

Navy Program Review: Columbia SSBN On Track



An artist rendering of the future Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine. U.S. NAVY

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy’s top acquisition official said the Columbia ballistic-missile submarine is on track and ready for a fiscal 2021 official construction start.

Speaking Aug. 12 in a teleconference with reporters, James F. Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition, said the Columbia SSBN program went through a review Aug. 11 with program and shipyard teams.

“The design maturity of Columbia is exceeding 86% right now,” Geurts said. “We’re focusing on converting that design into manufacturing plans, instructions, [and] material parts. Advance construction is continuing on all of the super-modules.”

The Navy announced on June 22 a contract modification with Electric Boat that featured an option – that already has been fully priced by the Navy – that would start construction of the first Columbia, SSBN 826, in October (the first quarter of fiscal 2021) and fund advance procurement, advance construction and 2024 construction start of the second Columbia sub, SSBN 827.

Geurts said at the time that the work of the Navy to price out the two SSBN contract options will help the service keep on schedule and achieve economies on materials and advance procurement for the Columbia class.

“We’ve got the Build 1 contract in place,” he said in the latest teleconference. “We’re ready to exercise that upon

appropriation and authorization in fiscal year 2021. ... We're continuing to ensure that Columbia stays on track as our highest priority program."

He said that the COVID-19 pandemic "has not impacted Columbia in terms of readiness to proceed."