# Parties Unite in the House Behind More Submarine Construction



The Virginia-class attack submarine USS Indiana arrives at Naval Station Rota, Spain, on June 16 while on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Peter Lewis/Released)

ARLINGTON, Va. — The chairman of the House Armed Service Committee reiterated his support for increasing construction of submarines for the U.S. Navy, as reported in the committee's mark-up of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

"There were some concerns about some shortages in the shipbuilding budget that came out of the president; we restored that," Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), the chairman of the committee, said in a July 13 webinar, NatSec 2020: Coronavirus and Beyond, sponsored by the Navy League of the United States, the Association of the United States Army and Government Matters.

Smith was referring to the addition of a second Virginia-class attack submarine for fiscal 2021.

Also speaking was Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.), also a member of the House committee, who said that it is important to make sure "that we are building and enhancing our undersea strike capabilities, adding the additional Virginia-class submarine, making sure we provide stability and the assurances that we are building the next two Columbia-class [ballistic-missile] submarines. Long lead-time purchase there helps maintain the industrial base, creates certainty there."

Wittman also emphasized sealift, “getting the Army and Marines where they need to go,” including recapitalizing the Ready Reserve Force.

He also said the nation’s tanker fleet needs to be secured.

Wittman also stressed the need for Congress to exercise strict oversight of the Navy’s plans to build large unmanned surface vessels.

“Let’s make sure we get it right, how to integrate those into the fleet,” Wittman said. “As we’ve seen in other ship classes, if you build too many too quick, and they’re not quite doing what you expect them to do, you’re going to have a lot of ships that may not be useful. That has to happen at the right pace. We are going to make sure that happens the right way.”