

## New CNO Says Submarine Production Boost Will Take Years

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Admiral Daryl Caudle, confirmed July 31 as the U.S. chief of naval operations, states that raising attack submarine production to the Navy's required levels will take several years. He emphasizes that no quick solution exists to accelerate the output of Virginia-class submarines.

Admiral Caudle outlines that the Navy focuses on advancing submarine production through strategic investments in the industrial base. These include improving shipyard infrastructure, strengthening supplier networks, expanding outsourcing, enhancing oversight, and developing the workforce. He notes that these measures aim to eventually support the production of at least two Virginia-class submarines per year, but acknowledges that achieving this goal will require time.

The Navy currently projects a decline in the number of active attack submarines, falling to as few as 47 vessels by 2028, well below the desired fleet size of 66. Officials expect that the fleet will remain under that target until mid-century.

The challenge takes on heightened importance in the context of international commitments, especially under the AUKUS security pact with Australia and the United Kingdom. The Navy and its industrial partners continue to face obstacles in expanding production fast enough to meet both domestic defense needs and alliance obligations.

Admiral Caudle's remarks came amid renewed budget discussions for the fiscal year 2026, where submarine spending remains a high priority. Congress and Navy leadership focus on how to sustain and enhance industrial capacity, ensuring the intelligence, surveillance, and deterrence capabilities that submarines provide.

The Navy's timeline underscores a critical buildup pace that reflects both technological complexity and the need to reinforce long-term strategic capabilities. As the Navy builds toward meeting its long-term fleet targets, this multi-year effort will remain a key national security priority.