Navy Studying Single-Phased Delivery for JFK



The hull of the USS John F. Kennedy, decorated for its Dec. 7 christening at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory J. Daut

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's program manager for the next three aircraft carriers said the sea service is considering the business case for a single-phased delivery of the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79).

Speaking Jan. 16 at the Surface Navy Association's symposium here, Capt. Philip Malone, the program manager for CVN 79, CVN 80 and CVN 81, said the Navy is looking at the possibility of delivering JFK with a single-phased approach. The current plan with a dual-phased approach includes delivering with some navigation and aviation capability followed by a second phase in which combat systems would be installed.

One advantage of a two-phased delivery is that the most recent mission systems can be installed before final delivery, avoiding an obsolescence that can occur in the long timeline of a carrier's construction. An advantage of the traditional practice of a single-phased delivery is having a completed ship at commissioning.

Malone said he is working with the Navy secretariat to determine the effects of a single-phased delivery on cost and build time.

James F. Geurts, assistant Navy secretary for research, development and acquisition, told reporters Jan. 17 that the discussion of a single-phased construction included “looking at a new version of a radar, combat systems, the people and making sure we have the right balance. Delivering an integrated ship with all its functions is an attractive model to look at hard.”

Geurts said the decision on the single-phased delivery would be made “in the next 30 to 45 days.”

“Mr. Geurts is aggressively pursuing integrating lessons learned on CVN 78 to improve efficiencies and affordability for the rest of the Ford class,” said Capt. Danny Hernandez, Navy acquisition spokesman. “Delivery approach is one of the items that Mr. Geurts has the team looking at.”

A major difference between CVN 78, the USS Gerald R. Ford, and CVN 79 is that the dual-band radar on CVN 78 will be replaced on CVN 79 by the SPY-6(V)3 Enterprise Air Search Radar.

CVNs 79, 80 and 81 are scheduled for delivery in 2024, 2028 and 2032, respectively. The Navy expects the total ownership cost savings of $4 billion for each ship over their 50-year service lives, as compared to the Nimitz class.

Malone said the construction of USS John F. Kennedy is incorporating more than 60,000 lessons learned

from the
construction of the Gerald R. Ford.

He also said JFK will
receive modifications to operate the F-35C strike fighter after its
post-shakedown availability. The modification involves changes in the squadron
ready room and the flight deck’s jet-blast deflectors, among others. He said
his office is evaluating the impact of the installations on the carrier’s
schedule.