

# Proposed Navy Aircraft Procurement Reduced for 2023



The new fiscal year will mark the sunset on new MV-22 Osprey purchases, according to new budget documents. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Andrew Skiver*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy plans to procure 96 aircraft in fiscal 2023, down from the 129 aircraft enacted in the fiscal 2022 appropriations law. The numbers are expected to go even lower over the years of the Future Years Defense Program.

The Department of the Navy has requested the following:

- 15 F-35B Lightning II strike fighters for the Marine Corps
- 13 F-35C Lightning II strike fighters (9 for the Navy, 4 for the Marine Corps)
- 5 E-2D Advanced Hawkeye command and control aircraft
- 5 KC-130J Super Hercules transport/refueling aircraft

- 10 new multi-engine training aircraft
- 10 CH-53K King Stallion heavy-lift helicopters
- 25 TH-73A Thrasher training helicopters
- 3 MQ-4C Triton unmanned surveillance aircraft
- 4 MQ-25A Stingray unmanned aerial refueling aircraft
- 5 MQ-9A Predator unmanned aerial surveillance aircraft

Assuming 10-plane squadron strength, the planned F-35C procurement does not even fill one Navy F-35C squadron or half of a Marine Corps F-35C squadron. But F-35C procurement is planned to increase significantly starting in 2024, to 15 per year for the Navy and four per year for the Marine Corp, except for three in 2027.

The Navy – again – is planning on ending F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighter procurement with the 2022 batch of 12 mandated by Congress. It remains to be seen if Congress will again keep procurement of the Super Hornet alive.

As proposed, the new fiscal year would be the last year of procurement of the E-2D and the TH-73A. No more P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft or MV-22B or CMV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft are planned.

Procurement of the KC-130J would pause or stop after two are purchased in 2024. The Navy has been hoping to replace its C-130T/KC-130T organic airlift fleet with C-130Js, but that seems far in the future if it happens.

The new fiscal year will be the first for procurement of the MQ-25A as it heads for operational capability in 2025. The 2023 budget also resumes procurement of the MQ-4C after a year gap, and more MQ-9As for the Marine Corps as it fills its unmanned squadrons with the Reaper to support expeditionary advance base operations.

The type aircraft to be procured to replace the T-44C multi-engine training aircraft has yet to be announced, but the 2023 budget plans to procure 10 Multi-Engine Training Systems, with

a total of 58 in a three-year run.

The T45TS line in the Navy's budget graph shows procurement starting in 2025. The term T45TS is familiar as T-45 Training System, of which the Boeing T-45 Goshawk aircraft is the main component. However, *Seapower* understands this line item to be a surrogate for a yet-to-be solution for the Navy's need for a T-45C replacement.

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## New National Defense Strategy Delivered to President



An F/A-18E Super Hornet, attached to the “Blue Blasters” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 34, launches from the flight deck the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Mar. 25. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist*

### *3rd Class Tate Cardinal*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Department of Defense delivered the new 2022 National Defense Strategy to the president March 28, the department said.

The NDS is classified, but DoD released a fact sheet to inform readers until an unclassified version is released.

“For the first time, the department conducted its strategic reviews in a fully integrated way – incorporating the Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review in the NDS – ensuring tight linkages between our strategy and our resources,” the fact sheet says. The unclassified NDS will be forthcoming.

Consistent with the president’s Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the classified NDS sets out how the Department of Defense will contribute to advancing and safeguarding vital U.S. national interests. The defense priorities are:

1. Defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by China
2. Deterring strategic attacks against the United States, allies and partners
3. Deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary, prioritizing the challenge of China in the Indo-Pacific, then the Russia challenge in Europe
4. Building a resilient joint force and defense ecosystem.

“The department will act urgently to sustain and strengthen deterrence, with the People’s Republic of China [PRC] as our most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the department.

“Russia poses acute threats, as illustrated by its brutal and

unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. We will collaborate with our NATO allies and partners to reinforce robust deterrence in the face of Russian aggression.

“The department will remain capable of managing other persistent threats, including those from North Korea, Iran, and violent extremist organizations.

“Changes in global climate and other dangerous transboundary threats, including pandemics, are transforming the context in which the department operates. We will adapt to these challenges, which increasingly place pressure on the joint force and the systems that support it.

“Recognizing growing kinetic and non-kinetic threats to the United States’ homeland from our strategic competitors, the department will take necessary actions to increase resilience – our ability to withstand, fight through, and recover quickly from disruption.

“Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are an enduring strength for the United States, and are critical to achieving our objectives, as the unified response to Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated. Answering this ‘call to action,’ the department will incorporate ally and partner perspectives, competencies, and advantages at every stage of defense planning.

“The Department will advance our goals through three primary ways: integrated deterrence, campaigning, and actions that build enduring advantages.

- Integrated deterrence entails developing and combining our strengths to maximum effect, by working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, other instruments of U.S. national power and our unmatched network of alliances and partnerships. Integrated deterrence is enabled by combat-credible forces, backstopped by a safe, secure, and effective

nuclear deterrent.

- Campaigning will strengthen deterrence and enable us to gain advantages against the full range of competitors' coercive actions. The United States will operate forces, synchronize broader department efforts, and align department activities with other instruments of national power, to undermine acute forms of competitor coercion, complicate competitors' military preparations and develop our own warfighting capabilities together with allies and partners.
- Building enduring advantages for the future joint force involves undertaking reforms to accelerate force development, getting the technology we need more quickly, and making investments in the extraordinary people of the Department, who remain our most valuable resource.

"The department will develop, design, and manage our forces – linking our operational concepts and capabilities to achieve strategic objectives. This requires a joint force that is lethal, resilient, sustainable, survivable, agile, and responsive."

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**HII Christens Flight III  
Destroyer Jack H. Lucas**



HII christened the pre-commissioning unit Jack H. Lucas on March 26. *HII*

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – HII christened pre-commissioning unit Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125) on March 26 at the company's Ingalls Shipbuilding division, the company said in a release.

Jack H. Lucas, a longtime resident of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was the youngest Marine and youngest service member in World War II awarded the Medal of Honor. During a close firefight with Japanese soldiers, Lucas saved the lives of three Marines when he unhesitatingly placed himself on two grenades.

"Jack H. Lucas made a selfless decision to choose others and country over self," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson said. "Our Ingalls shipbuilders have a deep appreciation and respect for what sailors and Marines do on behalf of our nation. We are proud to support them and to provide them this remarkable ship, our first Flight III destroyer."

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Mike Gilday, was the keynote speaker.

"Jack H. Lucas is not only the most capable and sophisticated surface combatant ever built by man, but it also represents

the bridge from the past to the future, as we bring a new radar, the Aegis Baseline 10, and a new electric plant onto an already highly capable platform,” Gilday said. “Such an evolution would be impossible without the shipbuilders of Huntington Ingalls Industries and the Pascagoula community. Flight III represents the dedication and commitment of our Sailors and civilians – the skill and innovation of our shipyards and industry partners – and the commitment of the American people to keep the seas free and open for all.”

“You have built the finest destroyer in the world,” Gilday said.

Jack H. Lucas is cosponsored by Ruby Lucas, widow of the ship’s namesake, and Catherine B. Reynolds, chairman and CEO of the Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation. Together, the two sponsors officially christened the ship and made remarks during the ceremony.

“May the Jack H. Lucas be indestructible, just like he was,” Ruby Lucas said. “This first of its kind ship is advanced in integrity, courage and commitment to serve our great country. Jack never ran from a fight, and I’m certain that all aboard his namesake will represent Jack with honor. Just as I feel his spirit with me, be assured that he will be with all of you all the time.”

U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker and U.S. Rep. Steven Palazzo, both of Mississippi, delivered remarks. Other speakers included Meredith Berger, performing the duties of undersecretary of the Navy, and Maj. Gen. Jason Bohm, commanding general, Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

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# Israeli Air Force Leader Takes Flight in CH-53K



Brig. Gen. Eyal Grinboim, Israeli air force chief of staff, along with his staff, discuss the capabilities of the CH-53K prior to flying on the aircraft. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Israeli air force Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Eyal Grinboim visited Naval Air Station Patuxent River in February for a program update and flight on the CH-53K heavy lift helicopter, Naval Air Systems Command said March 23.

Grinboim and his staff met with Maj. Gen. Gregory Masiello, program executive officer for air anti-submarine warfare, assault and special mission programs. Masiello and Col. Jack Perrin, program manager, Heavy Lift Program Office (PMA-261), gave the IAF group an overview of the CH-53K program and a status update on current tests and production.

The visit included an opportunity to co-pilot the aircraft. U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Luke Frank, pilot and officer in charge of CH-53K detachment for Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron 1, provided pre-flight safety instructions

before leading the group in a flight. The flight demonstrated the power and capabilities of the CH-53K aircraft.

Grinboim's visit to the program office was the first since Israel's decision last year to purchase the CH-53K. The IAF signed a letter of offer and acceptance on Dec. 30, 2021, with the U.S. government. The agreement is for purchase of 12 CH-53K aircraft with first deliveries planned in 2025.

As the long-range logistic support backbone for the U.S. Marine Corps, the CH-53K will support Israeli special operations programs first, as well as provide the Israeli Defense Forces with a platform that has the speed, safety and gross weight capability to support all of its missions, including troop and cargo transport, and search and rescue.

The CH-53K program is on track to achieve Initial Operational Capability in 2022. VMX-1 completed all initial operational test and evaluation scheduled events, including a real-world, non-test event recovering a 14,000-pound downed Navy H-60 from a 12,000 feet high zone in the mountains of Northern California. The CH-53K will transport Marines, heavy equipment and supplies during ship-to-shore movement in support of amphibious assault and subsequent operations ashore.

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**SASC Chair Reed: Defense Budget Turmoil Fault 'Not in Our Stars, But in Ourselves'**



Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee during a hearing in review of the fiscal 2023 defense authorization request on March 8. *DOD / U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jack Sanders*

WASHINGTON – The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee quoted Shakespeare to lay the blame on Congress itself for the defense budget legislative turmoil over the last two decades of multiple continuing resolutions, and said budget delays are especially dangerous in the world's current geo-political climate.

"We've gotten into a very bad habit over the last several years, but I hope we can get it done," said Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island), when asked by *Seapower* if he foresaw a return to the regular defense budget legislative process in Congress. Reed spoke March 23 in a webinar with reporters of the Defense Writers Group.

Reed noted the fiscal 2022 budget was received late from the Defense Department, which pushed back deliberations. The 2023 president's budget proposal is scheduled to be delivered to

Congress March 28, almost two months later than the normal plan.

Reed said getting the defense budget out on time is “extremely helpful to the services. Most services don’t – regrettably – plan to do anything in the first quarter of the new fiscal year because they assume they won’t have a budget and, in some cases, even authorization acts. That’s a whole quarter of just standing around tapping your feet, and in this world, with these adversaries, and the speed of technology, that’s wasted time.”

Reed noted the services had to wait nearly six months before the 2022 defense budget finally was appropriated.

“It’s not an efficient way to spend money,” he said.

“The problem is, as Shakespeare said, is not in our stars but in ourselves,” Reed said. “In Congress we have been, for many reasons, distracted. It’s a complicated political environment and I hope we can refocus.”

Reed said he, ranking member Sen. James Inhofe (R-Oklahoma) and the Senate Appropriations Committee leaders would like to get their defense bills done on time.

“Sometimes we become hostage to other issues, unfortunately,” Reed said. “But our goal is very clearly to get it done and get it done on time.”

Reed also took the opportunity to say in the current world climate, the United States has to “reimagine how we fight. We have to develop new warfighting concepts. We have new equipment. We have new areas of space and cyber that have been around by every day are much more critical for what we have to do.”

Reed said tough choices have to be made about legacy systems, and that the U.S. has to look to its allies as a “major source

of strength.”

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# Boeing's Australian-Produced Unmanned Aircraft to be Named MQ-28A Ghost Bat



The newly named MQ-28A during the second test flight series at Woomera Range Complex in South Australia. *BOEING*

AUSTRALIA – Australia has selected MQ-28A Ghost Bat as the military designator and name for the first Australian-produced military combat aircraft in over 50 years.

Australia's Defence Minister, Peter Dutton MP, announced the designator and name at a dedicated ceremony held at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland.

“The introduction of the new popular name is a rare and special moment in aviation history for our RAAF [Royal

Australian Air Force] partners and industry team of over 35 Australian suppliers,” said Glen Ferguson, director of Boeing’s Airpower Teaming System Australia and International.

“Selecting the Ghost Bat, an Australian native mammal known for teaming together in a pack to detect and hunt, reflects the unique characteristics of the aircraft’s sensors and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance abilities, and is a fitting name for this pioneering capability,” said Ferguson.

With a rapid development timetable of just three years from ideation to first flight, the development program leverages advancements in digital engineering, advanced manufacturing and unique Australian supply chain technologies.

While the RAAF Loyal Wingman development program name will phase out, Boeing’s product name for global customers will remain the Airpower Teaming System.

“Our enduring partnership with Commonwealth of Australia and Australian Defence Force is fundamental to the successful development of MQ-28A’s complex technologies and capabilities, and has global export potential for Australia,” said Brendan Nelson AO, president, Boeing Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific.

During 2022, the program will continue to accelerate the development and testing of the MQ-28A Ghost Bat, with a focus on sensor and missionization capabilities to deliver on RAAF commitments. These requirements will continue to expand as Boeing moves towards the aim of delivering an operational capability for the ADF.

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# HII Celebrates Centennial of U.S. Navy Aircraft Carriers



USS Ranger (CV-4), the first aircraft carrier built by Newport News Shipbuilding, shown off the coast of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, April 1938. *U.S. NAVY*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – HII, America's only builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers., will recognize the 100-year legacy of aircraft carriers this week and celebrate the next century of U.S Navy aircraft carriers.

Brought into service 100 years ago on March 20, 1922, was USS Langley (CV 1), the U.S. Navy's first aircraft carrier. The ship wasn't constructed at HII's Newport News Shipbuilding division, however it began a century of thoughtful innovation, enabling nuclear-powered aircraft carriers today that provide the U.S. Navy a preeminent power projection platform and have

served the nations interest in times of war and peace.

Newport News Shipbuilding' aircraft carrier legends began with USS Ranger (CV 4) in 1934. Since Ranger's delivery, the shipyard has delivered 31 aircraft carriers, including all 10 ships of the Nimitz class and the first of the Ford class that delivered in 2017.

"We are proud that all U.S. Navy aircraft carriers currently serving our nation and protecting our freedoms began their journey at Newport News Shipbuilding," said Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding. "The secret to the shipyard's success is its shipbuilding team. While the art and science of building ships has evolved over the last century, two things have remained constant: the pioneering and patriotic spirit of NNS' shipbuilders and the network of shipbuilding suppliers that spans all 50 states, and our strong partnership with the Navy."

Today's Ford-class aircraft carriers, the air wing, and weapons system evolve together as the latest technologies are developed for future missions and to counter emerging threats. Ford-class carriers are twice as long and weigh eight times as much as their 1922 counterpart, yet they are twice as fast and carry nearly three times as many aircraft. The nation's newest most advanced aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), will be in service until at least 2070. All U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carriers operating in the Navy fleet today were built at Newport News Shipbuilding. USS Enterprise (CVN 65) was first in 1961, then served the nation more than 50 years, having operated safely on nuclear power before being decommissioned in 2017.

Three other Ford-class aircraft carriers are currently under construction at Newport News Shipbuilding. They include John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), Enterprise (CVN 80) and Doris Miller (CVN 81). In addition, Newport News Shipbuilding is conducting mid-life refueling complex overhauls on two Nimitz-class aircraft



carriers: USS George Washington (CVN 73) and USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74). These overhauls will extend the service life for each platform by another 25 years, ensuring the Navy is positioned to deploy a fleet of aircraft carriers ready to support national security requirements.

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## DoD Announces Release of JADC2 Implementation Plan



Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen Hicks and Lt. Gen. Dennis A. Crall participate in a virtual joint all domain command and control cross function team meeting at the Pentagon on Jan. 18. *DOD / photo U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Brittany A. Chase*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks signed the Department of Defense Joint All-Domain Command and Control Implementation Plan on March 15, 2022, the department

said in a release.

JADC2 is a warfighting necessity to keep pace with the volume and complexity of data in modern warfare and to defeat adversaries decisively. JADC2 enables the Joint Force to sense, make sense, and act on information across the battlespace quickly using automation, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics and machine learning to deliver informed solutions via a resilient and robust network environment.

“We must maintain continued focus and momentum on these initiatives and programs which enhance Department capabilities to face current and future threats,” said Hicks. “Command and control in an increasingly information-focused warfighting environment have never been more critical. JADC2 will enable the DoD to act at the speed of relevance to improve U.S. national security. JADC2 is delivering capabilities beginning now, and it will continue to be funded in the coming years.”

The DSD chartered JADC2 Cross-Functional Team will oversee the execution of the JADC2 strategy, initially announced in June 2021, and the implementation plan. While the JADC2 strategy provides a vision and an approach for identifying, organizing, and delivering improved Joint Force C2 capabilities, the implementation plan outlines how the department will accomplish this. An unclassified summary of the JADC2 strategy is available [here](#).

“This step represents irreversible momentum toward implementing the JADC2 Strategy and concepts the department announced earlier this year,” said Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. “This is about dramatically increasing the speed of information sharing and decision making in a contested environment to ensure we can quickly bring to bear all our capabilities to address specific threats.”

JADC2 is the Department's way ahead. The JADC2 implementation plan, while classified, can be described as the document which details the plans of actions, milestones and resourcing requirements. It identifies the organizations responsible for delivering JADC2 capabilities. The plan drives the Department's investment in accelerating the decision cycle, closing operational gaps, and improving the resiliency of C2 systems. It will better integrate conventional and nuclear C2 processes and procedures and enhance interoperability and information-sharing with mission partners.

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## **Boeing Begins Build on New Zealand's First P-8A Aircraft**



A Boeing P-8A flies over the Great Barrier Reef near Queensland, Australia. *BOEING*

WICHITA, Kan. – Boeing P-8A team members and Spirit AeroSystems employees have laid the keel beam for New Zealand's first P-8A, Boeing said March 17.

This process, also called 'keeling,' was done at the Spirit AeroSystems facility where all Boeing 737 fuselages, nacelles and pylons are designed and built. Laying the keel is an important production milestone during the build of any ship or aircraft and represents the cornerstone of this latest P-8.

Rosemary Banks, New Zealand's ambassador to the United States, who was on hand to witness the keeling said, "Today's keeling ceremony is the beginning of a new era for New Zealand's maritime patrol and response capability. Our four P-8A Poseidons will better equip our defence forces to extend their reach into the Pacific and beyond, working with our partners and friends."

An aircraft keel runs the length of the fuselage belly. Due to

the innovative in-line approach to the build of commercial derivative aircraft pioneered on the P-8A, the keel beam on a P-8 is different from the typical 737 keel beam. The P-8 keel includes unique aspects of the P-8 configuration, such as the integration of an internal weapons bay.

“The excitement of seeing this come together was contagious,” said Brian Stuart, P-8 program manager for New Zealand. “Not only are we kicking off the journey to the first New Zealand P-8A delivery, but we are strengthening our relationships with suppliers like Spirit as well as our U.S. Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force customers.”

The panel and other fuselage components will be completed on Spirit’s existing 737 production line. Spirit will ship the P-8A fuselage to a Boeing Commercial Airplanes facility in Renton, Washington, for final assembly. After that, Boeing Defense, Space & Security employees will install mission systems and complete testing prior to delivery to New Zealand later this year.

In total, four Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft will eventually replace New Zealand’s current fleet of six aging P-3K2 Orion aircraft providing advanced capabilities to maintain situational awareness in neighboring waters on and below the surface of the ocean.

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## **MH-60R Helicopters Approved by State Dept. for Spain**





Boatswain's Mate Seaman Armando Herrera, left, and Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Clifford Turner remove chocks and chains from a MH-60R Seahawk helicopter aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), March 13. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Andrea Rumple*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. State Department has approved the possible Foreign Military Sale of MH-60R Seahawk helicopters along with support and related equipment to Spain, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said March 15.

The DSCA said the total cost of the program would be approximately \$950 million. Approved was the possible sale of eight MH-60Rs, built by Lockheed Martin.

The sale also would include engines, avionics, data links and other communications systems, APS-153 radars, electronic countermeasures and support systems, Airborne Low-Frequency Sonars, rocket launchers, AGM-114R(N) Hellfire missiles, Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System rockets, GAU-21 machine guns, and sonobuoys, as well as a flight simulator, spare

parts, publications, training, engineering, logistics, ferry and technical support.

“The proposed sale will improve Spain’s capability to meet current and future threats. The MH-60R Multi-Mission Helicopter will provide the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions along with the ability to perform secondary missions including vertical replenishment, search and rescue, and communications relay and will bolster the Spanish navy’s ability to support NATO and remain interoperable with the U.S. and the NATO alliance,” the announcement said.

Spain currently operates SH-60F versions of the Seahawk.

Spain would become the eighth nation to procure the MH-60R. The MH-60R is in service with the U.S. Navy, Australian navy, Danish navy, Saudi navy, and Indian navy. Greece and the Republic of Korea also have ordered MH-60Rs.