

US Navy's largest destroyer heads out to sea for trials

March 21 2016, by David Sharp

The United States' largest and most expensive destroyer headed out to sea Monday for final builder trials before being presented to the Navy for inspection.

The ship, which will be based in San Diego, stands to play a role in the Obama administration's "rebalance" of resources to Asia and the Pacific, where China is flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea.

The 600-foot (182-meter) ship is unlike anything ever built for the Navy. It features an angular shape to deflect enemy radar, [electric propulsion](#) and new guns. Automation allows it to operate with a smaller crew than existing destroyers.

But those innovations come at a high cost. The USS Zumwalt, the first of three [ships](#) in the class, will cost at least \$4.4 billion.

The price ballooned to the point some in the Navy tried to kill the program. Instead, the program originally envisioned for 32 ships was truncated.

This will be the second time the ship has gone to sea. The "alpha" trials in December, which gave engineers their first opportunity to test systems at sea, were deemed a success even though repairs were needed on one of the ship's 12 motor drives.

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