

SECNAV Phelan Visits Shipyards in South Korea



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REPUBLIC OF KOREA – Secretary of the Navy John Phelan visited shipyards at Hanwha Ocean Shipbuilding and HD Hyundai Heavy Industries during a scheduled visit to the Indo-Pacific area of operations, April 30.

Secretary Phelan's visit included meetings with industry leaders and underscored the importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the Republic of Korea's expertise in vessel maintenance, repair and overhaul that is crucial to enhancing naval operational capabilities.

"Working with leading shipyards like Hanwha Ocean Shipbuilding and HD Hyundai Heavy Industries is essential to ensuring deployed U.S. ships and systems remain fully operational in the Indo-Pacific," said Secretary Phelan. "Leveraging the

expertise of these highly capable shipyards enables timely maintenance and repairs for our vessels to operate at peak performance. This level of large-scale repair and maintenance capability strengthens our combat readiness, sustains forward deployed operational presence, and reinforces regional stability.”

Hanwha Ocean Shipyard successfully completed the repair of the Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship, USNS Wally Schirra (T-AKE 8), marking the first Military Sealift Command ship repair conducted in the Republic of Korea. Additionally, the USNS Yukon (T-AO 202), a Henry J. Kaiser-class underway replenishment oiler, is currently undergoing maintenance at the shipyard. Meanwhile, HD Hyundai Heavy Industries recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Huntington Ingalls Industries to explore collaborative opportunities in both commercial and defense shipbuilding. These developments highlight their capability to support U.S. naval operations in theater, reducing downtime and costs while increasing operational readiness in the Indo-Pacific region.

“The relationship between the U.S. Navy and the Republic of Korea’s maritime industrial base goes far beyond ship maintenance; it is a cornerstone of our shared commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and strengthens the overall bond between our nations,” said Secretary Phelan. “It fosters innovation, enhances national defense and drives economic prosperity for all. Our united efforts are a powerful reflection of the deep trust and ironclad commitment to the enduring alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea.”

Secretary Phelan’s first visit to the Indo-Pacific region highlighted his top priorities including Naval shipbuilding in support of President Trump’s Executive Order on restoring America’s maritime dominance.