



BACKGROUND

The Role of the Protecteur-class Joint Support Ship

The Protecteur-class Joint Support Ship is critical to the future of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), and constitutes a vital and strategic national asset.

It will provide Canada with a modern, task tailored naval support capability that can provide support to the ships and aircraft of a naval task group at sea, support operations ashore, and provide a vital sea-lift capability enabling global reach for the Canadian Armed Forces.

As articulated in *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, the core RCN operating concept is the naval task group, which is composed of up to four surface combatants and a joint support ship, supplemented where warranted by a submarine.

The presence of replenishment ships increases the range and endurance of a naval task group, permitting it to remain at sea for significant periods of time without needing to return to port. Additionally, the inclusion of a Joint Support Ship in a group (or with an individual ship) affords complete sovereign decision regarding routing through elimination of the requirement for alongside fuel or logistic support enroute a final destination. In these ways, as well as owing to the unique capabilities that they bring as large and well-outfitted warships, Joint Support Ships are force-enablers to naval forces – precisely why they are so essential! They will provide the RCN with a global reach and staying power that elevates the significance of our participation with allies, partners and friends – enabling our ships, and those from other nations that are operating in coalition or under our command, to remain operating at sea for prolonged periods, virtually anywhere in the world.

The JSS will also provide other vital functions such as advanced medical and dental capabilities for deployed sailors who are injured or wounded, and maintenance services for other warships. They will have full control for helicopter operations, and can carry two CH-148 Cyclone helicopters. They will be able to carry containerized payloads such as disaster relief supplies or portable headquarters modules, providing mission flexibility.

The Joint Support Ships will possess enhanced, military-grade communications, radar, and surveillance technology that will meet NATO standards. This will be vital to both operations within the task group and our ability to operate with other allied navies; with the JSS, Canada will be able to both conduct and lead international and combined operations.

Purpose-built warships like the Joint Support Ship provide the best available protection for our sailors. Military designs incorporate damage control aspects as well as counter-measures against threats from torpedoes, mines, or missiles. The Joint Support Ships will also be crewed by Canadian Armed Forces members and will meet the Royal Canadian Navy's operational requirements for this role.

This issue of survivability is particularly critical, as the RCN must have the capability to maintain a persistent presence in high-threat areas if the security of Canadians demands it.

For this reason the Joint Support Ships will be equipped with systems to detect and protect against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear threats, and will possess self-defence capabilities including a Combat Management System, Naval Remote Weapon Systems, Close-In Weapon Systems, heavy machine guns, surveillance capabilities (3D air surveillance radar), Tactical Data Link Networks, and an electronic warfare suite.

Together with the Canadian Surface Combatants, the Protecteur-class Joint Support Ships will form the core of the future Royal Canadian Navy fleet.

