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## assault gear McCain to gut Navy and Army

Posted by hcobb - 2008/09/13 05:23

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Posted by scott s. - 2008/09/13 05:23

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Posted by deemsbill@aol.com - 2008/09/13 05:23

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<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b2eaceee-7ae1-11dd-adbe-000077b07658.html?n...> Mr Holtz-Eakin suggested that the defence budget was ripe for savings, highlighting expensive projects such as the Littoral Combat Ship and the Future Combat System. The Department of Defence does not get a pass from John McCain, he said. Without the LCS the USN is under 300 combat ships. Is McCain calling for a global retreat or will his Navy hole be fixed up with the same sort of magical patch that balances his budget? Since his plans are full of holes no wonder he wants to drill in them. - HJC If he had a real set, he'd disband the Air Force and let the other services pick up any slack. That would save a few bucks.

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Posted by Tiger - 2008/09/13 05:23

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<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b2eaceee-7ae1-11dd-adbe-000077b07658.html?n...> Mr Holtz-Eakin suggested that the defence budget was ripe for savings, highlighting expensive projects such as the Littoral Combat Ship and the Future Combat System. The Department of Defence does not get a pass from John McCain, he said. Without the LCS the USN is under 300 combat ships. Is McCain calling for a global retreat or will his Navy hole be fixed up with the same sort of magical patch that balances his budget? Since his plans are full of holes no wonder he wants to drill in them. - HJC I would prefer 300 good ships rather than crappy ones. See below: U.S. Navy Inspectors Pan 2nd LPD-17 Ship By philip ewing and andrew scutro Published: 1 September 2008 It was a tough week for the U.S. Navy's newest amphibious ships. According to a Navy report, the amphibious transport dock New Orleans cannot support embarked troops, cargo or landing craft. On Aug. 25, a report surfaced that showed the amphibious transport dock New Orleans was degraded in its ability to conduct sustained combat operations. Worse, Navy inspectors said the ship cannot support embarked troops, cargo or landing craft, an amphib's very reason for existence. One day later, the lead ship of its class, the San Antonio, had to stay behind at the pier while other ships in its strike group deployed from Norfolk, Va. The ship had suffered from years of construction delays, cost overruns and scathing inspections. And now, on the brink of its maiden deployment, with a chance to silence the naysayers, it was stuck at home with a broken stern gate. The ship managed to get underway about 48 hours later, but long-simmering questions are boiling to the surface about the quality and fitness for duty of the San Antonio class. Now that both the first and second ships have shown problems - in the case of New Orleans, fundamental problems roughly six months before the ship is supposed to deploy - critics wonder how well the Navy and the shipbuilder can recover. It was a one-two punch when the ships needed a victory. Critics place the blame on the fact that the Navy accepted both ships from Northrop Grumman before they were completed. It has just been atrocious, said naval expert Norman Polmar, who said he has been mystified by Northrop Grumman's and the Navy's repeated problems with the ships. A Northrop spokeswoman pointed out that early ships in a class will always have problems, and that the shipbuilder is constantly improving the

product it's delivering to the Navy. The service plans to buy at least nine hulls, and maybe more. And the Navy points out that many of the items in the New Orleans' inspection were low-priority items, and that the service and the shipbuilder are working together to incorporate lessons learned on the ground-breaking class of ships. One senior Navy official with amphibious command experience said these ships, once they're in the fleet, bring game-changing technologies to the Navy. The officer was not authorized to speak about the issue and therefore requested anonymity, but said many officials have confidence in the program, and problems like bad inspections and broken stern gates are expected when bringing on so many new technologies. That unfortunately happens, but it happened, and not at the best time, the officer said, referring to San Antonio's mechanical problem. It's just bad luck.

**Widespread Problems**  
The Navy wanted the San Antonio class to combine older ships' best features, with the well deck of an amphibious assault ship, the sensors of a destroyer and the best accommodations of any warship in the fleet - including sit-up racks with laptop trays and room for 700 Marines in full battle gear. Instead, the ships were delayed for years and went over budget by hundreds of millions of dollars. San Antonio's low point arrived after its delivery in 2005, when members of the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey said the ship was not only incomplete, but had electrical problems that made it unsafe for crew members. It received another harsh grade in a 2007 evaluation. So all eyes were on New Orleans, the second ship, as it went through its final contract trials in August. The ship was delivered to the Navy in December 2006 and commissioned 18 months ago, and is expected to deploy early next year with the Boxer Expeditionary Strike Group. But InSurv inspectors, when they scoured the ship Aug. 11-15, didn't like what they saw. The report, obtained by Defense News, paints the picture of a ship not only troubled by the same technical problems as its older sibling, but also with many of its own. Inspectors found serious material deficiencies in the well deck and vehicle stowage areas ; the well deck's ventilation fans didn't work; the vehicle ramps were inoperative; and berthing for Marines and the ships' crew was found to be unsatisfactory. And just like the San Antonio, the New Orleans was found to have shipwide electrical problems, making it, along with the amphibious assault ship Makin Island, the third recent Northrop Grumman warship with such issues. Among other problems, InSurv found that the ship's propulsion system was unreliable, causing a 10-hour delay before it could put to sea. Much of its communications and sensor equipment didn't work. And when the ship tried to test its Rolling Airframe Missile launchers, both of them fired just one missile at their targets and then lost power, forcing crews to reset their computer systems. Kathleen Roberts, a spokeswoman for Naval Sea Systems Command, said in a written statement that although the Navy was aware of the problems on some key systems aboard the New Orleans, most of the things noted by Navy inspectors were low-priority items, such as paint overspray, incorrect or missing color coding for piping systems and inoperative lights. Similar to other shipbuilding programs, the LPD 17 class continues to improve and mature as lessons learned on early ships are rolled into following ships, she said. Northrop spokeswoman Margaret Mitchell-Jones said the company does not comment on ships it has already delivered to the Navy. In a written statement, she also said the San Antonio-class was constantly improving: While we don't comment on the capabilities of commissioned ships, we can say that with each LPD, we continue to make significant improvements in all areas and this includes the electrical systems. The latest LPD, Green Bay, will be delivered this week to the Navy and, from a material and systems standpoint, was more complete than any other LPD at acceptance trials. This is a testament to the benefits of series ship production and our ability to come down the learning curve resulting in greater efficiencies.

**Some Blame for Crew**  
Jan van Tol, a retired Navy captain and former amphibious assault ship commander, said the New Orleans' ship's company bears some responsibility for the degraded condition of the vessel, especially where the report seems to show the crew scrimped on preventive maintenance. Inspectors found leaky valves all over the ship, a badly maintained air conditioning system, and 17,000 square feet of the 21,300-square-foot flight deck was degraded with severe corrosion and rust bleed-through. But the ship's ability to self-assess was given a satisfactory grade, van Tol pointed out, indicating that at least the captain and crew seemed to be capable of diagnosing their own problems, a crucial point in InSurv's. The crew's self-assessment capabilities aren't the issue, Polmar countered. The real problem, he said, is that the Navy is struggling so much to build what should be comparatively basic ships. What really bothers me is that it's basically a troop transport with a docking well, he said. There's no advanced missile system, no advanced sonar, no advanced radar, it's not nuclear-propelled. The whole ship doesn't submerge like a submarine. It's a relatively simple ship to build. He blamed those who agree to accept ships before they are finished. The Navy accepted New Orleans with about 400,000 hours' worth of work remaining on the ship, or about 3 percent of the hours needed to build it, according to a May report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The Navy accepted the San Antonio with about 1.1 million work hours remaining, the report said. Acquisition officials told GAO the Navy decided to accept the incomplete ships because it sped up how quickly the fleet could evaluate the new design; hastened getting the crews aboard; freed yard space for subsequent ships; and reduced the cost of final construction, because the ships could go to repair yards that charge less than the builder. The Navy accepted the third LPD 17-class ship, the Mesa Verde, with about 45,000 hours of remaining work. Commissioned in December, the Norfolk-based ship returned from builder's trials flying two brooms, indicating a clean sweep of its initial tests. ?

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