HASC Seapower Chairman's Mark Pushes Two-CVN Buy, Study of Nimitz Extension

WASHINGTON – The markup of the National Defense Authorization bill by the chairman of the Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee advocates a two-carrier buy to save Navy funds and a study of another life extension of the USS Nimitz to enable the fleet to maintain a force level of 12 aircraft carriers."

"The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, beginning with the fiscal year 2019 program year, for the procurement of one Ford-class aircraft carrier to be designated CVN–81," the markup said. "The aircraft carrier authorized to be procured may be procured as an addition to the contract covering the Ford-class aircraft carrier designated CVN–80 that is authorized to be constructed under Section 121 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007. … The Secretary of the Navy may use incremental funding to make payments under the contract."

Navy leaders have encouraged a two-carrier buy as a way to reduce the carrier construction cost while building up the fleet faster to the 12-CVN part of the 355- ship requirement.

"With the delivery of the USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) in 2023, the Navy will reach their 12 aircraft carrier goal but will quickly lose this overall capacity with the programmed retirement of USS Nimitz (CVN 68) in fiscal year 2023," the markup said. "The committee believes that there are several options to retain required aircraft carrier force structure to include accelerating construction of the Ford-class carriers. Additionally, the committee believes that service life extension options may be available for USS Nimitz. Therefore,

the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by March 1, 2019, on options that exist to extend the service life of USS Nimitz, to include the extension of major components. Additionally, such a briefing should include cost estimates and major modernization components."

The bill as marked up also would:

■ Require the Secretary of the Navy to procure the data rights to the new guided-missile frigate and recompete the frigate not later than the contract award of the 10th frigate.

■ Authorize the Secretary of the Navy to enter into one or more multiyear contracts for 625 Standard Missile-6 missiles beginning in fiscal 2019.

■ Authorize the Secretary of the Navy to enter into one or more multiyear contracts for up to 52 C-130J aircraft beginning in fiscal 2019.

■ Authorize the Secretary of the Navy to enter into one or more multiyear contracts for up to 24 E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft beginning in fiscal 2019.

■ Authorize the Secretary of the Navy "to procure up to 10 foreign-constructed ships if the secretary certifies that the U.S. Navy has initiated an acquisition strategy for the construction of 10 new sealift vessels. Additionally, this section would limit 25 percent of the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command's fiscal year 2019 expenditures until the Secretary of the Navy enters into a contract for the procurement of two used National Defense Reserve Fleet vessels and completes the capability development document for the common hull multimission platform."

■ Limit the Maritime Administration from "procuring used training vessels for use as school ship replacement vessels," noting that the Maritime Administration's "short-term strategy

would not support the long-term maritime academies' interests. The committee continues to support the new construction of these training vessels in the United States."

■ Support development of the Advanced Low-Cost Munition Ordnance, a guided 57 mm projectile, to counter the growing threats posed by small boat swarms, unmanned aerial systems and other emerging threats.

■ Directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide to the HASC "an assessment of the current and foreseeable torpedo threats facing high-value units and the Navy's plan to adequately protect them, a description of the requirements for SSTD [surface ship torpedo defense], an assessment of the development program concerning each of the SSTD capability elements, the plan to consolidate responsibility of the SSTD program, and the plan to manage and sustain currently fielded SSTD systems."