

Why the US Needs Aircraft Carriers

US Grand Strategy

- > Constitution clearly states the government must *provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.*
- > Modern trading states rely on freedom of access to the commons of air, sea, space, and cyberspace to allow the import of raw materials and goods.
- > Increasingly, just-in-time logistics support to every industry has become the standard. Small interruptions to global supply trade can result in major disruptions to industrial production, jobs and the economy.
- > Getting the budget right depends on thoughtful adaptation to an uncertain future by developing military equipment that is affordable, flexible and provides US leaders appropriate options for dealing with challenges to our interests.

Challenges

- > Advances in technology have made it possible for much smaller states to threaten the global system. Modern anti-ship and ground attack missiles that threaten our fleets and forward bases.
- > Modern adversary air defense systems are increasingly able to track, engage, and destroy nearly all but the most advanced US and allied aircraft.
- > While regional powers can still threaten the international system in a variety of ways, now even small states and non-state actors with malicious intent and access to modern weapons have the means to effectively challenge vital national interests.
- > The ability to rapidly project power to any critical area on the globe is essential to our national strategy.
- > The uncertainty about the intentions and capabilities of numerous states and non-state actors will continue into the future making our ability to project credible military power quickly anywhere in the world vital to our economic future.
- > For diplomatic actions to be effective, both the resolve of the United States and its potential use of military force must be credible. Therefore, it is essential the US possess the capability to quickly bring decisive military power to bear anywhere on the globe to provide an unambiguous, visible signal of US intentions.

When Diplomacy Fails

- > To be responsive, the President will need capability for rapid global reach and flexibility from assets operating from secure bases which do not require the approval of other governments.

Why Aircraft Carriers

The US needs Aircraft Carriers and Carrier Battle Groups to:

- **Maximize Presidential options – rapidly react to any crisis from forward deployed Carrier Battle Groups**
- **Respond at distance with effective range and payload from aircraft carriers outside anti-access/area denial denial (A2/AD) or asymmetric threat ranges.**
- **Provide long term persistent presence, power and precision weapons**
- **Penetrate and be highly survivable day one in a new strategic environment**
- **Attack critical targets or provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.**
- **Enable access for Amphibious Forces and follow on land forces.**

Aircraft Carriers have:

- ✓ Persistence – 22 year + service life before refueling, large fuel and ammo capacity
- ✓ Power – Air Wing has all domain capability to project power while defending fleet.
- ✓ Precision – Air Wing and Battle Group weapons systems bring ability to achieve mass against any nation
- ✓ Maneuver – Ability to travel at high speeds and employ deception techniques confuses enemy surveillance systems and makes targeting extremely difficult
- ✓ Adaptability – Huge power generation capability and open architecture allow for future expansion for directed energy, aircraft and weapons systems.

Smaller carriers or other solutions limit the flexibility to:

- Provide all domain (air, sea, sub) defense and power projection
- Station keep – have to be able to operate in all weather and sea states.
- Achieve mass – overwhelming integrated strikes requires Airborne Early Warning, Electronic Warfare, Air-to-Air and Precision Strike capability.
- Provide economical solutions – pound for pound, current carriers provide the most cost effective solution. Smaller is not cheaper.

Pursuing a lesser capability—regardless of why—is an action that wastes resources and past investments and puts the service's sailors, the Navy's mission and the nation's security at grave risk.