

British navy unveils \$8B carrier plan

by UPI

LONDON -- The British government unveiled plans to add a pair of new aircraft carriers, costing more than \$8 billion, to its Royal Navy fleet. Dubbed the Queen Elizabeth and the Prince of Wales, the two 65,000-ton carriers are expected to have service lives of 40 years and be the "jewel in the crown" of Britain's navy when completed, The Telegraph reported Thursday. Constructing the largest warships in British naval history should provide about 10,000 jobs around the country. The carriers will be built by rival companies, including BAE Systems and VT Group, forming business alliances, the newspaper said. The Queen Elizabeth is expected to be finished by 2014, while the Prince of Wales should be in the water two years later, The Telegraph said. The ships will carry 40 of the advanced F35 Joint Strike Fighters or 25 Chinook helicopters and will have a crew of 1,500 sailors, The Telegraph said.

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