Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant Returns Home after 68-day Patrol

The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC 617) small boat crewman approaches the cutter in the Caribbean Sea, July 22. The Vigilant crew repatriated 147 Haitian migrants interdicted in the high seas. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant's crew returned to Port Canaveral on July 22 after completing a 68-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said July 28.

The crew's deployment was focused on collaborating with other Coast Guard assets to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant voyages en route to the United States.

During the patrol, the crew interdicted 19 vessels with 460 Cuban and Haitian migrants attempting to illegally enter the United States, and aided a group of Cubans stranded on an island.

In support of Coast Guard Sector Key West, Vigilant’s crew interdicted 18 vessels while patrolling in the Florida Straits. During the patrol, the crew approached a grossly overloaded sailing vessel with 147 Haitian migrants onboard. The cutter’s crew provided care and medical attention to the migrants before repatriating them to Haiti.

As a tropical depression with 40 mph winds and 10 to 12-foot seas approached the Florida Straits, Vigilant’s crew interdicted three overloaded and unseaworthy homemade vessels in a 12-hour period, saving 44 Cuban migrants.

The crew also supported the Coast Guard 7th District Operation Southeast Watch in the Windward Pass. Operation Southeast watch is an interagency effort to detect and deter vessels engaged in illegal maritime migration. While in the Windward Pass, the crew oversaw and coordinated patrol assignments for aircraft and seven other cutters off the coast of Haiti. Vigilant’s crew worked with Coast Guard Cutter William Trump’s crew to interdict an overloaded and unstable sailing vessel, rescuing 107 Haitian migrants.

“During this 68-day patrol, Vigilant’s crew supported homeland security objectives by deterring illegal maritime migration,” said Cmdr. Jay Guyer, commanding officer of the Vigilant. “Interdicting and rescuing nearly 500 people over a two-month patrol is a testament to the incredible professionalism of our crew.”

Vigilant, a 210-foot Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter, patrols the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean, performing counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction operations, search and rescue, and fisheries enforcement.

Hospital Ship USNS Comfort to Deploy to Southern Command Region

The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) sails off the coast of Puerto Rico to provide humanitarian relief in this 2017 photo. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ernest R. Scott*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Defense Department will deploy a hospital ship to the U.S. Southern Command region during the fall of 2022, the department said.

"The Department of Defense plans to deploy the United States Naval Ship Comfort, a Mercy-class hospital ship, to conduct medical assistance in support of regional partners in the fall of 2022," the release said. "During each port visit, the USNS Comfort typically provides medical assistance to about 3,500-8,000 people."

The initiative is one of several the department announced in the wake of the XV Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA), which convened on July 25-29, 2022, in Brasilia, Brazil.

“CDMA is the premier hemispheric defense ministerial for strategic-level engagement with the top defense officials of the Americas, and convenes every two years,” the release said.

The USNS Comfort, one of two hospital ships operated by the Military Sealift Command, last visited the region in 2019, prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided medical care in 12 nations in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

“The Department of Defense is committed to its role as the most trusted defense ally and partner for its neighbors to the north and south, building on its longstanding cooperation across a range of areas to foster mutual security throughout the Western Hemisphere,” the department said.

The Comfort’s sister ship, USNS Mercy, currently is deployed to the Western Pacific region as a participant in the Pacific Partnership humanitarian assistance effort.

The U.S. Navy is procuring medical versions of the Austal-built expeditionary fast transport ship to provide medical care for military operations and humanitarian care and disaster relief.

U.S. Navy Holds UAS Wide-Area Mission Demonstration

The Navy conducts a demonstration aboard USS Paul Hamilton (DDG-60) July 12 to identify and examine unmanned aircraft systems capable of wide-area missions from a Navy vessel at long ranges for extended periods while sending information back to the vessel. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy recently completed an unmanned aircraft system wide-area mission demonstration to assess capabilities that could benefit the fleet in the future, Naval Air Systems Command said July 27.

The Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical UAS program office (PMA-263), Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division AIRWorks, and Navy Warfare Development Command led the sea-based demonstration July 11-15 aboard USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) in San Diego.

Two vendors, Insitu Inc. and L3Harris, showcased multiple technologies designed to operate as a portable system in challenging conditions while providing the same wide-area

coverage as a shore-based system.

“This event was a great opportunity to evaluate unmanned capability in a relevant environment, learn how it can support and enhance operations, and get direct feedback from the fleet,” said Col. Victor Argobright, PMA-263 program manager. “A lot of work was done in a short time across the enterprise to make this happen.”

Earlier this year, PMA-263 and AIRWorks teamed in collaboration with Innovation and Modernization Patuxent River, the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division partner for experimentation, technology demonstrations, and prototyping, and with Navy Warfare Development Command’s Fleet Experimentation team to identify and examine a UAS capable of performing wide-area missions from a Navy surface vessel at long ranges for extended periods while relaying accurate, relevant information back to the host vessel.

The team downselected the vendors to participate in the demonstration based on their ability to provide a system able to operate without additional support systems, deploy without dedicated launch or recovery equipment and have maximum portability, self-sufficiency and modularity across UAS hardware and payloads.

“The USS Paul Hamilton team was pleased to be a part of this demonstration,” said Cmdr. Jake Ferrari, the ship’s commanding officer. “To see the energy put behind providing capabilities associated with UAS aboard surface vessels is exciting. I look forward to future efforts that will provide an enduring fleet capability that is integrated into sustained operations.”

The systems demonstrated wide-area surveillance capability across multiple mission sets. The government will review data gathered during the demonstration to further evaluate each system’s performance.

“Both vendors stepped up to the challenge and the crew of the

USS Paul Hamilton provided outstanding support and feedback," said Argobright. "It's teamwork like this that's needed to get capability in the hand of sailors as quickly as possible. We will be leveraging this effort and working with Navy leadership on the next steps to make this happen."

As part of a multi-phased merit-based selection process, the demonstration may lead to Insitu or L3Harris being awarded an Other Transaction Authority prototype project under the authority of 10 U.S.C. 2371b later this year. OTAs are used by the DoD to carry out prototype, research and production projects.

Pacific Partnership Concludes Palau Phase

Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) sits at anchor upon its arrival off the coast of Koror, Palau during Pacific Partnership 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brandie Nuzzi*

KOROR, PALAU – The Palau phase of Pacific Partnership concluded in Koror, Palau, on July 23, Lt.j.g. Molly Sanders wrote in a July 27 U.S 7th Fleet release.

In Palau, the Pacific Partnership 2022 team included representatives from the host nation, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

During the mission stop, the Pacific Partnership 2022 team conducted more than 100 total medical engagements including more than 50 dental events and five patient surgeries, 71 animals seen for surgical and medical care, two humanitarian assistance and disaster relief workshops with 120 personnel trained, three band concerts with more than 600 attendees, and a search and rescue exercise conducted between four participating nations.

“The USNS Mercy is strengthening relationship between our countries. We greatly appreciate their presence here in Palau to further the capabilities of our local medical practitioners,” said Palau President Surangel S. Whipps Jr.

Participants said the coordination between partner nations during Pacific Partnership 2022 enhanced understanding and cooperation, as well as prepared those involved to respond in case of a natural disaster or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Pacific Partnership contributes to regional stability and security through exchanges that foster enduring partnerships, trust, and interoperability between nations.

“It has been our honor to bring Pacific Partnership to Palau,” said Capt. Hank Kim, Pacific Partnership 2022 mission commander. “We worked together to share knowledge and provide care that will instill bonds lasting long after PP22 departs Koror.”

This year’s mission has included stops in Vietnam and Palau and an engineering engagement in Fiji. The hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) serves as the Pacific Partnership 2022 mission platform.

Now in its 17th year, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific.

For more information about Pacific Partnership and USNS Mercy, visit www.facebook.com/USNSMERCY, www.facebook.com/pacificpartnership, or https://www.msc.usff.navy.mil/ships/mercy/.

US Navy Exercises Option for L3Harris Submarine Imaging Masts

Sailors attached to the Virginia-class fast attack submarine USS Montana (SSN 794) man the boat during a commissioning ceremony in Norfolk, Va., June 25. L3Harris will provide imaging masts for Virginia- and Columbia-class submarines. *U.S. NAVY / Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist John Smolinski*

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. — The U.S. Navy exercised an option on a previously awarded L3Harris Technologies' contract to produce enhanced submarine imaging masts and spares, the company said July 27.

L3Harris will provide two configurations of its Type 20 low-profile mast to meet the Navy's operational requirements. Production will be performed at L3Harris' Northampton, Massachusetts, facility, with initial deliveries scheduled to

begin in 2024.

As the world’s largest submarine imaging system provider, L3Harris delivers precise, high-resolution optics and integrated sensor packages.

The Type 20 mast is a modular non-hull-penetrating imaging sensor that uses a telescoping universal modular mast to deliver improved high-definition visual imaging capabilities.

“The Type 20 low-profile mast is the next-generation imaging mast that will provide enhanced capabilities to the Virginia- and Columbia-class submarines,” said Rosemary Chapdelaine, president, Maritime, L3Harris. “Under this contract, we will deliver technology advancements to support the U.S. Navy’s mission and operational requirements, which will enable the users to see and control the submarine integrated imaging systems.”

Austal USA Awarded Contract Option for 2 U.S. NAVY T-ATS Ships

An artist's conception of a T-ATS craft. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA was awarded a $156 million U.S. Navy contract option for the construction of two Navajo-class Towing, Salvage, and Rescue Ships (T-ATS), the company said in a release. With the award, the company is now under contract for four T-ATS, having received awards for T-ATS 11 and 12 in October 2021.

T-ATS will provide ocean-going tug, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support U.S. Navy fleet operations and will be a multi mission common hull platform capable of towing heavy ships. These ships will also be able to support current missions, including oil spill response, humanitarian assistance, and wide area search and surveillance.

The contract award follows Austal USA's start of construction on its first T-ATS ship earlier this month that was celebrated at a ceremony attended by governmental officials and local community leaders. The highlight of the ceremony had U.S. Rep. Jerry Carl (R-Alabama) pushing the plasma cutter button making the first cut of steel for the ship.

"The T-ATS program is special to our team as it represents the start of construction of a new class of ship for our shipbuilding team. This contract is important because it provides us the backlog to really optimize production over the

course of these four ships," Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh said. "We're honored to have this contract and it illustrates the Navy's continued confidence in our team's demonstrated ability to deliver capability on-time and on-schedule."

Marine Corps Resumes Limited ACV Water Operations

U.S. Marines assigned to the 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, conduct waterborne training with an Amphibious Combat Vehicle from shore to loading amphibious transport dock ship USS Anchorage (LPD 23) at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Feb. 12. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Willow Marshall*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Marine Corps has authorized water

operations of its new Amphibious Combat Vehicle, but only in protected waters, Headquarters Marine Corps said July 26.

“On July 22, after initial review of the factors involved in the July 19 ACV incident, Headquarters Marine Corps authorized ACV water operations in protected waters only (Area 21, Del Mar Boat Basin) to sustain ACV crew proficiency and meet entry-level training requirements,” said Capt. Ryan Bruce, media officer at Headquarters Marine Corps, in the release. “ACV operations remain suspended for open ocean and surf.”

The Marine Corps suspended ACV water operations on July 20 after a July 19 training incident at Camp Pendleton, California. There were no injuries to the Marine and Sailors on board the ACVs involved.

“This is the right thing to do,” Lt. Gen. David J. Furness, deputy commandant of the Marine Corps for Plans, Policies, and Operations, said in announcing the pause on July 20. “A pause on ACV waterborne operations will give us time to conduct an investigation, learn from this event, and ensure our assault amphibian community remains ready to support our nation.”

“ACV land operations, to include live fire ranges, remain authorized,” Bruce said.

The ACV, built by BAE Systems, is replacing the AAV7 assault amphibious vehicle and its variants in Marine Corps amphibious assault battalions.

General Atomics SeaGuardian

UAS Supporting RIMPAC 2022

An MQ-9B SeaGuardian UAS is supporting RIMPAC 2022 under a contract with the U.S. Navy. *GENERAL ATOMICS AERONAUTICAL SYSTEMS*

SAN DIEGO – An MQ-9B SeaGuardian unmanned aircraft system from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. is under contract with the U.S. Navy to support the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022 exercise, the company said July 27.

RIMPAC, the world's largest international maritime exercise, started in late June and continues until early August in Hawaii and Southern California operations areas.

GA-ASI's SeaGuardian is a maritime derivative of the MQ-9B SkyGuardian and remains the first UAS that offers multi-domain intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting as an internal payload that can search the ocean surface and the depths in support of Fleet operations. The UAS is also providing real-time ISR data feeds to the U.S. Pacific Fleet Command Center using signals intelligence parametrics and full-motion video to the watch floor and intelligence centers for real-time, dynamic tasking.

As of July 25, 11 flights totaling over 80 hours have been

flown by SeaGuardian showcasing all operational payloads, which includes electronic intelligence, communication intelligence, Automatic Identification System, antisubmarine warfare monitor and control of sonobuoys, GA-ASI developed Lynx Multi-mode Maritime Radar, high-definition electro-optical/infra-red imaging system and Link 16.

SeaGuardian's multi-domain capabilities allows it to flex from mission to mission and pass real-time sensor data directly to the Fleet through Link 16 and satellite feeds to the shore-based command and intelligence centers, the company said.

During RIMPAC, the MQ-9B has effectively passed ISR&T information to various surface and air units, such as the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, guided-missile destroyers, littoral combat ships, frigates, patrol boats, P-8 and P-3 maritime patrol aircraft and a litany of other U.S. and foreign units taking part in the exercise.

Raytheon to Upgrade Australian Border Surveillance Aircraft with Advanced Radar

ADELAIDE, Australia – Raytheon Intelligence & Space will equip Australian border surveillance aircraft with its latest SeaVue Multi-Role radar under a contract with Cobham Special Mission, the company announced July 27.

Under the contract, RI&S will upgrade Cobham's fleet of Dash 8 fixed-wing aircraft to the most advanced version of its SeaVue

multi-domain surveillance radar in support of Australian border protection operations.

SeaVue MR will bring long-range, high-altitude surveillance capabilities to the special mission fixed-wing aircraft used to patrol the oceans surrounding Australia's shores as part of the world's largest outsourced civil maritime surveillance operation.

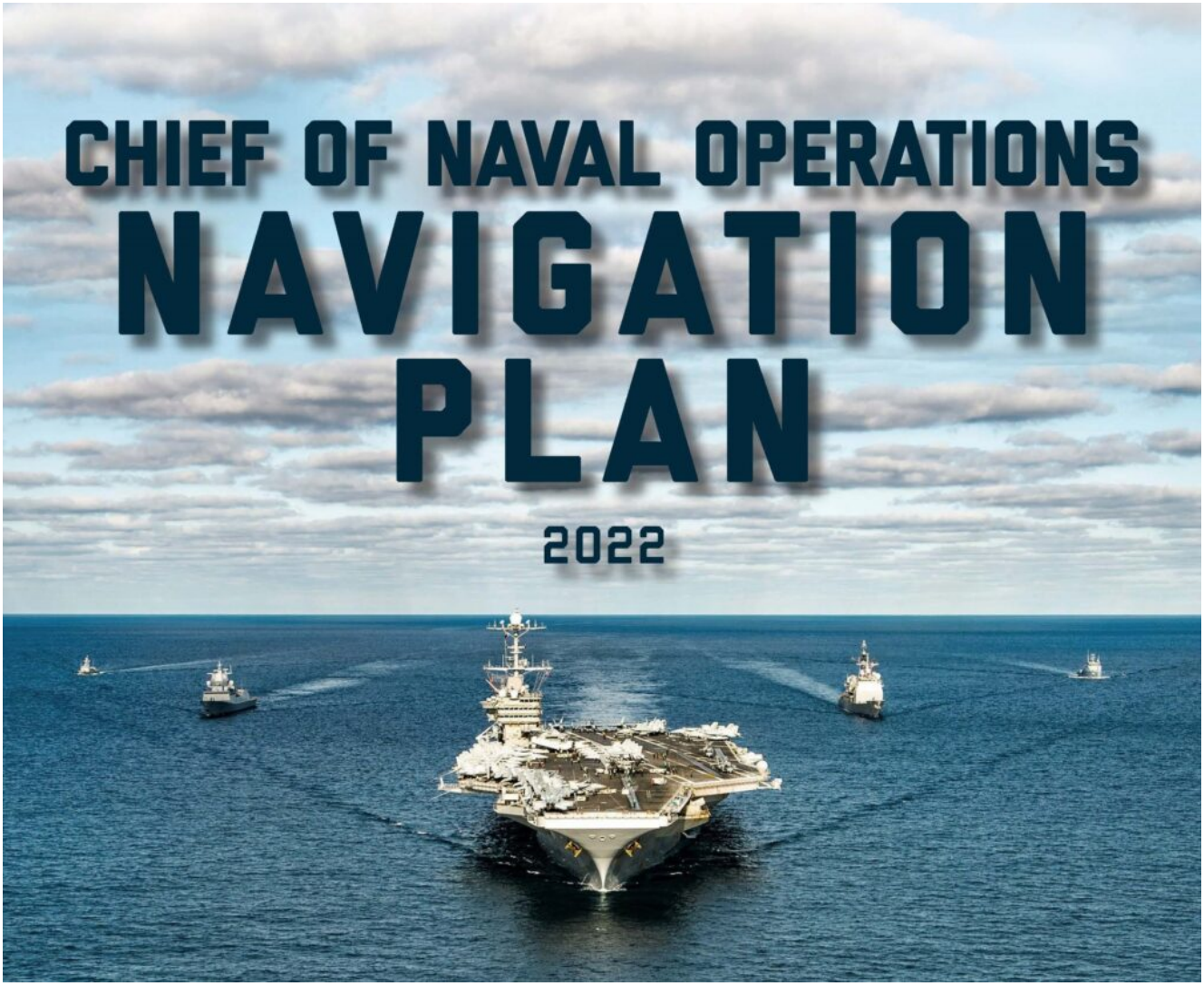
"Long-range detection of small targets from higher altitudes increases surveillance coverage and improves Australia's capability to detect and counter Civil Maritime Security threats," said Denis Donohue, president of Surveillance and Networks Systems for RI&S.

Cobham Special Mission Managing Director James Woodhams said, "Having new-generation technology on our Dash-8 fleet ensures these platforms remain relevant and fit for purpose to conduct border surveillance missions in the national interest."

RI&S has supported Cobham's mission of patrolling the country's vast 8.2-million-square-kilometer exclusive economic zone – which includes oil and gas fields, shipping lanes, and fisheries – with previous versions of the SeaVue radar since 1995. SeaVue maritime surveillance radars currently fly on manned and unmanned aircraft in nine countries around the world.

CNO's NAVPLAN Addresses Hybrid Fleet Force Structure

Goals for 2045



ARLINGTON, Va. – The update to the chief of naval operation's Navigation Plan incorporates the Navy's Force Design 2045 ship and aircraft force level goals for 2045, a hybrid fleet in which manned ships will remain dominant but supplemented by significant numbers of unmanned systems.

The NAVPLAN, released July 26, has been informed by recent fleet exercises, including IMX-22 held by Task Force 59 earlier this year and the Rim of the Pacific exercises, CNO Adm. Michael Gilday, now in his third year in office, said during a July 26 roundtable with reporters.

The plan complies with the National Defense Strategy and the CNO's priorities on Sailors, readiness, capability and

capacity.

“The Navy must be capable of controlling the seas to deter aggression against our allies and partners, and project power ashore as an integral part of the Joint Force,” the CNO says in the NAVPLAN. “The Navy will incorporate our force design imperatives – distance, deception, defense, distribution, delivery, and decision advantage – to effectively integrate with the joint force, deliver effects across all domains and defeat adversary forces in conflict.

“To accomplish this, the Navy must become a hybrid fleet. Manned, multi-mission platforms will remain at the core of our future fleet but augmented with new platforms and new capabilities. We will add to our current fleet a host of manned, unmanned and optionally manned platforms operating under, on, and above the seas. This future fleet will deliver an assured strategic deterrent; greater numbers of undersea capabilities; a mix of large and small modern surface combatants; and a resilient logistics enterprise that can sustain our distributed naval force.”

Gilday said the future fleet would require a 3% to 5% annual increase in the Navy’s budget, noting that the shipbuilding request of $27 billion is the highest ever but also affirming that a long time will be required to build up the size of the fleet to meet the goals in 2045.

“I think it’s going to take a couple of decades to yield that hybrid fleet that we think that we ultimately need in order to fight the way we think we want to fight in a distributed manner, leveraging networking like JADC2 and the effort that we have ongoing with Overmatch,” Gilday said. “All that is going to take time. I’m being realistic. We don’t have the capacity in the industrial base to pump out that number of ships in a short period of time.”

Force Design 2045 envisions a hybrid fleet of “more than 350

manned ships, 150 large, unmanned surface and subsurface platforms, and approximately 3,000 aircraft," the plan says, noting the numbers will be refined as the security environment changes.

The capacity goals of Force Design 2045 include:

- 12 Columbia-class nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines
- 12 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers
- 66 nuclear-powered fast-attack and large-payload submarines, continuing with the Virginia class and developing the SSN(X)
- 96 large surface combatants, including the Flight III Arleigh Burke-class DDG and the DDG(X)
- 56 small surface combatants, including the Constellation-class FFG
- 31 large amphibious warships
- 18 light amphibious warships
- Approximately 150 unmanned surface and subsurface vessels
- 82 combat logistic and auxiliary ships
- Increased expeditionary logistics capacity
- Approximately 1,300 carrier-based fifth-generation strike fighters and Next-Generation Air Dominance Family of Systems
- Approximately 900 maritime patrol, reconnaissance, anti-submarine and anti-surface fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft, augmented by unmanned aircraft
- Approximately 750 intra-theater lift, training, and research and development aircraft.

"We will augment the force with an evolving complement of thousands of small, rapidly adaptable, and attritable unmanned platforms," the NAVPLAN says. "These enablers will increase our sensing resilience, persistence, and coverage, provide cross-domain kinetic and non-kinetic effects, and enhance the survivability and sustainability of the future fleet. We will

build future platforms with modernization in mind – hardware upgradeable and software updateable at the speed of innovation. We must build adequate space, weight, and power into our large long-life capital investments to support evolving sensors and weapons systems."

The NAVPLAN is available here.