

Navy Intends to Ramp Up Shipbuilding Through Collaborative Efforts



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U.S. shipbuilders continue to produce the highest quality, safest and most advanced warships on the planet, said Brett A. Seidle, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development, and acquisition, who testified today at a House Armed Services Committee's seapower and projection forces subcommittee hearing on the state of U.S. shipbuilding.

"We have the finest Navy ever assembled in the history of the world," Seidle said. "They're coming to a theater near you, bringing their A game."

However, at a time when adversaries around the globe challenge the maritime commons, the U.S. shipbuilding industry is

challenged to produce the quantity of ships at the rate required, he said.

Cost and schedule performance remain challenging with deliveries approximately one to three years late and cost rising faster than overall inflation. These issues are prevalent across the nuclear and conventional shipbuilding communities with both the Navy and industry sharing responsibility, Seidle said.

Some things brought this about, he said, including reduced competition and capacity at tier-one shipyards. Additionally, suppliers have experienced atrophy of the manufacturing sector, shifting Navy requirements, burdensome acquisition processes, depressed investment, workforce shortages, diminished proficiency, supply chain disruptions, historic underinvestment and industry consolidation following the end of the Cold War.

"I was not raised in the shipbuilding environment and therefore am not saddled with preconceived notions of 'this is how we've always done it.' I certainly welcome informed perspectives from those who are passionate about strengthening our fleet," Seidle said.

He believes these collective challenges can be overcome, he said.

"This committee has my passionate commitment to collaborate with Congress, industry, academia, training organizations, trade associations, as well as all levels of government in pursuit of improved cost and schedule performance," Seidle testified.

"Our nation and the world need the strength of our Navy, and my intent is to do everything in my power to deliver on that promise," he said.