and U.S. Navy teammates completed a series of flight tests last week for the GBU-75 Joint Direct Attack Munition Long Range (JDAM LR) at the Navy's Point Mugu Sea Range, California.

- JDAM is a low-cost guidance kit that converts existing free-fall bombs into accurately guided smart weapons. JDAM LR adds long-range capability and is the newest in the JDAM family of systems.

Why it matters: The tests validated the weapon's ability to operate from an F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter and sustain powered flight of a 500-pound (230-kilogram) JDAM.

- Military Code GPS navigation systems on JDAM LR tracked satellites for the entire test, improving the weapon's

resilience and accuracy against GPS jamming and spoofing.

How they did it: An F/A-18E Super Hornet from China Lake Naval Weapons Station flew to Point Mugu and released an inert JDAM LR.

- The first test, on April 1, demonstrated safe separation, engine start, cruise and guidance through terminal flight and impact in water after a 34-minute flight. The weapon sustained powered flight for nearly 200 nautical miles and landed within meters of its planned target.

- For the next test, on April 3, teams flew a second planned flight profile, successfully incorporating altitude changes and weapon maneuvering during an otherwise similar flight.

U.S. Forces Disable Vessel Attempting to Enter Iranian Port, Violate Blockade

From U.S. Central Command, April 19, 2026

TAMPA, Fla. – U.S. forces operating in the Arabian Sea enforced naval blockade measures against an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel attempting to sail toward an Iranian port, April 19.

Guided-missile destroyer USS Spruance (DDG 111) intercepted M/V Touska as it transited the north Arabian Sea at 17 knots enroute to Bandar Abbas, Iran. American forces issued multiple warnings and informed the Iranian-flagged vessel it was in violation of the U.S. blockade.

After Touska’s crew failed to comply with repeated warnings over a six-hour period, Spruance directed the vessel to evacuate its engine room. Spruance disabled Touska’s propulsion by firing several rounds from the destroyer’s 5-inch MK 45 Gun into Touska’s engine room. U.S. Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit later boarded the non-compliant vessel, which remains in U.S. custody.

American forces acted in a deliberate, professional, and proportional manner to ensure compliance. Since the blockade’s commencement, U.S. forces have directed 25 commercial vessels to turn around or return to an Iranian port.