

Navy Strategic Systems Director Praises Trident Missile's Motor Reliability



An unarmed Trident II D5 missile launches from the Ohio-class submarine USS Nebraska off the coast of San Diego on Sept. 4. U.S. Navy

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of procuring and sustaining the U.S. Navy's submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) has praised the reliability of the Trident missile's rocket motor, a critical factor in the credibility of the U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent.

[See: Navy's next-gen attack submarine will be revolutionary, not evolutionary, admiral says.](#)

Vice Adm. Johnny Wolfe, director of Strategic Systems Programs, speaking Nov. 7 at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Arlington, said all of the five Trident missiles fired during tests and demonstrations in preceding 12 months "flew exactly as they were supposed to" and he noted that in one of the missiles the three rocket motors were almost 27 years old.

"From a health perspective, our system is doing very, very well," Wolfe said.

"We are the only people that use the 1.1 [highly detonable] propellant," he said. "There is no need to change that [for the next-generation Trident D5LE2 version]. We're going to continue on producing those rocket motors because, if you look from a reliability perspective, that is the base contributor. We're not going to change that.

"We have seen no real degradation in our motors at all," he

said. "We have understanding of the properties of these motors if we see some type of gradual degradation. But what we are focused on is never being at that point, which is why we continue to produce the motors. We take older motors out as we can and [replace them] with newer ones."

The Trident SLBM is built by Lockheed Martin and deployed on Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarines and will be deployed on the future Columbia-class ballistic-missile sub.