

April 5, 2007

Issue: Aircraft Carrier Presence at Naval Station Mayport, FL

There are numerous benefits to an aircraft carrier presence in the Southeast U.S. Fleet Concentration Area:

- The location satisfies the strategic importance of dispersing East Coast aircraft carrier assets. West Coast carriers are homeported in several, dispersed locations; with the decommissioning of USS John F Kennedy all East Coast carriers are located in Norfolk, VA. A single homeport leaves these East Coast assets vulnerable to security, weather threats, and environmental disasters.
- Provide synergy with other Naval units in the Mayport, Kings Bay and Jacksonville area, enhancing training opportunities in local Fleet operating areas.
- Provide an aircraft carrier homeport near the center of the Southeast Regional Training Ranges. Since closure of Vieques, vital pre-deployment training has shifted to locations at ranges in the vicinity of CONUS. Mayport homeporting means reduced transit distances for units engaged in training operations, either during their pre-deployment training phases or while supporting training operations.
- Force Protection measures are already in place. Mayport provides a secure alternate homeport location for East Coast based aircraft carriers, thereby compounding the challenges faced by any potential adversaries.

Given the strategic location of Mayport – our last major Naval port at the threshold of the Caribbean and South America, and the indisputable benefits of a carrier presence, it is clear Mayport's future should include utility and facility improvements to allow homeporting a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier (CVN).

Preliminary timeline has been established to support a Record of Decision in early 2009. This timeline includes several milestones:

- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) distributed for review, Dec 2007
- Public comment and hearings completed by Feb 2008
- Preparation of final EIS throughout the remainder of 2008

The nuclear repair capability that exists at Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay, GA should be considered when determining Mayport infrastructure requirements. Utilizing a regional maintenance approach, and leveraging the capability and facilities at Trident Refit Facility in Kings Bay, GA will potentially reduce the capital investments to transform Mayport to a nuclear capable port and the operational costs to sustain the CVN.

Recommendation. Support the planning and decision making process to enable homeporting a nuclear powered aircraft carrier at Mayport Naval Station.

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