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IN THE NEWS

Danes Tout \$340M Stanflex Frigate for US Navy – But What’s Real Cost?

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Related Expert: Bryan Clark

Bryan Clark was unconvinced. “The Iver Huitfeldt uses mostly commercial components that may not be rated for the run time” — the sheer wear and tear of long deployments — “and potential effects of (battle) damage that US ships are expected to experience,” he told me. “US Navy ships have a much higher OPTEMPO (operational tempo) than foreign ships, are expected to operate in a higher threat environment, and are expected to return to service after a casualty (accident or battle damage) and repairs.” “A ship built to U.S. military standards will have more hull stiffeners, more compartments, redundant wiring and cabling, etc. — all of which add man-hours to ship construction times,” Clark said. All told, he said, “I’m confident that a ship built to some version of US military standards will be more expensive.” Even if the original design is good, said naval historian Norman Polmar, the US Navy and Congress will want to replace countless foreign components with ones made in the USA. “Steel for hulls is the cheapest part of the ship; it’s the electronics, the weapons, and htemachinery that cost,” he said, and that’s what the Navy would change. Polmar likes the Iver Huitfeldt class — “It’s an excellent design” — but he says the US Navy hasn’t bought a foreign warship design since World War II. With the protectionist Donald Trump in office, he added, we’re not going to start now.