

# Next-Gen Attack Sub Will Be Revolutionary, Navy Undersea Warfare Director Says

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of undersea warfare requirements said the U.S. Navy's next-generation attack submarine (SSNX) will be revolutionary, not evolutionary.

"We run up against the design margin of the Virginia class, and we will need a new submarine capable of carrying [payloads] and is capable of pacing the threat," said Rear Adm. Thomas Ishee, director of undersea warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, speaking Nov. 7 at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Arlington.

[See: Admiral in charge of procuring sub missiles praises Trident's motor.](#)

The NSSN "will have improved mobility – think speed and stealth, both not 'or,'" Ishee said. "It will have improved lethality – think magazine size and payload integration. It will have some levels of artificial intelligence to increase the warfighter decision space. It will have improved survivability, able to take a punch and still carry out the mission."

The admiral said the Navy has studies – "two starting now – to really inform our requirements process," noting that the top-level requirements will be determined over the next year.

Ishee said the timetable for the SSNX is not clear yet.

"Since the end of the Cold War we have been making evolutionary changes to our SSNs," he said. "The theme for SSNX is to look at revolutionary changes, so we are accelerating in the direction of a new class of fast-attack

submarine.”

In an earlier briefing, Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, the Navy’s program executive officer for the new Columbia-class ballistic-missile submarine, said that the SSNX, not the Columbia, will be the class that will feature automation that will significantly affect crew size of a submarine.