

WASHINGTON, DC - Senators Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT) – members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, respectively – today released the following statement after the announcement of the President's budget request and Future Years Defense Program.

The budget requests \$4.3 billion for the procurement of two Virginia class submarines in 2013, as well as advanced funding for additional boats in 2014 and 2015. As part of its budget request, the administration announced that although it still plans to buy nine Virginia class submarines under a multi-year contract between 2014 and 2018, it seeks to postpone the construction of one new submarine from 2014 to 2018. As a result, the Navy would buy one submarine in 2014, but two each year for the duration of the next multi-year contract. The budget also includes a request for continued research and development on new submarines and capabilities, such as work on the Ohio-class replacement and development of the Virginia Payload Module.

"We are pleased with the budget's strong commitment to the future of our nation's submarine force and industrial base in the face of significant budget pressures. Our submarines play an increasingly critical role in our nation's defense, and this budget ensures that we will continue building the submarines and capabilities we need to support the new national security strategy. We disagree strongly, however, with the proposal to shift the procurement of one Virginia-class submarine from 2014 to 2018. There is no good reason for this delay. We are concerned about the impact this change could have on the industrial base and our submarine force structure in the years ahead, and look forward to working with our colleagues and the Navy to find an alternative that could address this short-sighted move.

"Most importantly, we believe that this budget represents the Navy's strong commitment to its partnership with the state of Connecticut. We met last week with the Chief of Naval Operations to discuss the Navy's plans, and he confirmed to us that the Navy plans to homeport two attack submarine squadrons, comprising twelve ships, at Submarine Base New London through 2020. At a time when all federal spending is under scrutiny, we are glad to see that the Navy agrees with us that Submarine Base New London offers as great a value for American taxpayers as it provides advantages for our submariners."

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