

Report to Congress on Gerald R. Ford-class Aircraft Carrier Program

From the report:

CVN-78, CVN-79, CVN-80, and CVN-81 are the first four ships in the Navy's new Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) class of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers (CVNs).

CVN-78 (named for Gerald R. Ford) was procured in FY2008. The Navy's proposed FY2019 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at \$12,964.0 million (i.e., about \$13.0 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received advance procurement (AP) funding in FY2001-FY2007 and was fully funded in FY2008-FY2011 using congressionally authorized four-year incremental funding. To help cover cost growth on the ship, the ship received an additional \$1,394.9 million in FY2014-FY2016 and FY2018 cost-to-complete procurement funding. The ship was delivered to the Navy on May 31, 2017, and was commissioned into service on July 22, 2017.

CVN-79 (named for John F. Kennedy) was procured in FY2013. The Navy's proposed FY2019 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at \$11,341.4 million (i.e., about \$11.3 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received AP funding in FY2007-FY2012, and was fully funded in FY2013-FY2018 using congressionally authorized six-year incremental funding. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in September 2024.

CVN-80 (named Enterprise) was procured in FY2018. The Navy's proposed FY2019 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at \$12,601.7 million (i.e., about \$12.6 billion) in then-year dollars. The ship received AP funding in FY2016 and FY2017, and the Navy plans to fully fund the ship in FY2018-FY2023 using congressionally authorized six-year incremental funding. The Navy's proposed FY2019 budget requests \$1,598.2 million in procurement funding for the ship. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in September 2027.

CVN-81 (not yet named) is scheduled to be procured in FY2023. The Navy's proposed FY2019 budget estimates the ship's procurement cost at \$15,088.0 million (i.e., about \$15.1 billion) in then-year dollars. The Navy plans to request AP funding for the ship in FY2021 and FY2022, and then fully fund the ship in FY2023-FY2028 using congressionally authorized six-year incremental funding. The Navy's FY2019 budget submission programs the initial increment of AP funding for the ship in FY2021. The ship is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in September 2032.

Oversight issues for Congress for the CVN-78 program for FY2019 include the following:

- whether to approve, reject, or modify the Navy's FY2019 procurement funding requests for the CVN-78 program;
- whether to accelerate the procurement of CVN-81 from FY2023 to an earlier year, or use a block buy contract to procure multiple aircraft carriers, or pursue a combined material buy for multiple aircraft carriers, or do some combination of these things;
- cost growth in the CVN-78 program, Navy efforts to stem that growth, and Navy efforts to manage costs so as to stay within the program's cost caps;
- whether to conduct the shock trial for the CVN-78 class in the near term, on the lead ship in the class, or years later, on the second ship in the class;
- CVN-78 program issues that were raised in a January 2018 report from the Department of Defense's (DOD's) Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E); and
- whether the Navy should shift at some point from procuring large-deck, nuclear powered carriers like the CVN-78 class to procuring smaller aircraft carriers.