



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

IN THE NEWS

Delivering On The Vision

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Related Expert: Bryan Clark

...“The unified-build strategy is a very aggressive plan to continue building two SSNs per year and eventually an SSBN each year as well,” Bryan Clark, a naval analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington think tank, said in an e-mail response to *Seapower*. “It leverages the builders’ 15 years of learning on Virginia-class submarine construction, which has reduced the build time to about five and a half years. The new SSBN will include many Virginia design features and components and this commonality should help reduce the steepness of the SSBN’s ‘learning curve.’”

...“If there are any delays or complications in building these new- design Virginia-class submarines, it could create delays for the first SSBN,” Clark said. “Since Virginia and SSBN construction will share many of the same processes, delays in one ship program can carry over into delays for the other. This can cascade very quickly into longer delays since the production line will be very tightly scheduled to accommodate both programs.

“While the builders anticipate being able to carry lessons from Virginia construction into the SSBN, the propulsion architecture for the two ships is very different and will not benefit from learning on Virginia,” he said. “The Virginia uses steam propulsion while the SSBN will use electric propulsion. This also brings in the potential of delays in non-Virginia components, such as large electric propulsion motors, which could result in cascading delays as described above.”