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McCain blasts Navy's LCS ship plan; urges cut to 24 vessels

By Reuters By Andrea Shalal 12 hours ago

By Andrea Shalal

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Senator John McCain on Wednesday blasted the U.S. Navy's new Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program as a "shameful" and dangerous waste of taxpayer money...



The United States littoral combat ship USS Coronado is shown during a media tour in Coronado, California ...

McCain, a senior Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the Navy's poor planning had led to a new class of ships that could not survive in combat, cost far more than expected...

Lockheed Martin Corp and Australia's Austal are building two different versions of the ship, which was designed to be rapidly reconfigured to fight other surface ships...

A longtime critic of the program, McCain used a speech on the Senate floor to back Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's decision to limit LCS procurement to 32 ships instead of the 52 ships initially planned...

"Production should not go forward until the Navy and (Department of Defense) confirm that LCS provides greater capabilities than the legacy ships it is intended to replace," McCain said.

He said the Navy also needed to demonstrate that the three interchangeable weapons systems being designed for the ship provided military commanders the combat capability they needed.

McCain's speech came a day before Navy acquisition chief Sean Stackley and other top Navy officials are due to testify about the fiscal 2015 shipbuilding budget at a hearing of the Senate Armed Service Committee's seapower subcommittee.

Hagel announced plans on February 24 to stop building the current class of LCS ships after 32 vessels and focus on ships with more firepower and protection, saying he had "considerable reservations" about building all 52 LCS ships as planned.

Lockheed and Austal are each under contract to build 10 ships, which will bring the total number of LCS ships to 24.

The Navy has set up a task force to study alternatives for a new small warship and provide recommendations by July 31, in time to inform the Pentagon's fiscal 2016 budget deliberations.

Initially designed to be a small, fast and affordable ship to augment larger ships in the fleet, the LCS program has seen numerous cost increases and schedule delays over the past 13 years, although Navy officials say production costs are now down sharply and the fielded ships are performing well.

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Home Mail News Vice Admiral Thomas Copeman, commander of Naval Surface Forces, told the annual Navy League conference on Wednesday he was convinced that the Navy would wind up building 20 more small warships because they offered a relatively inexpensive way to essentially double the Navy's presence around the world.

"We need to have a certain number of ships out there," Copeman told reporters at the conference, before McCain's speech. "You do have to make some trades. I'd love to have every ship be unsinkable and shoot down satellites and defeat every weapon and enemy there is, but that's unaffordable."

Copeman said the new LCS warships were much larger than World War Two destroyers and used far less manpower. He added that no warship could survive under all circumstances.

Copeman also said the LCS ships were also subject to far greater scrutiny than any other new ship class, and many U.S. lawmakers based their criticism on outdated information.

McCain said the congressional Government Accountability Office would soon release another report that criticized the LCS program and called for more rigorous testing and evaluation.

(Reporting by Andrea Shalal; Editing by Cynthia Osterman)

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McCain blasts Navy's LCS ship plan; urges cut to 24 vessels
 By Andrea Shalal WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Senator John McCain on Wednesday blasted the U.S. Navy's new Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program as a "shameful" and dangerous waste of taxpayer money, and he urged the Pentagon to cut its planned purchases back by another eight ships to 24
[Reuters](#)

Student Makes Iron Man Costume Entirely From Cardboard
 Kai-Xiang Xhong takes ordinary cardboard boxes and turns them into extraordinary pieces of art. The 20-year-old's latest work is a full sculpture of Tony Stark's Iron Man suit, and you would be hard-pressed to find words that can do it justice.
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Angry boxing promoter Arum takes aim at MGM Grand
 Manny Pacquiao and Timothy Bradley faced off in the final press conference for their welterweight world title rematch on Saturday, but it was promoter Bob Arum providing the fireworks. Arum thought there was far too much Floyd Mayweather in evidence at the MGM Grand, where signs and banners...
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Prince George revels in royal play day in New Zealand
 Britain's baby Prince George hosted his first official function on Wednesday -- maintaining a regal calm on a play date with a group of New Zealand toddlers, even as some of his tiny guests burst into tears. The play session at Wellington's Government House was organised by non-profit childcare...
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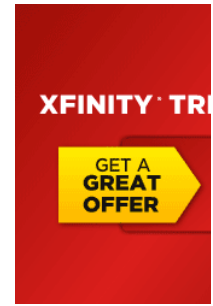
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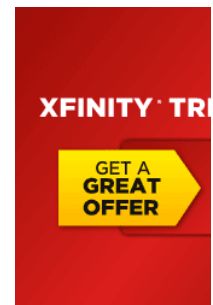
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Flight 370 search intensifies after pings heard

PERTH, Australia (AP) — With hopes high that search crews are zeroing in on the missing Malaysian jetliner's crash site, ships and planes hunting for the aircraft intensified their efforts Thursday after equipment picked up sounds consistent with a plane's black box in the deep waters of the Indian...
Associated Press

Russia rejects US warnings over oil deal with Iran

MOSCOW (AP) — A senior Russian diplomat on Wednesday angrily rejected U.S. warnings against striking an oil-for-goods contract with Iran, saying that Moscow wouldn't be intimidated by threats.
Associated Press

Woman found guilty in 1996 killing of ex-husband

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — After spending years abroad living a lavish lifestyle across Europe, a once-prominent socialite has been convicted in the 1996 car bomb killing of her ex-husband in southern Arizona.
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Boy, 9, Treks Across Miles of Snow to Rescue Dad

Bode Bierdneau realized that his father was trapped under his snowmobile with severe leg injuries and the son was unable to dig him out. So the boy, 9, started walking miles for help through the snow, even though he didn't know which way to go....
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Alisha White, a senior at Pierce High School in Nebraska, was excited about her prom but never thought that a photo session on the big day would result in a soggy ending.
Odd News

New signal detected in search for MH370 black boxes

Perth (Australia) (AFP) - Searchers engaged in a race against time to pinpoint "pings" from a missing Malaysian airliner's black boxes on Thursday detected a possible fifth signal, fuelling hopes that wreckage will soon be found. The Perth-based Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC) said the...
AFP

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ABC News

Human body parts grown in a lab (7 photos)

In a north London hospital, scientists are growing noses, ears and blood vessels in the laboratory in a bold attempt to make body parts using stem cells. It is among several labs around the world, including
Yahoo News

MH370 in a Million Pieces?

The search area needs to shrink dramatically before the black boxes can be retrieved. It could take years to pick up the rest of the pieces.
The Daily Beast

Rare sarcophagus, Egyptian scarab found in Israel

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli archaeologists have unearthed a rare sarcophagus featuring a slender face and a scarab ring inscribed with the name of an Egyptian pharaoh, Israel's Antiquities Authority said Wednesday.
Associated Press

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