

## \$1 billion and counting: Inside Canada's troubled efforts to build new warships

Response by Norm Jolin: Date 27 Feb 2020

*“This article, while factually correct, fails to mention a number of points. Specifically, that in the case of the JSS, the Government of Canada initially mandated that the shipyard (Seaspan) build the three CCG Offshore Fisheries Science Vessels (OFSV) - of which two have been delivered and the third will be delivered summer 2020 - and an Offshore Oceanographic Science Vessel (OOSV) before the JSS for the RCN be constructed. This has now been amended to build the first JSS after the third OOFV and the second JSS will follow the OOSV (not an optimal construction plan for the shipyard). Likewise, in the case of the CSC project, the Government of Canada mandated that the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS) project precede the CSC project to give the shipyard (Irving) an opportunity to refine its workforce before commencing construction of 15 very complicated modern warships. Of the eight AOPS (6 for the RCN and 2 for CCG) the first two ships are currently “floating” in the water (scheduled to be delivered to the RCN this year) with construction well underway for the third and fourth ships of the class. Therefore, given the place of the JSS and CSC projects in the NSS shipbuilding schedule, these ships were never to be the first ships to be delivered under NSS and thus one should not be surprised they are not currently “floating”. With regards to monies spent to date on the JSS and CSC projects, yes significant monies have been spent on designs and in the case of the CSC project this will continue as part of total project costs to finalize a design of a ship that will meet Canadian requirements and ensure longevity in service in the RCN for the bulk of the 21st century. One has only one chance to get it right in ship design and the RCN has historically benefitted with Canadian-ized ship designs which have allowed Canada to safely push ships well beyond their designed service life (by a considerable factor). However, in the case of JSS, this figure represents much more than design work, as preparatory contracts have been let for long lead items such as propulsion systems, which typically require five years lead time, as there is no ‘maritime Walmart’ with aisles of ship systems waiting to be purchased at the last minute – in the maritime sector (commercial as well as naval) these types of items (engines, shafts, propellers, etc.) are ordered specifically for each ship build. The JSS design (based on the German Berlin-class replenishment ship) is expected to be finalized very soon and to maintain schedule, Seaspan has commenced construction on a number of modules that are not impacted by any Canadian design changes to the Berlin-class design – so work is proceeding on JSS, with a keel laying ceremony last month for the first JSS, the future HMCS Protecteur. In sum, given that the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS) has been underway for less than 10 years, and the Government of Canada has ordered five completely different classes of ship with unique designs, the current state is a considerable achievement in comparison with other Allies. Norman Jolin, Associate Consultant, CFN Consultants, and NAC member”)*

