

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on Seapower

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
MARITIME UNMANNED SURFACE VESSELS

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1 TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON MARITIME UNMANNED SURFACE VESSELS

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Tuesday, April 21, 2026

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U.S. Senate

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Subcommittee on Seapower

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Committee on Armed Services

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Washington, D.C.

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10 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:29 p.m. in

11 Room RS-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Rick

12 Scott, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

13 Committee Members Present: Senators Scott [presiding],

14 Wicker, Kaine, and Blumenthal.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICK SCOTT, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM FLORIDA

3 Senator Scott: The hearing will come to order. The
4 Subcommittee on Seapower is meeting today to hear about the
5 state of our Navy's unmanned surface vessel efforts.

6 First, I want to thank Ranking Member. This is a
7 committee that we were just talking about, this is actually
8 committee that works well together. I think this is the
9 room we sit down and finish the NDAA. It's done behind
10 closed doors. And actually, it's a bipartisan bill that
11 people can feel good about at the end. So, everybody has
12 input. And if you are convincing, you can get anything in.

13 As we all know our country and our Navy is not immune
14 from the rapid changes in threats and technologies reshaping
15 the battlespace. There's no question that our Navy must
16 move decisively to integrate unmanned systems into the
17 fight. The time is now, and it appears the Navy is late to
18 the game already. We've all been watching what's going on
19 in Ukraine, and it seems like everybody should be moving
20 faster. But we're going to hear about where we are today.

21 Unfortunately, we have enemies. The governments of
22 Iran, Communist China, Russia, Cuba, and North Korea, they
23 have chosen to be our enemies. I know with Iran there's
24 different views on how well we've all worked together, so we
25 all hope for a positive future, though.



1 We've learned from the war in Ukraine that unmanned
2 autonomous systems need real integration to our military and
3 our Navy. The history of warfare teaches us that whenever
4 we don't lead, we eventually suffer. The United States has
5 to be a leader. We must lead in the unmanned autonomous
6 battle space during conflict.

7 There needs to be a real sense of urgency within the
8 Navy. My main concern is there are some admirals that are
9 opposing innovation, and the idea is necessary to make real
10 changes and bring new, real, lethal capabilities to the
11 Navy. Our country and the sailors and marines who defend it
12 deserve absolutely the best. I think your son serving
13 right? Our enemies are moving fast.

14 Unmanned surface vehicles can be force multipliers that
15 extend our reach, reduce risks to American sailors and
16 Marines, which is very important to all of us, and give us
17 the edge we need against any threat posed by our enemies.

18 From one way attack missions to logistics, air defense,
19 reconnaissance, mine countermeasures and more, unmanned
20 surface vessels offer a wide array of capabilities to
21 augment our manned fleet. Yet, for too long, our Navy's
22 plans have been noncommittal at best. Where other navies
23 have received the message to move fast, it seems like our
24 Navy's lagging approach risk leaving us behind.

25 You take the replicator initiative, which forced the



1 Navy into a one-time buy of small unmanned surface vessels.
2 Unbelievably, last year, the Navy planned to zero out the
3 entire effort, just cut the entire thing. Similarly, the
4 Navy wanted to keep studying medium unmanned surface vessels
5 until considering the start of a real program in 2029.

6 My staff and I have met with numerous companies that
7 build these unmanned systems, and they all tell us the same
8 thing. The Navy needs to have a clear strategy, and they
9 don't know exactly what the Navy needs or wants them to
10 build. That causes a lot of problems. The Navy owes it to
11 our country to have a real solution.

12 Luckily, in Congress, we took it upon ourselves to drag
13 the Navy forward. The one big, beautiful bill made the
14 largest single investment in unmanned maritime systems in
15 history, a \$5 billion investment, including a \$3.6 billion
16 investment specifically for unmanned surface vessels.
17 That's real money, and sent a clear signal that America will
18 start growing the fleet.

19 To its credit, when Secretary Fallon took the helm, he
20 immediately recognized the Navy's problem. He saw that
21 unmanned efforts were scattered across too many program
22 offices with no coherence, no urgency, and no path to scale
23 and no overall strategy. He acted like a businessman,
24 fixing a broken organization. He set up the portfolio
25 acquisition executive for robotic autonomous systems to pull



1 everything together under one roof with the authorities
2 needed to move quickly.

3 Today, we have two key witnesses before us, Ms. Rebecca
4 Gassler, who was tapped to be the first portfolio
5 acquisition executive. I'd like to hear from you, I want to
6 better understand how the Navy plans to buy these vessels
7 going forward, especially with the shift toward unmanned
8 marketplace. That move has raised serious concerns in
9 industry about whether the Navy is changing direction again.
10 Industry needs a clear, sustained demand signal they can
11 build against. Not another pivot to leave shipyards and
12 suppliers hanging.

13 I also want to welcome Rear Admiral Derek Trinque,
14 director of Surface Warfare. Admiral, you own the
15 requirements for what these vessels must do for the fleet
16 and the responsibility to line up the funding to make it
17 happen. I understand the President's budget justification
18 for fiscal year 2027 drops today. So, this is a good
19 timing.

20 How much money is planned for small unmanned vessels,
21 for medium. How much for payloads that make these platforms
22 lethal. How much for enabling technologies for rigorous
23 testing and critically, for force generation? We would like
24 to understand the Navy's plan for training, logistics and
25 maintenance. I know these issues are at the top of your

1 mind. I look forward to your direct answers.

2 I want to thank both the witnesses for being here, and
3 invite my friend and ranking member, Senator Kaine, to make
4 his opening statement.

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 VIRGINIA

3 Senator Kaine: Thank you to our chair for calling this
4 hearing today. It's a really important one, and I look
5 forward to working with you again on the Seapower
6 subcommittee, particularly as we're in the kind of run up to
7 the NDAA. And there may well be insights that come from
8 this hearing today that can help us shape the NDAA as we get
9 to it in full committee in June.

10 Thank you to each of you for your service to the
11 country. And thanks for being here today. We are here to
12 talk about a new and different way to potentially change the
13 balance of power through the augmentation of our fleet with
14 uncrewed surface vessels.

15 Now, to those in the room or anybody who may be paying
16 attention to this. We haven't been having a lot of public
17 hearings about this, but we have been digging into it pretty
18 significantly in the committee. Just in the last couple of
19 months, we've had at least two hearings in classified on
20 uncrewed systems. And we've also had some discussions with
21 some of the COCOMs about uncrewed systems. But I will say
22 the predominance of those discussions are about aerial
23 systems.

24 And we recently even had a discussion about the
25 protection of naval assets from aerial threats. But when we

1 asked, how do we protect naval assets from surface or
2 subsurface threats, the answers were not as fleshed out.

3 And so, it's good, Mr. Chair, that we're having this as
4 a public hearing today, so we can really dig into the way we
5 look at surface and subsurface vessels as we think about the
6 investments that we're making in the fleet.

7 How do we partner with industry to meet this challenge?
8 We know that the evolution of these systems is advancing
9 very, very quickly, and we have to be prepared to innovate
10 and procure with some speed and flexibility as technologies
11 improve.

12 We want to talk about not only unmanned systems in the
13 defensive mode. How do we protect our assets from unmanned
14 threats? We watch what's happening in the Black Sea, for
15 example, in Ukraine. And we know those threats are very
16 real. We want to talk about the offensive use of these
17 systems and how they may augment what we're doing in ship
18 and sub building.

19 We've had a lot of testimony about the equivalent
20 effort that is, I think, pretty carefully constructed after
21 some missteps, kind of false starts. The Joint Interagency
22 Task Force 401, JIATF-401, that's very focused on the aerial
23 threats. And it was the sort of second organizational
24 iteration of how are we going to focus on aerial threats and
25 get everybody at the table. And at least for my sake, I



1 think that this second iteration of it gives me some
2 confidence.

3 I think we were sort of stumbling about how to get
4 everybody at the table, whether it's the defense agencies or
5 the FAA or local law enforcement or FBI, how do we get
6 everybody at the table to come up with the right set of
7 strategies to both counter threats and have an offensive
8 capacity. Now, we have an organization that I think seems
9 to be working and that I think is engendering some
10 confidence. So, we want to now look at the Navy side of the
11 House and figure out what we're doing.

12 I do acknowledge, as the chair did, this is a pretty
13 extraordinary time for the Navy. Commercial vessels from
14 all around the world, and our naval vessels and those of our
15 partners have been attacked dozens of times in the past
16 three years by Houthis, now by Iran and Iran's proxies. The
17 Navy has put together a pretty amazing record of repelling
18 threats, and the successful repelling of threats doesn't
19 always generate news. If you're unsuccessful, it generates
20 news. And so sometimes the fact of your super high batting
21 average and repelling threats, which is something we should
22 celebrate, doesn't get the attention that it deserves. And I
23 know both the chair and I really appreciate the excellence
24 of our folks in being able to defend against these threats.

25 But now that we have open hostilities in the Persian



1 Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz, we got to take a moment to
2 appreciate the hard work that's being done, to recognize the
3 threats that are growing more complicated every day in that
4 region and around the world, and really commit to the right
5 kind of investment level and innovation strategies to meet
6 these threats.

7 And so that's what this hearing is about. I look
8 forward to hearing testimonies and then digging in by
9 questions. And again, the timing of this to the chair is
10 really important because I bet we're going to hear some
11 things today that will be instructive as we're working on
12 putting together this year's NDAA. Thank you.

13 [The prepared statement of Senator Kaine follows:]

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1 Senator Scott: Thank you. So, I'll start with some
2 questions. But maybe if you have something, as I ask this
3 first part, if you want to ask --

4 Senator Kaine: So, you don't even want to let them do
5 their --

6 Senator Scott: Oh, I guess I should let you do.

7 Senator Kaine: See he's impatient. He wants to get
8 right to the question.

9 Senator Scott: I'm sorry. Please start.

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1 STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL DEREK A. TRINQUE, USN,
2 DIRECTOR, SURFACE WARFARE DIVISION, N96, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
3 OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

4 Admiral Trinque: Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Kaine,
5 and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for
6 the opportunity to testify on unmanned surface vessels,
7 USVs. A critical component of the Navy as laid out in the
8 Chief of Naval Operations fighting instructions. There is
9 no Navy without sailors, and that includes our USVs. These
10 platforms require trained professional sailors.

11 The foundry, as outlined in the CNO's fighting
12 instructions, produces naval power. USVs will form one key
13 output from the foundry. Commanders will combine sailors
14 and USVs into our fleet. Our decisive instrument of
15 national power. That fleet executes combat power in the
16 fight, maneuvering, striking, and sustaining naval
17 operations on key maritime terrain.

18 The Secretary of the Navy and the CNO are committed to
19 enhancing maritime dominance, rebuilding our industrial
20 base, and changing the way we do business. Along with Ms.
21 Gassler's team at PAE RAS, I am working to ensure that
22 warfighting requirements are translated into effective
23 acquisition strategies that deliver USV capability at speed.

24 As resource and requirement sponsor for USVs, I keep
25 three commitments. First, I'm committed to writing

1 requirements that the fleet needs. Second, I'm committed to
2 fielding capabilities that meet these requirements quickly.
3 Third, I'm committed to ensuring unmanned vessels introduced
4 into our fleet have the proper manning, training, and
5 equipment support under the Navy's Standard Model.

6 Incorporating robotic and autonomous systems into the
7 fleet at scale will require us to learn and adapt, and our
8 introduction and sustainment models will evolve as we scale
9 these capabilities. However, we will maintain a standard
10 model, one that includes Commander Naval Surface Forces as
11 the type commander, surface Development Group 1 as the
12 immediate superior in command, and our USV squadrons as the
13 tactical units. We're committed to leveraging this standard
14 model to generate ready force packages for use by our
15 operational commanders.

16 The CNO's requirements and fleet operational needs
17 demand a faster acquisition cycle than traditional
18 prototyping and testing can provide. I'm supportive of Ms.
19 Gassler's efforts to accelerate this cycle. A faster
20 approach to acquiring USVs at scale is critical to meeting
21 fleet driven timelines. Under the broader effort of
22 requirements reform, we have adapted the way we generate
23 requirements for USVs to move faster in tandem.

24 The CNO has expressed a clear need for tailored forces
25 and tailored offsets. Capabilities that are lower cost,

1 scalable and can be fielded quickly to create operational
2 advantage. USVs provide tailored capabilities that will
3 augment and complement the main battle force. By investing
4 in these systems, the Navy is building a more adaptable,
5 resilient, and distributed high, low mix of forces. We are
6 not moving toward an exclusively unmanned fleet.

7 Achieving sea control in the modern era requires manned
8 and unmanned teaming. This approach capitalizes on local
9 autonomy without sacrificing the accountability or clear
10 direction traditionally associated with command at sea. We
11 must combine high end, technologically advanced, multi-
12 mission warships to mass effects with a larger number of
13 less expensive platforms to expand the kill chain. Manned
14 platforms will ensure command and control of USVs under the
15 most challenging combat conditions.

16 Our strategy for unmanned systems will also deliver
17 tailored forces through containerized payloads as described
18 in the CNO's Containerized Capabilities Campaign. By
19 designing systems to fit within standard shipping
20 containers, we will rapidly add new capabilities such as
21 sensors, communications relays, logistics packages, and
22 weapons to the fleet. This allows us to have relatively
23 modest requirements for the USVs themselves, and potentially
24 exquisite requirements for the mission systems inside the
25 containers.



1 In addition to currently funded payloads, Navy will
2 continue to work with industry to develop future
3 containerized capabilities. We intend to provide clearly
4 defined priorities for payloads that will help guide
5 investment by our industry partners. Validated requirements
6 drive our introduction of USVs into the Navy. The
7 warfighting value of these vessels has been clearly captured
8 in the CNO's fighting instructions. They will form tailored
9 forces that will give commanders flexibility, broaden room
10 for tactical and operational risk calculations, present
11 additional dilemmas to our adversaries and balance against
12 specific risks, geographies, and adversary capabilities.
13 I'm grateful for the opportunity to appear before you, and I
14 look forward to your questions.

15 [The prepared statement of Admiral Trinque follows:]

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1 Senator Scott: Thank you. Ms. Gassler, thanks for
2 being here.

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1 STATEMENT OF MS. REBECCA J. GASSLER, PORTFOLIO
2 ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE, ROBOTICS AND AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS

3 Ms. Gassler: Thank you. Chairman Scott, Ranking
4 Member Kaine, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

5 I serve as the Navy's first portfolio acquisition
6 executive for robotic and autonomous systems. My
7 responsibility is to deliver operational capability to the
8 fleet at the speed the threat demands. The PAE construct
9 allows me to manage this as a portfolio, aligning with
10 requirements and resource sponsors while driving acquisition
11 and industry engagement to accelerate delivery and scale-
12 proven capability.

13 Unmanned systems are not a future concept. They are a
14 response to a present operational reality. Our adversaries
15 are investing in mass distribution and lower cost systems
16 that can be fielded quickly and at scale. We cannot counter
17 that with a force structure built solely with our general-
18 purpose forces. We need a complementary approach, one that
19 expands the reach of the fleet, increases persistence, and
20 imposes new dilemmas on an adversary. That is the role that
21 robotic and autonomous systems will play.

22 They are not a replacement for the Navy's main battle
23 force. They are a core part of what the Chief of Naval
24 Operations describes as tailored offsets. Capabilities that
25 enhance fleet lethality and resilience and allow us to adapt

1 quickly to stressing scenarios, including those where an
2 adversary seeks to deny us access to the sea. These
3 capabilities are designed to be scalable, adaptable, and
4 deployable. Able to perform missions such as scouting,
5 screening, deceiving, denying, striking, and sustaining
6 while remaining cost effective, and where appropriate and
7 attributable. Across a family of systems, these
8 capabilities are being fielded for multiple missions,
9 including maritime domain awareness and ISR, communications
10 and sensing, one way attack and counter air effects.

11 At the same time, we are seeing the rapid scaling of
12 unmanned threats across air, surface and subsurface domains
13 that demand a parallel focus on counter-UxS capability.
14 From maritime approaches to installation defense to real
15 world operations, such as those supported through JIAFT-401
16 and ongoing efforts like Epic Fury, the Navy is confronting
17 these threats now, not in the future.

18 And this is not a platform problem. It is a kill chain
19 problem. It requires integrated sensing, decision making,
20 and response at speed across multiple domains. Our approach
21 to counter-UxS reflects that reality. We are integrating
22 sensors, effects, and autonomy into layered, scalable
23 defenses and prioritizing rapid fielding, so commanders have
24 operationally relevant capability today, not years from now.

25 But the most important shift is in how we deliver



1 capability. For years, the department focused on
2 prototyping and experimentation. What we have learned is
3 that the technology has matured, industry is investing, and
4 the constraint is no longer engineering, it is our ability
5 to adopt innovation at speed. So, we have changed the
6 model. We've implemented an acquisition strategy that
7 capitalizes on mature technology, leverages private sector
8 investment, and accelerates adoption through continuous
9 competition.

10 At the center of that strategy is a competitive
11 marketplace with regular and recurring openings that allows
12 new entrants to participate as capability evolves. In this
13 model, companies bring form mature systems, demonstrate
14 performance, and compete for follow on production and
15 service contracts. We are not paying for concept
16 development. We are rewarding results.

17 Just as important, we are not acquiring systems as
18 isolated platforms. We are building a modular open
19 architecture that allows capability to evolve over time. A
20 key element of that approach is containerized payloads. By
21 standardizing interfaces and packaging capability into
22 modular payloads, we can rapidly shift mission sets across
23 unmanned systems and manned ships without redesigning the
24 platform. That allows us to upgrade capability at the speed
25 of software and payload development rather than at the pace



1 of shipbuilding. We are also ensuring these systems are
2 fielded as complete capability packages including command
3 and control, autonomy, training, maintenance, and
4 sustainment.

5 In conclusion, we are no longer experimenting with
6 robotic and autonomous systems. We are fielding them at
7 speed and at scale in a way that strengthens the main battle
8 force and expands the Navy's ability to fight and win. At
9 the same time, we are delivering the counter-UxS
10 capabilities required to defend our forces, our
11 installations, and our operations against a rapidly evolving
12 threat. This is a fundamental shift in how the Navy
13 delivers capability driven by operational need and aligned
14 to the pace of modern competition. Thank you, and I look
15 forward to your questions.

16 [The prepared statement of Ms. Gassler follows:]

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1 Senator Scott: Thanks, both of you.

2 So, Admiral, how long have you had the job and how long
3 will you have it? And what do you want to end up with when
4 you finish the job? Where do you want the Navy to be when
5 you finish?

6 Admiral Trinque: Chairman, I've been in the job for
7 about 10 months now, and I don't know how long they'll let
8 me keep doing it. I'm --

9 Senator Scott: Is it typically 3 years?

10 Admiral Trinque: It's typically 2 years, sir.

11 Senator Scott: 2 years?

12 Admiral Trinque: But I've been given another job that
13 needs to be done, and I'm grateful for that. What I'd like
14 at the conclusion of my tenure as N96, as the director of
15 Surface Warfare, is to make the fleet stronger, to advance
16 the Golden Fleet Initiative and to expand both the high and
17 low end of our high, low mix that we need for a Navy for the
18 United States.

19 Senator Scott: Should it be longer, a bit than 2
20 years?

21 Admiral Trinque: I'll stay as long as they let me,
22 sir.

23 Senator Scott: Okay. Ms. Gassler, how long have you
24 had the job, and how long do you think you'll have the job,
25 and what do you want to get done when you're finished?



1 Ms. Gassler: Yes, sir. PAE RAS was established in
2 December, and I was appointed the same day we set up the
3 organization. I do understand that the PAEs are expected to
4 take longer tours than our traditional program manager or
5 PEO. So, I think the tenure is listed as 4 to 5, 6 years.
6 We have not worked out the formal agreement, but it is
7 expected is longer than a PEO.

8 Senator Scott: And your job is not a political
9 appointment?

10 Ms. Gassler: No sir, I'm a career SES.

11 Senator Scott: Okay. So, Admiral, we've watched what
12 Ukraine's done, right. So how would you compare the U.S.
13 manufacturing of unmanned vehicles versus the Ukraine
14 manufacturing and our ability to put vessels or any unmanned
15 equipment out there as compared to Ukraine's?

16 Admiral Trinque: Chairman, well, I'm not in a
17 position, unfortunately, to quantify Ukraine's manufacturing
18 capability. I will say that I'm heartened by the outreach
19 we've had from industry and by frankly, smaller, and newer
20 companies that wish to work with us. And I think that it's
21 my responsibility as a requirement sponsor to ensure that
22 we're not closing the door for those companies.

23 Senator Scott: One thing that Senator Kaine and I have
24 worked on over the last -- Senator Kaine has been up here
25 for a little longer than I, but I've been here 7 years. We



1 really tried to make sure that we're not buying Chinese
2 drones. Has that had an impact on the opportunity for
3 American manufacturers?

4 Admiral Trinqué: I don't believe that it has. I think
5 that our defense partners, our industry partners understand
6 the legal requirements for selling gear to the Department of
7 War and the Department of the Navy. And so, I would be
8 surprised if any of our industry partners came to us and
9 said, "We have a great idea, but we just found out that we
10 can't sell you our stuff because it comes from the PRC." I
11 don't expect them to be surprised by that requirement,
12 Senator.

13 Senator Scott: Okay. So do you know the amount of
14 money, maybe I'll just if you can just -- I'll give you my
15 question, but how much money has the Navy gotten and what
16 would be the return so far. And then my understanding is
17 there was a MUSV budget drop to \$171 million in fiscal 2027.
18 Is that right? Does that make sense? It seems like they're
19 dropping the amount of investment.

20 Admiral Trinqué: I understand the question and I
21 appreciate you looking for additional investment across the
22 Futures defense plan, we plan to acquire, quite a few MUSVs
23 Chairman, and using PAE RASs marketplaces will involve more
24 than a single supplier could give us. And I'll defer to Ms.
25 Gassler if she wants to add any detail.

1 Ms. Gassler: Senator, including the one big beautiful
2 bill which had \$2.1 billion for MUSVs, we received
3 approximately 1.95 billion in procurement funds, the rest in
4 RTN to do our experiments and testing and such. When you
5 add that to the rest of the FDP that has dropped today and
6 out, it's approximately \$6.2 billion for MUSV. The 1.9
7 billion that we have now will actually provide deliveries
8 across fiscal year 2027. So, when we add that, those
9 expenditures, and that investment in industry, plus the
10 funds we have in 2027 we feel we have sufficient funds for
11 2027 and then you do see it go back up in 2028 and out to
12 sustain that.

13 Senator Scott: How many different pieces of equipment
14 do we get? How many unmanned vessels or?

15 Ms. Gassler: Certainly, sir. So, we just closed the
16 MUSV solicitation Friday and we are going through the
17 proposals now, so I can't talk in detail about that. We do
18 have an objective number we are aiming for, approximately 30
19 in the first buy and we will open the marketplace again for
20 additional requirements as we receive them from our
21 requirements resource sponsor.

22 Senator Scott: So, you're saying that we'll have spent
23 \$6 billion and we'll get 30?

24 MS. Gassler: No, sir. That's just in the first buy.
25 And then over the, I believe the number gets to, I think

1 approximately 70. We assumed a 5-year life cycle over the
2 vessels. And then we would start replacing them.

3 Senator Scott: So, we'll spend \$6 billion and get 70
4 vessels?

5 Ms. Gassler: Seventy vessels, including all the -- we
6 believe all the sustainment and such for them.

7 Senator Scott: Okay. And would that count in the 30-
8 year shipbuilding plan that the Navy has with those vessels
9 count as part of that?

10 Admiral Trinque: Chairman, because the USVs are new
11 the department of the Navy right now is looking at all of
12 our options for how we present to the Congress the
13 accounting of the USVs in the shipbuilding plan. We
14 recognize because they bring combat capability there has to
15 be some way to articulate that to you. But they are unlike
16 our other ships, and so there's a discussion going on where
17 the Secretary will make a final decision as he signs out the
18 shipbuilding plan of exactly how to articulate those numbers
19 and that demand in the shipbuilding plan. They will be in
20 there, sir.

21 Senator Scott: So, 70 divided by \$6 billion, from your
22 standpoint, that does that seem like a good return? Is that
23 the way to look at it or not?

24 Admiral Trinque: I mean, if that were just the
25 purchase price or the lease price, I think that would not



1 necessarily be, but it's not. And that is a total ownership
2 price. And that is the price of operating these vessels.
3 And it's one of the benefits of doing things differently is
4 that we get to explore different models unlike all of the
5 commissioned work --

6 Senator Scott: So, it involves capital costs and
7 operating costs?

8 Admiral Trinqué: Yes, sir.

9 Senator Scott: For how long? 5 years?

10 Admiral Trinqué: The plan right now is for a 5-year
11 center for the vessel. And I think that as we learn our way
12 through the process of operating MUSVs we'll determine
13 whether that number needs to change.

14 Senator Scott: So, do you think after that, there will
15 be scales there that we can -- that price will be coming
16 down?

17 Admiral Trinqué: I don't know if the price will come
18 down. We will continue to have requirements for more USVs
19 and so we will scale in our ability to operate them. We
20 will scale in our ability to provide force packages to our
21 fleet commanders. I expect that we'll scale in our ability
22 to acquire them as well, but the specific learning we'll go
23 through I don't yet know.

24 Senator Kaine: And I'm sure we're going to go back and
25 forth because I think we both have a whole lot of questions.



1 And so, just some basics because we've been having a number
2 of hearings about the JIATF-401. I'm kind of like trying to
3 compare like the Navy to the structural model. So, the
4 JIATF-401 is an inter-agency task force that reports
5 directly to the OSD. The Army is the executive, meaning if
6 General Ross says, "Hey, I need more staff," he goes to the
7 Secretary of the Army to ask for more staff. But it is
8 interagency. Is the Navy at that table?

9 So, talk about the PAE RAS and the connection into the
10 Navy. And I ask that question because when we were getting
11 briefed from the JIATF about their protection of naval
12 assets. They were talking about protection of naval assets
13 from the air. But when we asked, okay, how are you
14 protecting them from the sea and the subsea? Well, that's
15 the Navy's responsibility. They didn't say they weren't
16 being protected, but that wasn't the JIATF's job.

17 So, talk about your interaction with that organization
18 so that we can have some sense that we're not in silos here,
19 but there is a more holistic look at this.

20 Ms. Gassler: Absolutely. At the same time, we were
21 set up, we also met with ASN (EI&E) installations, and it
22 was determined that PAS RAS would be the integrator for
23 capabilities and for the counter-Ux as well. And that makes
24 us the primary interface into JIATF-401.

25 Senator Kaine: Okay.

1 Ms. Gassler: So, we do work back and forth with them
2 often, without going into a lot of details, when Epic Fury
3 kicked off, we started looking for capabilities for
4 installations and the first place we went for the counter
5 air was the JIATF market place. Because they had contracts
6 set up and if we bought systems through them, we knew they
7 were interoperable with all the other systems for the
8 different bases that they had prioritized in their initial
9 tranche. So, hand in hand on all the counter air. The
10 counter-USV and counter UAV, yes, we do have that mission.
11 We're working on the top-level requirements for that now.
12 That did not stop us from fielding capability for Epic Fury
13 --

14 Senator Kaine: And just to kind of converse here, when
15 you use the word marketplace, you can use a small M, we know
16 what a small M marketplace is. This is more than that.
17 This is like JIATF has a --

18 Ms. Gassler: You literally have like an --

19 Senator Kaine: -- kind of established marketplace
20 where the innovators come with their own platforms that get
21 tested. And then this one's approved and you're using their
22 marketplace for counter aerial or aerial systems, but you're
23 establishing your own marketplace to test and then make
24 available with this kind of local autonomy, as we're talking
25 about systems that are surface and subsurface. Do I



1 understand that right?

2 Ms. Gassler: Yes. I mean, it looks like an Amazon
3 storefront.

4 Senator Kaine: Yeah. Thank you.

5 Ms. Gassler: And at that point, then the contracts
6 people get involved behind the scenes once we click, cart
7 doesn't go to your visa card, but. so yes, we bought from
8 their actual marketplace, different from our marketplace
9 that we talk about for MUSV.

10 Senator Kaine: Yeah.

11 Ms. Gassler: What we have talked about with OSW and is
12 that they want to create a larger marketplace for all of the
13 capabilities and at which case we would put our offerings
14 there as well. So small USVs counter capability, anything
15 that we have arranged that can be a contractor owned,
16 contractor operated asset, we would let the rest of the
17 services know that we could service those needs as well
18 across the services. And so, we are -- that isn't a
19 fledgling concept. But even before that -- so we are not
20 only working on defense of our installations.

21 General Ross has acknowledged that he's got needs for
22 counter UAV and counter-USV for -- other than Navy bases.
23 And so, we will also in the very beginning --

24 Senator Kaine: Ship yards and industrial partners,
25 yeah --

1 Ms. Gassler: -- also in the very beginnings of that
2 partnership for those other domains. But we will be helping
3 him with those solutions as well.

4 Senator Kaine: Let me ask you one about just sort of
5 the alphabet soup that we always get into in any program
6 like this. And it's the change from MASC to MUSV. So, the
7 Navy had been pursuing modular attack surface craft, the
8 MASC program, but the Navy canceled that program and they
9 launched the medium unmanned surface vessel program. And I
10 want to know if that's a change in name or if that's
11 actually a change in sort of substance.

12 I think the justification was that the MASC program was
13 too narrowly tailored to achieve the Golden Fleet
14 objectives, and the MUSV program kind of broadened the gauge
15 a little bit about what you're actually acquiring. Tell us,
16 each of you, what the MASC program could not achieve, that
17 you believe the MUSV program can achieve?

18 Admiral Trinque: Senator, from a requirements
19 perspective, the MASC was fairly focused, and MUSV is a nod
20 to the ubiquitous nature of what an MUSV can do. And so,
21 what we will do is have a set of requirements for a
22 relatively modest set of requirements for an unmanned
23 surface vessel, and then separate requirements for payloads
24 that it can carry. A MASC --

25 Senator Kaine: Payloads would be kind of



1 interchangeably --

2 Admiral Trinquet: Yes, sir.

3 Senator Kaine: -- like NASA payloads or a lot of our
4 space payloads, it might be a communications technology or
5 it might be something different. And so now you're
6 conceiving of these uncrewed marine systems as similarly
7 kind of you can tailor them different directions with
8 payloads that would fit into what the base vehicle is?

9 Admiral Trinquet: That's exactly correct, Senator.

10 Senator Kaine: And Ms. Gassler, you want to comment on
11 that?

12 Ms. Gassler: From an acquisition perspective MASC had
13 two phases. It had a phase that specified conversions, a
14 block zero phase and it had a block one phase, which was
15 going to put us into prototyping again for 12 to 18 months.
16 And that's where you referenced the fiscal year 2029 stand
17 up of the program, where we would get those newer vessels
18 actually delivered into production. When we went and looked
19 at what was available, right now that industry had invested
20 in, and we looked at the urgent operational needs and the
21 requirements that we had been provided. We determined that
22 we would pivot right now, and so, we did that over the
23 winter and opened the marketplace.

24 And so, what the marketplace is, is exactly what
25 Admiral Trinquet explained, but it's actually broader. We

1 have one surface vessel acquisition strategy, and it is to
2 use this type of marketplace for all the vessels in the
3 family, both small and there are different sizes of small
4 depending what payload again goes on them. And then with
5 the MUSVs, yes, we're going after a specific mission right
6 now. And as we add missions we will add to that family of
7 vessels as well. And so, this is a broader encompassing
8 family of vessels with interchangeable payloads on the MUSV
9 and a larger variety of payloads on the small USV. The
10 original small USV were focused solely on one way attack for
11 the most part.

12 So, we've kind of revised the kind of -- we have
13 revised the entire strategy. And that is why we canceled
14 MASC went to the broader marketplace. We believe that it
15 will accelerate the production vessels into the fleet by at
16 least a year.

17 Senator Kaine: Let me ask one other question, and I
18 know Senator Blumenthal has arrived, but you had a
19 solicitation that closed Friday. You're still analyzing it.
20 I don't ask you about particular entrance, but what can you
21 tell us about the health of the industrial base based upon
22 sort of the number and the quality of the -- and the amount
23 of interest that's been shown by who's responded to the
24 solicitation?

25 Ms. Gassler: Absolutely. First even before we get to



1 that, PAE RAS and the naval RCO have done a number of
2 engagements over the winter, both with the investors and all
3 the small businesses that would be in that kind of rapid
4 capability space, or the hedge for space, which includes all
5 the robotic and autonomous systems. The week after we
6 launched the solicitation, I held a town hall to explain not
7 the solicitation specifically, but to explain the entire
8 marketplace and we had 300 people dial into that. And I've
9 had a lot of feedback from that as well. Some additional
10 questions came in and we've answered all of those. So just
11 from that, you can tell there's a lot of interest and a lot
12 of feedback, and we're taking that on board.

13 From the solicitation, we received a healthy response.
14 And, looking at the companies, they are across -- it's a
15 diverse set of companies that have responded, newer
16 companies, small companies, larger companies, so, I think we
17 will have a pretty diverse selection going into the testing.

18 I will give you an example though of our small industry
19 base as well. In the last two months, maybe since Epic Fury
20 kicked off, in support of both Epic Fury and SOUTHCOM 4th
21 fleet operations, we have awarded one contractor-owned
22 contractor operated extension to a vessel to make sure they
23 keep operating. We've awarded two government owned
24 contractor-operated support contracts to make sure we have
25 operations in theater. We have awarded two contracts to buy

1 additional vessels with two different companies. And not
2 only did we award those, they were delivered. In some
3 cases, we took delivery of boats within a week. And other
4 ones were shortly thereafter. So, it's no longer we buy, we
5 wait for development, we start delivery. We're looking at
6 what they're producing and we're buying literally right off
7 the line.

8 Senator Kaine: Thank you.

9 Senator Scott: Senator Blumenthal.

10 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you. Thank you both for
11 your service.

12 We hear a lot in the aerial sphere of combat about the
13 capabilities of swarms or lots of low cost, often slow-
14 moving swarms of drones, unmanned aerial vehicles making
15 targets very vulnerable. Is the same principle applied
16 undersea unmanned vehicles where you could have the same,
17 say, a submarine or surface ship vulnerable to swarms of
18 unmanned vehicles?

19 Admiral Trinquet: Senator, certainly a mass of
20 adversaries makes your problem more difficult. And so, for
21 a surface ship defending herself against a swarm of unmanned
22 aerial systems we have exquisite weapons that are very
23 expensive that we can use against that. And so, recognizing
24 that that's the wrong way to do this, we've equipped them
25 with lower cost interceptors. And, our Ux --



1 Senator Blumenthal: But, may I didn't make myself
2 clear. I'm talking about undersea.

3 Admiral Trinqué: Yes, sir. For undersea that --

4 Senator Blumenthal: Swarms of low cost -- is the same
5 potential principle apply?

6 Admiral Trinqué: It can. The coordination under the
7 sea will be more difficult. As the aerial systems can use
8 radio waves to coordinate their attack and you won't have
9 that necessarily that same coordination between unmanned
10 undersea vessels. But certainly, any undersea threat can be
11 a threat.

12 Senator Blumenthal: So, our aircraft carriers could be
13 vulnerable to that kind of undersea swarm or undersea
14 unmanned vehicle?

15 Admiral Trinqué: An undersea vehicle can present a
16 threat, yes, sir. And this is one of the reasons that we
17 invest in exquisite anti-submarine warfare systems, because
18 a UUV is still a type of submarine.

19 Senator Blumenthal: Would submarines be vulnerable?

20 Admiral Trinqué: I wouldn't want to take that question
21 for the record, sir. Outside my experience.

22 Senator Blumenthal: Are we looking at that issue?

23 Admiral Trinqué: Yes, we are.

24 Senator Blumenthal: Can you give us a -- I mean, is
25 this something we ought to be concerned about?



1 Admiral Trinqué: I think that we are always looking
2 for new threats and how we counter them. And there are --
3 in addition to the requirements divisions inside the CNO's
4 office, we have analysis divisions that look at threats and
5 potential threats and how we can counter those threats and
6 potential threats. And so, I share your concern that any
7 threat in large numbers could become a larger threat. But
8 yes, we do look at that, sir.

9 Senator Blumenthal: Ukraine has been pretty successful
10 in the Black Sea, would you agree?

11 Admiral Trinqué: I do.

12 Senator Blumenthal: And what's the secret of their
13 success?

14 Admiral Trinqué: Well, so they have adapted faster
15 than their enemy. And they have employed systems in a way
16 that has surprised their enemy. And that is always an
17 advantage in warfare.

18 Senator Blumenthal: Could the Russians have done
19 something to prevent them from being as effective as they
20 have been?

21 Admiral Trinqué: I mean, certainly they could have
22 reacted earlier to Ukrainian innovations. Certainly, they
23 could have withdrawn, which is in essence what they've done.
24 But that cedes the battle space. And so, the Ukrainians, to
25 their great credit, have taken their localized problem and



1 exercise sea control without a navy. And if your problem is
2 localized like that, then you can focus like that. And
3 they've done a marvelous job focusing in that limited
4 theater.

5 Senator Blumenthal: Are there steps that you would
6 urge Ukrainians to take to make their unmanned undersurface
7 vehicles more effective?

8 Admiral Trinque: I would not have enough of a baseline
9 on what they're doing today, Senator, to advise them.

10 Senator Blumenthal: Are we actively in contact with
11 Ukrainians on this topic?

12 Admiral Trinque: I believe that we are, I would defer
13 to U.S. European Command on that.

14 Senator Blumenthal: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 Senator Scott: Thank you. So first off, how do you
17 all coordinate your activities? What each of you do, how is
18 it coordinated? Do you guys work with each other much?

19 Ms. Gassler: Yes. We've seen each other a lot lately.
20 Yes. So, absolutely. So, obviously, there are formal
21 meetings through, N9I, who's the integrator, brings together
22 all of us. I have -- within my portfolio, I have Admiral
23 Trinque, but I also have air platforms, I have undersea
24 platforms, I have counter platforms. So, I have many
25 resource sponsors. I do the same coordination with all of



1 them. And then there's lots of informal coordination
2 between the staffs and I mean, nearly every day going back
3 and forth.

4 Senator Scott: Okay. So, on the marketplace, do you
5 have companies that have concerns that they don't have
6 enough capital. That they don't have enough commitment from
7 government to be able to be viable?

8 Ms. Gassler: We have not heard too many concerns.
9 There are some. And I think that is why we the Navy in
10 general, have also made sure that we are going out and
11 talking to the investment community, the venture
12 capitalists, equity investors and such as well to ensure
13 that they understand our demand signal. Within the PAE I
14 can proudly go out and say, "I have over the fit up a \$15 or
15 \$15 billion investment that I can make in these if you also
16 invest." That was hard to do before the PAE was set up
17 because the programs were spread across, I think, 20
18 different program offices. So, they didn't have the buying
19 power to really get a seat at the table with the investors
20 as well.

21 And so, it is incumbent on us to also make sure that we
22 get out ahead and explain our demand signal. As the budget
23 drops, we now have a profile for MUSVs. They know what
24 we're looking for every year now, we can talk about that, as
25 we lay in those budgets. Those are public knowledge; we can

1 go out and talk about what those demand signals will be as
2 our resource sponsors lay in the requirements for those
3 payloads and additional vessels. And I think that helps
4 bring in the investment because they know that we, the Navy,
5 you, Congress, are allowing us to be investors with them.

6 Senator Scott: So, Admiral, there's a \$54 billion
7 defense autonomous warfare group budget line on the
8 mandatory side of the fiscal year 2027 request. So, what --
9 tell me -- what are we going to get out of that? What's
10 going to be the return?

11 Admiral Trinque: Chairman, the defense autonomous
12 working group budget is separate from the Department of the
13 Navy budget. And so, we have separate lines for procurement
14 for medium and small USVs.

15 Senator Scott: So, like how many do we get?

16 Admiral Trinque: So, from our requirements --

17 Senator Scott: What types of things are we going to
18 get?

19 Admiral Trinque: We are looking to procure the medium
20 USVs and the containerized payloads that will go on them.
21 We have a \$1.5 billion across the for containerized payloads
22 alone, as well as the enabling capabilities that allow the
23 linkage between containerized payloads and the vessels. The
24 containerized payloads will be applicable to the USVs, but
25 also to the frigate program and other ships. And we have



1 separate procurement set aside for small USVs.

2 And so right now we're working on one specified
3 requirement from one of our fleets. But we are anticipating
4 through the CNO's containerized capability campaign several
5 more specific requirements for containerized payloads, and
6 we are not waiting for the fleets to tell us what they need
7 before we start budgeting for that, because we can think
8 ahead to some of the things that they will need, a contested
9 logistics, sensors, weapon systems, etc.

10 Senator Scott: Okay. So, this came through the
11 reconciliation, right? That money?

12 Admiral Trinqué: There is some from reconciliation,
13 there is also some from the discretionary budget, sir.

14 Senator Scott: Okay. All right. So, what happens if
15 there's not another reconciliation? Will that be --

16 Admiral Trinqué: What we plan for is the normal
17 President's budget -- sorry, the normal discretionary
18 budget. And what we want is to ensure that through proper
19 planning of our requirements, we can articulate to the
20 Congress what we need to achieve our missions.

21 Senator Scott: Okay. So is your portion of the budget
22 inside the DOG line, or is it from Secretary Feinberg's
23 office?

24 Admiral Trinqué: Neither. It comes through the
25 Department of the Navy, Senator.



1 Senator Scott: Okay. All right. Senator Kaine.

2 Senator Kaine: I have one more question about MUSV and
3 then I want to switch topics for a sec. So, on the MUSV you
4 talk about the desire to have these interchangeable
5 payloads. The Navy made an effort to kind of have a similar
6 focus with respect to the LCS, the littoral combat ships,
7 but ran into difficulties making that work. What have you
8 learned from that experience? And how are you trying to
9 incorporate that into making this modularity idea work with
10 respect to the MUSVs?

11 Admiral Trinque: Senator, the technical risk we built
12 for ourselves with the littoral combat ship was, two new
13 types of ships. Ships we had not bought -- we had not built
14 before. Systems that we did not currently have into the
15 mission modules and modularity in a way that we hadn't done
16 before. And we took all of that newness and stacked it on
17 top of itself, and it collapsed under its own weight. And
18 so now we're going through a lot of work to add permanent
19 systems to the littoral combat ships to ensure that our
20 fleet commanders have the small surface combatants that they
21 do need.

22 What we're doing differently right now is essentially
23 taking systems that already exist and my requirement for
24 those vendors or someone who wants to work with us for a
25 containerized payload, is that they make that system fit

1 into an ISO container, a 20 foot or 40 foot container, and
2 it will have a standard interface for input power from the
3 host vessel, cooling water from the host vessel, and a data
4 interface with the host vessel.

5 And if they can do that with a system that already
6 exists, then we will have a containerized capability and
7 then as more capability comes online, as we move into the
8 future, then we will continue with the ability to add more
9 containerized capability to our MUSVs and other ships.

10 Senator Kaine: All right. Let me switch topics. This
11 may be the thing I'm most interested in. And I suspect it's
12 something that the chair will be interested in, I know the
13 committee will be, too. Armed Services, 10 years ago,
14 according to my institutional memory, Creighton Greene
15 adopted the 355-ship requirement and we have some sub
16 requirements, like 11 carriers and 30 amphibs. But I think
17 most of us -- and this came up in the hearing this morning,
18 the 355. Most of us are interested in the lethality and
19 capacity more than just the number of ships.

20 I mean, I think some are really interested in the
21 number. We know we don't have enough now, we know we have
22 to grow, but it's really a measure of your capacity and
23 lethality that we're trying to get at and I'm not an expert
24 at this, you got a Navy officer here who knows more than me,
25 but that criteria was developed before you were really

1 seeing the acceleration of these uncrewed platforms.

2 And so, 355 ships, we have carriers that have a 50-year
3 center with a 25-year refueling. But you were talking about
4 an uncrewed system with a 5-year center, we're going to have
5 to have a metric for understanding as a nation and as a
6 committee. Okay, what is the array of vessels, surface and
7 subsurface, that essentially gives us the capacity that we
8 wanted when we said 355 or just gives us the right capacity?

9 What's your kind of advice to us on this and how far
10 along do you think the Navy is in trying to develop the plan
11 that would be shared with us on the mix of crewed and
12 uncrewed going forward. It's crewed uncrewed surface and
13 sub, and 10 years ago we weren't so focused on the INDOPACOM
14 as the center of everything like the way we are now. So,
15 there's been a lot of change. How is the Navy addressing
16 this question of giving us the capacity we need so that we
17 know the kinds of investments we should be making in the
18 NDAA or in appropriations bills?

19 Admiral Trinqué: Senator, the Secretary of the Navy,
20 the CNO and the VCNO have been having that very discussion
21 about how do we present to you the Congress, the measure of
22 our naval power? The number of ships that you have provided
23 and maintained is the easy button, as it were. But our
24 ships are not all the same, nor do they need to be. And so
25 we have aircraft carriers with incredible sortie generation

1 rates. We have ballistic missile submarines with their
2 exquisite strategic deterrence capability. We have multi-
3 mission guided missile destroyers, and we will have medium
4 USV's and frigates that will be much more focused in their
5 mission.

6 And so, while I believe we will continue to tell you
7 the numbers because the global reach and the presence
8 requirement for the Navy under the NDAA will require us to
9 have a large Navy. We are working right now to build a new
10 metric for combat power, and we are struggling with that.
11 And we recognize that we owe it to you.

12 Senator Kaine: Ms. Gassler, do you want to add
13 anything to that? I mean, it's really important that you
14 give that to us because I'll tell you a kind of a reality
15 that's like, an object at rest will stay at rest. If we
16 don't get that, then I would like to see more ships built in
17 Virginia. And my colleague here would like to see more in
18 Connecticut. And we all have our own equities that absent
19 of a compelling case, like, "Okay, the balance needs to be
20 different. We got to recalibrate it." We will continue to
21 push what we have been doing. And that might not be the
22 right answer.

23 And so we really need kind of a compelling case that
24 factors in these new technologies, these innovative
25 technologies, that factors in if it's a 5-year center,

1 you're assuming it's a 5-year center, not only because it's
2 more disposable -- that's the wrong word -- but also that
3 the innovation may happen so fast that you really -- it
4 would be kind of obsolete after 5 years. So, we need to
5 have a compelling case so that we can make the right
6 investment decisions, rather than just fall back on the
7 default and argue for our parochial priorities. And, I'm
8 not saying this as a criticism, I think it's an amazing
9 opportunity. But it's going to take some real explanation
10 to us so that we can get all of our colleagues on board.

11 Ms. Gassler: If I may. I think, one of the things
12 that was introduced in the fighting instructions was the
13 hedge force, the tailored offsets, and then the combination
14 of those into the tailored force packages. So, as we look
15 across the threat set and we determine whether it is the
16 main battle force that would take on that threat or whether
17 it is a tailored offset and what those offsets need to be
18 that will drive the mix of systems that we need to procure.
19 And so, to your point, is it a number or is it the
20 capability that we need at the time? And so, as you will
21 always -- we will always have the main battle force and the
22 general-purpose force. And that will be a certain number
23 that is driven by the threat.

24 What we need to be able to do faster and to the point,
25 maybe the vessels end up lasting longer than 5 years, but

1 the payloads probably don't, because they -- or what's
2 inside the payloads, right? Certain munitions, certain
3 threats, certain EW capability that has to evolve at the
4 speed of the threat, at the speed of software. And so, I
5 think that is what we have to figure out. How do we measure
6 the tailored offsets and the and the hedge forces that we
7 need when we need them?

8 Admiral Trinque: If I could keep going just for a
9 second. I will tell you that from a Navy perspective,
10 there's no intention to stop shipbuilding of our large
11 multi-mission or even focus mission like SSBN warships. We
12 have an opportunity to involve more shipbuilders and to have
13 more of the United States involved in the shipbuilding
14 industrial base so that we can add MUSVs and frigates and
15 other small vessels into our fleet without taking away from
16 the attention that the large established shipbuilders, the
17 focus that they're dedicating to building destroyers and
18 submarines and aircraft carriers.

19 Senator Kaine: Well, and let me just say one thing if
20 I could add one more, and the chair will be surprised
21 because he didn't hear me do a lot of compliments to the
22 administration. This is an area where I'm very
23 complimentary of the administration. I think we have been -
24 - we haven't cast our arms widely enough to include the
25 entire industrial base, including the new upcoming

1 disruptive innovators. And we need more upside capacity as
2 our production rate is showing, both in building and even in
3 repairing. And so, we have to cast our arms wider. And I
4 think the administration -- and I said this to the Secretary
5 the last time he was here for a classified hearing. I think
6 the administration is blowing a lot of cobwebs out of the
7 system and doing that in a way that we won't get to where we
8 need to get absent of that. And so, I give you guys credit
9 for going down that path in a good way, so. Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman.

11 Senator Scott: It would be nice if the Navy could tell
12 us exactly what they think we want. I mean, we can still
13 make our own decisions, but it would be nice if they'd tell
14 us exactly what they think, looking at where they -- our
15 potential conflicts are, what capacities you really need,
16 so. Chairman Wicker.

17 Senator Wicker: Well, I want to thank both of you for
18 filibustering long enough for me to get down here and just
19 make a statement. The space shuttle astronauts were picked
20 up in the Pacific by a ship called The John Murtha. And I
21 had the opportunity, a decade or two ago to be a colleague
22 of John Murtha. I was a relatively junior congressman from
23 the state of Mississippi. And John Murtha was chairman of a
24 very important subcommittee and the Appropriations
25 Committee, and John Murtha used to say, basically what our

1 chairman just said, "Tell us what you need." And this is
2 your opportunity. And also, on the record to perhaps
3 scratch your head about it later on, and this is the reason
4 we have these hearings. Sometimes we take people to task
5 and point out shortcomings. But, yes, I would echo what
6 Senator Scott has said, make sure that you do your best to
7 help us understand exactly what you need. Both of you
8 coming from the uniformed service and also from the
9 administration.

10 And, I'll say this, Senator Kaine, I do appreciate the
11 bipartisanship of the discussion today. And, frankly, this
12 morning. at a closed hearing down in the skiff, but also in
13 an open hearing. There was quite a bit of support for the
14 proposition that this country very much needs a quantum leap
15 in our fleet. And of course, this subcommittee hearing
16 today is more about one specific aspect of it, the unmanned
17 part, which has got to be one of the places where we can
18 make a quick relatively, speedy, quantum leap. So, I
19 appreciate that.

20 Am I correct, Admiral, that at one point the Navy did
21 buy a small unmanned fleet of -- but then for some reason
22 decided not to fund it anymore. Do you have an
23 understanding of what happened there? And wasn't that just
24 the opposite signal that lawmakers needed to send?

25 Admiral Trinque: Senator, there were small unmanned



1 surface vessels purchased under the replicator program and
2 given to the Navy for experimentation, and in response to
3 some operational needs. And so, this was -- this preceded
4 the creation of PAE RAS and now with Ms. Gassler in place as
5 the acquisition executive for all of our unmanned systems,
6 we are working with her to articulate our requirements for
7 medium and small unmanned surface vessels so that we can
8 move forward and ensure that the fleets have what they need
9 for payloads on medium unmanned surface vessels, but also
10 the various versions of small unmanned surface vessels we
11 need.

12 Senator Wicker: Okay. That's helpful. And Ms.
13 Gassler, do you agree that Secretary Fallon, was making a
14 very important statement in even creating your operation?

15 Ms. Gassler: Yes, sir. I think we are the only PAE
16 across the services that focuses specifically on the robotic
17 and autonomous systems. And RDA will say that there is a
18 reason that they chose RAS to be the first PAE within the
19 Navy, they have since set up several others, because there
20 is an importance in looking at how fast we can go. And they
21 thought putting all of the systems together, they were very
22 fragmented across the Navy and the Marine Corps. Putting
23 them together gave us the capability and capacity and the
24 authorities we needed to create capabilities, not just by
25 widgets or small boats, but we note all of the solutions --

1 our system of systems, and we now own all the systems in the
2 system of systems to create an entire effect, not just
3 buying to a quantity.

4 Senator Wicker: Well, Ms. Gassler, it seems to me that
5 you've been presented with a unique opportunity to be a game
6 changer in this regard. And I do think we have a proposal
7 for a 50 percent increase in our defense manufacturing for
8 the very reason that this administration intends for the
9 next year or two to amount to legislation, that is a game
10 changer. So, I would challenge you again, specifically,
11 give us the details of how we can make this as easy as
12 possible for you and as reliable and as efficient an
13 expenditure of your portion of the federal funds. So, I
14 thank you both and I thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking
15 Member for allowing me to come in here and add my
16 congratulations and support.

17 Senator Scott: Thank you, Chairman. I just have one
18 more question. Do you do you have an -- Admiral, do you
19 have a rule -- do you have a very specific request from the
20 Navy of what they want in custom containerized payloads and
21 the vessels?

22 Admiral Trinque: We have one very specific requirement
23 that we are acquiring now, we know that there are more
24 coming and we are building the requirements for them to lead
25 the fleet. And so, after we had the one specific



1 requirement from U.S. Pacific Fleet, we recognized that
2 there were going to be a similar collection of requirements
3 from all of the fleets. And so, the request went out to
4 collectivize all of those inputs and tell us what you need.

5 We know that some of them will be logistics capability.
6 Some of them will be sensors both for anti-submarine warfare
7 and as radars. We know that some of them will be for
8 effectors, both non-kinetic and kinetic effects. And so
9 there are industry partners already working with us and the
10 Department of the Navy Rapid Capabilities Office to show us
11 what's possible. So that again with top level requirements
12 for containerized payloads in general already established,
13 we can then take a specific mission, make that an annex to
14 those top-level requirements to specify what goes in the
15 container and then move out to purchase that and field it to
16 the fleet.

17 Senator Scott: Senator Kaine.

18 Senator Kaine: I also have one last question. Under
19 sea capabilities is one of the -- sort of areas of focus
20 under AUKUS Pillar II, and I almost always ask an AUKUS
21 question in a hearing like this. Talk about how you're
22 trying to integrate the work you're describing in with our
23 allies as the SECNAV and CNO and others are thinking about
24 this problem we're describing, how to come up with the right
25 capacity. How are we analyzing the capacities of our allies

1 to integrate that thinking in?

2 Ms. Gassler: So, within the undersea portfolio, I have
3 part of it, and part of it remained with Department of
4 Submarine and PAE Undersea. So, what remained with them was
5 anything that was launched or recovered by a submarine. So,
6 they still have that portfolio. I have the portfolio that
7 has the large UV and extra-large UV that are not launched
8 and recovered by the submarine. In that case, we are
9 working on some additional prototypes and testing right now.

10 In some cases, we are coordinating directly with the UK
11 and Australia on some of their systems, even testing their
12 systems as surrogates for things we may want to buy. On a
13 bigger scale, because our requirements are that we obviously
14 are interoperable with our main battle force, our
15 conventional forces, with our shore infrastructure, and we
16 spend a lot of time and effort to make sure that those
17 architectures and all those systems are interoperable with
18 our allies and partners that also then means by extension
19 that our systems are interoperable.

20 But I have had -- not during AUKUS talks, but during
21 Five Eyes talks -- I've had specific conversations about the
22 RAS architectures that we want to build and how they need to
23 not just maintain interoperability, but almost
24 interchangeability so that we could all operate together
25 under similar C2 software and communications architectures.

1 Senator Kaine: Could you foresee a time when in the
2 marketplace that you're operating having established the
3 kinds of platforms that you might want to have available on
4 that marketplace that industrial innovators from some of our
5 allied nations, like Five Eyes Nations or AUKUS Nations
6 could have their platforms up and available on the
7 marketplace for those who would say, "Yeah, that's a
8 capacity that I want to be able to acquire?"

9 Ms. Gassler: I think we could look at that. I think
10 the first thing it might be is the other way around, is that
11 we have talked to a number of the allies who would like
12 systems that we are currently procuring from American
13 manufacturers.

14 Senator Kaine: This morning when I asked Admiral
15 Paparo about AUKUS, he said he's very impressed with the
16 investment, the infrastructure investment from the
17 Australian government. He says the key now is getting their
18 industrial base really revved up to do it. And, obviously,
19 if that industrial base believes that there's a market not
20 only to meet AUKUS Pillar I, but there's other opportunities
21 for them, then that sends them the signal that they should
22 make even more investment and get more innovative. So, I
23 don't need to say that to you, I know that you get that
24 already, but I just wanted to put that on the record.

25 Senator Scott: Anything else?

1 Senator Kaine: No.

2 Senator Scott: Chairman Wicker, do you have anything
3 else?

4 Senator Wicker: No, thank you.

5 Senator Scott: Thank you. I want to thank the
6 witnesses for being here. This is this is going to be
7 important. I know we're going to have -- [Off mic.]

8 [Whereupon, at 3:38 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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