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Contact: Ed Barker

850.452.4858
(DSN) 922.4858
(FAX) 850.452.4900

CNO Stresses Versatility of Independence Class LCS

PENSACOLA, Fla. -- Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) stressed the versatility of the Independence-Class Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) April 1 at a press conference on board Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola.

After touring the USS Independence (LCS 2) with the congressman, the CNO highlighted the value of the LCS's ability to be repackaged for multiple missions.

"The thing that is of value about the LCS is that she has great volume, high speed, and is modular," said Greenert. "What that means is you can change out packages to perform different missions."

"Currently the Independence is configured for mine countermeasures operations, but she can be reconfigured for other missions including maritime security or anti-submarine warfare. These packages could be forward-deployed around the world in hot spots, where in a matter of a few days, the ship could be changed as necessary to meet the demand."

The ship has been testing its new anti-mine warfare technology in the Gulf of Mexico since Feb. 20, and will be docking between sorties at NAS Pensacola throughout its training operation.

Greenert praised the experience of the crew testing the new LCS saying it allows the Navy to be more efficient with crew management.

"These Sailors on board the ship are more senior than the average Sailor," he said. "They've been in the Navy for four-to-six years. This enables us to keep the crew to half of what it would normally be on a conventional ship."

The CNO also addressed the pace of construction for these new ships.

"In the future I expect to see continued construction of the LCS platform. We took a pause and decided we need 52 of these ships," said Greenert. "The Secretary of Defense asked us to take a look at this and see if we could make these more survivable and more lethal. We've done that and we are all guns ahead."

Miller was thanked by the CNO for his work in Congress in aiding military personnel and veterans. The Representative likewise thanked the CNO for letting him visit the ship.

"It's been an outstanding tour of a great new capability that we have in the United States Navy," said Miller. "I appreciate not only seeing this great vessel, but being able to talk to the men and women of the U.S.S. Independence."

For more information on the Littoral Combat Ship, visit www.navy.mil.

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Story by Ensign Michael Torres, Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs