H.R. 8800—NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

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Sec. 1015—Requirements Relating to Unmanned Surface Vessels

This section would require the Secretary of the Navy to certify to the congressional defense committees that concepts of operation and employment have been developed prior to acceptance of an unmanned surface vessel. The Secretary of the Navy would also be required to develop and implement a strategy for the integration of unmanned surface vessels naval force design and joint maritime operations. The Secretary of the Navy would be required to submit a report to the congressional defense committees not later than 210 days after the date of the enactment of this Act on the strategy for unmanned surface vessel integration and provide an annual brief on integration efforts thereafter.

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This section would require the President to submit proposals to the relevant congressional committees to implement recommendations related to domestic shipbuilding included in the Maritime Action Plan issued by the White House.

BILL LANGUAGE

Subtitle C—Navy Programs

SEC. 121 [Log 85548]. AUTHORITY TO USE INCREMENTAL FUNDING FOR LONG LEAD-TIME COMPONENTS FOR VIRGINIA CLASS SUBMARINES.

Section 126 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (Public Law 119–60; 139 Stat. 755) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b) through (d) as subsections (c) through (e), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

''(b) AUTHORITY TO USE INCREMENTAL FUNDING.—In exercising the authority under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Navy may enter into incrementally funded contracts for the procurement of covered components that are long lead-time items.''.

SEC. 122 [Log 85434]. MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY FOR ARLEIGH BURKE CLASS DESTROYERS.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT.—Subject to section 3501 of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more multiyear contracts for the procurement of up to 15 Arleigh Burke class Flight III guided missile destroyers.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, beginning in fiscal year 2027, for advance procurement associated with the destroyers for which authorization to enter into a multiyear procurement contract is provided under subsection (a), and for systems and subsystems associated with such destroyers in economic order quantities when cost savings are achievable.

(c) CONDITION FOR OUT-YEAR CONTRACT PAYMENTS.—A contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2027 is subject to the availability of appropriations or funds for that purpose for such later fiscal year.

(d) MANDATORY INCLUSION OF PREPRICED OPTION IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event the total base quantity of destroyers to be procured through all

contracts entered into under subsection (a) is less than 15, the Secretary of the Navy shall ensure that one or more of the contracts includes a prepriced option for the procurement of additional destroyers such that the sum of such base quantity and the number of destroyers that may be procured through the exercise of such options is equal to 15 destroyers.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) BASE QUANTITY.—The term ''base quantity'' means the quantity of destroyers to be procured under a contract entered into under subsection (a) excluding any quantity of destroyers that may be procured through the exercise of an option that may be part of such contract.

(B) PREPRICED OPTION.—The term ''prepriced option'' means a contract option for a contract entered into under subsection (a) that, if exercised, would allow the Secretary of the Navy to procure a destroyer at a predetermined price specified in such contract.

(e) LIMITATION.—The Secretary of the Navy may not modify a contract entered into under subsection (a) if the modification would increase the target price of the

destroyer by more than 10 percent above the target price specified in the original contract for the destroyer under subsection (a).

SEC. 123 [Log 85356]. MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY FOR JOHN LEWIS CLASS OILERS.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT.—Subject to section 3501 of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more multiyear contracts for the procurement of John Lewis class Oilers and systems, components, and long-lead time materials associated with such vessels.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, beginning in fiscal year 2027, for advance procurement associated with the oilers for which authorization to enter into a multiyear procurement contract is provided under subsection (a), including economic order quantity purchases and advance procurement of long-lead time materials, to support the continuous production of such vessels and to achieve cost savings.

(c) CONDITION FOR OUT-YEAR CONTRACT PAYMENTS.—A contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2027 is subject to the availability of appropriations or funds for that purpose for such later fiscal year.

(d) TERMINATION LIABILITY.—A contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that the total liability to the Federal Government for termination of the con-

tract shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated for the contract at the time of termination.

SEC. 124 [Log 85569]. PROCUREMENT AUTHORITIES FOR CERTAIN AMPHIBIOUS SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMS.

(a) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—

(1) PROCUREMENT AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts for the procurement of covered ships.

(2) PROCUREMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH EXISTING CONTRACTS.—The ships authorized to be procured under paragraph (1) may be procured as additions to existing contracts covering programs for covered ships.

(b) CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.—A contract may not be entered into under subsection (a) unless the Secretary of the Navy certifies to the congressional defense committees, in writing, not later than 30 days before entry into the contract, each of the following, which shall be prepared by the milestone decision authority for the covered ship program concerned:

(1) The use of such a contract is consistent with the Commandant of the Marine Corps' projected force structure requirements for amphibious ships.

(2) The use of such a contract will result in savings compared to the total anticipated costs of carrying out the program through annual contracts.

In certifying cost savings under the preceding sentence, the Secretary shall include a written explanation of—

(A) the estimated end cost and appropriated funds by fiscal year, by hull, without the authority provided in subsection (a);

(B) the estimated end cost and appropriated funds by fiscal year, by hull, with the authority provided in subsection (a);

(C) the estimated cost savings or increase by fiscal year, by hull, with the authority provided in subsection (a); and

(D) the contractual actions that will ensure the estimated cost savings are realized.

(3) The Secretary of the Navy has a reasonable expectation that throughout the contemplated contract period funding will be available for the contract at the level required to avoid contract cancellation.

(4) There is a stable design for the property to be acquired and the technical risks associated with such property are not excessive.

(5) The estimates of both the cost of the contract and the anticipated cost avoidance through the use of a contract authorized under subsection (a) are realistic.

(6) The use of such a contract will promote the national security of the United States.

(7) During the fiscal year in which such contract is to be awarded, sufficient funds will be available to perform the contract in such fiscal year.

(c) AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts for advance procurement or advance construction associated with a ship or ships for which authorization to enter into a contract is provided under subsection (a), and for systems, sub systems, spare parts, and major shore based spares associated with such ships in economic order quantities when cost savings are achievable.

(d) AUTHORITY TO USE INCREMENTAL FUNDING.—The Secretary of the Navy may incrementally fund a contract entered into under subsection (a) or (c).

(e) CONDITION FOR OUT-YEAR CONTRACT PAYMENTS.—A contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract for a fiscal year is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose for such fiscal year.

(f) TERMINATION.—The authority of the Secretary of the Navy to enter into contracts under subsection (a) shall terminate on September 30, 2030.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''covered ship'' means a San Antonio-class or America-class ship.

(2) The term ''milestone decision authority'' has the meaning given that term in section 4251(e) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 125 [Log 85673]. CONTRACT AUTHORITY FOR SUBMARINE TENDER PROGRAM.

(a) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts for the procurement of not more than two AS(X) submarine tenders.

(b) USE OF INCREMENTAL FUNDING.—With respect to a contract entered into under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Navy may use incremental funding to make payments under the contract.

(c) LIABILITY.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that—

(1) any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose; and

(2) the total liability of the Federal Government for termination of the contract shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated to the contract at the time of termination.

SEC. 126 [Log 85616]. MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY FOR E–2D ADVANCED HAWKEYE AIRCRAFT.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR MULTIYEAR PROCUREMENT.—Subject to section 3501 of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more multiyear contracts, beginning with the fiscal year 2027 program year, for the procurement of twelve E–2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR ECONOMIC ORDER QUANTITY.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, beginning in fiscal year 2027, for advance procurement associated with the aircraft for which authorization to enter into a multiyear procurement contract is provided under subsection (a), which may include procurement of economic order quantities of material and equipment for such aircraft when cost savings are achievable.

(c) LIABILITY.—Any contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that—

(1) any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose; and

(2) the total liability of the Federal Government for termination of the contract shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated to the contract at the time of termination.

SEC. 127 [Log 85565]. AUTHORITY TO USE INCREMENTAL FUNDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER (DDG).

(a) IN GENERAL.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for the Navy for Shipbuilding and Conversion for fiscal year 2027 may be used by the Secretary of the Navy to enter into an incrementally funded contract for the construction of one Guided Missile Destroyer (DDG).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS AND TERMINATION LIABILITY.—A contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose, and that total liability to the Government for the termination of the contract shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated at time of termination.

SEC. 128 [Log 85351]. AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT OF COMPONENTS FOR SHIP-TO-SHORE CONNECTOR CLASS CRAFT.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE PROCUREMENT.—The Secretary of the Navy may enter into one or more contracts, prior to ship authorization, for the advance procurement of components for Ship-to-Shore Connector class craft, including procurement of such components in economic order quantities when cost savings are achievable.

(b) CONDITION FOR OUT-YEAR CONTRACT PAYMENTS.—A contract entered into under subsection (a) shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract for a fiscal year is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose for such fiscal year.

SEC. 129 [Log 84962]. LIMITATION ON CONSTRUCTION OF BATTLESHIP PENDING CERTIFICATION ON TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVELS.

The Secretary of the Navy may not enter into a contract or other agreement that includes a scope of work for the construction of the lead ship of the Battleship program until the date on which the Secretary certifies to the congressional defense committees that the weapon systems planned for inclusion in such lead ship are at a sufficiently mature technology readiness level.

SEC. 130 [Log 84961]. STRATEGY FOR ITERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND FLIGHT MODIFICATIONS FOR FF(X) CLASS FRIGATES.

(a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a strategy for the iterative development of the FF(X) class frigate. Such strategy shall include the following:

(1) Information on the estimated timeline for each planned variant (commonly known as a ''Flight'') of the FF(X) class frigate.

(2) Details on the integration of additional capabilities for future Flights of the frigate, such as vertical launch systems or improved sensors, and implications for the space, weight, power, and cost of the hull form.

(3) Any additional mission sets or combat functions that may be added to the concept of operation for FF(X) class frigates.

(b) INTERIM BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall provide to the congressional defense committees a briefing on the development of the strategy required under subsection (a).

(c) FF(X) CLASS FRIGATE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''FF(X) class frigate'' means the new class of frigate vessel under development by the Secretary of the Navy (as of the date of the enactment of this Act) based on a design derived from the Legend class Coast Guard cutter.

Subtitle D—Air Force Programs

SEC. 141 [Log 85106]. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO C–130 AIRCRAFT.

(a) EXTENSION OF MINIMUM INVENTORY REQUIREMENT.—Section 146(a)(3)(B) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2455), as most recently amended by section 145(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (Public Law 119–60; 139 Stat. 760), is further amended by striking ''2026'' and inserting ''2028''.

(b) EXTENSION OF PROHIBITION ON REDUCTION OF C–130 AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO NATIONAL GUARD.—Section 146(b)(1) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2455), as most recently amended by section 145(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (Public Law 119–60; 139 Stat. 760), is further amended by striking ''2026'' and inserting ''2028''.

(c) REPORT REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report detailing the following:

(1) The total number and variant types of C–130 aircraft in the inventory of the Air Force.

(2) Any planned retirements, divestments, or reductions to the fleet of such aircraft.

(3) Modernization and recapitalization efforts, including block upgrades and procurement schedules.

(4) Planned basing actions for fielding C–130J aircraft to recapitalize C–130H aircraft.

SEC. 142 [Log 85684]. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR C–37 AIRCRAFT RECAPITALIZATION PROGRAM.

Of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2027 for the Air Force for the procurement of C–37 aircraft, not more than 50 percent may be obligated or expended until a period of 30 days has elapsed following the date on which the Secretary of the Air Force submits to the congressional defense committees—

(1) the acquisition strategy for such aircraft; and

(2) a justification for using other than competitive procedures under section 3204 of title 10, United States Code, for the award of a contract for the procurement of such aircraft.

SEC. 143 [Log 85326]. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES FOR NEXT GENERATION AIRLIFT CAPABILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Commander of the United States Transportation Command, shall conduct an analysis of alternatives for next generation airlift capabilities.

(b) ELEMENTS.—In conducting the analysis of alternatives required under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Air Force shall—

(1) evaluate a range of options for next generation airlift capabilities, including recapitalization of existing platforms, service life extension and modernization efforts, and development of new airlift platforms;

(2) in evaluating such options, consider operational effectiveness, survivability in contested environments, fuel efficiency, lifecycle costs, connectivity, basing, and interoperability with joint and coalition forces and battle networks; and

(3) assess the feasibility of incorporating unmanned or optionally crewed systems and innovative concepts of operations.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the congressional defense commit-

tees a report on the results of the analysis of alternatives conducted under subsection (a). The report shall include—

(1) the findings and conclusions of the analysis;

(2) recommendations, if any, for future investment in next generation airlift capabilities; and

(3) such other information as the Secretary determines appropriate.

SEC. 144 [Log 85086]. REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF RESTORING NUCLEAR CAPABILITY TO THE B–1B LANCER BOMBER AIRCRAFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 1, 2026, the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Commander of the United States Strategic Command, shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report assessing the feasibility of restoring nuclear capability to the B–1B Lancer bomber aircraft.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of any structural, electronic, software, and weapons-integration modifications required to enable the B–1B aircraft to deliver nuclear weapons.

(2) An assessment of the compatibility of such aircraft with currently fielded and planned nuclear gravity bombs and air-launched cruise missiles.

(3) Identification of any military construction, storage, security, and certification infrastructure that would be required at forward operating locations within the continental United States should nuclear capability be restored to such aircraft.

(4) Requirements related to aircrew certification, maintenance training, security forces training, nuclear surety inspections, and personnel reli-

ability programs should nuclear capability be restored to such aircraft.

(5) Estimated research, development, test, evaluation, procurement, operations, and sustainment costs over a the five-year period following the initiation of any efforts to restore nuclear capability to such aircraft.

(6) An assessment of the expected remaining service life of the B–1B aircraft fleet.

(7) The estimated time required to achieve initial operational capability and full operational capability should the Air Force pursue restoring nuclear capability to such aircraft.

(8) An assessment of the military utility and strategic deterrence value of restoring nuclear capability to the B–1B aircraft.

(9) An assessment of any costs and additional requirements to restore nuclear capability across bomber bases.

(c) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 216 [Log 84963]. MODIFICATION TO TEST PROGRAM FOR ENGINEERING PLANT OF CERTAIN VESSELS.

Section 221 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117–81; 135 Stat. 1599) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by inserting ''**AND OTHER LARGE SURFACE COMBATANT**'' before ''**VESSELS**'';

(2) in subsection (a), by inserting ''or any subsequent class of large surface combatant vessels'' after ''destroyer class of vessels'';

(3) in subsection (b), by striking ''Senior Technical Authority for the DDG(X) destroyer class of vessels'' and inserting ''Senior Technical Authority for the class of vessels involved (as designated pursuant to section 8669b of title 10, United States Code)'';

(4) in subsection (d), by striking ''for the DDG(X) destroyer class of vessels'' and inserting ''for the class of vessels involved'';

(5) in subsection (e), by striking ''by not later than the delivery date of the lead ship in the DDG(X) destroyer class of vessels'' and inserting ''for a class of vessels by not later than the delivery date of the lead ship in that class of vessels''; and

(6) by amending subsection (f) to read as follows:

''(f) DELIVERY DATE DEFINED.—In this section, term 'delivery date' has the meaning given that term in section 8671 of title 10, United States Code.''.

SEC. 219 [Log 85322]. OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY REQUIREMENTS FOR UNMANNED SURFACE VESSELS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall take such actions as may be necessary, including modification of research and development and acquisition procedures as appropriate, to ensure that unmanned surface vessels are capable of autonomous operation—

(1) during periods in which communications capabilities are denied, degraded, intermittent, or limited; and

(2) during periods in which positioning, navigation, and timing capabilities are degraded or unavailable.

(b) BRIEFING.—Following implementation of the actions required under subsection (a), but not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall provide to the congressional defense committees a briefing on such actions. The briefing shall include an explanation of each of the following:

(1) The ability of unmanned surface vessels to execute preauthorized mission tasks without continuous human control.

(2) The ability of such vessels to adhere to defined autonomy behaviors, decision logic, and safety constraints governing mission execution.

(3) The ability of such vessels to adapt, recover, retask, or terminate missions in accordance with preestablished operational parameters when communications or positioning, navigation, and timing are degraded or unavailable.

(c) UNMANNED SURFACE VESSELS.—In this section, the term ''unmanned surface vessels'' includes—

(1) unmanned surface vessels in use by the Navy or Marine Corps; and

(2) unmanned surface vessels planned for development or procurement for the Navy or Marine Corps.

Subtitle B—Naval Vessels and Shipyards

SEC. 1011.[Log 84959] MODIFICATION OF AUTHORITY TO PURCHASE USED VESSELS WITH NATIONAL DEFENSE SEALIFT FUND.

(a) EXCLUSION OF VESSELS BUILT IN CHINA.—

(1) EXCLUSION.—Subsection (f)(3) of section 2218 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''any used vessel, regardless of where such vessel was constructed'' and inserting ''any used vessel (other than an excluded vessel), regardless of where such vessel was constructed,''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''(other than an excluded vessel)'' after ''a used vessel''.

(2) DEFINITION OF EXCLUDED VESSEL.—Subsection (k) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) The term 'excluded vessel' means a vessel that was—

''(A) constructed or substantially modified in the People's Republic of China; or

''(B) built by a Chinese military company or a Chinese owned or controlled entity.''.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR PURCHASE OF TWO NEW UNITED STATES-CONSTRUCTED VESSELS FOR EACH FOREIGN-CONSTRUCTED USED VESSEL PURCHASED IN EXCESS OF 12.—Subparagraph (C) of paragraph (3) of subsection (f) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(C) For each foreign-constructed vessel purchased by the Secretary under the authority of this paragraph in excess of 12, the Secretary shall contract for the purchase of two new vessels each of which is to be constructed in a shipyard located in the United States.''.

(c) CLARIFYING AMENDMENT.—Such paragraph is further amended in subparagraph (D) by striking ''subparagraph (A)'' and inserting ''this paragraph''.

(d) REPEAL OF OBSOLETE PROVISION.—Such paragraph is further amended—

(1) by striking subparagraph (E); and

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as subparagraph (E).

(e) REPEAL OF 30-DAY NOTICE-AND-WAIT PERIOD BEFORE CERTAIN PURCHASES MAY BE FINALIZED.—Such paragraph is further amended by striking subparagraph (G).

(f) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO UPDATE CITATIONS.—Such section is further amended—

(1) in subsection (d)(3), by striking ''(10 U.S.C. 8661 note)'' and inserting ''(Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 8661 note)''; and

(2) in subsections (f)(2) and (k)(2)(A), by striking ''Public Law 101–510 (104 Stat. 1683)'' and inserting ''the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 (Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 8661 note)''.

SEC. 1012.[Log 84965] ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR NAVY STRATEGY FOR INVESTMENT IN AND SUPPORT FOR THE MARITIME INDUSTRIAL BASE.

Section 1019 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (Public Law 119–60; 139 Stat. 1032; 10 U.S.C. 8661 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''programs'' and inserting ''and sustainment''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) ADDITIONAL MEASURES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027, the Secretary shall include each of the following measures in the strategy required under subsection (a):

''(1) Measures to determine a total cost and schedule for investments needed to enhance the performance of the submarine industrial base to the extent to which it can support the production of one Columbia class submarine and two Virginia class submarines each year and improve in-service submarine maintenance to achieve the goals of the Navy for operational availability.

''(2) Measures to determine a total cost and schedule for investments needed to enhance the performance of the surface ship industrial base to the

extent to which it can support the goals of the Navy for surface ship construction and sustainment.

''(3) Measures to identify roles, responsibilities, and mechanism for coordination and data sharing between all entities within the Department of Defense involved in investing in and supporting the maritime industrial base.

''(4) Measures to conduct an analysis of the capacity of the Department of Defense to effectively plan for, award, and oversee investments in the maritime industrial base and, if relevant offices do not have sufficient capacity, determine how to increase capacity.''.

SEC. 1014.[Log 85498] REALIGNMENT OF CONTRACT MANAGEMENT FOR POLAR SECURITY CUTTER PROGRAM.

(a) CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ALIGNMENT.—The Secretary of the Navy, in coordination with the Commandant of the Coast Guard, shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the Commandant of the Coast Guard is solely responsible for the contract management responsibilities for the Polar Security Cutter program.

(b) LIMITATION ON NAVY CONTRACTING ACTIVITIES.—Beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy may not maintain a separate contracting office for the Polar Security Cutter program except as required to provide advisory support requested by the Commandant of the Coast Guard.

(c) BRIEFING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall provide to the congressional defense committees a briefing describing the implementation of this section.

SEC. 1015.[Log 84964] REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO UNMANNED SURFACE VESSELS.

(a) LIMITATION.—The Secretary of the Navy may not accept or take delivery of an unmanned surface vessel before the date on which the Secretary submits to the congressional defense committees certification in writing that the Chief of Naval Operations or the Commandant of the Marine Corps has developed both concepts of operation and concepts of employment for at least one of the following combat functions:

(1) Anti-submarine warfare.

(2) Maritime strike.

(3) Logistics.

(4) Electronic warfare.

(5) Command and control.

(6) Intelligence.

(7) Surveillance.

(8) Reconnaissance.

(9) Targeting.

(10) Systems designed to counter any of the functions described in paragraphs (1) through (9).

(11) Any other combat function designated by the Chief of Naval Operations or the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

(b) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary

of the Navy shall develop and implement a strategy for the integration of unmanned surface vessels into naval force design and joint maritime operations. Such strategy shall include each of the following:

(1) A description of the role of unmanned surface vessels in the future force design for the Department of the Navy.

(2) The process and timelines associated with the integration of unmanned surface vessels into joint maritime operations.

(3) An identification of the operational authorities currently governing the use of unmanned surface vessels.

(4) An acquisition strategy for unmanned surface vessels.

(5) An identification of the manpower, training, and infrastructure requirements for the integration of unmanned surface vessels into naval force design and joint maritime operations.

(6) A description of different ownership or operating models for unmanned surface vessels, including ownership and operation by the Government and by contractors, and how each such model would affect—

(A) manpower and infrastructure requirements;

(B) sustainment planning; and

(C) competition and industrial base concerns.

(7) An identification of access and basing requirements for unmanned surface vessels.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 210 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the strategy required under subsection (b).

(d) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the submission of the report required under subsection (c), and biannually thereafter, the Portfolio Acquisition Executive established under section 1732 of title 10, United States Code, shall provide a briefing to the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Each such briefing shall include each of the following:

(1) A description of any changes or refinements made to the strategy required under subsection (b) during the period by the briefing.

(2) A description of any planning, scenarios, or simulations carried out by the Navy during the period by the briefing that model the use of unmanned

surface vessels in defined environments for specific missions and tasks.

(3) A description of any operational gaps identified during the period by the briefing that unmanned surface vessel capabilities could address.

(4) A description of any validated and emerging requirements of the combatant commands identified during the period by the briefing for unmanned surface vessels and unmanned underwater vessels, and the criteria used to validate such requirements.

(5) Any gaps in operational authority or required changes with respect to unmanned surface vessels and unmanned underwater vessels identified during the period by the briefing.

SEC. 1016.[Log 85367] STRATEGY FOR DISTRIBUTED SHIPBUILDING.

(a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall develop and implement a strategy to increase distributed shipbuilding.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide to the congressional defense committees a briefing on the strategy required under subsection (a).

(c) DISTRIBUTED SHIPBUILDING DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''distributed shipbuilding'' means, with respect to a vessel, the construction of modules of the vessel—

(1) by one or more entities that are independent from the operators of the shipyard at which the final assembly of the vessel occurs; and

(2) at a facility that is located separately from, or that is located within but is not operated by, the shipyard at which the final assembly of the vessel occurs.

SEC. 1017.[Log 85712] SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING NAMING OF VESSEL FOR BATTLE OF DAI DO.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name an amphibious or expeditionary class vessel for the Battle of Dai Do.

SEC. 1045.[Log 85355] DOMESTIC SOURCING OF BULK FUEL TO SUPPORT TANKER SECURITY PROGRAM.

(a) DOMESTIC SOURCING.—Beginning not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Defense Logistics Agency shall seek to procure at least 10 percent of covered bulk fuel from domestic refineries with excess production capacity.

(b) USE OF TANKER SECURITY FLEET VESSELS.—The delivery of covered bulk fuel procured from a domestic refinery pursuant to subsection (a) shall be transported for delivery to locations outside of the United States on participating fleet vessels.

(c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this section, the Director of the Defense Logistics Agency shall coordinate with the Administrator of the Maritime Administration to align procurement and delivery planning for covered bulk fuel in accordance with subsection (a) with the Tanker Security Program, including by identifying opportunities to increase the use of participating fleet vessels consistent with subsection (b).

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report that includes—

(1) an assessment of the extent to which participating fleet vessels are expected to be used pursuant to subsection (b);

(2) a description of opportunities to increase the delivery of covered bulk fuel procured from a domestic refinery pursuant to subsection (a) in support of the Tanker Security Program, including opportunities to establish recurring shipments of such fuel to fuel depots of the Department located outside of the United States;

(3) an assessment of how such increase would support the availability of United States mariners and long-range fuel supply chains necessary to sustain military operations in contested environments; and

(4) any legislation, policy, or contract authority that the Secretary determines necessary to implement this section.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''covered bulk fuel'' means aviation turbine fuel, marine diesel, or any other refined petroleum product procured by the Secretary of Defense for delivery to locations outside of the United States in support of military operations or fuel depots of the Department of Defense.

(2) The term ''excess production capacity'', with respect to a refinery, means a production capacity of the refinery that the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Energy, determines is in excess of domestic consumption requirements.

(3) The term ''participating fleet vessel'' has the meaning given such term in section 53401 of title 46, United States Code.

Subtitle E—Studies and Reports

SEC. 1061.[Log 85001] MOBILITY CAPABILITIES STRATEGIC PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2027, the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Commander of the United States Transportation Command and in consultation with the commanders of each of the geographic combatant commands, shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that includes a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan for the development, acquisition, modernization, and integration of mobility capabilities of the Department of Defense through fiscal year 2047.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a) shall include each of the following:

(1) An operational environment assessment of—

(A) contested operations across all domains over great distances;

(B) contested lines of communication extending from the United States to operational theaters;

(C) adversary capabilities designed to target United States mobility forces, mobility infrastructure, and logistics networks; and

(D) the requirement for mobility forces to operate in degraded, contested, and highly contested environments including austere locations, battle-damaged airfields, degraded runways, ramps, taxiways, and other runway agnostic operating environments.

(2) An assessment of current mobility force, including—

(A) the ability of Air Mobility Command to support the requirements of all of the Armed Forces in competition, crisis, and conflict;

(B) the ability of Air Mobility Command to support agility concepts for all of the Armed Forces simultaneously in conflict, including agile combat employment, multi-domain task force operations, expeditionary advanced base operations, and distributed maritime operations;

(C) the vulnerability of mobility forces, mobility infrastructure, and global logistics networks in contested environments; and

(D) the degree to which existing mobility capability and capacity meet homeland defense

priorities, nuclear mission obligations, and simultaneous global operational demands.

(3) An identification of the attributes required of future mobility forces, including—

(A) secure beyond line-of-sight connectivity with—

(i) service and joint data links;

(ii) service and joint battle management networks; and

(iii) service and joint command and control network;

(B) automation and autonomous aviation capabilities;

(C) the ability to operate across the full spectrum of threat environments;

(D) flexibility across the full scale of mobility missions, including small and distributed missions, tactical, operational, and strategic missions, and oversized and large-volume movements;

(E) the ability to operate from runway-agnostic and degraded operating locations;

(F) fuel-resilient aviation concepts, including aircraft capable of operating on traditional

fuels and emerging propulsion systems, such as electric, hybrid-electric, and hydrogen;

(G) consideration of aircraft designed with open architecture enabling rapid integration of mission systems including palletized effects, electronic warfare, battle management, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities; and

(H) signature management capabilities that enable mobility aircraft to operate globally while maintaining operational security, including the ability to comply with international aviation safety requirements while limiting exposure of aircraft identity, position, and mission information through publicly accessible tracking systems or other unclassified means.

(4) An evaluation of future tanker capabilities, including—

(A) collaborative tanker aircraft supporting collaborative, distant, and distributed refueling operation in contested environments;

(B) penetrating stealth tanker aircraft capable of operating in highly contested environments;

(C) low-signature tanker concepts, including blended-wing body tanker aircraft;

(D) tactical tanker aircraft capable of supporting distributed tanker and airlift operations;

(E) modernization of legacy tanker aircraft through connectivity and full automation;

(F) tanker aircraft designed with open architecture and multi-role capability, enabling complementary missions including electronic warfare, battle management, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities;

(G) opportunities to expand tanker capacity through commercial tanker constructs including Government owned, contractor operated; and

(H) the establishment of a Civil Reserve Air Fleet tanker capability that would enable the commercial operation of tanker aircraft to provide immediate and dependable augmentation of United States tanker capacity.

(5) An evaluation of future airlift capabilities across mission scales, including—

(A) autonomous airlift platforms supporting small and tactical missions;

(B) the establishment of a distributed maneuver pool composed of autonomous and highly automated mobility platforms capable of supporting maneuvering units and distributed operations, with mobility capabilities owned or controlled by lower-echelon multi-service operational units and integrated into the broader mobility enterprise;

(C) improved and automated tactical and operational airlift capabilities supporting maneuver and distributed operations;

(D) new and improved strategic airlift capabilities supporting global force flow and theater reinforcement, including the development of a next-generation strategic airlifter to augment or replace the C–17 aircraft and establishing a new standard for military airlift through improved capability, capacity, survivability, connectivity, automation, and operational flexibility;

(E) oversized and large-volume airlift systems;

(F) vertical takeoff and landing and short-field takeoff and landing airlift platforms sup-

porting multi-service agility and distributed operations;

(G) delivery systems, including automated airdrop, glider, towable, and hybrid aircraft logistics platforms; and

(H) opportunities to expand airlift capacity through commercial operation of strategic airlift aircraft, Civil Reserve Air Fleet participation, and service-based acquisition models such as effects-as-a-service.

(6) An assessment of command and control architecture required to support mobility operations in contested environments, including—

(A) the use of maneuver battle management using technologies such as artificial intelligence, algorithmic allocation systems, and advanced data architectures to integrate logistics, maneuver, and mobility operations across the Joint Force; and

(B) integration of distributed traditional air battle management capabilities within mobility forces.

(7) An assessment of opportunities to expand mobility capability and capacity through commercial aviation capabilities, including—

(A) the expansion of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet;

(B) the establishment of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet tanker capability;

(C) the commercial operation of excess, transitioned, or Government-owned strategic airlift and tanker aircraft;

(D) the use of service-based acquisition models such as mobility-as-a-service or effects-as-a-service; and

(E) the role of nonprime aviation companies in enabling the building of the future mobility enterprise.

(c) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 3501.[Log 85348] AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR MARITIME ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Transportation for fiscal year 2027, for programs associated with maintaining the United States Merchant Marine, the following amounts:

(1) For expenses necessary to support the United States Merchant Marine Academy, $249,500,000 of which—

(A) $129,500,000 shall be for Academy operations; and

(B) $120,000,000 shall be for construction of facilities and infrastructure at the United States Merchant Marine Academy in accordance with the Campus Modernization Plan and for facilities maintenance and repair and equipment.

(2) For expenses necessary to support the State maritime academies, $53,400,000, of which—

(A) $9,400,000 shall be for the Student Incentive Payment Program;

(B) $7,000,000 shall be for direct payments for State maritime academies;

(C) $12,000,000 shall be for training ship fuel assistance;

(D) $4,000,000 shall be for offsetting the costs of training ship sharing; and

(E) $21,000,000 shall be for maintenance and repair of State maritime academy training vessels.

(3) For expenses necessary to support the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel program, including funds for construction and necessary expenses to construct shoreside infrastructure to support such vessels, $75,000,000.

(4) For expenses necessary to support Maritime Administration operations and programs, $105,760,000, of which—

(A) $15,000,000 shall be for the maritime environmental and technical assistance program under section 50307 of title 46, United States Code;

(B) $15,000,000 shall be for the United States marine highway program, including to make grants authorized under section 55601 of title 46, United States Code;

(C) $2,000,000 shall be for the Office of Environment and Compliance, including to assist in the environmental review of grant and

permit programs administered by the Maritime Administration; and

(D) $73,760,000 shall be for headquarters operations expenses.

(5) For expenses necessary for the disposal of obsolete vessels in the National Defense Reserve Fleet of the Maritime Administration, $6,000,000.

(6) For expenses necessary to maintain and preserve a United States flag merchant marine to serve the national security needs of the United States under chapter 531 of title 46, United States Code, $400,500,000.

(7) For expenses necessary to maintain and preserve a United States flag merchant marine to serve the national security needs of the United States under chapter 534 of title 46, United States Code, $167,600,000.

(8) For expenses necessary for the loan guarantee program authorized under chapter 537 of title 46, United States Code, $33,700,000, of which—

(A) $30,000,000 may be used for the cost (as such term is defined in section 502(5) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a(5)) of loan guarantees under the program; and

(B) $3,700,000 may be used for administrative expenses relating to loan guarantee commitments under the program.

(9) For expenses necessary to provide assistance to small shipyards and for maritime training programs authorized under section 54101 of title 46, United States Code, $105,000,000.

(10) For expenses necessary to implement the port infrastructure development program, as authorized under section 54301 of title 46, United States Code, subject to the limitation under subsection (b), $550,000,000, to remain available until expended.

(11) For maritime incentive payments to centers of excellence designated under section 51706 of title 46, United States Code, $300,000,000.

(b) LIMITATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No funds may be obligated or expended for the port infrastructure development program pursuant to subsection (a)(10) to make a grant to be used for the purchase of fully automated cargo handling equipment that is remotely operated or remotely monitored with or without the exercise of human intervention or control, if the Secretary of Transportation determines such equipment would re-

sult in a net loss of jobs within a port or port terminal.

(2) REPORT.—If the Secretary makes a determination pursuant to paragraph (1), not later than three days after the date on which such determination is made, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that includes the data and analysis used by the Secretary in making such determination.

SEC. 3502.[Log 85617] SUPPORT FOR ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OF THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 513 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 51329. Support for athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy

''(a) CORPORATION FOR SUPPORT AUTHORIZED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may, in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, establish a corporation (in this section referred to as the 'corporation') to support the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy. All stock of the corporation shall be owned by the United States and held in the name of and voted by the Secretary.

''(2) OPERATION.—The corporation shall operate exclusively for charitable, educational, and civic purposes to support the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

''(b) CORPORATE ORGANIZATION.—The corporation shall be organized and operated—

''(1) as a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

''(2) in accordance with this section; and

''(3) pursuant to the laws of the State of New York, its articles of incorporation, and its bylaws.

''(c) CORPORATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The members of the board of directors of the corporation shall serve without compensation as members of the board, except for reasonable travel and other related expenses for attendance at meetings of the board.

''(2) DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES.—The Secretary may authorize employees of the Department of Transportation to serve, in their official capacities, as members of the board of directors of the corporation, but such employees shall not hold more than one-third of the directorships. Such authorization to participate in the management of the corporation shall be without compensation and may be made only for the purpose of providing oversight and advice to, and coordination with, the corporation. Participation of the employee in the activities of the corporation may not extend to participation in the day-to-day operations of the corporation.

''(d) CONTRACTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may enter contract and cooperative agreements with the corporation for the purpose of supporting the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

''(2) AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding section 3105 of title 41, the Secretary may enter into such contracts and cooperative agreements on a sole source basis pursuant to section 3304(a) of title 41.

''(3) ACQUISITIONS.—Notwithstanding chapter 63 of title 31, a cooperative agreement under this section may be used to acquire property, services, or travel for the direct benefit or use of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

''(e) LEASES.—For the purpose of supporting the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, in consultation with the General Services Administration, the Secretary may rent or lease real property located at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, under such terms and conditions as are deemed advisable, for a period not exceeding 5 years, such real property as may not be required for immediate use by the United States Merchant Marine Academy, to the corporation, and that proceeds from such a lease shall be retained and expended in accordance with subsection (j).

''(f) SUPPORT SERVICES.—

''(1) AUTHORITY.—To the extent required by a contract or cooperative agreement under subsection (a), the Secretary may provide support services to the corporation while the corporation conducts support activities at the United States Merchant Marine Academy only if the Secretary determines that the provision of such services is essential for the support of the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

''(2) NO LIABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES.—Support services may only be provided without any liability of the United States to the corporation.

''(3) SUPPORT SERVICES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'support services' includes utilities, office furnishings and equipment, communications services, records staging and archiving, audio and video support, and security systems, in conjunction with the leasing or licensing of property.

''(g) TRANSFERS FROM NONAPPROPRIATED FUND OPERATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretary may, subject to the acceptance of the corporation, transfer to the corporation all title to and ownership of the assets and liabilities

of the United States Merchant Marine Academy nonappropriated fund instrumentality, the function of which includes providing support for the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, including bank accounts and financial reserves in the accounts of such fund instrumentality, equipment, supplies, and other personal property.

''(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not transfer under paragraph (1) any interest in real property.

''(h) ACCEPTANCE OF SUPPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 1342 of title 31, the Secretary may accept from the corporation funds, supplies, and services for the support of the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

''(2) EMPLOYEES OF THE CORPORATION.—For purposes of this section, employees or personnel of the corporation may not be considered to be employees of the United States.

''(3) FUNDS RECEIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES.—The Secretary may charge fees for the support of athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy. To support the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine

Academy, the Secretary may accept funds from the National Collegiate Athletic Association, funds from athletic conferences, game guarantees from other educational institutions, fees for ticketing and licensing, and other consideration provided incidental to the execution of the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

''(4) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that contributions under this subsection and expenditure of funds pursuant to subsection (j) do not—

''(A) reflect unfavorably on the ability of the Department of Transportation or any employee of the Department of Transportation to carry out any responsibility or duty in a fair and objective manner; or

''(B) compromise the integrity or appearance of integrity of any program of the Department of Transportation, or any individual involved in such a program.

''(i) TRADEMARKS AND SERVICE MARKS.—

''(1) LICENSING, MARKETING, AND SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENTS.—An agreement under subsection (d) may, consistent with section 51330, authorize the corporation to enter into licensing, marketing, and sponsorship agreements relating to

trademarks and service marks identifying the United States Merchant Marine Academy, subject to the approval of the Secretary.

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—A licensing, marketing, or sponsorship agreement may not be entered into under paragraph (1) if—

''(A) such agreement would reflect unfavorably on the ability of the Department of Transportation or any employee of the Department of Transportation to carry out any responsibility or duty in a fair and objective manner; or

''(B) the Secretary determines that the use of the trademark or service mark would compromise the integrity or appearance of integrity of any program of the Department of Transportation or any individual involved in such a program.

''(j) RETENTION AND USE OF FUNDS.—Funds received by the Secretary under this section may be retained for use to support the athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy and shall remain available until expended.

"§ 51330. Licensing of intellectual property

''(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may license trademarks and service marks owned or controlled by the Secretary with respect to the United States Merchant Marine Academy and may retain and expend fees received from such licensing in accordance with this section.

''(b) DESIGNATED MARKS.—The Secretary shall designate the trademarks and service marks regarding which the Secretary will exercise the authority to retain licensing fees under this section.

''(c) USE OF FEES.—The Secretary shall use fees retained under this section for the following purposes:

''(1) For payment of costs incurred by the Secretary of securing trademark registrations and of operating the licensing program under this section.

''(2) For support of athletic programs and recruiting activities of the United States Merchant Marine Academy under the jurisdiction of the Secretary, to the extent (if any) that the total amount of the licensing fees available under this section for a fiscal year exceed the total amount needed for such fiscal year under paragraph (1).

''(d) AVAILABILITY.—Fees received in a fiscal year and retained under this section shall be available until expended.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms 'trademark' and 'service mark' have the meanings given such terms in section 45 of the Act of July 5, 1946 (commonly referred to as the Trademark Act of 1946; 15 U.S.C. 1127).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

''51329. Support for athletic programs of the United States Merchant Marine Academy.
''51330. Licensing of intellectual property.''.

SEC. 3503.[Log 85618] ENHANCING UNITED STATES MARITIME WORKFORCE.

(a) PROPOSALS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees proposals to implement the recommendations set forth in the Maritime Action Plan issued by the White House and dated February, 2026, with respect to—

(1) maximizing the credits for military training and sea service eligible to count toward merchant mariner credential endorsements and expanding associated fee exemptions to all members of the Armed Forces;

(2) in consultation with the National Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee established under section 15103 of title 46, United States Code, formalizing equivalency guidance with respect to such credits and credentials;

(3) continuing to approve reciprocity for military courses to meet training requirements for such credentials;

(4) strengthening outreach and counseling to enable members of the Armed Forces eligible for preseparation counseling under section 1142 of title 10, United States Code, to efficiently convert rel-

evant skills of such members to qualifications necessary for such credentials;

(5) streamlining and clarifying the processes for merchant mariner credentialing;

(6) streamlining training approvals for such credentials, including with respect to the approval of training involving simulators and other modern innovations, to safely accelerate the acquisition of skills and qualifications necessary for such credentials; and

(7) streamlining training requirements and provider accreditation to accelerate merchant mariner credentialing.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(2) The term ''merchant mariner credential'' has the meaning given such term in section 2101 of title 46, United States Code.

SEC. 3504.[Log 85619] ENHANCING UNITED STATES SHIPYARDS AND SHIPBUILDING.

(a) PROPOSALS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees proposals to implement the recommendations set forth in the Maritime Action Plan issued by the White House and dated February, 2026, with respect to—

(1) blending Federal and private resources for durable shipyards and shipbuilding component fabrication;

(2) simplifying and standardizing requirements relating to applications, eligibility, and compliance across programs of the Federal Government that provide assistance or financing for shipyards or shipbuilding;

(3) employing commercially available technologies and solutions in shipbuilding by the Federal Government;

(4) establishing a Federal Government-wide shipbuilding plan;

(5) expanding eligibility, improving efficiency, and streamlining program administration with respect to Federal funding and other incentives for shipbuilding, to align such funding and incentives

with modern program management and business practices; and

(6) promulgating, revising, or rescinding such regulations as may be necessary to prioritize shipbuilding in the United States and repairs at domestic shipyards.

(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

DIRECTIVE REPORT LANGUAGE

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DIVISION A—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATIONS

TITLE I—PROCUREMENT

OTHER PROCUREMENT, ARMY

Items of Special Interest

Army Watercraft Recapitalization Strategy

The committee is aware of the Army's development of a long-awaited watercraft strategy intended to address an aging fleet through a combination of service-life extension efforts, limited procurement of new platforms, increased use of commercial and modified commercial vessels, and accelerated experimentation with autonomous systems. The committee remains concerned by the low percentage of mission ready watercraft hindering the Army's ability to meet mission requirements that reduces training opportunities for watercraft personnel. Further, the committee is concerned that the Army may not provide resourcing consistent with a realistic strategy to support the watercraft needed for operations in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Army to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than February 1, 2027, on the Army's watercraft strategy. The briefing shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) a clear explanation and concept of operations related to the recapitalization of the Army watercraft fleet that includes a discussion of the appropriate mix of both modern crewed vessels and unmanned systems;

(2) the Army's strategy to meet Combatant Commander watercraft and joint logistics over-the-shore requirements, with particular emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region;

(3) an estimate of the resources needed to address any capability shortfalls across the Future Years Defense Program;

(4) a discussion of various acquisition models for the unmanned portion of the recapitalization plan to include both traditional procurement, and leasing opportunities including government owned-contractor operated and contractor owned-contactor operated models; and

(5) how the Army plans to sustain these Army watercraft and resource training for Army personnel in the operation of these watercraft.

Unmanned Surface Vessels for Escort of Army Watercraft

The committee recognizes the increasing operational risk faced by Army watercraft conducting logistics, maneuver, and sustainment missions in joint, contested, and distributed operating environments. The committee notes that many Army watercraft possess limited organic defensive capabilities, increasing vulnerability to asymmetric threats, unmanned systems, and enemy fires.

The committee believes that manned Army watercraft may be aided by dedicated unmanned surface vessels (USV) providing enhanced force protection, early warning, sensing, and defensive effects while reducing risk to personnel. Therefore, the committee commends the Army's use of competitive experimentation and prototyping activities, including initiatives such as xTech Pacific, to evaluate autonomous watercraft and escort concepts. The committee further applauds the Army's emphasis on engaging U.S. industry to identify mature, proven autonomy solutions and encourages continued consideration of commercially available capabilities where appropriate.

To better understand the status of Army consideration of escort USVs, the committee directs the Secretary of the Army to submit a report to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than February 1, 2027. The report shall assess the feasibility, operational utility, and acquisition pathways for an indigenous USV escort capability for Army watercraft. The report shall include:

(1) a description of operational mission sets and threat environments in which autonomous or semi-autonomous escort vessels could enhance the survivability of Army watercraft;

(2) an assessment of existing and emerging autonomy technologies, including commercially available solutions from U.S. industry, relevant to escort, sensing, and force protection missions;

(3) a summary of ongoing experimentation and prototyping efforts, including lessons learned from competitive events and demonstrations;

(4) an evaluation of potential acquisition approaches to transition successful prototypes into operational use and, where appropriate, programs of record; and

(5) an assessment of projected resource requirements and considerations for sustaining investment in autonomous escort capabilities in future budget submissions.

SHIPBUILDING AND CONVERSION, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Advanced Manufacturing and Fabrication for the Submarine Industrial Base

The committee is aware that the submarine industrial base's efforts to scale up production is hampered by supply chain fragility. The committee notes that the industry depends on thousands of highly specialized components produced by limited networks of suppliers, many of which are single or sole source. Delays in small-part fabrication and material availability frequently create bottlenecks that

ripple across the entire production system, resulting in schedule delays and cost growth.

To better understand efforts to support the industrial base for small parts and items, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than January 15, 2027 on its plan for addressing this particular challenge. The briefing should include, at a minimum, the following.

(1) a feasibility assessment on potential organic small parts manufacturing and fabrication capability;

(2) an update on any findings by the working group created in response to section 1843 of the fiscal year 2026 NDAA related to internal barriers to procurement;

(3) analysis regarding opportunities for incentivizing advanced manufacturing and other novel manufacturing techniques that still meet all standards and specifications; and

(3) information on potential reforms to the Navy stock number system that would enhance competition and ensure that qualified vendors can bid on parts solicitations.

Design for T-AH(X)

The committee is aware that the USNS Comfort and USNS Mercy have been in service for approximately forty years and are nearing the end of their service lives. The committee is concerned that without a replacement for these aging vessels, the Department of Defense may lose the ability to provide afloat mobile trauma, surgical, diagnostic, and supportive medical care in a contested environment as well as the ability to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster response services. The committee notes that in order to recapitalize the hospital ships in a timely and cost effective manner to ensure mobile hospitalization is available in forward locations, the Navy must consider existing designs and opportunities to reuse existing hull forms to the extent practicable. The committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2026 on the availability of viable existing designs or alternative uses of existing hull forms to provide expeditious and affordable recapitalization of the hospital ship fleet. The report shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) a description of available designs that could be used or modified as the basis for the T-AH(X) hospital ship replacement to avoid a lengthy clean-sheet design process;

(2) information on the size, power, and speed requirements for such vessels and the extent to which the available designs in (1) meet this requirements;

(3) information on any existing, or easily modified, features for available designs that would facilitate operation in expeditionary environments such as roll-on roll-off capability; and

(4) an assessment on whether the use of a Vessel Contract Manager for procurement could further ensure that the T-AH(x) build schedule remains on budget and schedule.

Domestic Production Capacity and Supply of Military-Specification Welding Wire in Shipbuilding

The committee understands the critical role that high-quality military-specification (MIL-Spec) welding wire plays in the construction of Navy submarines and surface ships, as well as other critical defense platforms, equipment, and additive manufacturing, particularly wire arc additive manufacturing, which is essential for advancing the nation's advance manufacturing capabilities and resolving supply chain issues that hamper the defense industrial base.

However, the committee is concerned that growing demand for these materials (MIL-spec and corresponding welding wire products) will critically strain the planned expansions in Navy shipbuilding and other critical defense platforms. To reduce any dependencies on foreign sources and to build domestic industrial base resilience, the committee believes the Department of the Navy must further prioritize sustaining and expanding domestic MIL-spec welding wire production capacity.

Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than December 30, 2026. The briefing shall include:

(1) an analysis of the projected volume of MIL-Spec welding wire needed for new construction, sustainment, and additively manufactured components, and the projected volume of domestic capacity to produce and supply it for the Fiscal Year 2027-2031 Future Years Defense Plan;

(2) identification of factors that could limit domestic capacity to produce and supply MIL-Spec welding wire, such as commercial sector demands that strain defense production, raw materials sourcing, near and long-term changes in production rates of Navy surface ships and submarines, and other relevant factors;

(3) a review of any current or planned efforts to address domestic capacity shortfalls or limitations in meeting the Navy's current or projected needs for welding wire, as well as any budget resources or authorities needed; and

(4) any other matters the Secretary deems necessary.

Power and Propulsion Architecture for Large Surface Combatant

The committee recognizes that investing in a next generation large surface combatant ship to replace the guided missile cruiser is essential to the Navy's continued dominance in the maritime domain. The committee notes that developing the cruiser's replacement will require a significant long-term investment in both combatant capability and the power and propulsion system that will be required to ensure sufficient and adaptable power generation over the lifecycle of the vessel. The committee is aware that decisions related to propulsion system selection and

integration early in the process will greatly impact cost, schedule, sustainment, and modernization capacity throughout the ship's service life. Accordingly, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by December 30, 2026 on its strategy for developing power and propulsion architecture for its next large surface combatant. The briefing shall include the following:

(1) a discussion of the process the Navy is using to assess the next large surface combatant's power and propulsion requirements and the current estimate of the vessel's power and propulsion requirement;

(2) planning assumptions the Navy is using related to the amount of reserve power required to ensure the vessel remains relevant and capable of being modernized throughout its service life;

(3) how the Navy will seek to prioritize domestic design and manufacturing;

(4) an evaluation of whether the Navy can leverage DDG(X), or other recent propulsion investments, to reduce cost, schedule risk, and technical uncertainty; and

(5) an evaluation of domestic industrial-base capacity to design and manufacture the next large surface combatants power and propulsion system.

Submarine Construction Wage Enhancements and Impacts to Supply Chain

The committee is aware of the ongoing efforts to enhance wages for workers within the the submarine industrial base and is pleased by the positive impact they have had on workforce recruitment and retention. The committee is also aware of the complex ecosystem of subcontractors and component suppliers that is essential to the on time delivery of these complicated platforms. The committee notes that recruitment and retention issues within this supplier base can exacerbate supply chain fragility and lead to downstream delays that impact the delivery schedule. Accordingly, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by January 15, 2027, on its observations and proposed actions to ensure workforce stability in the submarine supply bases. The briefing should include, at a minimum, an assessment of wage competitiveness within the supply base with an emphasis on critical components and sole-source suppliers.

OTHER PROCUREMENT, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Acquisition and Sustainment of Large Diameter Unmanned Undersea Vehicles

The committee recognizes the strategic importance of the Navy’s Large Diameter Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (LDUUV) and Extra-Large Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (XLUUV) efforts to maintaining United States advantage in the undersea domain. The committee supports innovation and rapid prototyping,

including efforts advanced through the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), but notes that long-term operational success will depend on whether these systems can be matured beyond prototyping efforts to be procured, sustained, and repeatedly deployed in support of combatant command requirements.

The committee is concerned that as LDUUV and XLUUV efforts transition from rapid development pathways into programs of record or sustained procurement, lifecycle readiness and industrial-base capacity may not be fully assessed as part of transition decisions. Accordingly, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a report to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than June 1, 2027, on LDUUV and XLUUV procurement and sustainment planning. The report should include the following:

(1) an assessment of the industrial-base capacity to operate, maintain, and sustain LDUUV and XLUUV platforms across their expected lifecycle;

(2) a summary of how lifecycle sustainment, operational availability, and total ownership cost are incorporated into acquisition strategies, source-selection criteria, and DIU transition decisions;

(3) a description of how DIU-led prototype efforts for LDUUV or XLUUV platforms are evaluated for transition to sustained procurement, including any relevant key performance indicators used in such determinations;

(4) an analysis of existing domestic sustainment infrastructure for subsea systems and companies with experience operating autonomous systems at a relevant scale to fleet operations; and

(5) information on proposed actions to strengthen competition, improve transition pathways, and ensure enduring readiness outcomes as these systems scale beyond prototype development.

Multi-Mission Reconnaissance Boat

The committee recognizes that the United States Marine Corps has an unfilled requirement for multi-mission reconnaissance boats as highlighted by a signed 2021 deliberate universal needs statement (D-UNS). The document highlights the Marine Corps' need for a platform to support organic littoral maneuver from the sea to support surveillance and reconnaissance as well as other combat functions with a reduced threat of adversary detection. The multi-mission reconnaissance boat is needed to extend the operational reach of commanders, while enabling Marine forces to execute littoral operations in contested environments and expeditionary advanced base operations concepts. As of 2026, the Marine Corps has not established a program of record that would fulfill this requirement.

To better understand efforts to meet this requirement, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy, in coordination with the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027, that details how the Marine Corps will meet the requirement described in the signed 2021 Multi-Mission Reconnaissance Boat D-UNS.

Payload Integration for Unmanned Surface Vessels

The committee is pleased with the progress the Navy has made in robotic and autonomous systems in the past year, prioritizing the fielding of these capabilities, especially through the Medium Unmanned Surface Vessel (MUSV) program. The committee has supported these efforts by ensuring that adequate foundational funding is available to support the development and testing of this technology. However, the committee believes the Navy must ensure minimum operational availability requirements for all ship systems in order to ensure the success of these programs. In order to ensure MUSV payload integration challenges are adequately addressed, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a report to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 26, 2027 on recommended standards and qualifications that will be used to evaluate the performance of payload integration for the MUSV assets and other similar medium and large unmanned surface vessels. The report shall include information on the following:

(1) current or planned efforts to conduct sea trials for at least 720 hours;

(2) current or planned efforts to test at various sea states to include operational representative sea states and night/all weather conditions;

(3) utilization of integrated modular payload bay of standard International Organization for Standardization (ISO) containers;

(4) current or planned efforts to test a mix of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) suites, passive and active sensors, and containerized effectors on a MUSV hull;

(5) demonstrations of stable power, cooling, and data interfaces;

(6) demonstrations of USV autonomous launch, recovery, refuels/recharge, and data-offload;

(7) current or planned efforts to demonstrate launch of small USVs, Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUV), and Vertical Take-off and Land (VTOL) or fixed-wing Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) from deck-based or containerized handling systems; and

(8) what the Navy's plan is for procuring, testing, and integrating mission payloads into USV platforms that require operational reliability at scale.

Torpedo Tube Launch and Recovery Capability for Unmanned Undersea Vehicles

The committee recognizes the critical importance of advancing undersea warfare capabilities to maintain strategic and tactical superiority in maritime operations around the world. The deployment of Unmanned Undersea Vehicles (UUVs) from submarines using the autonomous Torpedo Tube Launch and Recovery (TTL&R) capability that has been repeatably demonstrated during Project Rattrap in real-world conditions, is a key capability that enhances the submarine fleet's operational flexibility and effectiveness. Rattrap TTL&R provides substantial benefits to national security by enabling submarines to deploy and recover UUVs

discreetly thereby extending their tactical reach well beyond their covert position. This capability enables our naval forces to conduct more productive undersea activities with substantially reduced risk to the submarine, the crew and the United States government. Further, the technologically advanced capability substantially increases operational reach without compromising submarine stealth characteristics.

The committee commends the Navy and the Defense Innovation Unit for their investments to add this critical capability to the undersea warfare strategy and directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than December 31, 2026. The briefing should include information on the Navy's plans to integrate UUVs with Rattrap TTL&R functionality across the entire submarine fleet, including resource requirements for the acquisition and sustainment of TTL&R capable UUVs through future budget requests.

Unmanned Surface Vessel Industrial Base

The committee notes the growing operational requirements for unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) across multiple mission areas, including maritime security, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, logistics, and force protection. The committee is concerned that a lack of consistent requirements signaling from the Department of the Navy may negatively impact the USV industrial base, resulting in loss of skilled labor, supplier fragility, and increased costs to reconstitute production capacity during periods of crisis or rapid demand growth. The committee notes that consistency in priorities, communication, and acquisition strategy can help stabilize the industrial base and ensure a competitive vendor base. The committee therefore directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than December 1, 2026, that details its plan for communicating demand, requirements, and acquisition strategy to the USV industrial base. At a minimum, this briefing should include consideration of the following:

(1) how the Department's approach can contribute to sustaining a distributed, competitive production capacity for USVs;

(2) the relative merits of various procurement models including contractor ownership or operation of USVs;

(3) the impact of the Department's approach on critical suppliers, tooling, and workforce skills; and

(4) how lessons learned from submarine and surface shipbuilding sectors can be applied to maintaining a robust USV industrial base.

Use Cases for Autonomous Undersea Platforms

The committee recognizes the growing operational importance of autonomous or unmanned undersea vehicles (UUVs) as an important element of future naval operations, particularly in contested maritime environments. The

committee supports ongoing experimentation and prototyping efforts as well as the test and evaluation of commercially available platforms, and the consideration of these platforms in novel configurations and use cases. The committee recognizes the enormous potential of UUVs in naval operations. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by January 15, 2027. The briefing shall include the following:

(1) an evaluation of current gaps in combatant command requirements including logistics and resupply, payload and effects delivery, long-range fires, and countermine operations, for which UUVs could provide a bridging solution or a permanent capability;

(2) an evaluation of how the Navy is seeking to maximize the integration of UUVs into joint and combined concepts of operations in contested maritime environments;

(3) a summary of commercially available platforms in all size categories that the Navy is considering for use in filling the capability gaps described in (1);

(4) a review of the size categories of UUVs and a determination of whether an "ultra large" UUV would provide advantageous characteristics such as increased resilience, endurance, range, survivability, and operational flexibility;

(5) an evaluation of commercially available endurance enabling propulsion technologies, including hybrid electric systems, that could provide benefit in filling the capability gaps described in (1);

(6) for UUVs with the potential to fill capability gaps described in (1), an assessment of scalability and manufacturability, including production and supply chain considerations; and

(7) an evaluation of deployment flexibility and lifecycle cost considerations for the above described UUVs, including an assessment of relative sustainment burden and cost per effect as compared to other potential methods of filling these capability gaps.

V-22 Safety Investments

The committee remains committed to the critical role of the V-22 Osprey fleet in executing joint force missions across the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. The committee notes the December 2025 reviews conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) and recognizes the importance of implementing data-driven corrective actions to improve reliability, maintainability, and overall mission capability of the fleet. As the Department of Defense continues to assess and enhance the safety, readiness, and sustainment performance of the V-22, the committee emphasizes that modernization and safety investments must be aligned with operational demands and informed by the recommendations outlined in these reviews. The committee also recognizes the Nacelle Improvement (NI) Program as a purpose-built upgrade, that reflects the data driven recommendations of both the GAO and NAVAIR reviews. The committee further commends broader modernization initiatives within

the V-22 Joint Program Office, including mid-life upgrade planning, implementation of triple-melt X-53 steel improvements in proprotor gearboxes, and future avionics modernization efforts intended to enhance long-term aircraft safety, performance, survivability, and sustainment. The committee directs the Chief of Naval Operations, in coordination with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to provide a report to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 27, 2027, detailing the investment plan for each variant of V-22 Osprey. The report shall include, but is not limited to:

(1) identification of expected mid-life upgrade plans to improve overall readiness, safety, and lethality;

(2) funding profiles and resources required to accelerate NI for Navy and Marine Corps aircraft, Osprey Drive System Safety and Health Information, and the procurement of triple-melt X-53 steel for the manufacture of gears used in V-22 proprotor gearboxes;

(3) an assessment of potential upgrades for V-22 avionics systems;

(4) identification of remaining technical, supply chain, or industrial base risks affecting V-22 readiness and safety; and

(5) an analysis of increased and improved communication across the military services with regard to maintenance procedures.

AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT, AIR FORCE

Items of Special Interest

Active Protection for Aerial Refueling Tankers

The committee understand air power projection depends on a limited fleet of aerial refueling tankers to support offensive operations at extended ranges. The vulnerability of strike packages during refueling operations is a key operational consideration as adversaries develop capabilities to counter air power projection. Successfully targeting a single tanker effectively defeats four or more tactical aircraft that depend on refueling and can quickly unwind mission planning assumptions, as well as follow-on operations. The committee is aware of nascent efforts by the Air Force to address this vulnerability with both active and passive self-protect capabilities but is concerned that development and fielding timelines are not keeping pace with the risk to the fleet. Maturation of these capabilities would support organic integration with Next Generation Air Refueling System designs and also has broader application to the fleet of High Value Airborne Assets (HVAA). The committee directs the Secretary of Air Force to provide a report to the congressional defense committees not later than December 1, 2026, assessing options to integrate active and passive protection systems on tankers. This report shall be submitted in an unclassified form but may include a classified annex. The report shall include:

(1) a threat assessment for current and future refueling platforms, as well as other HVAA, required to support extended range offensive operations against near peers;

(2) a summary of relevant operational simulations and the probability of mission success with the loss of tankers and other HVAA;

(3) an assessment of current technology readiness levels and relative effectiveness to address the threats identified in (1) for active and passive self-protect systems and subsystems;

(4) the current Air Force plan to mature and field such systems in a common configuration, as proposed in the fiscal year 2027 budget request; and

(5) funding required, by year, to achieve an initial operational capability of a passive system and an active system by December 31, 2031.

Autonomous Intratheater Airlift

The committee remains supportive of the Air Force's efforts to integrate commercially available aircraft with capabilities that enable remotely piloted or autonomous operations in contested environments. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Commander of United States Transportation Command, to submit a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027. The briefing shall include at a minimum the following:

(1) information on the Air Force's progress in assessing the potential for remotely piloted or autonomous aircraft to meet operational requirements for airlift capabilities in distributed and austere operational environments;

(2) the anticipated schedule for testing commercially available aircraft with remotely piloted or autonomous capabilities for use in air mobility operations;

(3) the manner in which data and operational experience from applicable demonstrations in the U.S. Indo-Pacific region shall be used to inform the tactics, techniques, procedures and associated technology requirements necessary for implementation of these systems;

(4) identification of available federated systems that could enable sustainment and modernization of commercially available aircraft with remotely piloted or autonomous capabilities and integrate with existing mobility aircraft operated by the Air Force; and

(5) to the extent to which these technologies hold promise for supplementing air mobility requirements and a proposed timeline for development of an acquisition strategy, including, but not limited, to the use of rapid fielding or a rapid prototyping acquisition.

Increasing B-21 Program of Record

The committee is concerned that the current program of record for the B-21 Raider may be insufficient to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy. The committee notes the B-21 program of record of 100 aircraft remains

unchanged since it was established in 2015, despite significant changes in the security environment. The committee further recognizes that a broad range of national security leaders have called for expanding the B-21 program of record, including the Chair of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States and the Commander of United States Strategic Command. The committee directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to the House Committee on Armed Services by December 1, 2026, that assesses how many B-21 aircraft are necessary to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy for both nuclear and conventional missions and, to the extent that there are additional B-21s required, evaluates the appropriate time frame for the procurement of these aircraft. The report may be classified.

Looking Glass-Next Procurement

The committee is aware of the continued restructuring of the airborne Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications enterprise, shifting responsibilities for the Navy's Take Charge and Move Out mission supporting Submarines and the Air Force's Looking Glass mission. The committee is also aware that the Air Force has started the procurement process for the Looking Glass mission's replacement. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than January 1, 2027, detailing the timing and requirements for selection of Looking Glass-Next. The briefing should include the following:

(1) an assessment of the feasibility and affordability of a business jet solution to host associated Looking Glass-Next aircrew and required hardware and software, including cost, schedule, and performance parameters;

(2) an assessment of platform dependencies, including seating and workstation capacity, power, cooling, internal aircraft space, and offboard line-of-sight and beyond-line-of-sight communications, information technology, and security infrastructure; and

(3) a recommended acquisition strategy and multi-year funding profile for a Looking Glass-Next program of record.

Retained KC-135 Basing

The committee notes the requirement to maintain the total aircraft inventory for air refueling tanker aircraft pursuant to section 141 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (Public Law 119-60) and encourages the Secretary of the Air Force to prioritize the distribution and retention of KC-135 aircraft to Air Force and Air National Guard installations located in strategic proximity to the Unites States Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility. The committee encourages consideration of installations that support the nuclear alert mission, provide recurring aerial refueling for trans-pacific fighter movement, and demonstrate the ability to recruit and retain personnel above authorized end strength levels to meet the requirements associated with additional aircraft

inventory. The committee directs the Secretary of the Air Force to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than February 1, 2027, on the Air Force's plan to base retained KC-135 aircraft.

TITLE II—RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST, AND EVALUATION

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST, AND EVALUATION, NAVY

Items of Special Interest

Concepts to Scale a Commercial Logistics Fleet

The committee supports the continued development and transition of unmanned surface vessels to meet fleet requirements. As the commercial industry makes advances in the technology and builds their own unmanned logistics fleet, the committee believes that autonomous unmanned surface vessels can provide logistics support to meet combatant command operational requirements. However, this effort would require further standardization of maritime logistics networks and methods to manage intra-theater surface vessels. To better understand efforts to develop enabling technologies that support intra-theater unmanned surface vessel logistics operations, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027. The briefing should include the following:

(1) an assessment of current unmanned surface vessel enabling technologies and their ability to manage logistics focused operations; and

(2) a summary of intra-theater maritime logistics requirements and how they could be met by commercial logistics fleets of unmanned surface vessels.

Continuity in Communications Degraded Environments

The committee recognizes the increasing requirement for secure, mobile-enabled command and control platforms for distributed maritime operations. Particularly for continuity of operations in environments where traditional communications may be denied, degraded, or intermittently available. The committee notes that recent operations across the Indo-Pacific and Middle East have demonstrated how adversarial use of electronic warfare, cyber disruption, global positioning system interference, and physical infrastructure targeting can significantly impair centralized decision-making, situational awareness, and force coordination.

The committee is concerned that the Navy lacks a consistent, accredited framework for rapidly fielding commercially developed mobile command and control tools that are engineered for tactical resiliency, including offline operation, peer-to-peer synchronization, and reconstitution of command coherence when connectivity is restored. To better understand the effort to field secure, mobile-enabled command

and control software for communications denied or degraded environments, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027. The briefing should include the following:

(1) a description of commercially developed mobile command and control platforms currently demonstrated or fielded aboard carriers, surface vessels, and shore commands, including an assessment of each platform's demonstrated performance in communications denied or degraded environments and compatibility with Zero Trust architecture requirements;

(2) an assessment of the operational benefits of mobile-first platforms accessible on Government and personal mobile devices, including any reductions in administrative burden and improvements in small-unit readiness observed during demonstration efforts; and

(3) information on any efforts to accredit, procure, and scale commercially developed mobile command and control solutions with demonstrated performance in communications denied or degraded environments.

Digital Combat Console for Aegis Baseline Integration

The committee is concerned about critical capability gaps in low altitude air defense identified in multiple combatant command areas of responsibility. The committee notes that Group 1 through 3 unmanned aircraft systems present asymmetric threats that challenge legacy air defense systems optimized for high altitude aircraft and ballistic missiles. Traditional naval sensors and combat systems were not designed to detect, track, and engage small unmanned systems that operate beneath conventional radar coverage and move in coordinated formations. The committee encourages the Secretary of the Navy to evaluate and incorporate digital combat console capabilities that address low altitude air defense gaps within Aegis Combat System baseline configurations. To better understand current efforts to incorporate digital combat console capabilities, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than December 30, 2026. The briefing shall include information on:

(1) integration of digital combat console capabilities with existing Aegis architecture to provide predictive threat awareness for low altitude unmanned aircraft systems without requiring dry dock hardware modifications;

(2) efforts to fuse sensor data from electro optical, infrared, acoustic, and radio frequency sources delivered through a unified operator display;

(3) efforts to track data for Group 1 through 3 unmanned aircraft systems at ranges exceeding 5 kilometers with update rates of 1 Hz or better and accuracy above 99 percent;

(4) development of capability to provide over the air software update capability to deployed fleet units;

(5) capability enhancements to expand the defensive engagement envelope; and

(6) associated deployment timelines.

Unmanned Surface Vessel Operability in the Arctic Ocean

The committee recognizes the strategic importance of the Arctic Ocean and the challenges that weather and conditions pose for military and civilian operations. With increased investment in unmanned enabling capabilities, the committee believes that unmanned surface vessels (USV) could augment manned Arctic operations. The committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027, on the operability of unmanned surface vessels in the Arctic Ocean. The briefing should include:

(1) an assessment of any current cold weather limitations of USV ability to maneuver, seakeeping ability, ability to navigate, maritime domain awareness capability, and communications capability needed to support survey, monitoring, rescue, and maritime patrol missions;

(2) analysis of possible technological or design solutions for aspects such as hull, topside structure (including the mast), sensor suites, communications equipment, material choices, and changes in naval architecture for manned ships, and how they can be applied to USVs with no personnel accommodations or requirements;

(3) information on any ongoing efforts to develop technical solutions through analysis, modeling and simulation, and rapid prototyping to advance novel design concepts and component hardening solutions; and

(4) information on potential controlled experiments with component technologies that would be needed to support USV operations in cold weather conditions.

TITLE X—GENERAL PROVISIONS

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

At-Sea Vertical Launch System Rearming

The committee recognizes the operational need for near-term, expeditionary approaches to sustain naval surface-combatant operations in contested maritime environments. The committee notes that uncertainty regarding the availability of future at-sea rearming capabilities underscores the importance of identifying and advancing feasible, near-term rearming and rapid-replenishment concepts that can be executed using existing platforms and infrastructure.

The committee is aware of ongoing Department of the Navy efforts to evaluate forward, at-sea vertical launch system rearming and rapid-replenishment

options and believes additional clarity is needed regarding implementation plans, resource requirements, and operational timelines. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027, on the Department's plans for near-term forward, at-sea vertical launch system rearming and rapid-replenishment capabilities. The briefing shall include:

(1) an overview of current requirements and operational needs for forward at-sea rearming;

(2) a description of near-term rearming and rapid-replenishment concepts executable with existing platforms and infrastructure; and

(3) an assessment of risks, barriers, and enabling investments required to accelerate implementation of these capabilities.

Recapitalization of the Oceanographic Research Fleet

The committee notes that the Auxiliary General Oceanographic Research (AGOR) Global-class oceanographic research vessels are nearing the end of their service lives. These vessels are vital to U.S. Navy research objectives and inform our understanding of the world's oceans which is needed to control the maritime domain. Because of this critical mission, the committee believes there is a need to increase research vessel availability through recapitalization. An overall fleet recapitalization strategy for the oceanographic research fleet is essential to maintain a balanced research fleet that meets growing national and scientific demands. Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services not later than March 1, 2027, on the strategy to complete design and construction of new AGOR Global-class research ships. The briefing should include the following:

(1) information on efforts to maintain the operational capabilities of the AGOR Global-class fleet until they are replaced;

(2) any limitations of the current AGOR Global-class fleet in the Arctic region;

(3) a feasibility assessment of converting current civilian or military operational ship designs to meet the Global-class research vessel missions; and

(4) an assessment of funding required to operate and recapitalize the Navy's oceanographic research fleet.