Negative: Littoral Combat Ship

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

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NEGATIVE: Littoral Combat Ship (LCS)

TOPICALITY

1. There is no commitment to LCS

The Navy has shifted away from LCS and is now moving towards a new frigate to replace it

*Thibaut Delloue 2020 (served for five years as a surface warfare officer in the U.S. Navy. He was the communications officer aboard the destroyer USS Carney and the navigator of the littoral combat ship USS Coronado)* LESSONS FOR THE NAVY’S NEW FRIGATE FROM THE LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP https://warontherocks.com/2020/09/lessons-for-the-navys-new-frigate-from-the-littoral-combat-ship/

Nearly 12 years after commissioning the first littoral combat ship, the Navy has learned hard lessons about creating a new small surface combatant. In that time, its focus has shifted back to the great-power competition between maritime nations. This necessitates a return to more robust warfighting capabilities that littoral combat ships could not deliver. The Navy should examine all facets of the littoral combat ship program, from its training and organizational structure to the ships’ design itself, and implement those lessons in the construction of the FFG(X). It has already made encouraging steps in that direction and should now put the new frigate’s future sailors at the forefront.

Navy is canceling LCS orders. They’re certainly not “committed” to it – they’ve already started replacing it

Anthony Capaccio 2020 (journalist) 7 May 2020 “Big Navy Frigate Risks Oversized $1.4 Billion Cost Per Ship” https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-07/navy-s-big-frigate-risks-an-oversized-1-4-billion-cost-per-ship

The Navy truncated orders for its ill-fated Littoral Combat Ship because the small vessels were vulnerable to attack and too lightly armed. Now, a new report suggests that the frigate intended to replace it may cost 56% more than projected partly because it’s bigger.

As of Nov 24, 2020: Definitely not committed. They’ve canceled contracts in the past and now the program will likely end early

Defense Industry Daily 2020. (defense industry news source) 24 Nov 2020 LCS: The USA’s Littoral Combat Ships https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/the-usas-new-littoral-combat-ships-updated-01343/

The LCS program has changed its fundamental acquisition plan 4 times since 2005, and canceled contracts with both competing teams during this period, without escaping any of its fundamental issues. Now, the program looks set to end early.

COUNTERPLAN – Reform, not reduce

Introduction & Background

There are two types (classes) of Littoral Combat Ships that have been produced with different engineering and designs. One is the “Freedom Class,” produced in Wisconsin, and it’s the one that is having all the problems. The other is the “Independence Class,” produced by a different company in Alabama. It’s working fine. Most of the Affirmative’s evidence about design flaws and performance issues is probably talking about the Freedom Class.

2 different types of LCS

Stephen Bryen 2020 (journalist) 18 July 2020 “US Navy scuppers flawed Littoral Combat Ship fleet” https://asiatimes.com/2020/07/us-navy-scuppers-littoral-combat-ship-program/

There are two versions of the Littoral Combat Ship. One is built in Wisconsin by Lockheed Martin teamed with Fincantieri’s Marinette Marine. The other, with an entirely different hull design, a trimaran, is built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.  Austal delivered its 12th trimaran LCS to the US Navy on June 29th. The Lockheed Martin design is a derivative of a super-fast ship built by Fincantieri called the [Destriero](https://www.charterworld.com/index.html?sub=yacht-charter&charter=destriero-2049" \t "_blank), which was a yacht sponsored by Aga Khan IV specifically to cross the Atlantic Ocean in record time.  The hull is steel and the superstructure is aluminum. The trimaran version is all aluminum. Both ships use different propulsion systems, different combat systems, and require noticeably different types of support.

Topical jurisdiction

Please notice that the Affirmative can only “reduce” US military commitments. They cannot eliminate one thing and replace it with something else – that would be reducing AND increasing, or reforming. If they do anything beyond reducing, that part of their plan must be dropped from the round because it’s extra-topical. Affirmative teams cannot do the “Resolution Plus More” because it’s abusive to Negative teams. They could put one mandate that does something about the resolution and then other mandates on lots of other things that we could never research or prepare for, like space travel, food aid, or immigration. The resolution is written the way it is for a good reason: To define and limit the scope of each debate round. Affirmatives must “reduce.” Negatives have all the other ground. We can reform, increase, or keep it the same.

The Counterplan

Our Counterplan denies the resolution. We do not believe we should substantially reduce any military commitments. What we need to do is “reform,” not reduce, the LCS program. Our Counterplan is that Congress votes to do the following:

1. Stop producing the Freedom Class ships and instead replace them with Independence Class Littoral Combat Ships.   
2. Funding is general federal revenues and the Navy’s existing budget for LCS.  
3. Enforcement is the Navy chain of command through normal means.  
4. Timeline is the same as the Affirmative’s Plan.  
5. All Negative speeches may clarify.

Solvency and Advocacy

Abolishing LCS would be a mistake. Instead we should drop Freedom class LCS and replace it with Independence class

Craig Hooper 2020 (Senior Contributor for Aerospace & Defense; Previously, served as an executive for naval shipbuilder Austal USA, helping deliver Littoral Combat Ships and Expeditionary Fast Transports to the U.S. Navy. Ph.D. in Immunology and Infectious Diseases from Harvard University; taught at the University of California, the Naval Postgraduate School, and the Monterey Institute of International Studies) FORBES magazine 9 Nov 2020 “Now Is The Perfect Time To Sink The Freedom Class Littoral Combat Ship” https://www.forbes.com/sites/craighooper/2020/11/09/now-is-the-perfect-time-to-sink-the-freedom-class-littoral-combat-ship/?sh=62e4aa0b3e1d

Some observers, deliberately conflating the Independence class with the Freedom, argue for ending both littoral class ships. That would be a mistake, as the Navy needs small utilitarian vessels. While neither ship is perfect, the Independence Class is on a more positive trajectory. The class suffered only two publicized engineering failures in 2016. Both failures were fixed within a month or two, and both ships returned to their missions (USS Coronado (LCS-4) broke down off Hawaii in late September, got repaired, arrived in Singapore on October 16, and then served out a 16-month tour) . The failures have not been seen since.

Independence Class doesn’t have the problems: They are working great, in contrast to Freedom Class

Craig Hooper 2020 (Senior Contributor for Aerospace & Defense; Previously, served as an executive for naval shipbuilder Austal USA, helping deliver Littoral Combat Ships and Expeditionary Fast Transports to the U.S. Navy. Ph.D. in Immunology and Infectious Diseases from Harvard University; taught at the University of California, the Naval Postgraduate School, and the Monterey Institute of International Studies) FORBES magazine 9 Nov 2020 “Now Is The Perfect Time To Sink The Freedom Class Littoral Combat Ship” https://www.forbes.com/sites/craighooper/2020/11/09/now-is-the-perfect-time-to-sink-the-freedom-class-littoral-combat-ship/?sh=62e4aa0b3e1d

The problem is that the rest of the Freedom class vessels have been equally problematic, suffering from an overly complex and unreliable power plant. In contrast, the competing littoral combat ship variant, the aluminum trimaran Independence Class, appears to be methodically working through teething problems. Twelve Independence class ships are in service, doing good work in the Pacific, and another seven are being built.

INHERECY

1. Status Quo already dropping LCS

US Navy has already started replacing LCS with FREMM

Stephen Bryen 2020 (journalist) 18 July 2020 “US Navy scuppers flawed Littoral Combat Ship fleet” https://asiatimes.com/2020/07/us-navy-scuppers-littoral-combat-ship-program/

The US Navy is at the start of a process to dump the Littoral Combat Ship fleet and replace it with heavily armed frigates based on the highly successful FREMM system developed by France and Italy.

Replacement for LCS has already been announced and contract has been awarded

Sean Gallagher 2020 (journalist; former Navy officer, systems administrator, and network systems integrator) 22 July 2020 “US Navy’s next warship will have an Italian accent” https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2020/07/us-navys-next-warship-will-have-an-italian-accent/

The search for a replacement for the US Navy's["little crappy ship"](https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2014/03/littoral-failure-navy-hedges-bets-on-high-tech-littoral-combats/) is over. On April 30, the [US Navy announced](https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=112820) that Fincantieri Marinette Marine, the US shipyard subsidiary of Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri, had beaten out the rest of the field to take on the FFG(X) frigate program, the shipbuilding effort that will replace the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship (LCS).

Inherency: LCS has been canceled. Solvency: Too late to save the money

Dan Grazier 2020 (journalist) 17 July 2020 “The Littoral Combat Ship and the Folly of Concurrency” https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2020/07/the-littoral-combat-ship-and-the-folly-of-concurrency/

Sometimes, as in the case of the first four Littoral Combat Ships, the costs to modify underdeveloped weapons are so great that the effort is abandoned and the weapons become “[concurrency orphans](https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2017/10/21-billion-worth-of-f-35-concurrency-orphans/),” having never provided useful service. While the Navy leaders are right in their decision to decommission the four ships and to cancel the program, the taxpayers will be left with $2.4 billion worth of Littoral Combat Ship concurrency orphans.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. LCS does what it was designed to do

LCS does what it was designed to do. It’s “failure” is that it doesn’t do what it wasn’t designed for

John Keller 2020 (Editor-in-Chief, Military & Aerospace Electronics Magazine) 2 June 2020 “The Navy's new FFG(X) frigate warship will be right-sized and -armed for the crucial open-ocean escort role” MILITARY & AEROSPACE ELECTRONICS https://www.militaryaerospace.com/blogs/article/14176965/frigate-armament-electronics

The LCS, which comes in two variants, is 378 feet long, 57.4 feet wide, displaces 3,900 shorts, can steam as fast as 47 knots, and has a range of 3,500 nautical miles. It has different mission modules for anti-ship and anti-submarine warfare; mine countermeasures; and irregular and amphibious warfare. The LCS is effective at what it was designed to do: operate near coastlines and harbors in a wide variety of flexible missions, but is lacking when it comes to the kind of open-ocean escort duty that frigates are intended for.

DISADVANTAGES of the Affirmative plan. (Good reasons to vote for the Counterplan)

1. Lose naval competition with China

Link: US must build more ships and faster to keep up with other countries

Rosalind Mathieson 2017 (journalist) 16 May 2017 “Navy chief says U.S. needs more ships — and soon — to stay credible” https://www.theday.com/nationworld/20170516/navy-chief-says-us-needs-more-ships----and-soon----to-stay-credible

America needs more warships -- and must build them faster -- to keep up with other countries that are spending heavily on maritime prowess, according to the U.S. Navy's chief of operations. "Pace is an important part of our current world environment, including the security environment," Adm. John Richardson said Tuesday at a briefing in Singapore. "We have to be mindful that that environment is moving forward at a particular pace and if we're going to remain competitive we'd better pick up that pace and match it at least, if not exceed it."

Link: LCS is key part of plan to expand Navy ship numbers

Rosalind Mathieson 2017 (journalist) 16 May 2017 “Navy chief says U.S. needs more ships — and soon — to stay credible” https://www.theday.com/nationworld/20170516/navy-chief-says-us-needs-more-ships----and-soon----to-stay-credible

[US Navy Admiral John] Richardson defended the Littoral Combat Ship program, after two defense secretaries under Obama questioned if the light ship intended for shallow coastal waters could survive in combat and then cut back the numbers planned. The Navy has often had an LCS operating out of Singapore into the South China Sea. "The LCS program is improving almost by the day, it's becoming stronger, more lethal, more survivable, more reliable," Richardson said. "It embodied this idea of modularity and the ability to improve over its life. We need to take that to the next level. The technology has moved, even since we designed and built the first LCSs." The LCS and its successor frigate would be one path to deliver on Trump's pledge to expand the fleet.

Brink: Now is a really bad time to be talking about cutting Navy ships. We don’t have time to wait or delay growing the size of the Navy because we’re in serious great power competition

Brent Sadler 2020 (senior fellow for naval warfare and advanced technology at The Heritage Foundation; 26-year veteran of the Navy; M.S. from National War College; established the Navy Asia Pacific Advisory Group (NAPAG), providing regionally informed advice directly to Chief of Naval Operations) 19 Aug 2020 “The Navy Needs More Ships—And Vision, Too” https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-navy-needs-more-ships-and-vision-too

Without a clear and accessible vision of how a larger Navy competes in great power competition, the effort to grow the Navy from today’s 299 ships will falter in the headwinds of a questioning Congress, distracted leadership, and a confused electorate. And, most importantly, as the fleet operates with a shortage of ships, captains will struggle to find the time to adequately train their crews. China and Russia will continue to press their interests against ours at sea. This will not allow the Navy the luxury of a timeout to sort out either its culture or its seamanship. Real action is needed today, propelled by leadership with a vision and the fire to drive the Navy forward.

Impact: Imbalance of naval forces versus China can provoke a war, possibly going nuclear

Seth Cropsey 2018 (*director of the nonprofit*[Hudson Institute](https://www.hudson.org/)*’s Center for American Seapower. He served as a naval officer and as deputy Undersecretary of the Navy in the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations*) 25 Feb 2018 “American naval power: The last great impediment to China's global dominance” THE HILL https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/372342-american-naval-power-the-last-great-impediment-to-chinas-global

Playing catch-up with a Chinese navy projected to break 400 ships by 2030 after another decade and a half of U.S. military stagnation is not an option. No lapsed great power has ever recovered its position. A substantive imbalance in forces could tempt China (or China together with other adversaries) to strike first against a U.S. that belatedly seeks to regain hard power, leading to, at best, a multi-year war or, at worst, the destruction of the U.S. Pacific Fleet or a nuclear exchange.

Impact: National survival and fate of the world depend on US Navy capabilities

Seth Cropsey 2018 (*director of the nonprofit*[Hudson Institute](https://www.hudson.org/)*’s Center for American Seapower. He served as a naval officer and as deputy Undersecretary of the Navy in the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations*) 25 Feb 2018 “American naval power: The last great impediment to China's global dominance” THE HILL https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/372342-american-naval-power-the-last-great-impediment-to-chinas-global

The Trump administration’s actions on the question of the U.S. Navy’s future will be the single most consequential policy decision of the next four years, if not the next decade. Its decisions will affect our national security, if not our national survival — and with those, the fate of the world as well.

Impact: Lack of littoral warfare capabilities can cause serious losses to the US Navy in a war

Dr. Milan Vego 2015 (PhD; professor in the Joint Military Operations Department at the U.S. Naval War College) “On Littoral Warfare” NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW, Spring 2015 https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1200&context=nwc-review

Among the principal prerequisites for the successful conduct of war in the littorals, perhaps the most critical is a force optimally designed for operations in confined and shallow waters. However, no single-type force, no matter how capable, can ensure success in the littorals. Forces for littoral combat should be organized differently from those for war on the ocean; specialized littoral assets should not be considered either as replacements for blue-water forces or as expendable. The lack of adequate capabilities for littoral warfare could cost a blue-water navy, such as the U.S. Navy, dearly in the case of a high-intensity conventional war.

2. Lose US hegemony

Links: Cross apply links and brinks in DA 1

Must build more ships to compete. LCS is key to expanding numbers. Right now is critical brink, we can’t delay.

Link: Naval forces are key to US hegemony and international order. Brink: We’re at risk right now

Seth Cropsey 2018 (*director of the nonprofit*[Hudson Institute](https://www.hudson.org/)*’s Center for American Seapower. He served as a naval officer and as deputy Undersecretary of the Navy in the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations*) 25 Feb 2018 “American naval power: The last great impediment to China's global dominance” THE HILL https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/372342-american-naval-power-the-last-great-impediment-to-chinas-global

Naval forces are therefore the most important military variable in this Sino-American rivalry. A strong U.S. Navy and Marine Corps is essential to maintaining freedom of navigation, ensuring effective security relations with allies, deterring enemy escalation and, in the event of a confrontation, neutralizing any threat with overwhelming firepower. To put it more broadly, the prerequisite for an international order, especially a liberal one that depends on free trade and unmolested global commerce, is naval dominance. Ours is at risk.

Impact: World peace & prosperity at risk without US influence. US hegemony is key to global peace & prosperity

Capt. M. V. Prato 2009 (United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University) “The Need for American Hegemony” http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a508040.pdf

The world witnessed a vast shift in the polarity of geopolitics after the Cold War. The United States became the world’s greatest hegemon with an unequalled ability to globally project cultural, political, economic, and military power in a manner not seen since the days of the Roman Empire. **[END QUOTE]** Coined the “unipolar moment” by syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, the disparity of power between the U.S. and all other nations allows the U.S. to influence the world for the mutual benefit of all responsible states. Unfortunately, the United States is increasingly forced to act unilaterally as a result of both foreign and domestic resentment to U.S. dominance and the rise of liberal internationalism. [**He goes on to conclude later in the same context QUOTE**:] The United States must exercise benevolent global hegemony, unilaterally if necessary, to ensure its security and maintain global peace and prosperity.

Impact: Decline into anarchy with decline of US dominance and rise of Russia and China. Massive loss of life, money and freedom

Dr. Robert Kagan 2017. (PhD in American history; Stephen & Barbara Friedman Senior Fellow - [Foreign Policy](https://www.brookings.edu/program/foreign-policy/), [Project on International Order and Strategy](https://www.brookings.edu/project/project-on-international-order-and-strategy/) at Brookings Institution) 6 Feb 2017 ‘Backing into World War III” <https://www.brookings.edu/research/backing-into-world-war-iii/>

Think of two significant trend lines in the world today. One is the increasing ambition and activism of the two great revisionist powers, Russia and China. The other is the declining confidence, capacity, and will of the democratic world, and especially of the United States, to maintain the dominant position it has held in the international system since 1945. As those two lines move closer, as the declining will and capacity of the United States and its allies to maintain the present world order meet the increasing desire and capacity of the revisionist powers to change it, we will reach the moment at which the existing order collapses and the world descends into a phase of brutal anarchy, as it has three times in the past two centuries. The cost of that descent, in lives and treasure, in lost freedoms and lost hope, will be staggering.