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2d Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

{ REPORT
115-676

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

H.R. 5515

together with

ADDITIONAL AND DISSENTING VIEWS

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]



MAY 15, 2018.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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WASHINGTON : 2018

Briefing for the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Armed Services on US Navy's efforts to expand carrier air wing long-range strike capability

The committee notes that the aircraft carrier air wing has been optimized for striking power and sortie generation and believes that it may not be configured to support the long-range strike required by current and future threat systems. While the introduction of the F-35C will significantly expand stealth capabilities, the F-35C could require increased range to address necessary targets. The committee believes that several options could be used to address this issue to include developing a stealth tanker capability, improved engine technology or to develop and procure a strike capability that is purposely built to strike at increased range. The committee further notes that the Navy previously desired to significantly increase the carrier air wing range with the development of the A-12 aircraft. The committee understands that the A-12 would have included a 5,000-pound internal carriage payload, stealth, and a range of 800 nautical miles. While the committee believes that requirements to support this capability remain relevant and the technology available, the development of the A-12 aircraft was mired in acquisition challenges that eventually resulted in the cancellation of the program. While the committee further believes that the Department of Defense has successfully developed a suite of long-range intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, the committee also believes that it is vital that the Navy develop a carrier-based long-range strike capability.

Therefore, the committee directs the Secretary of the Navy to provide a briefing to the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Armed Services by January 25, 2019, on options to expand the strike range of a carrier air wing in a contested environment, including manned and unmanned capabilities, and, Department of the Navy capabilities it plans to pursue in the Next Generation Air Dominance capability.

Briefing on Navy support for research into autonomous systems

The committee is aware of the Robotarium, a laboratory hosted at the Georgia Institute of Technology, sponsored by the Office of Naval Research (ONR), where researchers conduct experiments with interconnected, heterogeneous unmanned ground and aerial systems. The committee is supportive of competitively awarded grant programs that enhance academia's ability to conduct complex experiments with autonomous systems. As the role of autonomous systems in operations is expected to grow, the Committee believes it will be increasingly important for ONR to continue to fund initiatives that prepare future engineers to conduct cutting edge research in this discipline, especially with different classes of autonomous systems including unmanned underwater vehicles, unmanned surface vehicles, and unmanned aerial vehicles operating simultaneously across multiple domains. Therefore, the committee directs the Director of ONR to brief the House Committee on Armed Services by November 1, 2018, on initiatives that enhance the ability of academia to conduct complex experiments with autonomous systems.