

THE NOMINATION OF GENERAL JACQUELINE D.  
VAN OVOST, USAF FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO  
THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE COM-  
MANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION  
COMMAND

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services



Available via: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2026

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**THE NOMINATION OF GENERAL JACQUELINE  
D. VAN OVOST, USAF FOR REAPPOINTMENT  
TO THE GRADE OF GENERAL AND TO BE  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPOR-  
TATION COMMAND**

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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Fischer, Cotton, Ernst, Tillis, Scott, and Hawley.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Chairman REED. Excuse me. Let me call the hearing to order.

A few administrative announcements. A ten o'clock there will be two votes for the benefit of my colleagues and to the general.

Also, this will be a hybrid hearing. Some of our colleagues will be joining virtually; as a result, we will use the seniority rule to identify speakers, as we have in the past at hybrid hearings.

Good morning. The committee meets today to consider the nomination of General Jacqueline Van Ovost to be the next Commander of the United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM).

If confirmed, General Van Ovost will be the first female general to take on this critical role and will also be the first time we have had two female combatant commanders serving concurrently.

General, I want to welcome you to the committee and I thank you for your many years of service to our Nation and for your willingness to continue to serve in positions of great responsibility.

We also thank your family for their support and sacrifice and welcome your husband, Alan.

The men and women of TRANSCOM perform duties that sustain the whole Department of Defense (DOD) effort in protecting our nation's security. We saw that very clearly with the extraordinary efforts of TRANSCOM to support the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Our ability to conduct and support operations around the globe remains a clear, competitive advantage for the United States forces.

With its competitive edge in deploying and sustaining America's Armed Forces, TRANSCOM provides the Defense Department with unique capabilities that some may have come to take for granted. TRANSCOM is busy supporting all the combatant commanders every day and without these forces, the United States would be at a significant disadvantage almost everywhere in the world.

TRANSCOM faces a number of daunting tasks. General, given that you have served previously as Commander of Air Mobility Command, I believe that these are not new issues for you. One primary concern is addressing a new set of cyberthreats. TRANSCOM works extensively with private sector entities in the transportation and shipping industries to support Defense Department deployment operations, which creates increased exposure to the commercial, internet, and challenges of operating our strategic transportation system.

General, I look forward to your views on how to ensure that TRANSCOM's network is secure and that sensitive information remains protected.

TRANSCOM has just completed a new Mobility Capability Requirements Study, an MCRS, and a Sealift Tanker Study. These studies indicate, among other things, a need to keep more C-130 airlift aircraft that are in the Air Force's plans, and a need for a program of subsidies for U.S.-flagged fuel tankers, to keep more tankers in the domestic fleet. I am interested in how you plan to address these critical shortfalls.

There is also the issue of modernizing the Ready Reserve Force, the RRF; a group of cargo ships held in readiness by the Maritime Administration. The RRF is aging and will need to be modernized over the next decade.

General Van Ovost, I look forward to hearing what criteria you think we should consider as we undertake this large modernization program.

The Defense Department also needs to ensure that the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, or CRAF program, which provides as much as 40 percent of wartime airlift needs, remains viable after operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and will be able to provide needed search capacity in the future. Notably, we saw some of that capacity used by the Defense Department in activating stage one of the CRAF program during the Afghanistan withdrawal.

General, I am interested in your views on the state of this fleet and whether anything needs to be done to ensure its readiness.

Now, finally, I would ask that you share your views on how TRANSCOM should contract out the management of the Personnel Property Program, or DP3. DP3 is the program that handles the movement of household goods for DOD personnel. In this plan, a contractor team would be responsible for issuing contracts to individual movers and carriers, rather than the U.S. Government. Last year, after a bidding competition, TRANSCOM awarded a contract to a contractor team; however, the losing bidders protested the award and GAO upheld the protest. We need to have a clearer picture of how TRANSCOM will proceed with the DP3 outsourcing effort.

Thank you, again, for your decades of service. We all look forward to your testimony.

Let me now recognize the Ranking Member, Senator Inhofe.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES INHOFE**

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate having this and, of course, seeing General Van Ovost.

I have to say this about you, General, I know you never were privileged to getting your training in Oklahoma, but they don't know that in Oklahoma. They think that you are one of us. You have come to our Coyle breakfast and all of that, so you are a star there.

I enjoyed meeting Alan for the first time and I look forward to your testimony, as I always do, and, again, I thank you for all that you have done for America.

If we learned anything in the last 8 weeks, it is that we can't shoot from the hip when it comes to military operations and geopolitical affairs. I am, of course, referring to this Administration's botched evacuation of American citizens and allies in the waning hours of the Afghanistan withdrawal and paving the way for the Taliban takeover.

While this hearing is not about your current role, it is about what you will bring to the TRANSCOM, which oversaw a vital portion of the Afghan evacuation. As the current commander of Air Mobility Command, you had firsthand knowledge of how evacuations were unfolding; you oversaw more than 250 military aircraft, supporting complex aircraft.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the success of the military portion of the operation and what the limiting factors were for the withdrawal, since thousands were left stranded to face Taliban retribution.

Additionally, TRANSCOM has had issues meeting its requirements. This is, I think I didn't check that. I think this is about the first time a major operation was done and not carried out as we normally do with the National Defense Strategy Commission, and we were not able to do that for some obvious reasons. For one thing, last year's budget, Congress had to reverse divestments of thousands of air-refueling tankers because the Air Force made cuts that would directly hinder TRANSCOM's ability to refuel aircraft.

I am curious what you think is the right path for combatant command's input in the budget process and, finally, I would like to get your thoughts on the ongoing transition of this issue that keeps coming up. I will be glad, I think everyone up here will be glad when it is over, if we bring it to a successful conclusion; that is, the Global Household Goods Contract.

So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to the meeting.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.

General, your statement, please.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL JACQUELINE D. VAN OVOST, USAF, NOMINEE TO BE COMMANDER, U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND.**

General VAN OVOST. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished Members of this committee. It is my great honor to appear before you today as the

President's nominee to command the men and women of the United States Transportation Command.

I first want to thank President Biden for his nomination, as well as Secretary Austin and Chairman Milley for the special trust and confidence that they have placed in me.

I also want to acknowledge General Stephen Lyons for his steadfast leadership of the United States Transportation Command and thank him for his staunch support of Air Mobility Command.

Here with me today is my husband Alan, who, for the past 30 years, has been an incredible source of strength and inspiration. He has always kept me grounded in my faith, and like most military spouses, has exemplified the true meaning of flexibility and resiliency. Most notable, however, has been his support and commitment to our military families.

The strength of our servicemen and women starts at home and the impact Alan has had on service family resiliency and quality of life is immeasurable. I can unquestionably say that without his love and support, I would not be here today.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the remarkable men and women I have had the privilege of leading at Air Mobility Command. Projecting decisive strength and delivering hope 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, this team tackles some of our nation's hardest missions.

Just last month, AMC played a significant role in the national and coalition effort to airlift more than 120,000 people out of Afghanistan. It was a difficult and dynamic mission, where some of our airmen had to make decisions when lives were on the line. I am so very proud of the work they did there and that they continue to do every day.

Mr. Chairman, today we face a dynamic and increasingly contested global strategic environment. Determined and emboldened strategic competitors, like China and Russia, continue rapid and deliberate development of advanced capabilities and they challenge international norms with their coercive behavior.

As the National Security Strategic Guidance emphasizes, we must maintain our military competitive edge by continuing to field and train the best force, adopt new technologies, and build and maintain key partnerships. As all components within the Department of Defense compete daily across the global to strengthen our strategic network of allies and partners, advance our national security interests, and remain poised to defeat our adversaries, the unique mission of the United States Transportation Command has never been more important.

If confirmed, I will ensure United States Transportation Command continues to provide our nation with one of its most important, strategic, and asymmetric advantages over our adversaries: the ability to rapidly project and sustain joint combat power at strategically relevant speeds, distances, and scale at the time and place of our nation's choosing.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, our like-minded allies and partners, our commercial industry partners, the services and combatant commanders to ensure United States Transportation Command delivers for the nation, meeting the demands of logistics required by the evolving character of war.



I would like for acknowledge and thank the Members of this Committee for your continued support of the men and women who so selflessly serve to defend our great nation. Their honor, courage, and sacrifice is humbling, and their passion for service, inspiring. They are the foundation to our success and we owe them the very best our nation has to offer.

Mr. Chairman, thank you, again, for this opportunity. It is my honor to appear before the committee today and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, General.

I have a series of questions which are required for all sitting nominees and you can simply respond, as appropriately.

Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Have you assumed any duties or taken any actions that would appear to presume the outcome of the confirmation process?

General VAN OVOST. No, Senator.

Chairman REED. Exercising our legislative and oversight responsibilities makes it important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings, reports, records, and other information from the Executive Branch on a timely basis.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify before this committee when requested?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Do you agree, when asked before this committee, to give your personal views, even if your views differ from the Administration?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Do you agree to provide records, documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate committees of Congress, and to consult with the requestor regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such records?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Will you ensure that your staff complies deadlines established by this committee for the production of reports, records, and other information, including timely responding to hearing questions for the record?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Will you cooperate and provide any witnesses and briefers in response to congressional request?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Will those witnesses and briefers be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, General.

Again, let me commend you on your extraordinary career and your knowledge and experience as you enter this very demanding, but as you point out, significant component of our national security, one of our advantages.

The one issue I wanted to touch upon, I suggested in my opening comments, is cybersecurity. I was struck once and talked to you or asking questions of one of your predecessors, who indicated that his dealing with the commercial airlines, there is some interest, but the person in charge has no contact with the board of directors or the senior management, so that it is a complicating challenge.

What can you do to help improve and protect the cyber connections between yourself and commercial entities?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, cyber operations pose significant threats to logistics. They target vulnerable supply chain elements and can interrupt the flow of goods and supplies around the world.

Senator, there has been a lot of work that the United States Transportation Command has done to develop relationships with our commercial service providers; one of which, of course, is to ensure secure command and control of the assets and ensure secure data management and IT.

If confirmed, I will continue to thicken the relationships with the commercial providers to ensure that they understand the threats and we can remain agile enough to combat these threats as they come up.

Chairman REED. Thank you, General.

I would like, in the future after you have got your feet on the ground in this particular job, to inform us either directly or informally about whether you are getting the kind of cooperation from the civilian sector that you need. This is a two-way street, so the commercial entities have to take it as seriously as we do. So, please let us know as that develops.

Let me shift gears for a moment and talk about the C-130 Force Structure. The fiscal year 2022 budget would reduce the inventory of C-130s to a level of 255 total aircraft from our current level of 287 and the new C-130 Air Force fleet size would be inconsistent with the study that has just been published about capabilities.

So, does this give you a concern?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, the Mobility Capability Requirements Study that was just released did provide a more comprehensive assessment of the viability of the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, given the new threats that we face. One of the recommendations of this study was to follow on with a specific intra-theater lift study, looking at the lift capabilities, not merely in air, but also in land and surface and preposition, in order to meet tomorrow's threats.

So, Senator, while the current C-130 discussion on total aircraft inventory was your question, the bottom line is I think we need to take a holistic look on the survivability of these various assets, given the new threat.

Chairman REED. Well, thank you, General.

So, you are already planning to look at different alternatives to the number of C-130s that are available and also look at the capabilities of C-130s in a given environment.

Is that fair?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator; in fact, it is very important that we explore the new technologies as we are looking at the joint warfighting concept and the new ways that the services are going to fight, it is becoming apparent that potentially runway, inde-

pendent operations might be a keep capability. In that case, we have to discover how it is that we are going to support and sustain our runway, independent operations.

Chairman REED. Thank you, General.

A final question. The Ready Reserve Force recapitalization, the committee has authorized the Department to start a program to recapitalize the Ready Reserve fleet by purchasing a number of foreign-built vessels and purchasing these vessels to modernize the RRF has been held up by problems with the contracting effort at the Maritime Administration.

Can you give us an update on this process, are we making progress, and do we have to do more here?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, thank you.

This is a critical capacity concern of mine, with respect to U.S. Transportation Command. We must continue to move forward on recapitalizing this aging fleet. As you are aware, over 50 percent of our roll-on/roll-off capability will be aging out in a decade. So, the time is now to do that recapitalization.

I fully support the Navy's buy-used strategy. I understand that a vessel-acquisition manager is in place and is working the contract and we do expect that there will be a buy in calendar year 2022 of used ships to begin this recapitalization progress.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, General.

Now, let me recognize the Ranking Member, Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Biden administration's horrific attempt at a successful withdrawal from Afghanistan will go down, in my opinion, and the opinion of many others, as one of the biggest blunders in American military history; however, it has given us a great opportunity, and through your efforts, I would say, in training in lessons that we have learned.

As Commander of the Air Mobility Command and the Air Component Commander for TRANSCOM, you oversaw operations with over 250 military aircraft; in fact, my staff told me that they had, the number of sorties were at 2,627. I had them go back and check the accuracy of that. That is just a huge undertaking of what went on that included C-17s, C-130s, refuelers, KC-135s, KC-10s, maybe even the 46, but it was huge.

General, in AMC's planning for the withdrawal, and specifically for the airlift, what were the limiting factors in wind and what advice did you give to your senior leaders on how the withdrawal would be conducted?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, I am proud of how the airmen of Air Mobility Command executed this campaign in such a dynamic situation.

Senator INHOFE. I think they are probably still riding high on this. You all did such a great, great effort.

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

While my advice was limited to the mission I was tasked with, which was airlift out of Kabul International Airfield, my goal was to ensure that airlift and our supporting ground operations were never a constraint for the Central Command Commander. Due to the heroic efforts of our airmen, we achieved that goal.

Senator INHOFE. Well, that is great and it is really a job well done.

I mentioned in my opening statement where we are right now with this Global Household Goods Contract and the fact that I am hoping we are in a position now to get this behind us. It is my understanding it is now being competed again with an award date of this month.

So, what was your feeling about it and do you believe a new system is needed? Do you believe that TRANSCOM's approach is the best path forward? How do you feel about it now?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, you have hit upon a key "quality of life" issue for our servicemembers and their families. It is clear that the current program is really incapable of consistently providing that quality capacity, accountability, and transparency that our members and family members deserve.

So, if confirmed, I will ensure, as I assess the contract as we move forward in letting that contract that all the mechanisms are in place for the single move manager to be able to effectively execute and meet the standards that our members and families deserve.

Senator INHOFE. We will get it behind us.

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

Now, let me recognize Senator Shaheen, please.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations, General, we are delighted to have you before us and to have you as the person nominated to head up TRANSCOM. I very much appreciated the opportunity to see you in action in New Hampshire when you came to visit the New Hampshire Air National Guard, and I know that people were very impressed with your presentation.

Of course, there, one of the areas of focus of that presentation was the KC-46. It is the first Guard base to get those planes. People are very anxious for when they can do the fully operational missions that they are anticipating. That was, obviously, one of the questions that people had for you.

So, as you are thinking about what we still need to do to make sure that those are fully operational, how will you continue to push on that once confirmed?

General VAN OVOST. Thank you, Senator.

Let me commend the men and women of the 157th for being the first Guard base to help us field the KC-46. They have done some amazing work within operations and maintenance, and we are able to take those new tactics, techniques, and procedures, and export them across the fleet; indeed, even in this Operation Allies Refuge, they all leaned forward to support us and the KC-46 was in the fight for this operation.

Now, while I desire to get full operational capability as soon as possible in the KC-46, as you know, we have moved to an interim-capability release, where we are providing the U.S. Transportation Command taskable capacity and we are flying this aircraft around the world doing drogue refueling and probe-and-drogue, and probe refueling, I'm sorry, boom refueling with certain aircraft. So I ap-

preciate the fact that Pease leans forward and volunteers to continue to do this work.

Senator SHAHEEN. So, as you are thinking about the challenges ahead to make sure those planes become fully operational, are you comfortable with Boeing's commitment to address the challenges that we have with the planes and do you have a sense of what the timeline is going to be?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Again, while I like to move as quickly as possible, and we want to hold contractors responsible to meet all requirements in different contracts, I am seeing positive movements on resolving the deficiencies of the KC-46 so that we can achieve FOC as soon as possible.

With respect to, in particular, the Remote Vision System 2.0, we are looking for the timeline of 2024 for cutting into production and retrofitting those aircraft. So, I am hopeful we have achieved agreement on a design that we know will be effective. Our boom operators have been very engaged, as have yours, and so I look forward to continuing to push this progress forward as quickly as possible.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

One of the things that was discussed when you were in New Hampshire was the partnership that the 157th has with Delta Airlines to try and address the real maintenance challenges that reduce the aircraft flying time.

So, can you talk about how TRANSCOM can address the overlapping FAA and DOD maintenance requirements, which are really requiring, I think, a challenge as we look at the future of, really, not just the KC-46, but aviation?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

You hit on a key thing, again, that the Wing has been very focused on, is to how to ensure the maximum effectiveness of our maintenance operations both, in the field and in depot. It is the United States Air Force's responsibility with respect to that, so as a TRANSCOM perspective, I will ensure that the Air Force continues forward to try to streamline and reduce the maintenance times on these aircraft, which really turns out to be readiness.

So, as the TRANSCOM Commander, I would be focused on more fighter readiness and I will absolutely be watching the readiness of the KC-46.

Senator SHAHEEN. Is that an area where we need to better engage the FAA? Are you comfortable that what the FAA is requiring is necessary?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, I am comfortable with their procedures. We work with them on a number of issues. We have other commercial platforms that we work with them, and so I am comfortable with the process that we are going to go through to ensure we have the most effective, technical orders to operate off of.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

One of the other things we discussed while you were in New Hampshire was the deterioration of the ramp, the parking ramp at Pease, and I am out of time, so I will send you a question for the record, with respect to this, but, again, another critical issue if we are going to ensure that the 157th continues to complete its mis-

sions and that we can have other aircraft going through, be able to land at Pease. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Let me recognize via Webex, Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you Senator Reed.

Thank you, General, for being here with us this morning. I enjoyed the visit that we had yesterday in my office. Thank you for taking the time to [inaudible] yesterday.

One of the battlefield conditions that the National Defense Strategy presupposes is the increasing prevalence of contested domains, but I think it is unclear to what extent TRANSCOM has acted on this guidance.

General, what do you view as the key challenges that TRANSCOM and the Department of Defense must address, with respect to planning for a potential conflict in a contested logistics environment and how can we build a more distributed and resilient [inaudible]?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, thank you for the conversation.

As I emphasized earlier, the character of war is changing. We face direct challenges across all domains, particularly in previously unmatched areas of superiority, like global logistics. So, as I think about the challenges that we face, we have to be able to project and sustain the Joint Force along a very long, contested line of communication, particularly when we think about the distances associated in the Indo-Pacific area.

One of the key areas for the all-domain threats that we must overcome is cyber operations because they pose significant threats, as I previously mentioned. We need secure command and control and modernized digital infrastructure.

As the AMC Commander, responsible for global command and control, I prioritized our investments in cyber mission assurance, secure and resilient communications, and data utilization and management so that we could achieve decision advantage at the speed of war. Those are the kinds of things that I would focus on as the Transportation Command Commander, if confirmed.

Indeed, I understand that USTRANSCOM has a number of digital modernization initiatives to include some pilot programs with U.S. Cyber Commands that are very promising, including Zero Trust.

Senator FISCHER. You know, as we look to a possible conflict, I know that TRANSCOM may be heavily reliant on commercial partners to participate, for example, the Civil Reserve Air Fleet and the Ready Reserve Force.

How do you view the potential role of these partners if we are in a contested, operating environment?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, our ability to project and sustain the Joint Forces are inextricably linked to commercial industry and those emergency programs that you talked about: Civil Reserve Air Fleet and Voluntary Intermodal Service Agreement.

As we go forward, at this time, U.S. Transportation Command is writing into the contracts to ensure some basic cyber hygiene standards by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. As we go forward, as you probably know, they are required to do

a self-assessment every year on their cyber vulnerabilities. My understanding is TRANSCOM is entering into a pilot program where they are going to have a third party do that assessment; take a different look at those companies.

So, I think, if confirmed, I would want to deepen those relationships with our commercial partners. I would like to share more so that we understand each other, we understand where the threat vectors are, and where that attack surface is, and we have an understanding of where the risks are across the whole global logistics complex.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

In September of 2019, TRANSCOM conducted the largest no-notice sealift exercise of the wartime sealift fleet in the Command's history, and at the end of the exercise, TRANSCOM concluded that the readiness rate could delay the buildup on combat power in the theater of operations.

What has the Command done to address these problems and what, in your opinion, needs to happen? What more needs to be done in order to correct that?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, warfighting readiness is a key priority for this command, so as you stated, during the exercise, the readiness levels were not where we wanted them to be, where TRANSCOM wanted them to be. Frankly, we have older ships and some of the Reserve ships are up to 46 years old, and as you know, older equipment takes longer to maintain and, perhaps, takes longer to actually bring to the ready for us.

So, the single-most-important thing is I would support the Navy in their recapitalization effort to buy used.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

Let me recognize Senator Kaine and also ask if Senator Shaheen could preside while I go and vote. The vote is on, the first vote is on. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Ranking Member Inhofe.

General Van Ovost, I also really appreciated the conversation we had yesterday. Two topics I just want to raise. One, the controversy and challenges around the retirement of the old tankers suggest that maybe we waited too long to begin the process of figuring out what the new refueling aircraft should be.

So, trying to learn that lesson and taking it over into the airlift fleet, our C-17 airframes are pretty old; anywhere from 10 to 25 years old. The C-5s are over 30 years old. So, talk to me about what the Air Force is thinking about doing to start the planning of the next generation of cargo aircraft so we can avoid any time crunch that we have felt in the tanker.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, as the AMC Commander, I have two responsibilities. One, as the Component Commander to the United States Transportation Command to provide ready capacity for tasking around the world to project and sustain the force on a day-to-day capacity; on the other hand, I have an "organize, train, and equip" responsibility, where I need to look out into the future to see how our capacity can remain credible in order to defeat the

threats in the future, so I can continue to project to sustain the force with credible capacity.

So, as I think about aging infrastructure, I have to balance both sides; I have to have capacity today and I must be able to respond to tomorrow. So, it is a risk between the both. There is not quite a balance, but there is a risk between the both.

As I look to the strategic airlift fleet, you are exactly correct. We are looking into the timelines for the C-5 and when it has to retire, as well as the C-17. They have performed magnificently, both, frankly, during Operation Allies Refuge. So, what we are doing now is we are looking through the joint warfighting concept at the new threats and the new employment concepts, which we will have to deliver airlift to, and as we think about that, we think about the capability. We think about survivability, you know, full spectrum of survivability and, frankly, kinetic survivability, and being connected on to the battlefield so that we have the situational awareness to be able to make decisions.

So, we are gathering these requirements and then we will move to an analysis of alternatives, a formal process where we will then finalize those requirements and run them through the Joint Staff for approval. So, we are moving forward with that, but, basically, as we look at our warfighting concepts and we are doing these war games, that is giving us that insight to be able to create those requirements that we can then codify for the next strategic airlifter.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that answer, General Van Ovost.

The second topic I wanted to ask you about was raised by Ranking Member Inhofe and that was the household moves. You know, being a senator from Virginia with an awful lot of military members, the moving situation is one that often comes up, people have concerns about.

I was interested when we talked yesterday, tell the committee how many times you and your family have had to move during your career.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, we have had to endure 13 moves.

Senator KAINE. So, you have a consumer's view of this situation and you know how important it is that it be right. We also talked a little bit about some of the challenges of managing moves in the status quo, or the status quo ante environment.

Isn't it the case that you were dealing with more than 900 different moving contractors? That has kind of been what we have had to manage, which is pretty difficult.

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator. U.S. Transportation Command has had to reach out, frankly, during COVID and coordinate and provide information to all of these service providers to keep them up to date on the different policies and enforce health-protection measures that we were trying to take, and to ensure that the capacity delivered during this incredible time.

Frankly, what we learned in COVID was it really exasperated the flaws that are in the current contract. Having a single move manager that would be, with a multi-year contract, they would be more confident to invest in quality suppliers and digital IT and will be pressed with the accountability that our family members deserve.



Senator KAINE. Well, I think the committee knows from earlier iterations of contracts, like in the housing space, the contract is only as good as the military's willingness to exercise deep and intense oversight of the contract.

I appreciate the challenges of the need to make these moves right to meet families' needs, and because of your own experience and having had to endure 13 moves with your family over the course of your military career, it seems to me like you are the right person to get this right. So, I encourage you in that.

With that, I yield back.

Senator SHAHEEN. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Cotton?

Senator COTTON. General, thank you for your service to our country and congratulations on your nomination.

We have spoken on several occasions this morning about reports and studies. A GAO report released earlier this year says that in the 5 years and across about a dozen classified or sensitive studies, quote, the Department of Defense has studied contested mobility, but has not systematically addressed recommendations, end quote.

What, in your opinion, is preventing TRANSCOM from systematically addressing the study recommendations and how can you improve on this assessment?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, facing these, you know, really threats from China and Russia and strategic competition, we have learned that we really need to ensure that logistics planning is integrated with all joint warfighting functions. Logistics planning is not an add-on and it needs to be part of the deliberate process as we go forward.

So, if confirmed, Senator, I will work with the other combatant commanders to ensure that logistics concerns are being addressed early and we provide options to them for the best use of these scarce resources.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

Following on that line, I, too, want to commend our airmen who performed excellently, a job in Afghanistan that they should never have had to be perform. They were brave. They were skillful. They saved many lives.

That is the rare occasion in which we have seen contested logistics play out in the real world in recent years; however, the contest we faced in Afghanistan would look like child's play if we had a conflict with China in the Western Pacific, and it would have us fighting on all fronts to include, very much, as you say, on logistics.

What have studies, such as the Mobility Capability Requirements Study, as well as others, demonstrated regarding the survivability, efficiency, and reliability of our logistics systems during a large and contested conflict with China?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, the Mobility Capability Requirements Study did provide a very comprehensive assessment on what the new employment concepts would do to logistics and that information was given to the combatant commanders to, overall, assess the risk to their plans for us having to, essentially, project and sustain along a long, contested line of communication.

You are correct, in Afghanistan, early on, the ground line of communication became non-usable and we had to move to air lines of communication to execute the retrograde.

So, as we move forward, we take the results from the Mobility Capability Requirements Study and we would like to exercise those in our upcoming war games and TTXs so that we can better tease out the insights required to build a stronger Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise so that we can project and sustain throughout strategic competition.

Senator COTTON. Thank you.

China's Belt and Road Initiative has invested substantially throughout Asia and Africa, increasingly in Europe, in logistics and transportation hubs, in particular, in international ports. I would like your assessment on whether that initiative, and especially its investment in ports, has created any new access problems for TRANSCOM or do you foresee it creating access problems, as ports might be potentially closed to the United States and our partner forces during a time of crisis.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, you have hit on a key concern. China has been challenging a stable and open international order, trying to impose their authoritarian model beyond their borders. They have been coercing our allies and partners to make different economic, diplomatic, and even security decisions. Their investments around the world in ports are something that we are absolutely watching, with respect to how it would change any access, basing, and overflight that we critically need.

The good news is we have a deep bench of allies and partners and we can provide multiple options through multiple routes and nodes, not just from our organic capability, but by relying on our commercial partners, who have a very extensive network throughout the world, and in some cases, that we might not have access to.

So, going forward, Senator, if confirmed, I will continue to assess our global posture with respect to China, to ensure that we can meet all the combatant commanders' requirements.

Senator COTTON. Thank you, I am glad to hear that. TRANSCOM has a lot of very important responsibilities. I think the number one priority for TRANSCOM, as all of our combatant command, needs to be the preparation for, and therefore, hopefully, the deterrence of a conflict with China.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator Cotton.

Next, we have Senator King, via Webex.

Senator KING. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, General, welcome to the committee, and thank you for your willingness to take on this incredibly important assignment.

In light of Senator Kaine's questions, I have to mention that many years ago, I worked in this area for a moving and storage company that did a huge amount of work for the military and I will never forget a military spouse telling me that she considered seven moves to be equal to a fire in terms of her household goods. So, I know how serious that problem could be, absolutely, from, literally, from the ground up.

Let me talk a moment about the time of conflict and cyber. If we are engaged in a conflict, the very first target will be nuclear com-

mand and control by an all-out cyber attack. The second will be command and control, generally. The third will be you, will be TRANSCOM.

In your pre-filed remarks, you said something to the effect, well, you said, the posture of TRANSCOM and the Department is likely insufficient to deal with a well-resourced, capable, and determined nation-state adversary.

You just defined China and Russia: well-resourced, capable, and determined nation-state adversary.

In other words, we are not prepared. I want to hear your views on what has to be done. This is a “hair on fire” issue. Your whole infrastructure is not going to be functional if you don’t have command and control and the ability to allocate your resources.

I want to hear your sense of urgency on this issue.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, you are exactly correct, the ability to command and control this enterprise is central to making an executing logistics decisions around the world. We must take advantage of the significant advances in commercial technology and integrate that into military technologies, especially when it comes to exposing and using data to make better decisions.

So, if confirmed, I will focus, I will first assess the digital initiatives that U.S. Transportation Command is currently executing and I will work to accelerate these technologies so that we can always retain decision advantage.

But to your point, these are determined enemies and technology is only going to increase; it will never be one-and-done. This is about risk management, and so I will apply the focus to the areas that are the most risk first.

Senator KING. Well, in that light, I would urge you to engage, either in the private sector or within the Department, your own hackers to determine where your vulnerabilities are. Every CIO says, we are okay, boss. They don’t know whether that is true until you test it, so I urge you to test it. Because I can assure you at this very moment, our adversaries are figuring out how to hack your systems and compromise your ability to move our resources around the world.

Let me change the subject for a minute to tankers. General Lyons testified a few years ago that he was concerned that there could be a gap between the deployment of the KC-46s and the retirement of the C-135s, a gap in terms of refueling capability.

Do you feel that that gap has been adequately addressed today?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, a few years ago, that is exactly where we were headed, but since then, now that we have brought the KC-46 interim capability release to bear for USTRANSCOM’s taskings, and in addition, we have amazing support from our total force volunteerism to increase a taskings of the Guard and Reserve refueling assets. We have been able to meet, and I foresee that we will absolutely be able to meet the day-to-day requirements and any wartime requirements made.

Senator KING. Have the problems with the boom-management system in the KC-46 been resolved and, if so, what is the time frame for restarting the significant deployment of those airplanes?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, the boom deficiencies are still in work and we are satisfied with the design, and we are pushing the

contractor to continue to integrate and test. We are looking forward to a 2024 cut into the line to ensure that in the future, this aircraft can meet all of the requirements.

But until that point, what we are doing with interim capability release is we are providing a capability to the U.S. Transportation Command for select missions for that aircraft; for example, we are refueling now, B-52s, the C-17s, and I expect we are going to be refueling F-16s and F-15s in the very near future.

Senator KING. Well, I would be remiss if I didn't mention when it comes time to start the reallocation of the KC-46s, don't forget the Maineiacs in Bangor who provide incredible refueling support over the North Atlantic, and we would very much like to have the KC-46 capability, because most of the airplanes we are flying up there now are way older than their pilots.

Thank you very much, General, for your testimony. I look forward to working with you.

Chairman REED. [Presiding.] Thank you very much, Senator King.

I am told that Senator Hawley is on his way, and that would allow me to ask a question in the interim.

General, with respect to the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, did we learn in lessons, and I presume we are doing an after-action review, from the operations in Afghanistan, and can you share any of those lessons with us.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, as you mentioned, this is the third time ever that we actually activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, and we did it in the run-up to Operation Allies Refuge.

We start with commercial augmentation; in other words, they voluntarily contract and meet our commitments, which is, frankly, how we meet 90 percent of our passenger movement. When volunteerism wasn't there or we didn't have enough, that is when the U.S. Transportation Command Commander requested to the Secretary to activate stage one of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, which is 18 long-haul, international, passenger aircraft.

Because we have deepened our relationships with our Civil Reserve, especially over COVID, where we had numerous conversations with them because, essentially, we were both relying on each other for our networks, because international rules were changing during COVID, and so it was a mutual, beneficial relationship that we had and we kept each other informed of what was going on around the world, such that in the run-up to this activation, we kept them informed that we might have to activate and they were prepared when the decision was made.

Now, nothing goes perfectly, and I look forward to learning, gathering the lessons learned, and worked with the CRAF to make it a better activation both, from our position and from their position, but I am so thankful for their partnership.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much.

Let me suspend my questioning and recognize Senator Hawley.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate your willingness to wait for me.

General, thank you so much for being here. Thank you for your years of service to our nation and congratulations on your nomination.

I want to ask you a question that I have asked all the senior leaders who have come before this committee. I will preface this by saying that Secretary Austin has reaffirmed several times now that China is the pacing threat, emphasis on “the,” for the Department.

Do you agree with that, that China is the pacing threat?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Very good.

I have also asked the Secretary, Deputy Secretary Hicks, and just about every other Defense leader if the United States should maintain its ability to defeat a Chinese fait accompli with regard to Taiwan. They have all responded yes.

I want to ask you, I have been, myself, a real pest on this issue and I don’t want to let my reputation slide, so I want to ask you, General, if we agree that we need to maintain the ability to defeat a potential Chinese fait accompli against Taiwan?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Very good.

Given the importance of this, do you agree that TRANSCOM needs to prioritize that scenario, the fait accompli scenario, as it develops plans, concepts, and capabilities?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAWLEY. Very good.

Now, General, Admirals Davidson and Aquilino have both warned us that China might attempt a fait accompli against Taiwan sooner than previously anticipated. This, I think, was eye-opening testimony that this committee heard earlier this year.

Do you agree that the threat of a fait accompli against Taiwan is something we need to be worried about in this decade and not just in the 2030s and beyond, but potentially sooner than that?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, I am not privy to all the intelligence that the geographic combatant commander would have with respect to the driving threats, but I would say that the rapid, technological advances that China makes are very disturbing.

Senator HAWLEY. Would you agree that we need to be able to, we need to be prepared to blunt and also deny that offensive, any potential offensive from the beginning, from the start, if China should attempt it?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, I believe from the U.S. Transportation Command position that we need to ensure that we have the favorable, global posture, credible capacity, and ability to securely command and control so that we can be agile enough to respond to the INDOPACOM requirements of the [inaudible] plan.

Senator HAWLEY. Let me ask you about some of the logistics requirements for blunting a Chinese fait accompli.

How might those differ from the logistics requirements for fighting and winning a protracted war in INDOPACOM? So, help us understand the difference, logistically, between denying on the front end and fighting a lengthy war, by contrast.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, U.S. Transportation Command is responsible to deliver an immediate force tonight and a decisive

force, when necessary, as you pointed out, the blunt versus the continuation.

As we go forward and look into the plans, our Mobility Capability Requirements Study of 2020 recently looked at this contested environment and validated the requirements for sealift, airlift, and air refueling to defeat this kind of war. So, where there is a balance, the other piece that we will be looking into, with respect to the study, is the posture, you know, where do we need to be postured; where do our logistics need to be; where does the fuel need to be.

If confirmed, I will work with INDOPACOM with the services and DLA to best posture to meet the INDOPACOM Command requirements.

Senator HAWLEY. Very good.

Let me ask you this, the Joint Force has limited lift capacity and this past August, we used over half of our available C-17s, if I am not incorrect, in our inventory to support the evacuation operations in Afghanistan. Those capacity limits have significant implications for the force's ability to manage multiple conflicts at once.

Are you concerned by the threat of simultaneous conflicts, potential simultaneous conflicts, for instance, in Asia and in Europe, and TRANSCOM's ability to satisfy any operational requirements, should we have kinetic operations in multiple theaters at one time?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator. First, I would say that the surge for Afghanistan, I want to just say how proud I am of the airmen, of maintenance, and crew operators, who were able to surge the fleet and safely and effectively accomplish this operation.

When I look to the Mobility Capability Requirements Study 2020, this is exactly what it looked at: What is the integrated scenario we might be up against should we go against a peer conflict, and what are the requirements for each of the capabilities, in my case, that Air Mobility Command brings: the airlift, air refueling, air medical evacuation, and global mobility support.

It did recognize that we would be stressed to meet the globally integrated requirement for air refueling and for intra-theater airlift.

Senator HAWLEY. Let me ask you how you would approach and prepare for the possibility of simultaneous conflicts in multiple theaters.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, I believe that using the warfighting construct of our favorable posture, our credible capacity, and secure command and control, we need to constantly re-look at, given the threat, and we would have to change our posture based on how the threat changes. I would work with the Secretary of Defense and with the combatant commanders, again, to meet the requirements.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you for being here. I may have a few more questions for you for the record. Thanks, again, for your service.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again. I appreciate you waiting for me.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Hawley.

Now, let me recognize, via Webex, Senator Gillibrand.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am sorry I am off the floor, so it is not as quiet as it should be.

General, one of the issues that I have heard a lot in my office that I wanted to check with you about was the fact that a lot of servicemembers is how COVID delays have negatively affected their PCSing, including being told to handle their own move, since there are not enough TRANSCOM contractors and services available to assist them.

So, if confirmed, can I have your commitment that you will work to improve the PCSing experience for our personnel?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Senator GILLIBRAND. The second issue is the vaccine gap on the last mile. I understand TRANSCOM has done a lot to facilitate the distribution of vaccines worldwide; however, there is still inequity between developing nations and developed nations. Less than 4 percent of the African population is fully vaccinated, whereas 70 percent of the European population is vaccinated, for instance.

Experts in both, the public and private sectors, have blamed the last mile problem as the bottleneck. This includes getting the frozen vaccines from logistics hubs.

Can you tell me how you will respond to this, if confirmed?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, U.S. Transportation Command, if requested, by the Department of State, does contract or deliver COVID vaccines and personal protective equipment around the world, and we have done so on various occasions.

If confirmed, I will work with the Department of State and Department of Defense as they give us the tasks, but as you are probably aware, the Department of Defense does not make the decisions on where the vaccines go.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Yes. Well, thank you, again.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting me have time for a few questions.

I appreciate you both. God bless.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand.

Now, I may resume my second round, but, General, there is—well, I see Senator Kelly arriving and if—oh, excuse me, we have Senator Duckworth now on the Webex.

So, Senator Duckworth, you are recognized.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to welcome General Van Ovost to this and I want to commend the General's leadership and recognize the servicemembers of Air Mobility Command for conducting the historic, largest, non-combatant rescue, evacuation airlift in history. I am so proud of TRANSCOM's monumental efforts in August, as well as the continued work of servicemembers across the United States military in providing ongoing airlift support of our Afghan allies, including volunteers from the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, Illinois.

I think we are all witnessing real time example of why it is so important that we plan for and resource our logistics and sustainment capabilities as much as we plan for and resource our combat capabilities. Our logistics enterprise is absolutely vital for responding to emergencies, while preparing for future conflicts.

General Van Ovost, welcome. Based on the finding from the most recent Mobility Capability Requirements Study, if you are confirmed, how will you ensure TRANSCOM is balancing steady state

requirements, emergency response missions, and preparation for future operations in a contested environment?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, thank you for the earlier discussion and thank you for your support of logistics around the world.

We are simply a strategic capability, really, unmatched by any other nation to be able to project and sustain our force around the world, and it is very helpful that you bring forward the thoughts about the critical role that logistics plays, and not simply within an old plan, but, frankly, from a deterrent value. Our logistics formations can absolutely deter when we have these deep relationships with our allies and partners and we become more interoperable with them and we use their logistics chains, as well as very, very powerful, when our enemies see that.

Speaking to the Mobility Capability Requirements Study and the need to project decisive force along a long, contested line of communication, if confirmed, I will not only assess these results with the services, but I will work with the combatant commanders on their operational plans to ensure that we can provide them multiple options to meet their needs both, for an immediate force tonight and a decisive force, when needed.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, General.

Following up on that, as the services are looking to divest from older platforms, like the C-130, for example, what future capabilities are required to meet future challenges, especially in the Indo-Pacific Region, as far as TRANSCOM is concerned?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, as we look to the joint warfighting concept and the embedding concepts, in particular, the joint concept for contested logistics, we recognize that we have gaps in our capabilities in strategic competition. So, I think about ensuring that we participate from a logistics standpoint in the joint warfighting, in the games, in the exercises, and tabletop to tease out those insights where we can then increase the credibility of logistics around the world.

So, not only from there, the warfighting concepts from the different services, but we, indeed, need to think about doing new things, with respect to logistics. I think about having and utilizing data to make better logistics decisions more effective to use our critical resources better, especially, in a very dynamic situation, and then ensuring that we can actually execute those orders with a secure and resilient command and control.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Well, as you are doing that, do you think that TRANSCOM is adequately represented in the formulation of the upcoming NDS?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, I understand that U.S. Transportation Command has provided advice for the new National Defense Strategy, which is in formulation inside the Department. If confirmed, I will continue to provide that advice to the Secretary of Defense concerning logistics and, again, how logistics formations can increase deterrence and how logistics needs to be integrated with all the joint warfighting functions to be most effective for the warfighter.

Senator DUCKWORTH. I couldn't agree with you more. I have been unwavering in my insistence that we cannot build a combat-credible deterrence if we do not have the logistics capability and capac-



ity to realistically support the complex military operational plans that we are likely to be executing.

You touched on training a little bit. Can you touch a little, can you expand a little bit more on any training exercises or strategic planning that TRANSCOM must participate in over the next few years to get a clear picture of the state of our strategic capabilities, like the Ready Reserve Force, as well as to ensure that our operational plans adequately factor in logistics and sustainment concerns.

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator, and you are probably aware of the several Capstone exercises by INDOPACOM and EUCOM, Defender series, and various service games that we want to ensure that we are a part of so that we can, again, tease those insights out for how we are going to operate better together into the future and how we are going to increase our interoperability, not just with the services, but with our allies and partners, who can be of great benefit to us to ensure that we can capitalize on their capabilities.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, General.

I am over time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Duckworth.

Now, let me recognize Senator Blumenthal. Senator Blumenthal, please.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your service, General, and thanks for being here today.

I have been very personally involved in assisting individuals with efforts to evacuate from Afghanistan both, in Kabul and in Mazar-i-Sharif. After the United States' withdrawal was completed, as you know, thousands of Afghan allies, along with Americans, fled to Mazar-i-Sharif or sought to leave Kabul, despite the absence of the American airlift or the end of it. A lot of them are currently in hiding. They are desperate. Their situation is urgent.

Yesterday, Simcom canceled further flights to Al Udeid because of flight manifest discrepancies and I know that the air evacuation has been impeded by the cancellation of those flights. The flight manifests that I have seen have been fully vetted numerous times, far more than the manifests made on flights from Kabul before the American withdrawal. So the lives of Americans and hundreds of Afghan allies hang in the balance. I don't doubt our commitment to evacuate U.S. citizens and vulnerable allies, but we keep erecting unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, when time is of the essence.

My question to you as a logistics expert, and I believe, future combatant commander, can we depend on you to provide any and all assistance to get the air bridge from Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif to Al Udeid back open and to keep it open for a sufficient number of days?

General VAN OVOST. Senator, while I cannot comment on the Department of State or the immigration or flight manifest vetting, what I can say is that if the refugees do make it to one of our lily pads, so, for example, Al Udeid, then U.S. Transportation Command would then be subsequently tasked to provide their airlift movement to the final destination and we would absolutely support that effort.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Well, as you know, even before the withdrawal in late August, I and other members of the Senate, veterans groups, NGOs [non-governmental organizations], private citizens have been working tirelessly, along with the Administration, to evacuate as many citizens, legal permanent residents, SIB holders, and other Afghan allies with their families, as quickly as possible. I hope that you will be committed to participate and to support that effort, despite our absence; that is American military absence.

Do we have your commitment on that point?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Let me ask you, assuming you are confirmed, do you have specific steps in mind that United States Transportation Command can play in addressing climate change, which has been judged to be a national security threat?

General VAN OVOST. Now, Senator, climate change is a threat to infrastructure and operations, and it absolutely drives instability around the world. I have seen that firsthand as the Air Mobility Command Commander, who had been asked to respond to disasters and provide humanitarian relief. So, it absolutely is a critical concern and climate considerations will be a part of how we inform our strategies, our plans, and our infrastructure going into the future.

If confirmed, I look forward to looking at the strategies plans and the infrastructure and evaluating them with respect to the climatology of those locations.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

Senator Kelly, please?

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, great seeing you again. Congratulations on your nomination.

I would like to follow-up with some of the discussion that we had last week. General, a concern of mine that I believe you share is the readiness of our nation's sealift capabilities. Our competitors are investing heavily in this area; in fact, the Naval War College published an assessment this spring, which found that the Chinese maritime industry is now the largest in the world in nearly every relevant category, from investment in global ports to shipbuilding, while our former dominance of this industry is slipping.

Just to put this in perspective, right now, the Chinese have over 5,000 ocean-going merchant vessels. We have less than a hundred.

After years of focus on counterinsurgency, we need to take a clear-eyed look at the range of scenarios our military must prepare for. It is absolutely vital that we assess and respond to the unique demands of engagement in regions as distant as INDOPACOM, the Indo-Pacific Region.

So, to start, General, can you say a bit about our current state of readiness and any concerns that you have about our sealift capability.

General VAN OVOST. Senator, you rightly hit upon a concern. China has been developing capabilities in order to project combat power around the world to secure their overseas interests and objectives. It is concerning, it is concerning from an access, basing,

and overflight, and it is concerning with respect to their capabilities to monitor our capabilities around the world.

With respect to warfighting readiness, which is a key to our functioning as a warfighting combatant command, the Mobility Capability Requirements Study did validate the amount of sealift that we would need to deliver a decisive force, and I am concerned about the readiness, given the age of the fleet and the maintenance, and its day-to-day readiness capacity.

So, the first thing I would do is I would continue the great work by TRANSCOM, working with the Navy, to execute their buy-used strategy, so that we can get more U.S.-flagged, U.S.-manned, sealift capability that we can count on. In addition, the recent fuel tanker study did validate the fact that we had insufficient U.S.-flagged POL tanker capacity to meet the needs of the National Defense Strategy.

So, if confirmed, I will work with the Navy and MARAD on a way forward to try to secure more U.S.-flagged tanker capacity.

Senator KELLY. Yeah, to do that, we have got to get, figure out a way to get more U.S.-built ships, as well, U.S.-flagged, U.S.-crewed to meet this need, and I feel we need some rapid progress on this front. We can't wait years. This is a national security issue. If we can't meet the requirements of the NDS, we put our national security at risk.

So, I would like to see a plan, and I am going to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle of this, to return our sealift capability to what it formerly was, where it had the capability to meet the needs of our nation, because that is not true today.

So, I think it is important that we all understand that this is a critical investment to make as a nation, and this is going to need to be a whole-of-government effort, including stakeholders outside of this committee's jurisdiction. So, I appreciate your commitment to this issue and I look forward to working with you more on it after your confirmation.

With that, I yield back the remainder of my time. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Kelly.

General, let me resume and ask some additional questions. Some of our colleagues are trying to get online by Webex and some may be trying to return, but as I noted initially, there are votes in progress, also.

It is usually the little things that go wrong and mess up all the big things we have planned. That is what I learned when I was wearing the uniform, and U.S. roads and U.S. bridges could be some of those little things.

I was struck when the Commander of the 4th, the 3rd ID, rather, at Fort Stewart indicated his real problem is the railroad bridges can't sustain the weight of the tanks that he would have to roll out there to the port of embarkation. So, you could have your ships ready, down and ready to take them on, but they don't get there on time or they never get there.

There is, under TRANSCOM, the Defense Access Road Program, and it is a cooperation between the DOD and the Department of Transportation to jointly address surface-transportation issues with a concern to DOD. It is neglected, frankly.

In the fiscal year 2020 and 2021 NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] legislation, we put in extensive amendments to try to update the program and energize the program. In one respect, it was a reflection of the growing concern over rising oceans, et cetera, and many of our bases are right along the coast and the roads and railroads are affected by this.

TRANSCOM and associated entities have yet to issue any updates to their guidance and eligibility criteria for projects under the DAR program, so can you give us an update as to what is happening with the DAR program, how are our changes being implemented, and the status of coordination between the DOT and the Federal Highway Administration, et cetera. Again, great strategists don't usually think about the road outside the base; they are thinking about, you know, do I have enough ships? Do I have enough? But it is the little things, so any comments, I would appreciate.

General VAN OVOST. Yes, Senator. You pointed to a critical capability. Our posture is really dependent upon, it starts with the national infrastructure here and power projection, especially from our Army, power projection platforms begins with sufficient road and rail capacity to get to the seaports, as part of the initial marshaling for projection of that decisive power into the future.

I am not familiar with the Defense Access Road Program, but I am familiar with the national, the infrastructure bills and the various strategic highway programs and strategic rail programs. My understanding is that U.S. Transportation Command has been working with the Department of Transportation on providing some advice in the areas of most risk in that area.

So, Chairman, if confirmed, I would look to come back to you with my assessment of the DAR program.

Chairman REED. Well, thank you very much, General.

Again, this might be seen as details, but as I keep harping, it is the little stuff that, oops, we forgot that, and the big stuff doesn't happen.

We are at a juncture where my colleagues, we have no one, I think, available on either the Webex or in person; as such, General, let me thank you for your testimony and I look forward to your confirmation and to your service as the next USTRANSCOM Commander.

Thank you very much, ma'am.

General VAN OVOST. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman REED. With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:50 a.m., the Committee adjourned.]

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[Prepared questions submitted to General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF by Chairman Reed prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

#### QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

##### DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

*Question.* What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U.S. Transportation Command?

*Answer.* The Commander, United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), is responsible for providing air, land, and sea transportation for the DOD, in peace, crisis and war. USTRANSCOM executes through three compo-

ment commands and two subordinate commands to accomplish this mission: Air Mobility Command (AMC), Military Sealift Command (MSC), and the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), as well as the Joint Transportation Reserve Unit (JTRU) and the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC). The Commander is assigned five responsibilities in the Unified Command Plan (UCP), to include: Mobility Joint Force Provider, DOD single manager for transportation, Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise planning and operations, DOD Single Manager for Patient Movement, and the Joint Enabling Capabilities provider.

*Question.* What background and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform these duties?

*Answer.* Beyond my experience commanding mobility units at multiple levels and staff experience at USTRANSCOM headquarters, I was the Director for Mobility Forces in CENTCOM, coordinating with the Combatant Command, Services, and USTRANSCOM, to ensure the Commander's operational scheme of maneuver was supported across the theater. My time on the Joint Staff as the Deputy Director for Europe, NATO, and Russia Plans and Policy, then subsequently the Vice Director of the Joint Staff, provided in-depth knowledge and experience with the National Defense Strategy, roles of the Services, Combatant Commanders, the Chairman, and the Secretary of Defense to create and execute globally integrated plans and comprehensive policies that achieve national interests.

My subsequent time as the Director of the Air Staff provided the experience of balancing service responsibilities to organize, train and equip ready forces for today and tomorrow, with meeting the demands of the Combatant Commander as they fulfill National Defense Strategy requirements today. This position directly led to my selection as Commander, Air Mobility Command, the Air Component of USTRANSCOM.

*Question.* Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the Commander, U.S. Transportation Command?

*Answer.* As the current USTRANSCOM Air Component Commander, I am aware of the breadth of USTRANSCOM's worldwide responsibilities. If confirmed, I will engage with all of USTRANSCOM's component commands, DOD agencies, and commercial partners to ensure I fully understand the range of challenges they face in order to accomplish USTRANSCOM's crucial mission.

#### RELATIONSHIPS

*Question.* If confirmed, what will be your relationship with:  
The Secretary of Defense.

*Answer.* The Commander, USTRANSCOM, performs his or her duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense. The USTRANSCOM Commander is responsible directly to the Secretary of Defense to carry out the command's missions.

*Question.* The Deputy Secretary of Defense

*Answer.* The Deputy Secretary of Defense has the authority to act for the Secretary of Defense when serving as his designated representative in the Secretary's absence. As such, the USTRANSCOM Commander will report to and through the Deputy Secretary when serving in that capacity.

6. *Question.* The Under Secretaries of Defense

*Answer.* Under Secretaries of Defense coordinate and exchange information with DOD components, including Combatant Commands, which have collateral or related functions. In practice, this coordination and exchange is normally routed through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Additionally, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment provides logistics policy for the Department. If confirmed as a Combatant Commander, I look forward to continuing these relationships.

*Question.* The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

*Answer.* As specified in Title 10, U.S.C., the Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Defense. The Chairman is not, by law, in the chain of command, which runs from the President through the Secretary of Defense to each Combatant Commander. In his or her role as the Global Integrator, however, the CJCS plays an important role in a full range of security matters on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I will keep the Chairman fully informed regarding USTRANSCOM matters.

*Question.* The Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs

*Answer.* Each Service Secretary is responsible for equipping, training, and maintaining ready forces belonging to that Military Department. Close coordination with

each Service Secretary providing forces to USTRANSCOM is essential to ensure the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise (JDDE) remains ready to meet national security requirements. In addition, USTRANSCOM is responsible to deliver service-provided forces to Combatant Commanders. If confirmed as the Commander USTRANSCOM, I will continue my predecessors' productive dialogue with the Service Chiefs and the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

*Question.* The other Combatant Commanders

*Answer.* As one of four UCP-designated Combatant Commands with Transregional responsibilities, USTRANSCOM's primary mission is to support each of the Combatant Commanders in accomplishing the responsibilities assigned to them in the UCP. Given the complexity of today's security environment, it is essential all the Combatant Commanders work together to execute U.S. national security policy. If confirmed, I will continue to build upon the trust and mutual support my predecessors have fostered with the other Combatant Commanders.

*Question.* The Director of the Defense Logistics Agency

*Answer.* The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) manages the global supply chain for the DOD, other Federal agencies, and partner and allied nations. USTRANSCOM maintains a strong strategic partnership with DLA. USTRANSCOM includes the DLA Director in our periodic Component Commanders conferences, and if confirmed I have every intention of continuing to bolster this relationship. USTRANSCOM and DLA have ongoing transformational efforts to improve the JDDE operational outcomes and lay the groundwork for data-related initiatives.

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

*Question.* In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Commander, U.S. Transportation Command?

*Answer.* USTRANSCOM is a warfighting combatant command that enables the projection and sustainment of combat power at a time and place of our Nation's choosing. As the character of logistics evolves, we increasingly face direct challenges across all domains, particularly in areas of previously unmatched superiority - including our global logistics capability. Accordingly, the Command's major challenges are maintaining warfighting readiness and modernizing the DOD's transportation assets. The sealift and aerial refueling fleets are aging, demanding recapitalized fleets capable of operating in contested environments. Additionally, we must maintain a competitive edge with our adversaries in the cyber domain. Command and control is an essential element of our warfighting framework, necessitating steady focus on cyber assurance and improved cyber security. If confirmed as the next USTRANSCOM Commander, I will ensure the JDDE remains capable of projecting decisive military power while preserving the ability to command and control global mobility operations.

*Question.* If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with my fellow Combatant Commanders, Service Chiefs, Defense Agencies, Joint Staff and OSD partners to assess risks and collaboratively develop mitigation strategies. My near-term challenge will be dealing with the ever-growing number of cyber adversaries. I will continue the Command's efforts to pursue several initiatives in cyber resiliency and digital modernization, as well as partner with the commercial sector to improve JDDE cyber security. Fortunately, for sealift, there is a recapitalization plan in place to acquire used sealift vessels over the next 10 years; and I will ensure we continue partnering with the Navy to ensure we have the necessary Congressional authorities. As the Air Mobility Command Commander, I am familiar with the aerial refueling challenges, and I support the USAF's plan to release KC-46 interim capability for select missions, while carefully managing legacy tanker retirements and securing additional Reserve man-days to meet day-to-day and crisis requirements.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY (NDS)

*Question.* The 2018 NDS prioritized the "long-term, strategic competition" with revisionist powers China and Russia as the primary challenge with which the United States must contend, while also recognizing the need to deter and counter rogue regimes like North Korea and Iran and move to a more resource sustainable approach to counterterrorism.

In your view, what, if any, changes should be considered in reshaping the NDS, taking into account developments since 2018?

*Answer.* USTRANSCOM has made recommendations to the team preparing the forthcoming NDS, and most of those inputs can only be shared in a classified environment. As Secretary Austin has written and spoken, the need for an integrated approach to deterrence should be an important concept shaping the future NDS and

the Nation's approach to either potential near peer threats such as China or Russia or rogue regimes like North Korea and Iran. I recommend that even though the 2018 NDS specified Resilient and Agile Logistics as a key competitive advantage for the United States, the future NDS should more directly address the very real deterrent effect logistics formations and investments have through their demonstrated ability to project and sustain US power to any point on the globe at a time and place of our choosing. That can take the form of delivering a combat brigade or pallets of vaccine doses. Recent cyberattacks on the Colonial Pipeline or supply chain entities clearly demonstrate that our ability to project power can and (we expect) will be disrupted and contested. The future NDS should prioritize investments in strategic mobility assets, changes in operating concepts and investments in our allies and partners. Those investments speak directly to President Biden's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance requirement, "to defend access to the global commons, including freedom of navigation and overflight rights, under international law." Therefore, to reiterate, the 2021 NDS should expand upon logistics, strategic mobility, and the access, basing and overflight agreements that are the foundation for our ability to achieve the Nation's security objectives. Consequently, we should ensure the NDS recognizes the importance of logistics requirements and challenges to the Department's ability to successfully achieve the objectives of the NDS.

*Question.* What capabilities do you believe the Joint Force needs from the U.S. Transportation Command to prevail in competition with great power adversaries?

Answer. Our ability to rapidly move forces transoceanic distances is a strategic comparative advantage, providing a wide range of options in support of the National Defense Strategy while creating multiple dilemmas for our adversaries. Should deterrence fail, USTRANSCOM delivers two capabilities for DOD:

- #1, an immediate force tonight, and
- #2, a decisive force when needed.

USTRANSCOM's responsibility to the Secretary of Defense is global power projection and the ability to prioritize limited resources to the highest strategic priority, shifting temporally and spatially across the globe to meet the highest national security objective.

The NDS's Global Operating Model and Dynamic Force Employment concepts emphasize sustaining capabilities for major combat, while "providing options for proactive and scalable employment of the Joint Force."

*Question.* How do you intend to work with the services to implement these concepts while balancing the need to rebuild readiness?

Answer. USTRANSCOM will continue to work with military Service Departments to address air refueling, airlift, and sealift readiness concerns, to provide the capabilities needed to support a modernized Global Operating Model while enabling concepts such as Dynamic Force Employment (DFE). We will continue to fully support and are actively engaged with the Joint Staff, fellow combatant commands, and the Services in developing the emerging Joint Warfighting Concept and its supporting concepts, especially the Joint Concept for Contested Logistics.

USTRANSCOM's ability to project and sustain military forces is inextricably linked to commercial industry, which provides critical transportation capacity and access to global networks to meet requirements in both the competition phase and times of crisis. We can and do leverage commercial industry creating space for our organic capabilities to train and rebuild readiness, while maintaining our ability to support the Joint Force.

As part of its focus on near peer competitors, the NDS disputes the decades-long assumption that the U.S. military will have uncontested access to international airspace and sea lanes. Given this new threat:

*Question.* What areas of operations will be more challenging for the joint distribution and deployment enterprise, and what would you do, if confirmed, to mitigate those challenges?

Answer. As accurately described in the NDS, the U.S. military no longer has assured access to international airspace and sea lanes. Beyond the physical challenges in our "fight to get to the fight," supply chains are neither robust nor resilient, presenting dilemmas across the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise in sustainment operations for all commodities, particularly with liquid energy. Additionally, USTRANSCOM's partnerships with commercial entities that use unclassified information systems add to the challenge of ensuring reliable communication, command, and control systems required to effectively lead global distribution and sustainment operations across the JDDE.

I will work with DLA, the Services, fellow Combatant Commands, and commercial partners to attain the agreements and resolutions necessary to reduce these vulnerabilities while preserving our ability to project and sustain military power globally. I will leverage existing DOD forums to develop cross functional solutions

and action plans, as well as engage in well-established associations with our air, sea, and surface industry partners to address specific challenges related to our commercial associates. Finally, I will work with the JDDE to ensure solutions are developed, scrutinized, and prioritized using all available tools at my disposal including, but not limited to, the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) and Integrated Priority List (IPL).

*Question.* Do these challenges require the services to generate more capabilities to deal with anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) environments, where we could face greater enemy mine or ISR capabilities?

*Answer.* DOD is in the process of modifying the way we think about mobility operations to better understand the investment trades required to preserve our ability to project military power globally. All the Services are pursuing multiple different capabilities to combat persistent, multi-domain A2/AD challenges, to include adversary mine and ISR capabilities, within the future operating environment. If confirmed, I am fully committed to work across the Department and with the Services to continue this important effort.

#### CONTESTED LOGISTICS

*Question.* Over the last several years, DOD and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) have conducted or sponsored several studies on contested mobility and logistics which have resulted in more than 50 recommendations. However, the GAO found that DOD has failed to implement many of these recommendations. As a result, DOD and INDOPACOM may be missing an opportunity to leverage existing knowledge on mobility challenges in contested environments and increase resilience for major conflicts as envisioned in the National Defense Strategy.

In your opinion, what are the highest priorities and key challenges that DOD must address in a contested logistics environment in a potential conflict with China and Russia? Please identify which of those challenges are unique to either China or Russia and which are common to both.

*Answer.* Long, contested lines of communications and the tyranny of distance in the Indo-Pacific region create dilemmas that will require the integration of logistics planning across all warfighting functions to support the Joint war fight. Common to both China and Russia, the growth in demand from increasingly dispersed operations, increasingly complex and lethal kinetic platforms, and extended adversary anti-access/area denial capabilities place immediate stressors on the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise to support forward forces immediately, as we rapidly build capacity to deploy a decisive force.

Strategic lift (sea and air) assets and the ability to dynamically command and control those assets remain critical when looking at both great power challenges. Strategic lift allows us to present a sizeable Joint Force at scale around the globe. Additionally, air refueling is a key enabler that allows this enterprise to rapidly deploy fighters and bombers, as well as support the employment of those combat aircraft across strategic distances.

Ongoing recapitalization efforts remain crucial to this enterprise. We need to sustain efforts to recapitalize our sealift fleet to improve our readiness and capacity to project the Joint Force. The KC-46 is another key investment to recapitalize the aging AR fleet. However, even when the 179th KC-46 is delivered, there will still be 300 KC-135s at 67 plus years of age. Investments in air refueling will remain necessary. In addition to recapitalization efforts, we must also continue to invest in the readiness and maintenance of some of our older platforms. We have a great relationship with the Navy and the Air Force and are extremely appreciative of their efforts to enhance spending for readiness.

Finally, intratheater lift (airlift and sealift) is also critical to sustain and support the force to meet volume and time-sensitive requirements for cargo, passengers, and fuel. This is especially the case in the Indo-Pacific region. As captured in both the Mobility Capability Requirements Study and Fuel Tanker Vessel Study recently provided to Congress, the Department must continue efforts to identify the types and mix of intratheater air and sealift assets needed to successfully support and sustain operations in the future operating environment.

*Question.* What capability and/or capacity shortfalls in the current Joint Force present the most significant challenge to supporting U.S. Transportation Command operations in these contested environments?

*Answer.* The full capacity of the JDDE relies upon timely access to the Reserve Components and emergency preparedness programs like the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) and Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) that leverage commercial industry augmentation. The Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA directed a Mobility Capability Requirements Study (MCRS) to assess the adequacy of the JDDE's capacity



relative to the current NDS. The study assessed the demands associated with the National Defense Strategy and factored the implications of contested environments on degraded mobility outputs. I have reviewed the findings and recommendations of the recently released MCRS and Fuel Tanker Vessel Study, and if confirmed, I will work with the Joint community to implement appropriate recommendations from the study.

*Question.* Which programs, in your assessment, are the highest priorities for mitigating current and emerging warfighting capability and/or capacity shortfalls in the Joint Force?

*Answer.* The recently completed Mobility Capability Requirements Study (MCRS) and Fuel Tanker Vessel Studies provide a great roadmap for challenges facing USTRANSCOM as the Department looks at the future Joint Operating Environment. If confirmed, I'm committed to review and implement recommendations stemming from the studies while also conducting my own review and assessment of the JDDE to ensure the DOD mobility enterprise is prepared to meet current and future requirements consistent with the Joint Operating Environment described in the NDS. In my current role as the Commander, Air Mobility Command, I am aware these priorities may include enhanced cyber mission assurance, improving command and control capabilities, while also sustaining key ongoing recapitalization efforts, like air refueling and sealift recapitalization. Finally, as captured in both recently completed studies, the Department must work to identify the right type and mix of intra-theater (sea and air) capabilities for the future operating environment.

Given the "tyranny of distance" in the Pacific, there are significant challenges specifically related to energy requirements in a contested environment, which could be mitigated by making targeted investments and operational energy improvements to both military platforms and installations.

*Question.* If confirmed, what role would you take to reduce contested logistics vulnerabilities in INDOPACOM and elsewhere, and what specific operational energy improvements do you envision pursuing?

*Answer.* USTRANSCOM recently completed the Fuel Tanker Vessel Study to address the department's ability to meet future combatant commander deployment and sustainment requirements. The study considered both U.S. flagged and foreign flagged capacity to ensure enough capacity exists to meet NDS requirements. The study also considered contested environment impacts likely to be encountered in future operations. The study concluded that there is insufficient US Flag tanker capacity to meet NDS requirements. DOD will have an enduring need for foreign flag tanker augmentation. However, the mission, location, and timing of some fuel delivery requirements drives the need for U.S. flag tankers. Though there is sufficient friendly foreign flag capacity, there is substantial risk to mission associated with a heavy reliance on foreign flag tankers, particularly for intra-theater missions within a contested environment. The analysis clearly demonstrated the need for a Tanker Security Program in addition to identifying several other solutions. These solutions, working together, are important steps toward a comprehensive strategy to increase U.S. flag tanker capacity, to reduce the risk of reliance on foreign flag tankers for the most important fuel missions, and to ensure the DOD has sufficient tanker capabilities to meet NDS objectives.

#### EXPERIENCE IN MANAGING LOGISTICS OPERATIONS

*Question.* You have most recently served as the Commander of the Air Mobility Command, the air component of the U.S. Transportation Command.

What steps do you believe you need to take to achieve a more complete understanding of the logistics operations of the other component commands of U.S. Transportation Command?

*Answer.* As the current Air Component Commander, and having served as a staff officer in USTRANSCOM, I am familiar with the logistics operations of the component commands and the capabilities they bring to bear to accomplish the global mission. If confirmed, I will engage with the USTRANSCOM components and subordinate command, as well as sister agencies and commercial partners to enhance my understanding of the capability and challenges they face in their execution of that global mission.

#### CIVIL RESERVE AIR FLEET

*Question.* The military services rely heavily on the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) to supplement organic airlift in order to meet the U.S. Transportation Command's wartime and peacetime transportation requirements.

What is your assessment of the CRAF's ability to meet requirements to transport any equipment, materials, or commodities for U.S. military operations or to respond to a humanitarian disaster?

Answer. Today, the CRAF program is fully subscribed with 26 carriers to meet anticipated DOD needs by guaranteeing wartime commitment through assured peacetime business. They are well positioned to support humanitarian assistance, military operations, and peacetime missions. It should be noted, regardless of the mission profile, employment of CRAF capabilities requires a permissive environment. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our CRAF partners to ensure they remain committed and ready to support DOD requirements when needed.

*Question.* How much should we be relying on CRAF to meet our peacetime and wartime airlift requirements?

Answer. Consistent with our National Airlift Policy, CRAF is designed to leverage the commercial air carrier industry to provide capability beyond that available in the organic military airlift fleet. In peacetime, our reliance should be consistent with the requirement to maintain the proficiency and operational readiness of the organic military requirement, while ensuring the capability of our commercial partners to meet approved requirements for military airlift in wartime. I believe the DOD must strike a balance between commercial airlift and the organic fleet to ensure our military crews are trained, proficient and postured to meet the requirements outlined in the Mobility Capability Requirements Study for NDAA fiscal year 2020. This study provides DOD leadership with the analysis required to effectively manage the DOD's reliance on commercial augmentation without negatively impacting the military force.

*Question.* What changes, if any, do you think need to be made to CRAF—authorities, requirements, composition—to ensure that CRAF can continue to meet our needs?

Answer. I greatly appreciate how USTRANSCOM and Air Mobility Command continuously assess all facets of the CRAF program to ensure it meets our needs and supports the NDS. In doing so, USTRANSCOM recently concluded the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS 20). Although MCRS 20 found current CRAF subscription levels provide sufficient capacity to meet passenger and cargo requirements above the capacity of the organic mobility fleet, it is worth exploring the potential to enhance the CONUS aeromedical evacuation component of CRAF to reduce stress on organic theater airlift and meet NDS requirements. If confirmed, I am committed to further exploring this essential capability.

#### SEALIFT

*Question.* When the United States goes to war, U.S. Transportation Command moves approximately 90% of its cargo requirements with the strategic sealift fleet, which consists of government-owned ships augmented by the commercial U.S.-flagged fleet.

What is your assessment of current and planned organic strategic sealift capacity?

Answer. Department of Defense mobility studies over the past two decades have validated the requirement for approximately 20 million square feet of Roll-on/Roll-off (RO/RO) sealift capacity. The U.S. Navy organic fleet provides approximately three-fourths of the capacity, and the remainder is sourced commercially through the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA). Over the next 10 years, 33 of 50 USN RO/RO vessels, which deliver the surge force, will retire. The readiness of this aging fleet is USTRANSCOM's number one readiness concern. I support OSD and Navy's plan to recapitalize the fleet by purchasing used commercial ships to improve readiness to meet the National Defense Strategy. A long-term, stable procurement strategy will ensure we maintain sufficient capacity to deploy the force.

*Question.* What do you believe is the appropriate mix of new construction, used ship purchasing, and service life extensions that the Department should employ in the Ready Reserve Force recapitalization plan?

Answer. I defer to the U.S. Navy within the context of their Service responsibilities to retain a viable surge sealift capacity to deliver the decisive force. The Navy's plan to purchase used ships is an appropriate, cost-effective approach for the organic fleet, and includes significant work for the U.S. industrial base to convert/upgrade the used ships in U.S. shipyards. The health of the ship construction and repair base is essential to our national interests, and the Navy must ensure its overall shipbuilding program is sufficient to maintain the U.S. shipyard capacity.

*Question.* What is your view of the importance of maintaining U.S.-flagged vessels to participate in strategic sealift, including through the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement and Maritime Security Program?

Answer. The U.S. has long been a maritime nation. I believe it is critically important to maintain a viable U.S. flagged sealift capability to support DOD needs. The vessels within the VISA provide the Department assured access to commercial capacity, providing approximately twenty-five percent of the Department's Joint Force deployment capacity, and the majority of its sustainment capacity. Additionally, the Maritime Security Program (MSP) provides a fleet that is actively plying our deep-sea international trades, supporting National Economic Prosperity, while meeting national defense and other security requirements. These U.S.-flagged commercial sealift programs employ a pool of trained and ready U.S. Merchant Mariners needed to crew the U.S. Navy organic fleet when it transitions from reduced operating status to fully operational status.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the adequacy of the current and qualified, licensed merchant mariner population who would be available to crew strategic sealift vessels to meet surge and protracted U.S. Transportation Command requirements?

Answer. In accordance with Presidential Directives and National Policy, USTRANSCOM relies on the Maritime Administration to determine whether adequate manpower is available to support the operation of reserve ships during a crisis. The current Department of Transportation/Maritime Administration estimates there are sufficient Mariners to activate the surge fleet but would be challenged to concurrently sustain both the organic and commercial fleets through a crew rotation. Any additional decrement to U.S. Merchant Mariner availability increases the risk to our ability to surge the fleet.

#### GLOBAL HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONTRACT

*Question.* For more than two years, U.S. Transportation Command has attempted to consolidate its Global Household Goods Contract (GHC) into a single prime contractor that would oversee close to 1,000 subcontractors in charge of moving servicemembers and their families. U.S. Transportation Command contends this was done due to poor customer service and outcomes under the current model. In 2020, the GAO upheld numerous protests against U.S. Transportation Command awarding of the Global Household Goods contract citing that it violated federal procurement law. U.S. Transportation Command stated that the GHC would represent the "best value" for DOD and servicemembers when cost and performance are considered, yet according to reports, the winning bid was billions more over the life of the contract. The contract is now being re-competed with an award due in September of 2021.

What is your current assessment of the existing household goods program? Do you believe a new system is needed, and do you believe U.S. Transportation Command approach is the best path forward?

Answer. The Defense Personal Property Enterprise exists for one purpose and one purpose only: to provide quality moving and storage services to DOD and Coast Guard personnel and their families. As these families have correctly highlighted over the last several years, the Department faltered on this mission. I assess the existing household goods program as incapable of consistently generating the quality capacity DOD personnel and their families deserve or the accountability Congress demands.

I believe change is required in order to keep faith with military families, I believe the Department of Defense has a thoughtful, deliberate strategy to improve the relocation process, and I believe the reform efforts USTRANSCOM is leading on behalf of DOD—to include the Global Household Goods Contract (GHC)—will deliver credible improvements to military families.

In the existing household goods program, each of DOD's 39 Regional Shipping Offices award business to over 900 Transportation Service Providers on a shipment-by-shipment basis. The transactional nature of our relationship with a disparate confederation of suppliers prevents us from capitalizing on existing capacity, limits industry investment in generating additional capacity, and inhibits us from incorporating modern capabilities (to include the convenient technology we take for granted in every aspect of our personal lives) into the Defense Personal Property Program. And because DOD does not have a formal contract with any of these providers, the Department cannot hold them accountable for performance failures in a meaningful way. This fragmented approach generates the friction, frustration, and opacity many military families endure during the relocation process.

The GHC is an opportunity to raise the standard for DOD families, attract additional quality capacity to the program, and introduce a level of accountability absent in today's program.

I am confident in the approach because it has been transparent, involved broad collaboration across the Department's Personnel and Logistics communities, and incorporated industry input. Additionally, I appreciate that it is just as focused on improving the Department's own internal management framework as it is improving the level of service from commercial providers.

What resonates with me most, though, is the Department's focus on relocating people and addressing perennial family pain-points and not simply focusing on moving their things.

*Question.* If confirmed, would you continue the awarding of a new GHC prime contractor with the current scheduled September award date?

Answer. Yes, but only after rigorous reviews are conducted to ensure the recommendations GAO made in its protest decision were implemented and (as was done ahead of the previous award) after receiving concurrence from the Services. I understand the earliest the contract will be awarded is October 2021.

Changing the conditions within which industry operates is required: to improve access to and management of quality capacity to meet DOD's peak demand; to improve communication throughout the process; to deliver modern, digital management tools to DOD customers; to improve the claims process in the event of loss, damage, or inconvenience; and to enable the Department to affix the accountability and responsibility lacking in today's program. The Global Households Goods Contract delivers that change.

I concur with the 'Best Value' acquisition strategy rather than awarding to the lowest price, technically acceptable bidder. That said, I understand the reports referenced in the introductory paragraph to be incorrect. As directed by the 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act, USTRANSCOM submitted a cost report detailing the projected savings by Military Department to the Defense Committees on 22 April 2020. This cost report (based on rates submitted by the initial GHC awardee) projected savings of \$210 million across the FYDP when compared to what DOD pays under the current program. I commit to updating this cost report and submitting it to the Defense Committees before awarding a new contract.

Additionally, and just as GEN Lyons has done, I commit to continuing the transparency and close coordination with each of the Defense Committee staffs on the full range of issues involving the Defense Personal Property Program.

*Question.* There have been press reports of shortages of movers in areas with a high military population. Families are getting their PCS orders cancelled at the last minute. Does this post-pandemic labor shortage change the way you would think about handling the GHC?

Answer. I believe the labor shortages further highlight the inherent flaws in relying on a fractured, transactional process to manage the critical business of relocating military families around the globe. If anything, the impacts of the labor shortages (things like families being stranded at the curb or being served by an incompetent crew) underscore the necessity of entering in to a multi-year contractual relationship to 1) provide industry with the confidence and rationale to invest in capacity and relationships with trusted suppliers to meet DOD's demand and, 2) provide DOD with meaningful avenues of accountability, which is lacking in the existing program.

*Question.* If confirmed, what will you do to provide transparency and information to families planning moves?

Answer. Communication can make or break the relocation experience for DOD personnel and their families. The Department must deliver accurate and timely information directly to families planning moves. Simple, relevant, easily accessible products must clearly outline what customers can expect during the process and the business rules in place to protect them. We must be similarly clear on who they can call for help when things go wrong.

Recent surveys highlight the need for more comprehensive information in a central location. I will continue the partnership USTRANSCOM established with OSD P&R to leverage the Military OneSource platform as the authoritative source for DP3-related information. Providing a 'single source of truth' will reduce the likelihood of families finding out-of-date or conflicting instructions when searching for information and eliminate customer confusion on where to turn to find the requisite information to conduct successful moves.

I will also prioritize the work to develop simple, standard products and deliver them directly to DP3 customers. The Department must evolve beyond static brochures and capitalize on modern communication channels to present customers with the 'right' information when they need it. Recent surveys highlight the need for simple, modern tutorials explaining the relocation process.

While each service has made improvements to their 'Help Desks,' I do see value in establishing a Department-wide Help Desk staffed with professional customer

service representatives that are available 24x7 to address the full range of relocation issues (such as housing, reporting timelines, travel) as opposed to simply answering personal property questions.

Further, I commit to publishing DP3 metrics on publicly-available websites. The Government Accountability Office's sensible recommendation to develop DP3-related metrics will provide DOD leaders with a clear assessment of the program's performance; making these metrics available to all DP3 stakeholders is a critical component in delivering on the Department's commitment to transparency.

Finally, I will continue to invest time and resources into hosting the Personal Property Relocation Advisory Panel (PPRAP) and meeting with the Service-appointed Family Advocates to identify and solve relocation problems for military families.

#### CYBERSECURITY

*Question.* Most of the critical communications and operations of the Defense Department can be conducted over the classified internet service of the Department, which is not connected to the public internet and is therefore much more protected against eavesdropping, espionage, and/or disruption by computer network attacks. U.S. Transportation Command, however, must communicate over the unclassified internet with many private-sector entities that are essential to the Defense Department's force generation and deployment operations in the transportation and shipping industries in particular.

What actions do you plan to take, if confirmed, to ensure that the Department reduces the risk of cyber intrusions that would affect U.S. Transportation Command's operations?

*Answer.* As the USTRANSCOM Air Component Commander, I know that USTRANSCOM has made significant advancements to reduce the risk of cyber intrusions. If confirmed, I will continue to make cyber mission assurance a top priority for the Command and ensure we make the appropriate investments to protect Command and Control / Information Technology systems and infrastructure that are most consequential to mission success. My focus areas will include adopting security best practices, increasing the emphasis on improving the cybersecurity posture of our most critical systems, and partnering with the Department to continue progress on implementing the new information security framework, known as Zero Trust. With USTRANSCOM's mission inextricably linked to our commercial industry partners, I will continue to evolve the Command's cybersecurity contract language, so it remains aligned with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) cybersecurity framework and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) cybersecurity requirements. In addition, I will work with the Department to ensure USTRANSCOM has sufficient resiliency and capacity across the JDDE to operate in a contested cyber environment. If confirmed, I look forward to evolving the strong relationship USTRANSCOM already has with USCYBERCOM and other stakeholders to advance the Department's capabilities to reduce the risk of cyber intrusions to preserve USTRANSCOM's ability to meet our national security objectives.

*Question.* Do you believe that the current posture of U.S. Transportation Command and the Department is sufficient to deal with adversaries in cyberspace?

*Answer.* The posture of USTRANSCOM and the Department is likely insufficient to deal with a well-resourced, capable, and determined nation-state adversary. Therefore, we must continue to improve our ability to protect against, detect, and respond to increasingly sophisticated adversary actions that exploit vulnerabilities. The recent malicious cyber campaigns against the Nation's public and private sector highlight the increasing threat to U.S. national security. For USTRANSCOM, cyber vulnerabilities present risk to strategic logistics as adversaries continue to demonstrate the willingness and capability to target both military and associated commercial industry partners. In this rapidly changing environment, the Department continues to improve the resilience of military networks and implement defensive measures that make it harder for malicious cyber actors to successfully compromise networks. If confirmed, I will continue the focus on cyber mission assurance and look forward to building upon existing relationships with USCYBERCOM, DHS, and other key stakeholders to mitigate the operational impact of any adversary actions.

*Question.* What do you believe are the critical needs of U.S. Transportation Command for operating in the presence of cybersecurity threats?

*Answer.* Cyberspace is a warfighting domain in which capable adversaries continuously attempt to degrade our Nation's ability to project the Joint Force globally. The JDDE, which includes a wide range of commercial dependencies, represents a large cyber-attack surface for potential adversaries. For USTRANSCOM to operate

in the presence of cybersecurity threats, it must continue efforts to develop a deeper understanding of adversary capabilities and intentions, as well as an understanding of the cyber terrain most consequential to mission success and the associated vulnerabilities. I'm aware that over the past year the Command has significantly improved its understanding of both the threat and key cyber terrain, and if confirmed I'll continue to focus on advancing these efforts. USTRANSCOM must also continue to invest in technologies and the right cyber talent to modernize Information Technology capabilities and defend critical cyber infrastructure, that will in turn enable mission execution in the face of a persistent cyber threat. With USTRANSCOM's mission inextricably linked to our commercial industry partners, it's also critical that the Command continue to revise existing cybersecurity contract language to remain aligned with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) cybersecurity framework and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) cybersecurity requirements. Furthermore, the Command needs to ensure it retains sufficient operational resiliency across the JDDE to enable continued operations in a contested cyber environment. If confirmed, I will continuously work to ensure these needs are met.

*Question.* How important is it that U.S. Transportation Command be aware of cyber intrusions by advanced persistent threat (APT) actors into the networks of airlines, shippers, and other defense contractors that enable the Command's operations?

*Answer.* Commercial industry partners make up a significant portion of USTRANSCOM's capacity. As such, it is extremely important to be aware of APT intrusions into their networks so the command can rapidly assess potential impacts to global operations and take response actions to mitigate the risk to mission. It is also important for us to examine what occurred during the intrusion so we're able to apply lessons learned.

*Question.* When U.S. Transportation Command becomes aware of an APT intrusion into an operationally critical contractor, what steps should the Command take to determine whether operational plans should be adjusted to mitigate the risk of the intrusion affecting military operations?

*Answer.* Prior to changing an operational plan, USTRANSCOM would execute a mission risk assessment process to consider appropriate operational and technical mitigation actions based on the threat, vulnerabilities, and potential mission impact. That risk assessment involves identification (step 1), assessment (step 2), risk management and monitoring (step 3), and reporting (step 4). The outcome of the assessment is to determine the impact or potential impact to the Command's mission, identify mitigation actions, determine whether operational plans should be adjusted, and then take the appropriate actions to implement and increase opportunity for mission success. The mitigation steps are generally a broad-scope, collaborative effort across government, industry, and the international community in some situations. The Defense Transportation System has enough modal and nodal resiliency that often we do not need to adjust operational plans. If confirmed, I will work to ensure USTRANSCOM continues to maintain sufficient resiliency and capacity across the JDDE to mitigate risks.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

*Question.* U.S. Transportation Command relies on the services to make strategic acquisition planning decisions, such as the KC-46 tanker for refueling and the Rough Terrain Container Handler for port loading.

How is U.S. Transportation Command involved in this process, and do you believe the Command's needs are sufficiently taken into account?

*Answer.* Yes, Department processes provide multiple venues for USTRANSCOM to voice Joint Force requirements and identify challenges facing this enterprise in relation to the National Defense Strategy. As a Combatant Command, USTRANSCOM is responsible to define the joint deployment capability and capacity requirements to meet the National Defense Strategy. The Mobility Capability Requirements Study and Fuel Tanker Vessel Study are recently completed products that inform the Department and Congress on how well postured the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise is with respect to meeting global demands.

The Services are responsible to provide a trained and ready capability consistent with war plans. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with the military departments to ensure there is a common understanding of capability requirements and potential risk associated with investments or lack thereof.

*Question.* Should the service force providers change their equipment or units to field better capability to conduct logistics operations in contested environments? If so, how?

Answer. Yes, and I believe the Services are on the path to modifying their equipment and force constructs in recognition of the challenges of the changing contested battlespace. USTRANSCOM has worked diligently with the Joint Staff and the Services to highlight the impact of rising operational demands on a historically underfunded logistics enterprise. For example, it has been an active partner with the Joint Staff and the Services in developing the Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) and associated Supporting Concepts, specifically the Joint Concept for Contested Logistics (JCCL). These family of concepts will guide investment and divestment decisions for the Department to design and develop a more lethal future Joint Force, capable of conducting assured logistics operations across persistently contested environments.

Additionally, emerging Service-level concepts like the Air Force's "Agile Combat Employment," the Army's "Multi-Domain Operations," and the Navy/Marine Corps' emphasis on distributed maritime operations are providing the impetus for relooking at how we would organize and fight against capable peer adversaries. These new concepts all envision a future Joint Force able to employ more lean and agile units in a distributed construct, reducing target profiles and providing dilemmas to adversary targeting efforts. I should point out; however, these concepts levy increased requirements on the JDDE. It is also widely understood adversaries continue to study, and plan against our comparative advantage in logistics and mobility operations. Recent global war-games and simulations are increasingly highlighting adversary abilities to degrade our power projection capabilities under persistent, all-domain attack. If confirmed, I will continue to leverage the Command's technology transfer authorities, and research and development funding to assist the Services and fellow Combatant Commands in exploring, testing, and transitioning advanced capabilities that will enhance global deployment, distribution, and sustainment operations to meet these challenges.

It is widely understood logistics underpins the success of the Joint Force. If confirmed, I will continue to collaborate, as the coordinator of the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, with the Services, other Combatant Commands and the Department to address capability gaps and prioritize investments to enable future logistics and transportation functions, supporting Joint Force operations in contested environments.

U.S. Transportation Command is the only Combatant Command that sets aircraft requirements by total aircraft instead of via primary mission aircraft inventory (PMAI).

*Question.* Do you believe that the Combatant Commanders should determine total fleet sizes for the services or should they advocate for specific requirements for their assigned and apportioned forces? Why or why not?

Answer. I support the department's current budget process, which is designed to balance risk and resources with involvement of all relevant stakeholders – to include the Combatant Commands. It is true that for USTRANSCOM, global transportation capacity is a critical element of our warfighting framework and directly impacts the success of our power projection capability; from a Program Review perspective, I think it is most prudent for our command to think in terms of total fleet inventories, as I believe that allows us to most rapidly respond within an ever-changing global environment. It also allows force providers the flexibility to best manage their respective fleets to meet global requirements.

#### PEACETIME-WARTIME LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

*Question.* Our transportation and logistics systems have been significantly altered over time to reduce organic military air and sealift capacity and to rely instead on commercial aircraft and sealift as well as commercial supply chains to deliver spare parts to deployed forces. This was done to reduce costs and increase buying power and flexibility for the military.

Is there increased risk from this approach? If so, what is the nature of that increased risk?

Answer. Our commercial providers are both a strength and potential vulnerability. There is inherent risk regarding the level of responsiveness in relying on U.S. industry partners to meet wartime deployment and sustainment requirements when these companies are engaged daily in domestic and international commerce moving people and goods across the globe. That risk is mitigated by maintaining a balance of organic and commercial capabilities within the portfolio. Additionally, commercial providers help mitigate geographic access challenges by leveraging existing intermodal networks to deliver military materiel.

*Question.* How should U.S. Transportation Command plan for dealing with the risk inherent in such operations (e.g., providing equipment and logistics to deployed forces thousands of miles away in potential combat zones)?

*Answer.* The recently completed Mobility Capability Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS-20) and Fuel Tanker Vessel Study addressed the department's ability to meet future combatant commander deployment and sustainment requirements. As in past studies, these two studies considered both organic and commercial capabilities to ensure outside capacity exists to meet war plan requirements. These studies also considered the impact of contested environments on the mobility enterprise.

USTRANSCOM's warfighting framework outlines the overarching elements USTRANSCOM constantly assesses in reviewing plans and the global strategic environment. First, our global posture, which includes the nodes and routes critical to the execution of mobility operations is foundational to be able to deliver the Joint Force around the globe. Second, our transportation (organic and commercial) and air refueling capacity, to include the readiness of those forces, enables the deployment of a winning force at the time of need. Finally, the ability to command and control those forces around the globe and integrate with other commands and key warfighting elements is essential to the successful execution of this Command's mission. In sum, by maintaining favorable global posture, sufficient transportation capacity, and the ability to C2 global mobility operations, DOD retains the ability to project immediate and surge forces required to compete, deter, respond and win in order to meet U.S. strategic objectives.

USTRANSCOM will continue to work with OSD, the Joint Staff, Services, and the Combatant Commands to assess operating environments and the ability of the enterprise (organic and commercial) to meet Joint Force demands.

*Question.* How would the nature of the relationship between U.S. Transportation Command and commercial partners change in a wartime environment?

*Answer.* TRANSCOM is inextricably linked to our commercial partners, they are an integral part of providing global assets and capability to support military operations anywhere in the world. The relationships with commercial partners are nurtured by regular engagements in peacetime to ensure lasting support in wartime. As history has shown, the relationship with our commercial partners strengthens in wartime. In the buildups for both Operation Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, our airlift partners in the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program answered the call to activate and provide additional capacity to meet defense requirements. Similarly, commercial sealift capacity in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan overwhelmingly provided the vast majority of sustainment cargo capability during those conflicts. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our commercial partners to ensure the business relationships remain solid and continue to support DOD requirements.

*Question.* If confirmed, how do you plan to find the appropriate balance for logistics capacity between commercial and military logistics systems?

*Answer.* Today, our ability to project military power is inextricably linked to commercial industry. It is important to strike the right balance between commercial capabilities such that DOD is not overly dependent on commercial capability for mission success. The Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA Mobility Capability and Requirements Study (MCRS-20) includes an assessment of the reliance on commercial transportation capacity in support of joint deployment requirements. Future operations in contested environments will require greater effort to ensure we minimize the threats our commercial providers face when transporting military cargo and personnel in non-permissive (wartime) environments. If confirmed, I will work with commercial industry, Department of Transportation, and other stakeholders to ensure commercial capacity is sufficient and appropriate to meet future demands.

The military relies on an extensive network of logistics facilities overseas to support our deployed forces. These overseas depots enable our deployed forces to remain on station longer without having to be supported directly from CONUS. These depots are in host nations, which are U.S. friends and allies.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the resiliency of these overseas depots, particularly in places near ongoing political instability?

*Answer.* USTRANSCOM does not own or operate overseas depots. However, as lead for the JDDE, USTRANSCOM does collaborate closely with Geographic Combatant Commands, Military Services, DLA, and other strategic partners to develop and maintain an agile, secure and resilient distribution network to support and sustain overseas depots. We constantly monitor the operational environment and respond to challenges, as appropriate, with the use of alternate distribution routes and logistics nodes to ensure the continued viability of those depots.



## EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

*Question.* U.S. Transportation Command's uniquely complex and data-heavy mission could present an opportunity to take greater advantage of emerging technology like data analytics or machine learning.

How do you believe U.S. Transportation Command can most effectively leverage emerging technology for improved performance?

*Answer.* I am aware that USTRANSCOM is working towards better leveraging today's advanced computing power through incremental steps with key data initiatives. Acknowledging the criticality of data, a key USTRANSCOM initiative is to develop and implement a cloud-based data architecture to ingest, manage, and govern JDDE data. This will provide the required data foundation to exploit advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. If confirmed, I will continue to support future efforts such as this to enable USTRANSCOM to advance decision making in support of the warfighter throughout the spectrum of conflict.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

*Question.* The Department of Defense has developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assaults, including providing appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault.

What is your view of the steps taken to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in U.S. Transportation Command, including assaults by and against U.S. civilian and contractor personnel?

*Answer.* Sexual assault is destructive and undercuts our ability to keep a mission-focused, ready force. We are committed to preventing this crime, encouraging increased reporting, caring for victims, and holding offenders appropriately accountable. From what I understand, the steps taken by the U.S. Transportation Command have been thorough and successful. I further believe U.S. Transportation Command has policies, structures, and leadership committed to upholding an environment of respect, trust, and dignity to maintain a safe and healthy Command. If confirmed, I will continuously review the program to ensure it remains effective.

*Question.* What is your view of the adequacy of U.S. Transportation Command policies and procedures to protect victims of sexual assault from retaliation for reporting the assault?

*Answer.* Retaliation is an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and should not be tolerated. I believe USTRANSCOM has been following Department of Defense sexual assault prevention and response policies, procedures and applicable laws. However, I know more work remains to be done to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault, including retaliation against individuals who report sexual assault, within the DOD and I remain committed to this improvement journey.

*Question.* What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources in place in U.S. Transportation Command to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?

*Answer.* USTRANSCOM and their partners work together to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault. They also train the entire force annually in the concept of bystander intervention. This training reinforces to all servicemembers that they owe their fellow servicemembers a duty to step in and stop situations that could escalate into unwelcome sexual activity. However, more work remains to be done to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault within the DOD. If confirmed, I will continue to focus on all aspects of sexual assault and harassment, including training, education and accountability, to ensure that all U.S. Transportation Command members serve in a climate of dignity, respect, and inclusion.

*Question.* What is your view of the willingness and ability of military leaders to hold servicemembers accountable for sexual misconduct?

*Answer.* In my personal experience, commanders demonstrated a willingness to hold servicemembers accountable for sexual misconduct. Having had the privilege of serving in the United States Air Force for more than 30 years, at many duty stations, and with the Joint Force, I have been able to observe many different military leaders of all services with varied backgrounds. Over the course of those years, we have made significant progress in building and maintaining a fighting force that is representative of all Americans. The key to maintaining the strength of that force is providing an environment where those who engage in wrongdoing, no matter the offense, are held accountable. A military leader's responsibility is not only to ensure the health and safety of those under their command, but also to hold accountable those who commit misconduct, including sexual misconduct. Military leaders must

understand both ends of this spectrum and remain equally committed to undertaking actions that ensure success.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the adequacy of the resources and programs in U.S. Transportation Command to provide victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help they need?

*Answer.* The health and welfare of the victim is and will continue to be the foremost priority. U.S. Transportation Command teams with partner commands to provide preventive training and the full spectrum of response, medical services, and legal support to victims of sexual assault. While I cannot judge the adequacy of care and legal support in every case, if concerns are brought to my attention, I will take immediate action to address, if confirmed.

*Question.* What is your view about the role of the chain of command in providing necessary support to the victims of sexual assault?

*Answer.* Prevention, response and support of military members who are a victim of sexual assault or harassment is a leadership issue. A military leader is responsible for the health and safety of those under their command. Anyone who is the victim of sexual assault must have the full support of their chain of command and feel safe in coming forward, not only to seek justice but to seek any care they may need. If confirmed, I will continue to hold leaders and commanders accountable for prevention, response and support to victims of sexual assault.

*Question.* What is your view about the role of the chain of command in changing the military culture in which these sexual assaults have occurred?

*Answer.* Sexual assault prevention and response programs are Commander's programs, thus the chain of command is vital to creating an inclusive and supportive command culture. It is the role of the chain of command to make it clear, not just in words but in actions, that crimes including sexual assault will not be tolerated and to establish a safe environment for victims. Current authority granted to commanders allows them to hold accountable not only those who are the perpetrators of sexual assault but also those who engage in other crimes and misconduct that we often see when allegations of sexual assault are reported. If confirmed, I am fully committed to creating an inclusive command culture where members are treated with value, dignity and respect.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the potential impact, if any, of proposals to remove disposition authority from military commanders over felony-level violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including sexual assault?

*Answer.* The Uniform Code of Military Justice exists to provide justice and to maintain good order and discipline, both of which directly contribute to unit cohesion and military effectiveness in combat. I have not studied in-depth the implications of removing all disposition authorities from the military commanders over felony-level violations to clearly understand impacts, positive or negative. Given the criticality of Commander authority on and off the battlefield, we must thoughtfully understand the effects these changes would have on readiness, mission accomplishment, good order and discipline, and trust.

The Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military recommended, and Secretary Austin endorsed, that an independent prosecution authority, rather than military commanders, should decide whether to pursue criminal charges in sexual assault and related cases. I am supportive of effective solutions to combatting the scourge of sexual assault, and I am looking forward to reviewing the Secretary's implementation plan.

*Question.* Do you consider the current sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on restricted reporting, to be effective?

*Answer.* Several years ago, the Department instituted restricted and unrestricted reporting options for victims of sexual assault. These options allowed victims to choose when to report and whether to pursue a criminal investigation. I believe that the reporting options, if properly implemented and followed, are effective and allow the victims to get needed and deserved support services in any case.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions will you take to reassess current policies, procedures, and programs and to ensure senior level direction and oversight of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in U.S. Transportation Command?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I am committed to take all actions necessary to ensure current policies, procedures and programs as well as senior level direction and oversight efforts are complied with, and effective to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in U.S. Transportation Command. In my current assignment and in past assignments, I have met with the military experts and those charged with special responsibilities in these areas including the Inspector General, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Victims' Advocates, Judge Advocates, and others. If given the privilege to serve as Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, I will continue to rely upon these experts and ensure they have unfettered access to myself and all

senior leaders to continuously strive towards a workplace safe from the scourge of sexual assault.

*Question.* What methods for monitoring overall trends and gauging the sufficiency of component commanders' efforts in preventing and responding to incidents of sexual assault do you consider appropriate and intend to implement as U.S. Transportation Command Commander?

*Answer.* Component Commanders, as commanders do at every level, set the standards and require our Joint Force professionals to meet them, including establishing the foundation of military discipline, while ensuring victims receive care, and holding perpetrators accountable. If confirmed, I will work with each of the Component Commanders to gain feedback on sexual assault and harassment trends, and program performance and effectiveness, to gauge the sufficiency of their efforts.

#### RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS

*Question.* What are your views on the state of U.S. Transportation Command's relationship with the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

*Answer.* USTRANSCOM has established a good working relationship with the Committee and Congress in general. I am confident the command is responsive to Congress' requests and aggressively works to meet any suspense set by Congress, whether it be for requests for information, briefings, office calls, or hearings.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and U.S. Transportation Command?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will continue the current working relationships already maintained by USTRANSCOM. I will make myself available to Congress, provide my personal view when asked, and ensure we continue to strive to meet any and all deadlines established by Congress on requests to USTRANSCOM.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

*Question.* In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, reports, records (including documents and electronic communications) and other information from the Department.

Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records (including documents and electronic communications), and other information as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

PEASE AIR NATIONAL GUARD AERIAL PAVEMENT EVALUATION

1. Senator SHAHEEN. General Van Ovost, 11 of 12 apron sections evaluated at Pease Airbase are owned by the Air National Guard (ANG). The North Apron accounts for 24 percent (683,709 sf) of ANG pavement. Overall, the ANG portion of the North Apron (A01C1) is the lowest-rated apron and is in serious condition. Can U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) identify and report the impact this degradation has to future dynamic global operations such as supporting alternate strategic assets outside of KC-46 and KC-135?

General VAN OVOST. On an annual basis the posture plans for both NORTHCOM and TRANSCOM are evaluated over the FYDP to ensure adequate infrastructure exists both in and outside the United States to support operational plans and contingency missions. Pease ANGB is a critical location that is consistently evaluated against those requirements.

2. Senator SHAHEEN. General Van Ovost, in accordance with the 2016 Aerial Pavement Evaluation, all aprons at Pease can support assigned KC-135 and future KC-46 aircraft with no Allowable Gross Load restrictions. Can TRANSCOM coordinate with Air National Guard to report and specify what domestic and international assets are restricted at the deteriorated aprons such as North Apron and Nose Dock Apron which are both in very poor to serious condition?

General VAN OVOST. The 2016 Aerial Pavement Evaluation does confirm all aprons at Pease can support assigned KC-135 and future KC-46 aircraft with no Allowable Gross Load restrictions. Those responsible authorities for aircraft operations to include domestic and international assets are provided airfield suitability information, including apron conditions, from which they can make accurate risk informed decisions on operating their aircraft on the Pease ramps.

3. Senator SHAHEEN. General Van Ovost, can you share how you intend to remain committed to continue engagement with the New Hampshire National Guard on the deterioration of the Pease parking ramp and the impact assessment on Pease's ability to host strategic assets?

General VAN OVOST. Senator Shaheen, if confirmed, I commit to engaging and working with my staff and the committee to ensure sufficient and accessible mobility infrastructure exists, not only in the Northeast, but globally, to meet the National Defense Strategy now and in the future. I will ensure Pease ANGB and its capacity and capabilities are properly evaluated against mobility requirements in TRANSCOM's annual posture plan review. Our Air Force staffs to include the National Guard Bureau, Air Mobility Command, and the Air Force Civil Engineer Center are manned with subject matter experts who will maintain visibility of the Pease parking ramp conditions. The staffs work together to ensure commanders are aware of pavement conditions and ability to support assigned missions.

4. Senator SHAHEEN. General Van Ovost, if TRANSCOM finds that restoration of the parking ramp is in the best interest of supporting global requirements, how do you intend to ensure that the funding to facilitate the restoration of the parking apron is executed in a timely manner to mitigate future operational limitations for Pease?

General VAN OVOST. If current or future mission requirements are identified requiring funding, TRANSCOM will work with the Department of the Air Force and the National Guard Bureau through the MILCON working group process for project prioritization and funding allocation. Parking apron restoration would be prioritized with all Air Force facility restoration, modernization, and repair projects. Air Force staffs review, prioritize, fund, and execute these projects on an annual basis. Pave-

ment evaluations, mission requirements and field commanders will help inform prioritization of any future Pease ANGB apron restoration projects.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

5. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, as part of my responsibility as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) and to ensure the fitness of nominees for appointment to senior positions within the Department of Defense, I will be asking the same two questions that I ask nominees to all of the committees on which I serve. Since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors, or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

General VAN OVOST. No

6. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, have you ever faced discipline, or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

General VAN OVOST. No

AFGHANISTAN EVACUATION

7. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, I want to thank you and your team at Air Mobility Command for your extraordinary work executing the around-the-clock, historic airlift operation to evacuate over 124,000 U.S. citizens and Afghan partners under extremely dangerous conditions. What are your initial thoughts on the airlift, and are there any lessons learned you have identified up front you can discuss with us today?

General VAN OVOST. Our Airmen executed this historic NEO mission with extraordinary skill both in the air and on the ground. Our aircrew, maintainers, logisticians, medical personnel and others continuously amazed the AMC leadership team with their resourcefulness and skill as they tackled new problems daily. Although this was a relatively short operation, the Airmen and our aircraft operated at a significant level of stress and we are in the process of reconstituting the force, regaining readiness, and planning for the future.

The AMC and USTRANSCOM teams are involved in an extensive effort to collect lessons and move out on actionable items to improve our ability to meet mission requirements. However, there are a number of things that are immediately apparent from my perspective. First, this operation confirmed that our ability to project and sustain the joint force is inextricably linked to our commercial industry partners. Second, we need to improve our data systems to provide the information our military commanders, Federal departments, commercial partners, and allies and partners need to make decisions at the speed of relevance. Next USTRANSCOM and AMC C2 systems need to be more flexible when responding to rapidly changing conditions and scenarios. Finally, we need to pursue a refined common operating picture and better tools to increase situational awareness.

8. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, if confirmed, will TRANSCOM conduct an after-action report sharable with Congress so we can understand in more detail what went right and what went wrong during the operation to inform future missions of this sort?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, USTRANSCOM is conducting an after-action report and if confirmed, I will share the report with Congress.

SEALIFT RECAPITALIZATION

9. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, in General Stephen Lyons' statement to the Committee at the TRANSCOM posture hearing earlier this year, he pointed out that 33 of our 50 Roll on/Roll off sealift ships are scheduled for retirement in the next 10 years. In last year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress took steps to bolster the Government's ability to purchase additional used, foreign vessels currently on the market to augment the ready reserve force. How do you assess the progress of recapitalizing our sealift fleet?

General VAN OVOST. I am grateful for Congress' continued support of the U.S. Navy's plan to recapitalize the fleet. Although vessel acquisitions were delayed in FY21, a vessel acquisition manager is now in place. Accordingly, the U.S. Navy and the Maritime Administration expect to survey candidate vessels in the October 2021 timeframe, and they expect used ship purchases in calendar year 2022, to begin the

recapitalization process. If funding for ship purchases continues beyond 2022, I assess that our recapitalization efforts will remain satisfactory.

10. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, do the current sealift recapitalization plans sufficiently address the potential for attrition during a conflict with a near-peer competitor like China or Russia?

General VAN OVOST. The FY20 NDAA directed a Mobility Capability Requirements Study (MCRS) to assess the adequacy of the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise's capacity relative to the current National Defense Strategy (NDS). The study assessed the demands associated with the NDS and factored in the implications of contested environments and their impact on mobility forces. I have reviewed the findings and recommendations of the recently released MCRS and Fuel Tanker Vessel Study, and if confirmed, I will work with the Joint community to implement appropriate recommendations from these studies.

11. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, section 3511 of last year's NDAA provided authority to establish a Tanker Security Program, subject to the results of a TRANSCOM Mobility Requirements Study. Do you have sufficient results from that study to determine whether the Tanker Security Program needs to be implemented?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM recently completed the Fuel Tanker Vessel Study to address the Department's ability to meet future combatant commander deployment and sustainment requirements. This comprehensive and thorough study concluded insufficient U.S. flag tanker capacity exists to meet NDS requirements. DOD will have an enduring need for foreign flag tanker augmentation. The study's analysis clearly demonstrated the need for a Tanker Security Program in addition to identifying several other solutions. These solutions, working together, are important steps toward a comprehensive strategy to increase U.S. flag tanker capacity, to reduce the risk of reliance on foreign flag tankers for the most important fuel missions, and to ensure the DOD has sufficient tanker capabilities to meet NDS objectives.

#### SPACE MOBILITY

12. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, General Lyons confirmed with me in April that TRANSCOM is working closely with industry partners like SpaceX on the viability of using space-based vehicles to rapidly deliver time-sensitive logistics anywhere in the world. This technology is a potential game-changer, especially in the Indo-Pacific, where commanders are confronted with the tyranny of distance and time when moving people and parts from one location to another. Can you provide us a brief progress update on space mobility?

General VAN OVOST. With the recent high-profile successes of commercial rocket launches, the possibility of rocket cargo point-to-point intra-planetary transportation is closer to reality than at any other time in the Space Age. USTRANSCOM continues to investigate rocket cargo transportation, from the end user's perspective, as a potentially disruptive fourth mode of transportation in the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise portfolio. The capabilities of space transportation appear to offer enhanced supply chain responsiveness as well as improved global access. USTRANSCOM is continuing its investigation of space transportation opportunities through cooperative research, with an expanding variety of industry partners. The command's preference is to encourage the development of a competitive field of space transportation sources, offering a spectrum of capabilities from which to choose for urgent lift supporting future operations. Even in these early stages of inquiry, we have learned that more concept development is needed to make space transportation not just feasible, but practical. Integration with existing supply chain equipment, materiel handling and packaging concepts, reliable return of reusable space vehicles from their destinations, and requirements for the supporting infrastructure remain fundamental, to-be-answered questions. We are still in the early stages of adding partners, learning feasibility, and planning concept demonstrations. USTRANSCOM is also in close communication with the DOD's science and technology community, including U.S. Space Force and the Air Force Research Laboratory, to learn from their own deep dives on the status of enabling space transportation technologies. If confirmed, I plan to continue the collaborative work with Government and industry to understand the maturity, uses, limitations, and value of this new transportation opportunity, which is still emerging from industry sources.

13. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, if confirmed, do you plan to prioritize this capability as the next TRANSCOM Commander?

General VAN OVOST. In strategic competition, perpetuation of the Nation's unparalleled global transportation capabilities in the sea, air, and land domains must succeed. At the same time, the opportunities to enhance our response to global transportation needs through the emerging dimension of space transportation, must be explored to determine its reach, speed, and reliability, and feasibility. If confirmed, I will ensure USTRANSCOM remains a proponent of advancing rocket cargo as a potentially disruptive transportation capability.

#### AERIAL REFUELING

14. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, in last year's NDAA, Congress set limits on the number of KC-135 and KC-10 tanker aircraft the Air Force could retire over the next couple years as a result of delays in fielding the new KC-46 aircraft. I think this year's final bill will also have some limitations as well, although that's subject to change. Are you concerned about the pace of retirements of the Air Force's legacy tanker fleet?

General VAN OVOST. I am not concerned with the pace of retirements for KC-10 and KC-135 aircraft, and I support the retirement profile outlined by the DOD legislative proposal submitted for congressional review for the FY22 NDAA. USTRANSCOM currently has sufficient capacity to meet steady State and crisis response demands. With exceptional collaboration between the U.S. Air Force (USAF) and USTRANSCOM, four positive developments occurred over the last year that allowed USTRANSCOM to arrive at a workable solution with the USAF. First, Boeing accepted responsibility to fix the KC-46 contract's "Category 1" deficiencies, enabling the USAF to present a KC-46 Interim Capability Release. Second, the USAF agreed to lower the KC-10 divestiture profile. Third, the USAF funded additional MPA to increase the Reserve and Guard air refueling capacity and contributions. Finally, we are seeing a reduction in air refueling demand in the USCENTCOM AOR.

15. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, what changes to the limits of retirements, if any, do you recommend Congress make in this year's NDAA?

General VAN OVOST. I support the retirement profile outlined by the DOD Legislative Proposal. The exceptional collaboration between the USAF and USTRANSCOM resulted in an agreed-upon retirement profile for FY22: 36 KC-10 (divest 14 in FY22) and 376 KC-135 (divest 18 in FY22).

16. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, is the current and projected future tanker fleet size sufficient to address the potential for attrition during a conflict with a near-peer competitor like China or Russia?

General VAN OVOST. The recently completed Mobility Capability and Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS-20), directed by the FY20 NDAA, goes into detail on the sufficiency of this force element. While all the specifics cannot be detailed here, the air refueling fleet is sufficient, but will certainly be stressed by the various NDS wartime missions associated with great power competitors.

17. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, this year's version of the Senate NDAA would prohibit the Air Force from developing a follow-on to the KC-46 aerial tanker—how do you view that issue?

General VAN OVOST. We cannot delay the acquisition process of a follow-on tanker if the Air Force is to meet the required timelines and budgetary actions necessary to continue this vital recapitalization effort. When the final KC-46 is delivered by the current program of record, the remaining KC-135 fleet will be approximately 70 years of age. The air refueling fleet is and will remain critical to this country's ability to deploy and employ combat aircraft, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, and command and control aircraft during contingency operations. Continued recapitalization of the aging KC-135 is critical to maintain a ready and capable air refueling fleet postured to respond and execute National Defense Strategy wartime mission sets.

#### CYBERSECURITY

18. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, there are benefits to partnering with civilian carriers to meet TRANSCOM's missions, but also the risks that come from partnering with companies who primarily use unclassified networks. What is your understanding of the current status of TRANSCOM's efforts to harden its networks to defend against cyberattacks?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM has made, and continues to make, significant efforts to harden its networks from cyberattacks. Cyber mission assurance is

a top priority for USTRANSCOM, and USTRANSCOM is making investments to protect command, control, information technology systems, and infrastructure that are most consequential to mission success. This includes continued investment in cloud services, which has led to a more robust infrastructure, increased security posture, and improved resiliency of mobility systems. USTRANSCOM is also adopting security best practices, increasing emphasis on improving the cybersecurity posture of its most critical systems, and partnering with organizations within the DOD to continue implementing a new information security framework, known as Zero Trust, to harden its networks.

19. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, if confirmed, will you continue coordinating with CYBERCOM on this effort?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM has a strong relationship with USCYBERCOM. If confirmed, I will continue to coordinate with USCYBERCOM and strengthen this relationship.

#### MILITARY MOVES

20. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, last November, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) overturned the Department of Defense's (DOD) multi-billion dollar contract award to move service members' household goods around the world because of pervasive errors in the contracting process. I don't believe to date TRANSCOM has re-awarded that contract, so if confirmed, that decision will fall to you, General. What is your understanding of the status of re-awarding that contract?

General VAN OVOST. I anticipate award of the Global Household Goods Contract (GHC) to occur in late October 2021. USTRANSCOM anticipates additional protests will follow the re-award, which will delay start of the 9-month contract transition period approximately March 2022, presuming USTRANSCOM prevails in the protest. Following transition, we will begin a 7-month phase-in of moves and will avoid significant changes during the 2023 peak PCS season. We expect GHC will be at full performance by December 2023.

After GAO's recommendations sustaining some of the protest allegations, and in accordance with GAO's recommendations, the USTRANSCOM Acquisition Directorate initiated corrective actions and invited the offerors in the competitive range to submit new proposals. The source selection team, which includes members from USTRANSCOM, each of the Military Departments and the Coast Guard, evaluated those proposals from December 2020 through September 2021.

After conducting these proposal evaluations from a "clean slate," the evaluation team completed multiple iterations of "discussions" (negotiations) with the offerors and the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), inclusive of USTRANSCOM senior leaders, each of the Military Departments, and the Coast Guard, who unanimously made an award recommendation to the Source Selection Authority. The SSAC's recommendation and associated documentation currently is undergoing multiple levels of review, to include third party reviews by Defense Pricing and Contracting professionals and the U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General's Acquisition, Fiscal Law, and Litigation Directorate.

21. Senator HIRONO. General Van Ovost, do you plan to take into consideration the timing of any implementation of that contract to avoid, to the extent possible, negative effects it might have on military service member and family household good movements, especially during the summer peak season?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, I do. Improving the "at the curb" experience for service members and families is the North Star. USTRANSCOM undertook this massive effort because of their concern for Service members and their families. To minimize transition impact on service members and families, USTRANSCOM instructed offerors to avoid volume phase-in during peak season. The Performance Work Statement (Appendix A, Para A.1) states: "Offerors must plan to accommodate work interruptions should protests warrant, and shift Volume Phase-In Periods as necessary so that a significant phase-in volume does not occur during peak relocation season (15 May through 31 August)."

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOE MANCHIN III

##### REGIONAL THREATS

22. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, in April we heard from General Stephen Lyons that the success of the DOD's power projection capability was contin-



gent on three critical elements which were: global mobility posture, global transport capacity, and global command and control integration. Do you believe there are any shortfalls in our allies' capabilities to support these critical requirements if TRANSCOM is called to respond in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?

General VAN OVOST. Deep relationships with our allies and partners are essential to deterrence and to the access, basing, and overflight capability that underpin USTRANSCOM operations worldwide. If USTRANSCOM is called upon to respond in support of NATO in Europe, we would rely on—and we would expect to receive—NATO host nation support to provide needed access to airfields and port facilities in Europe and road and rail movement across multiple countries without restrictive border crossing requirements. While we enjoy excellent access, basing, and overflight cooperation with allies and partners currently, future operations will demand more distributed operating locations given the improved range and precision of our adversaries' fires.

23. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, what shortfalls have you experienced in your career with interoperability within our own Services, commercial partners, and allied nations, and how do you intend to solve them at TRANSCOM?

General VAN OVOST. Interoperability is key to operate in today's security environment. If confirmed, I intend to advocate to pursue developing common systems to share data with other services, our commercial partners, allies, and most importantly other Federal departments. DOD's ability to decide and act effectively is critical to our ability to compete, deter and win. Within the framework of Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2), the Air Force's Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) is the cornerstone of our C2 structure for enabling connectivity to the data to empower rapid decisionmaking. In addition, while USTRANSCOM does not "Command and Control" the Civil Reserve Air Fleet aircraft, communication between Air Mobility Command's Air Operations Center and the airline operations centers is critical to being able to effectively utilize the capabilities they bring to bear. Specifically, we need to eliminate policies which unnecessarily slow or inhibit classified or unclassified communication with our industry partners, while training and equipping those partners to communicate with us to enable USTRANSCOM and its components to effectively execute their missions in the time of need.

#### CYBER VULNERABILITIES OF TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

24. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, cyber threats continue to be a growing concern and threat to our Nation's security and infrastructure. General Lyons told us back in April that TRANSCOM was moving forward with a third-party verification process to ensure the companies TRANSCOM works with are up to snuff in their cybersecurity measures. Are you aware of this program, and if so, can you give us an update?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, I am aware of this program. USTRANSCOM has awarded a proof-of-principle contract to have a third party assess our commercial partners' compliance with Cyber Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Level 3 requirements. USTRANSCOM is now coordinating with two commercial partners to identify dates for the third party to conduct the assessment, which will provide indications of compliance with NIST security controls and identify gaps.

25. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, if not, do you commit to ensuring all contractor meet the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification if you are confirmed?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to incorporating CMMC language into USTRANSCOM contracts in line with DOD timelines and ensuring all contractors meet the CMMC requirements.

26. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, on the topic of increased cybersecurity, I've been hearing for years that the Department of Defense is working toward implementation of a zero-trust network to ensure our systems are as secure as they can be, but I haven't seen much progress. Are you familiar with zero-trust concepts, and can you ensure their implementation will be a priority for you as TRANSCOM Commander?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, I'm familiar with Zero Trust concepts and know that USTRANSCOM, in partnership with USCYBERCOM, is implementing a Zero Trust security model on its classified network that will enhance network traffic visibility and better position the command to secure sensitive data, systems, and services. USTRANSCOM will achieve the baseline Zero Trust maturity level, as outlined in

the Department's Zero Trust Reference Architecture, by the end of this calendar year. If confirmed, I will make advancing the Zero Trust security model beyond the baseline maturity level a priority.

#### WORLDWIDE LOGISTICS

27. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, the level of coordination, fleet readiness, and response to the combatant commanders in light of the COVID pandemic that TRANSCOM provided is nothing short of amazing. The global threat from rational and irrational states and actors is ongoing and the rise of humanitarian support and crisis mitigation is enduring. As a nation ready to support humanity, TRANSCOM has a critical role in the success of these missions. However, the age of our surface connectors, computer based systems, and the increasing threat of precision fires concerns me. What are your concerns if called today to support an armed conflict in a contested environment while also potentially called to support a humanitarian mission on opposite sides of the world?

General VAN OVOST. The NDS delineates a shift to great power competition and potential conflict that will challenge the ability to deploy and sustain the Joint Force in every segment of mobility operations, especially in divergent geographic locations. In the homeland, adversary actions in the cyber domain, particularly against USTRANSCOM's command and control centers for air refueling, airlift, and sealift, is a priority concern in terms of consequence to support wartime missions.

Another concern is maintaining and improving our global transportation nodes. Our mobility posture provides access, basing, and overflight, which are critical in wartime, but also essential in any global response as recently demonstrated in the Afghan NEO. Our allies and partners provide the nodes and networks necessary to connect the globe and provide options that we must protect against malign actions of our adversaries.

I am also concerned by the long, contested lines of communications against both China and Russia, and the tyranny of distance in the Indo-Pacific region. This requires the integration of logistics planning across all warfighting functions to support the joint warfight. The growth in demand from increasingly dispersed operations, increasingly complex and lethal kinetic platforms, and extended adversary anti-access and area denial capabilities place immediate stressors on the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise to support forward forces immediately, as we rapidly build capacity to deploy a decisive force.

Finally, the core mobility assets of strategic and intra-theater sea and airlift, as well as air refueling capabilities, in sufficient numbers and readiness, remain critical in supporting national objectives for humanitarian operations and wartime output. Both the Mobility Capability and Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS)-20 and POL Tanker Study submitted to Congress in June 2021, provide greater detail in these areas.

28. Senator MANCHIN. General Van Ovost, if you are confirmed, how do you intend to ensure your command review makes sure you're prioritizing capabilities that can succeed in a global conflict against near-peer adversaries?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM's priorities are synchronized with and support the National Defense Strategy. In terms of access, our regional posture enhances the flexibility and warfighting effectiveness of USTRANSCOM assets. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure USTRANSCOM invests in partnerships that expand access and support adaptive basing initiatives critical for success. Checking the malign influence of Russia and China will be a cooperative effort with the Geographic Combatant Commands, and our ability to identify critical en-route infrastructure is a major element of USTRANSCOM's posture plan. Within the United States, our domestic road, rail, and seaport infrastructure is also a key component of power projection. I will leverage our National Defense Programs in partnership with the Department of Transportation to ensure these remain capable of supporting national defense objectives.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

##### JOINT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

29. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, I understand TRANSCOM seeks to procure and implement a single integrated system for logistics services known as the Joint Transportation Management System (JTMS) to ensure our service members have access to data faster to make sound decisions. What is the timeline for JTMS procurement and fielding?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM has been working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense on the Joint Transportation Management System (JTMS) as part of a broad, department-wide transportation business reform effort. The final recommendation to the department on JTMS is pending solution analysis that is currently underway. The purpose of JTMS is to leverage commercial transportation and financial software to integrate financial management and transportation business operations at the transactional level to improve the department's ability to record and provide timely reconciliation of transportation and financial management transactions accurately, which have resulted in long-standing financial management deficiencies. JTMS is intended to contribute to the department's efforts to close auditability gaps and meet the statutory requirements identified in Section 103, Audit of the Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2018, in the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act.

JTMS feasibility analysis currently is in progress so a final timeline for procurement and fielding has not been finalized. USTRANSCOM is actively working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Military Departments, and other stakeholders to ensure, should the department proceed, that JTMS will meet the intended business reform requirements.

30. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, is there a plan to test and evaluate such a system?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM worked with Department stakeholders on several efforts to test and evaluate the feasibility and applicability of commercial software to meet Department-wide transportation and financial management business reforms requirements to include conducting a limited prototyping effort from 2018 to 2020. While initial results were encouraging, additional analysis and stakeholder input was needed based on the limited scope of the prototype.

31. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, if testing occurred, what were the lessons learned?

General VAN OVOST. While the JTMS prototype effort showed commercial transportation and financial software has a degree of applicability and could assist USTRANSCOM and the Department of Defense achieve a level of business reforms, commercial software alone cannot solve all desired reforms, and meet all operational requirements. Additionally, the prototype was of limited scope and duration that necessitated further analysis. Like any large-scale information technology project, JTMS will require department wide policy changes, a significant business process reengineering effort, integration into the existing department IT portfolio, and a comprehensive change management strategy should the department proceed. Additionally, USTRANSCOM and the department conduct unique, DOD-specific operations where no commercial software solution exists.

32. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, finally, when do you anticipate JTMS to be fully operationally capable?

General VAN OVOST. A fully operational date has not been established. Should JTMS go forward, however, based on the size, scale, and diverse nature of USTRANSCOM and the Department's global transportation mission, roll-out will be a multi-year endeavor.

#### CYBERSECURITY

33. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, we must maintain a competitive edge in the cyber domain as our global command and control underpin our logistics capabilities. TRANSCOM must be prepared to operate in a contested logistics and persistent multi-domain attack environment. Could you please provide the progress made through TRANSCOM's partnership with U.S. Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) to implement a proof of principle using "Zero Trust" security?

General VAN OVOST. In partnership with USCYBERCOM, USTRANSCOM has made significant progress toward implementing a Zero Trust security model on its classified network. USTRANSCOM is on track to achieve the baseline Zero Trust maturity level, as outlined in the Department's Zero Trust Reference Architecture, by the end of this calendar year. If confirmed, I will make advancing the Zero Trust security model beyond the baseline maturity level a priority.

34. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, when will the results become available?

General VAN OVOST. USCYBERCOM will conduct a Zero Trust validation event on USTRANSCOM's classified network no later than mid-January 2022, which will

assess whether USTRANSCOM successfully achieved the baseline Zero Trust maturity level.

35. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, in addition to cyber hygiene and third-party inspections, what efforts is TRANSCOM pursuing to build cybersecurity and resilience with commercial partners?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM incorporates Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) cyber language into its contracts. In addition, USTRANSCOM contracts require Transportation Service Providers (TSPs) to perform annual cybersecurity self-assessment of the 110 National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) security controls outlined in NIST SP 800-171. During meetings with TSPs to discuss their self-assessments, and in several other forums, USTRANSCOM shares information and collaborates with the TSPs, enabling them to advance their cybersecurity posture and better manage risk. USTRANSCOM also has a Cyber Working Group that is assessing requirements needed above NIST to ensure cybersecurity. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen the relationships with commercial partners to ensure we maintain a shared understanding of threats so we can be agile enough to combat these threats as they arise.

36. Senator DUCKWORTH. General Van Ovost, what resources are required to ensure the security of our data in cyber-contested environments?

General VAN OVOST. Given USTRANSCOM's unique mission, ensuring data security in a cyber-contested environment is paramount. The resources required include investment in cloud services, implementation of advanced detection and response solutions, and Zero Trust security capabilities. It also requires investment in technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to both secure the data and assure data is available at the speed of need. We must also take advantage of the significant advances in commercial technology and integrate it into military technologies, especially when it comes to using data to make better decisions.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

##### CYBER INTRUSIONS

37. Senator ROSEN. General Van Ovost, what are the steps you will take as the head of TRANSCOM to improve the cybersecurity posture of our most critical systems?

General VAN OVOST. If confirmed, I will continue to make cybersecurity posture and cyber mission assurance a priority for USTRANSCOM and ensure we make the appropriate investments to protect command and control and information technology systems and infrastructure most consequential to mission success. My focus areas will include adopting security best practices and continued investment in cloud services that lead to a more robust infrastructure, increased security posture, and improved resiliency for our mobility systems. I will also ensure we continue progress implementing Zero Trust security capabilities.

38. Senator ROSEN. General Van Ovost, how will you work with CYBERCOM and key stakeholders to mitigate the operational impact of any malicious cyber campaigns?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM is already aligned closely with USCYBERCOM and key stakeholders on a wide array of cybersecurity initiatives designed to counter the impact of any malicious cyber campaign. USTRANSCOM also works with USCYBERCOM to execute joint defensive cyber operations in response to emerging threats and named operations to mitigate known cyber vulnerabilities. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure USTRANSCOM remains aligned closely with USCYBERCOM and key stakeholders on all initiatives and operations.

##### CLOUD MIGRATION

39. Senator ROSEN. General Van Ovost, can you discuss the key benefits of migrating TRANSCOM's cyber domain to a commercial cloud and how, if confirmed, will you share lessons and best practices with other parts of DOD—including how to move older DOD technologies to a commercial cloud?

General VAN OVOST. The key benefits of migrating USTRANSCOM's cyber domain to a commercial cloud are the ability to make use of the data, security, resiliency, and application advantages that cloud technology offers. If confirmed, I will ensure USTRANSCOM continues to share lessons learned and best practices with

other parts of the Department through the existing groups the Command already participates in, such as the DOD Digital Modernization Executive Committee and DOD Chief Information Officer Cloud Community of Interest.

#### RAPID MOBILITY

40. Senator ROSEN. General Van Ovost, can you discuss how you will use your current experience to build off of the Joint Warfighting Concept to ensure TRANSCOM can deliver in future mobility operations through better use of data?

General VAN OVOST. My experience as the AMC Commander, as well as our collective experience, tells us that logistics holds the potential to be a pathfinder for better interoperability, security, and visibility of data across the Joint Force. The need for defined, secure, and shared logistics data is ubiquitous across all elements of the Joint Force, and with our industry partners and allies. Competitive advantage against adversaries through information dominance is a key element of the Joint Warfighting Concept, and in the supporting Joint Concept for Contested Logistics. Unlocking the latent potential of trusted, reliable logistics data will not only enhance mobility operations, but more importantly, inform joint planning to ensure operational plans are logistically feasible.

USTRANSCOM remains a strong advocate for, and supporter of, the Joint All-Domain Command and Control initiative, which is intrinsically linked to the Joint Warfighting Concept. This overarching effort will help enable more localized data management improvement efforts, such as the Aerial Port of the Future Joint Capability Technical Demonstration. The Aerial Port of the Future may radically change how we collect, process, and use data within and across aerial ports on a global scale. Finally, if confirmed, I will continue to advocate for prioritized Department-wide investments in those data management solutions that enhance global command and control, mobility capability and capacity, and commercial industry and allied partner data interoperability.

#### COVID-19

41. Senator ROSEN. General Van Ovost, if confirmed, what is your strategy for continuing to deliver on TRANSCOM's promise to support the Department of Defense's operations during the ongoing pandemic, including collaborating with our allies?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM has and will continue to implement OSD guidance on force health protection for our uniformed personnel, Government civilians, contractors, and our work centers. For our patient movement mission, we will continue to provide safe transport of COVID-19 positive patients in our biocontainment units for both our C-17s and C-130's, using specially trained aeromedical evacuation teams and critical care air transport teams. USTRANSCOM will also continue to provide force health protection measures for individuals traveling on USTRANSCOM aircraft, to include 72-hour pre-departure COVID-19 testing for those who are unvaccinated or for those heading to destinations where our partner nations require a negative 72-hour pre-departure test before entry into their country. If confirmed, I will enforce this guidance until OSD and the Geographic Combatant Commands provide new guidance.

42. Senator ROSEN. General Van Ovost, can you discuss how you will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on TRANSCOM's long-term operations?

General VAN OVOST. In coordination with OSD, we will implement the Executive Orders mandating vaccination of our uniformed personnel, Government civilians, and contractors. For our Component Commands, implementation of the OSD guidance on force health protection will be executed through Military Department channels. USTRANSCOM has provided guidance to the workforce on telework, virtual meetings, use of face coverings in accordance with OSD guidance, reinforced regular cleaning and disinfecting of work and common spaces, and emphasized good personal hygiene to include frequent handwashing. USTRANSCOM will also continue to provide force health protection measures for individuals traveling on USTRANSCOM aircraft. For our patient movement mission, we will continue to provide safe transport of COVID-19 positive patients in our biocontainment units for both our C-17s and C-130's. Finally, we will share best practices with the department, industry, the inter-agency, and our allies.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR THOM TILLIS

## AERIAL REFUELING OPERATIONS/PLATFORMS

43. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, the Air Force and TRANSCOM have previously stated that more than 25,000 hours of aerial refueling missions are not being supported annually. Given that the KC-46 is still not fully operational, and the Air Force has already begun retiring some of the legacy tanker fleet, I assume that there is still a significant shortfall in TRANSCOM's aerial refueling capacity. What is the current shortfall?

General VAN OVOST. TRANSCOM currently has sufficient capacity to meet steady State and crisis response air refueling demands according to the most important priorities articulated by the Joint Staff and NDS.

In April 2020, the Secretary of the Air Force provided Congress with a report titled "FY20 NDAA Contractor-Operated Aerial Refueling Aircraft," which assessed the Joint Force's request for air refueling to support missions and operations. Requests for air refueling capability vary in criticality and are often unconstrained by resources. While the air refueling fleet remains stressed, USTRANSCOM manages the tension between available resources and requests for capability in order to ensure warfighting readiness and operational mission support.

With exceptional collaboration between the USAF and TRANSCOM, four positive developments occurred over the last year, which allowed TRANSCOM to arrive at a workable solution with the USAF on meeting air refueling demand. First, Boeing accepted responsibility to fix the KC-46 contract's "Category 1" deficiencies, enabling the USAF to present a KC-46 Interim Capability Release plan to add needed air refueling capacity before final discrepancy fixes are implemented. Second, the USAF agreed to lower the KC-10 divestiture profile from initial planning efforts. Third, the USAF funded additional MPA to increase the Reserve/National Guard air refueling capacity and contributions. Finally, AMC is seeing a reduction in air refueling demand in the CENTCOM AOR as witnessed by a drop from 70 deployed air refueling aircraft on a daily basis in 2017 to less than 30 projected for FY22.

44. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, if the shortfall has been reduced or eliminated, please explain.

General VAN OVOST. While we currently have sufficient capacity to meet steady State and crisis response air refueling demands, the transition to a new tanker naturally creates a temporary reduction in available aircraft. A significant improvement to air refueling capacity projections was the 2021 release of the KC-46 Interim Capability Release plan and additional support provided by the Air Reserve Component tanker force. The Joint Force has an insatiable appetite for air refueling and global demands will likely continue to put pressure on the air refueling mission. The needed air refueling capacity is captured in the recently completed Mobility Capability Requirements Study and USTRANSCOM will continue to manage available air refueling assets according to the most important priorities articulated by the Joint Staff and NDS.

45. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, has the overall aerial refueling requirement changed or is the shortfall now being measured differently?

General VAN OVOST. Air refueling requirements have changed for both steady State demands and when projecting the need to scale for conflict. The Mobility Capability Requirements Study completed in June 2021 details the changes in these scenarios. In daily competition, the changes have been the most significant with a substantial reduction in CENTCOM requirements. Looking forward, air refueling demand as proscribed by the Joint Staff and NDS appears balanced with expected capacity, especially with the KC-46 interim capability release plan that began meeting USTRANSCOM operational air refueling requirements in 2021.

46. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, I have serious concerns regarding the Air Force's desire to retire a significant number of legacy tankers prior to the KC-46 becoming fully operational. I am particularly concerned by the potential loss of the KC-10, which provides significantly more fuel offload than both the KC-135 and the KC-46. I understand that the KC-10 fleet has many more years left in terms of potential service life and am concerned that prematurely retiring such a strategic asset would result in a loss of warfighter capability that cannot be regained for many years to come. Please describe the importance of the KC-10 to TRANSCOM's aerial refueling capability, and the potential impact to missions for Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps pilots and aircrews if we cut additional KC-10's.

General VAN OVOST. The KC-10 delivers necessary and relevant capability for all Joint Staff and NDS wartime missions. Unfortunately, the KC-10 is increasingly expensive to maintain. I concur with the USAF and USTRANSCOM decision to divest the KC-10. This divestiture is the best air refueling value assessment that incorporates current utility, future capability and cost, as well as facilitation of operational fielding of the KC-46. Through a deliberate interim capability release plan, the USAF has made the KC-46 available for USTRANSCOM missions, in combination with KC-10 and KC-135 aircraft, to ensure sufficient capacity to meet global air refueling requirements is maintained. In addition, the aircrews and maintainers needed to field and operate the KC-46 as aircraft are delivered to the USAF rely on the manpower that will be freed up with KC-10 retirements.

47. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, I understand that, although the KC-46 has been cleared to conduct some aerial refueling missions, the aircraft will not be considered to be fully operational until major deficiencies such as the Remote Visual System are resolved, which likely won't be until 2023 at the earliest. I was surprised to learn that, despite this non-or semi-operational status, the KC-46s being delivered are being coded into the Primary Mission Aircraft Inventory (PMAI). Please explain why these aircraft are given the same inventory status as fully operational KC-10's or KC-135s.

General VAN OVOST. PMAI aircraft are coded as such to ensure the airframe has the resources to support flying operations that includes maintenance and flying crews, weapon system sustainment and support, and programmed flying hours. Following established PMAI guidelines, it is necessary to code the KC-46 as a PMAI weapon system to generate the flying, maintenance and mission support personnel, and equipment required to support it. With USTRANSCOM utilizing KC-46 capacity now for operational missions, it is important the weapon system has the resourcing to sustain and grow operational capacity over time. A trained crew force allows the growth of the KC 46 capacity that will be needed to execute additional taskings to support the Joint Force in the future. Utilizing the KC-46 now frees up unrestricted KC-135 and KC-10 aircraft for other operational taskings or readiness building activities, thereby adding air refueling capacity for our Joint Force requirements.

48. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, I understand that there have been conversations regarding possible uses for KC-10 aircraft prior to being fully retired and sent to the boneyard. I understand that one option is to provide the aircraft to industry, either through sale or as Government Furnished Equipment, for use in a commercial air refueling program. I understand that the Navy and Marine Corps have been successfully utilizing a commercial air refueling program for the last 20+ years. What is the status of those discussions?

General VAN OVOST. Discussions regarding commercial air refueling as a viable means of support to USTRANSCOM's mission are ongoing. The U.S. Air Force is conducting further study of the commercial refueling option, which will be key to determining its merits.

49. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, shouldn't KC-10 retirements be halted until a decision is made on commercial air refueling?

General VAN OVOST. No, through coordination between the U.S. Air Force and USTRANSCOM, we have developed a sustainable way forward that maintains sufficient air refueling capacity to meet requirements as we bridge to the KC-46. The U.S. Air Force Interim Capability Release (ICR) process that makes KC-46 capacity available for limited USTRANSCOM tasking is a key step forward that will help with the transition to that platform. In addition, the aircrews and maintainers needed to field and operate the KC-46 as aircraft are delivered to the Air Force rely on the manpower that will be freed up with KC-10 retirements. I support the KC-10 divestment profile agreed to by the U.S. Air Force and USTRANSCOM, and which has been submitted by the Department of Defense

50. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, do you believe TRANSCOM and the Air Force should be pursuing a commercial air refueling program to address current and future aerial refueling shortfalls?

General VAN OVOST. Commercial air refueling should certainly be considered. The U.S. Air Force, as the force provider, continually assesses the air refueling enterprise to determine cost-effective, legal, and operationally credible alternatives to meet air refueling requirements. The U.S. Air Force is conducting further study to assess the commercial option.

## CONTESTED ENVIRONMENT

51. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study 2018 Executive Summary identified the need to mitigate mobility impacts of operating in a contested environment. In your view, how well is TRANSCOM prepared for strategic lift in a potentially contested operating environment?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM is postured to operate on a global scale in contested environments; however, adversary capability and capacity to directly or indirectly disrupt, degrade, or deny our ability to operate is growing.

In the homeland, adversary actions in the cyber domain, particularly against USTRANSCOM's command and control centers for air refueling, airlift, and sealift is a significant concern in terms of consequence to support wartime missions. Within the United States, USTRANSCOM relies on resilient road, rail, seaport, and airport critical infrastructure to provide unimpeded power projection with the ability to fight through disruptions by employing insightful command and control capabilities and tightly coordinated interagency support to deploy and sustain the Joint Force.

Long, contested lines of communications against both China and Russia, and the tyranny of distance in the Indo-Pacific region creates dilemmas that will require the integration of logistics planning across all warfighting functions to support the joint war fight. The growth in demand from increasingly dispersed operations, increasingly complex and lethal kinetic platforms, and extended adversary anti-access and area denial capabilities place immediate stressors on the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise to support forward forces immediately, as we rapidly build capacity to deploy a decisive force. Our allies and partners provide the nodes and networks necessary to connect the globe and provide options that we must ensure are not at risk due to malign actions of our adversaries.

Finally, the core mobility assets must be able to operate successfully in the face of persistent multi-domain attack to achieve wartime output. The support of our full range of operations during wartime is designed so that our commercial air and sea transportation partners operate in a permissive environment, whose viability must be maintained by DOD. Intra-theater sea and air lift is also critical to sustain and support the force across great distances to meet volume and time-sensitive requirements for cargo, passengers, and fuel. Both the Mobility Capability and Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS)-20 and POL Tanker Study submitted to Congress in June 2021 provide details in these areas.

52. Senator TILLIS. General Van Ovost, to the best of your knowledge, has TRANSCOM conducted attrition analyses of major operations plans using assumptions of contested sea lanes, limited ability to degrade anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities, etc.?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, in the last several years USTRANSCOM has developed and incorporated contested environment impact considerations into the mobility analysis based on Intelligence Community threat assessments of adversary abilities and intent to target mobility and logistics operations. Attrition of mobility assets, as well as combat power lost because of an attack on mobility targets, are included in this contested environment analysis.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

## GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN THE ARCTIC

53. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, Russia's and China's rapid development of capabilities in the Arctic has made the region an emerging front-line for great power competition. Given the National Defense Strategy's (NDS) focus on great power competition—if confirmed—will you commit to visiting Alaska with me in your first year to see first-hand the opportunities Alaska offers TRANSCOM?

General VAN OVOST. I welcome the opportunity to visit Alaska and see first-hand the incredible Joint Force team executing the multitude of missions necessary to support the NDS.

54. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, in your personal opinion, what makes Alaska strategically important for the United States and why would our adversaries want to limit our presence and power projection capabilities in the Arctic region? Please elaborate.

General VAN OVOST. From a national security perspective, Alaska's location on the North Pacific rim and proximity to Russia makes Alaska strategically important. I defer to the USNORTHCOM and USINDOPACOM Commanders for a more



nuanced discussion of Alaska's strategic importance. Among U.S. adversaries, Russia in particular considers the Arctic a priority area of strategic interest and fundamental to its national security. Russia is especially sensitive to U.S. military presence and power projection capabilities in the Arctic because Moscow views the Arctic as a strategic vector through which the United States may attack Russia, to include nuclear attack.

#### ARCTIC CAPABILITY GAPS

55. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, over the years senior defense officials have identified military logistics and mobility gaps within the Arctic region. These requirements have varied from the need for fuel north of Dutch Harbor, a strategic Arctic port, polar communications, and additional aerial refueling. Unfortunately, we haven't made consistent progress on each of these requirements and other known capability gaps. That is one of the reasons why I secured in this year's NDAA—alongside my SASC colleagues—the need for U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) to produce an independent assessment that identifies the activities and resources required to implement the NDS and service Arctic strategies in the Arctic region. Can I get your commitment to closely coordinate and collaborate with NORTHCOM on this assessment so that TRANSCOM equities—like a Strategic Arctic port—are captured in the final deliverable?

General VAN OVOST. If confirmed, you have my commitment, to closely coordinate and collaborate with NORTHCOM on USTRANSCOM equities in the Arctic.

56. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, can I also get your commitment to review TRANSCOM capability requirement gaps within the Arctic region within 60 days of your confirmation and sit down with me to discuss how you will work with the service components to close these gaps?

General VAN OVOST. If confirmed, you have my commitment to assess USTRANSCOM capabilities in the Arctic region, and to discuss necessary approaches to close any identified gaps.

#### KC-46 BASING

57. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, the previous Senate-confirmed Secretary of Defense Mark Esper acknowledged that collocation of 100 5th-generation fighters with KC-46 tankers would provide our Nation with “extreme strategic reach.” The current TRANSCOM Commander, General Stephen Lyons, USA, noted that “[t]he aerial refueling fleet continues to underpin the Joint Force's ability to deploy an immediate force across all NDS mission areas . . . .” Given Alaska's bed-down of F-35s, access to expansive training ranges, and proximity to several high-priority regions, would you agree with former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper that collocation of 100 5th-generation fighters with KC-46 tankers in Alaska would provide extreme strategic reach to the United States? Please elaborate on how that kind of air power could affect our power projection posture, strengthen our alliances, and message to our adversaries.

General VAN OVOST. Air refueling aircraft, by their intended design, provide extreme strategic reach for our other air assets daily around the globe. The home station of our air refueling aircraft is but one component of global responsiveness. Across the broad spans of the Indo-Pacific region, the elements of access, basing, and overflight to en-route and forward locations are essential to position and employ combat capability, and as important, if not more so, to where we home station mobility assets. The ability of USTRANSCOM to control and rapidly shift assets anywhere in the world to address emerging and high priority needs is also foundational to global responsiveness and executing strategic reach. In this context, using the notion of “extreme strategic reach,” mobility assets must operate not only across broad regions such as USINDOPACOM, but globally with the responsiveness to leverage the Department's combat power fully when and where it is needed, which USTRANSCOM is uniquely capable of performing. I will defer to the U.S. Air Force and its Title 10 basing responsibilities for determination of where to base aircraft.

#### LOGISTICS AND SUSTAINMENT IN A CONTESTED ENVIRONMENT

58. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, China has the capability and capacity to employ thousands of missiles within the first and second island chains. Similarly, Russia boasts an immense quantity of missiles that easily range all of Europe. Both countries are likely to expand their missile arsenals over the next several years. With that in mind, what concerns do you have regarding TRANSCOM's ability to conduct logistics and sustainment activities in an increasingly robust anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) environment?

General VAN OVOST. The nature of conflict against either China or Russia will challenge the ability to deploy and sustain the Joint Force in every segment of mobility operations. USTRANSCOM is postured to operate on a global scale in contested environments; however, adversary capability and capacity to disrupt, degrade, or deny our ability to operate directly or indirectly is growing.

In the homeland, I am concerned about a cyber-attack against our command and control centers for air refueling, airlift, and sealift in terms of consequence to support wartime missions. Our operations centers and the ability to conduct command and control operations are the centers of gravity for mobility operations. USTRANSCOM, in conjunction with USCYBERCOM, is taking actions to mitigate this risk both at the system level and within the DOD Information Networks that support these operations centers.

I am also concerned with ensuring our constellation of allies and partners provides the nodes and networks necessary to connect the globe and that we must ensure are not at risk due to malign actions of our adversaries. Access, basing, and overflight are not guaranteed in the emerging complex and intertwined geopolitical structure. Loss of key nodes under wartime conditions significantly would complicate our ability to rapidly deploy and sustain the Joint Force. This is not limited to wartime; during contingency operations, our allies and partners are critical to access, basing and overflight as recently demonstrated by the Afghan NEO effort.

Finally, core mobility assets must be able to operate successfully in the face of persistent multi-domain attack. Our commercial transportation partners, for both airlift and sealift, will operate in permissive environments, which USTRANSCOM must assure for their viability to support the full range of operations. USTRANSCOM must work in concert with other elements of the Joint Force to ensure we can set conditions to protect key nodes and lines of communication, and interdict adversaries before they can strike vulnerable transportation and logistics targets. Intra-theater sea and airlift is also critical to sustain and support the force across great distances. Both the Mobility Capability and Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS)-20 and POL Tanker Study submitted to Congress in June 2021 provide details in these areas.

59. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, how is TRANSCOM preparing for strategic lift in a potentially contested operating environment?

General VAN OVOST. The National Defense Strategy depicts a shift to great power competition and potential conflict that will challenge the ability to deploy and sustain the Joint Force in every segment of mobility operations. USTRANSCOM is postured to operate on a global scale in contested environments; however, adversary capability and capacity to directly or indirectly disrupt, degrade, or deny our ability to operate is growing.

In the homeland, I am concerned about adversary actions in the cyber domain, particularly against USTRANSCOM's command and control centers for air refueling, airlift, and sealift, in terms of consequence to support wartime missions. Our operations centers and the ability to conduct C2 is the center of gravity for mobility operations. USTRANSCOM, in conjunction with USCYBERCOM, is taking actions to mitigate this risk at the system level and in the DOD Information Networks that support these operations centers. Within the United States, we rely on resilient road, rail, seaport, and airport critical infrastructure to provide unimpeded power projection with the ability to fight through disruptions by employing insightful C2 capabilities and tightly coordinated interagency support to deploy and sustain the Joint Force.

Long, contested lines of communications against both China and Russia, and the tyranny of distance in the Indo-Pacific region, require the integration of logistics planning across all warfighting functions. The growth in demand from increasingly dispersed operations, increasingly complex and lethal kinetic platforms, and extended adversary anti-access/area denial capabilities place immediate stressors on the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise to support forward forces immediately. Our allies and partners provide the nodes and networks necessary to connect the globe and provide options that we must ensure are not at risk.

Finally, the core mobility assets must be able to operate successfully in the face of persistent multi-domain attack. Our commercial transportation partners, for both airlift and sealift, will operate in permissive environments which USTRANSCOM must assure for their viability to support the full range of operations. USTRANSCOM must work in concert with other elements of the Joint Force to protect key nodes and lines of communication, and interdict adversaries before they can strike vulnerable transportation and logistics targets. The Mobility Capability and Requirements Study 2020 (MCRS)-20 and POL Tanker Study submitted to Congress in June 2021 provide details in these areas.

60. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, how is a contested environment expected to affect TRANSCOM's ability to use the Civil Reserve Air Fleet and Ready Reserve Force, as well as commercial contracted logistics partners?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM inextricably is linked to our commercial partners, whether it be those in the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement, or the merchant mariners manning the Ready Reserve Force ships. These partnerships enhance our ability to support military operations anywhere in the world. Historically, relationships with commercial partners strengthen in wartime situations and scenarios. Contested environments pose unique challenges for global logistics, and if confirmed, I will continue to work with our commercial partners and all stakeholders in the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise to mitigate risk to these high value assets and personnel.

#### MILITARY SEALIFT

61. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, when the United States goes to war, TRANSCOM moves approximately 90 percent of its cargo requirements with the strategic sealift fleet, which consists of government-owned ships augmented by the commercial U.S.-flagged fleet. In your responses to the advance policy questions, you said that over the next decade, 33 of 50 Navy roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) vessels, which deliver the surge force, will retire and that the readiness of this aging fleet is TRANSCOM's No. 1 readiness concern. I understand that a 2019 exercise showed only 40 percent of the sealift fleet would be ready in a crisis and that the average age of these ships is 45 years. What plans and associated timelines are in place to mitigate this looming shortfall?

General VAN OVOST. I support the OSD and U.S. Navy plan to recapitalize the fleet by purchasing used commercial ships to improve readiness to meet the National Defense Strategy. The U.S. Navy's plan is an appropriate, cost-effective approach for the organic fleet. Currently, a vessel acquisition manager is in place, market surveys of available used vessels are nearing completion, and ship surveys are planned for the October 2021 timeframe. USTRANSCOM expects the U.S. Navy to purchase used ships in calendar year 2022 in order to begin the recapitalization process.

#### STRATEGIC HIGHWAY NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

62. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, during an office call I had earlier this year, General Stephen Lyons, the current TRANSCOM Commander, brought up the need for a Military Strategic Transportation Program (MSTP) that would seek to improve our Strategic Highway Networks (STRAHNET). Why is this initiative necessary?

General VAN OVOST. From the inception of the National InterState and Defense Highway System in the 1950's, national defense has been a statutory consideration in promoting the Nation's highways. Over time, expansion of the National Highway System (NHS) has reduced this national defense focus. Since established, the NHS has grown by over 300 percent compared to only about 50 percent growth in the STRAHNET. With the STRAHNET making up a smaller proportion of the NHS over time (now only about 29 percent), investment in highways important to the DOD has become diluted, affecting national defense interests. The DOD relies on each individual State's Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to operate and maintain the STRAHNET to ensure military readiness and protect national security. State DOTs and MPOs, however, currently are not required to consider national defense needs in project funding decisions using Federal funds. The MSTP proposal, developed in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, would provide the necessary incentives and guidance to State DOTs and MPOs to address national defense requirements. In addition to DOD benefits, the proposed MSTP would also provide appreciable benefits to freight commerce, manufacturing supply chains, and local communities.

63. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, what strategic risks is the United States accepting if we don't make these improvements, particularly improvements to critical Power Projection Platform (PPP) routes?

General VAN OVOST. The expeditious movement of military equipment on the National Highway System (NHS) is central to the DOD's enduring mission of providing military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of the Nation. USTRANSCOM has identified 5,000 miles of the most critical highway corridors in 19 states that support the movement of equipment from designated installations to seaports during national emergencies. These routes must be capable (e.g., be of adequate road/bridge design and condition) of supporting the rapid movement of mili-

tary equipment, including oversized and overweight vehicles. Although no single Power Projection Platform route deficiency presents a significant risk to the safe and rapid movement of equipment, increased congestion, unaddressed deficient roadway characteristics, and continued highway infrastructure degradation in the aggregate will challenge our ability to meet sealift loading timelines at our strategic seaports.

64. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, can you give me some examples of how Strategic Highway Networks would be beneficial in a national emergency?

General VAN OVOST. A healthy STRAHNET benefits not only military needs, but also improves highway safety for the traveling public and benefits the freight transport industry to further advance the country's economic productivity. It also represents a capable and resilient network of roadways to support the safe and rapid movement of DOD personnel, equipment, and relief materials in response to a variety of plausible national emergencies from Defense Support of Civil Authorities to large-scale wartime deployments. The STRAHNET traverses all U.S. states and passes through or near all major metropolitan areas. Any projects on STRAHNET that address vertical clearance, bridge structural condition and functionality, pavement condition, and roadway configuration would similarly enhance transportation-related responses to virtually any national emergency.

#### DEFENSE PERSONAL PROPERTY PROGRAM

65. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, availability of transportation service provider capacity in the Defense Personal Property Program (DP3) hit all-time lows during the 2021 peak season. Plagued with labor shortages and reduced third party partner options transportation service providers struggled to meet the demands of DOD relocations. According to an industry study 98 percent of companies experienced a reduction in qualified labor and associated labor costs rose 20–40 percent. How is TRANSCOM addressing and planning for these capacity problems in the 2022 peak season?

General VAN OVOST. The USTRANSCOM staff has heard from our industry partners about their challenges in securing labor in previous years, and this has increased significantly since the COVID–19 pandemic in 2020 and during the 2021 peak season. Based on current economic trends, we anticipate capacity constraints to persist through the 2022 moving season. While USTRANSCOM cannot alleviate the labor shortages nationwide, we remain committed to working with our industry partners to address capacity constraints. Moving into 2022, we will continue our collaborative approach with industry.

Since the COVID–19 pandemic began in 2020, USTRANSCOM has worked closely with industry to adjust program rules in recognition of the impacts of the pandemic on the supply chain and labor pool. These changes included extensions to our transit times, the addition of surcharges to account for stop movement impacts during the start of the pandemic (e.g., canceled moves and changed pickups), and other additional actions to account for supply chain disruptions. In 2021, we increased crating compensation due to lumber price increases, reduced containerized bookings to help with lumber costs, added long delivery compensation for delivery from storage, and allowed the use of commercial best non-DoD approved storage. USTRANSCOM made these adjustments in partnership with our transportation service providers without losing our focus on program improvements to better serve our customers.

In addition to the above efforts with industry partners, USTRANSCOM is taking active steps within DOD to mitigate the effect on service members and their families. We are engaging with the Military Departments to reduce the number of families moved during peak season, which would reduce the surge demand of transportation service providers during peak season.

66. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, are you committed to working with industry providers to provide flexibility within the program in response to these challenges?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, if confirmed, I am and will remain committed to working with our industry partners to deliver the quality capacity and accountability that our service members and their families deserve.

67. Senator SULLIVAN. General Van Ovost, in August, TRANSCOM released a proposal to require electronic inventories for all DOD shipments starting in April 2022. A recent industry study shows that 65 percent of current DP3 participants do not utilize the technology and that 54 percent of those individuals State it would take them a year or more to purchase and implement the technology. Most concerning

is that 76 percent of survey participants stated they would reduce their capacity within the DP3 program if this timeline is enacted. In light of the severe capacity problems within the program and concerns over losing a significant portion of the limited remaining capacity, is TRANSCOM still supporting a mandate of 100 percent electronic inventories starting in April 2022?

General VAN OVOST. For 2022, USTRANSCOM is not making electronic inventories mandatory. USTRANSCOM will not mandate the use of electronic inventories until the 2023 moving season, giving our industry partners well over a year to prepare. Currently, USTRANSCOM is strongly encouraging transportation service providers to use them.

USTRANSCOM has had extensive dialog on electronic inventories with industry partners for the past 3 years. Many have been supportive, as indicated by their collaboration on the establishment of an International Organization for Standards number specific to the electronic inventories (ISO Standard 17451). Some industry partners, however, have expressed their concerns regarding the challenges you mentioned. USTRANSCOM will continue to encourage these partners to replace the legacy process with a more modernized customer service standard.

USTRANSCOM strives to provide our service members and their families with the best service possible, and view electronic inventories as a major customer service issue. Hard copy inventories are consistently illegible and can negatively affect a customer's ability to account for their property and preexisting damage. Electronic inventories provide our service members, their families, and moving companies the ability to read legible inventories and reduce claims disputes. Electronic inventories also enable electronic transmission and storage by providing an email that is easily retrievable by service members and their families while in geographic transition.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARSHA BLACKBURN

##### AFGHANISTAN

68. Senator BLACKBURN. General Van Ovost, in light of the TRANSCOM's role in Operation Allies Refuge, what examples of both organizational successes and perceived gaps or areas for improvement will inform your perspective as the TRANSCOM commander?

General VAN OVOST. Authorities inherent to the USTRANSCOM Commander allowed USTRANSCOM to react, mass forces, and streamline communications, which enabled USTRANSCOM to concentrate airlift capacity and enabler personnel at the point of need. Some examples include: Task Force Gryphon from the 43d Air Mobility Operations Group deployed to Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, to support the launch of the 82d Airborne Division; the use of a Contingency Response Group at Kabul to run airfield operations and the insertion of Joint Enabling Capabilities Command forces to USCENTCOM and Department of State to facilitate interagency coordination and NEO movement. Additionally, due to the heightened demand signal and the expediency required, the temporary relaxing of the use of both detailed systems of record and normal manifesting procedures drastically increased the speed of operations; however, this expedited throughput caused a significant degradation of In-Transit Visibility resulting in a lack of real-time awareness at multiple levels. This is an area for improvement.

69. Senator BLACKBURN. General Van Ovost, please share shortcomings that you noticed outside of TRANSCOM's control including, but not limited to, an authority or permission that could allow TRANSCOM to be more efficient, a particular platform or capability that could have saved more Afghans, or a strategic airlift relationship with a partner nation that the United States needs to pursue?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM possessed the authorities and capabilities needed to successfully execute Operation Allies Refuge. Additionally, partner nations supplied essential support throughout the operation, especially in area of access, basing, and overflight. USTRANSCOM is in the process of conducting an after-action report which may identify shortcomings to address for future operations.

##### U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND IN GREAT POWER COMPETITION

70. Senator BLACKBURN. General Van Ovost, how do you envision TRANSCOM's role either complimenting or guiding the efforts of Pacific Movement and Coordination Center (PMCC)?

General VAN OVOST. Over the past 3 years, USTRANSCOM has been engaged in the efforts of Indo-Pacific Command to develop the Movement Coordination Center Pacific (MCCP). The MCCP provides an opportunity to increase interoperability, ex-

pand training opportunities, leads to greater regional cooperation, and increases lift sharing options for the U.S. and its Allies and Partner Nations. M CCP is modeling much of their efforts after the successful Movement Coordination Center Europe (MCCE). These centers reinforce our global posture while enhancing access, basing and overflight opportunities.

71. Senator BLACKBURN. General Van Ovost, does an equivalent center exist within other Geographical Combatant Commands?

General VAN OVOST. Yes. USTRANSCOM has been involved with the Movement Coordination Center Europe (MCCE) for the past 13 years. Utilizing the Air Transport & Air-to-Air Refueling and other Exchanges of Services (ATARES) system, 27 countries currently are MCEE members. United States European Command is the Executive Agent for MCCE. A similar capability exists within CENTCOM. Although structured somewhat differently, the CENTCOM Deployment and Distribution Operations Center (CDDOC) performs roughly the same functions as the MCCE in the CENTCOM AOR.

#### IMPACT OF FUEL PRICES ON U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

72. Senator BLACKBURN. General Van Ovost, how much of an impact do you anticipate fuel price volatility will have on TRANSCOM's ability to operate over the course of the next fiscal year?

General VAN OVOST. Fuel price volatility will not prevent USTRANSCOM from completing its mission. Fuel accounts for approximately 12 percent of the USTRANSCOM budget; therefore, fuel pricing changes can drive significant changes in operating costs. Transportation operations are funded through a Working Capital Fund, which is designed to absorb this cost volatility.

73. Senator BLACKBURN. General Van Ovost, what kind of impact do you anticipate fuel price volatility will have on TRANSCOM's Defense Working Capital Fund?

General VAN OVOST. Working Capital Funds are designed to absorb price uncertainties, with financial losses passed on to the Military Departments through higher future rates. If fuel prices rise substantially, however, USTRANSCOM could seek immediate relief through a cash recovery charge to the Military Departments. USTRANSCOM last used this cash recovery mechanism for a fuel price increase in FY14.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOSH HAWLEY

##### FAIT ACCOMPLI TIMELINE

74. Senator HAWLEY. General Van Ovost, former U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Commander Admiral Philip Davidson testified that the threat of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan "is manifest during this decade, in fact in the next 6 years." Current INDOPACOM Commander Admiral John Aquilino testified similarly that the threat of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan "is much closer than most of us think" and could occur well before 2035. When asked if he agreed with Admiral Davidson's testimony, Commandant of the Marine Corps General David Berger testified, "I do." Likewise, when asked about Admiral Davidson's testimony, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael Gilday stated, "I don't think we should ignore that possibility." Do you agree that the threat of a Chinese invasion against Taiwan is something we need to be worried about in this decade, not just in the 2030's or afterward?

General VAN OVOST. Yes, I concur with the assessments of Admiral Davidson and Admiral Aquilino.

#### IMPORTANCE OF PARTNER EXERCISES IN THE PACIFIC

75. Senator HAWLEY. General Van Ovost, partner exercises across the Pacific are critical to strengthening our relationships in the region and gaining access to key logistical nodes. How do these kinds of activities help us prepare for logistics and basing of transportation assets?

General VAN OVOST. Multinational exercises across the Pacific bolster relationships with our allies and partners and are critical events to enabling information sharing, promoting interoperability, ensuring resiliency, and providing credible deterrence. Through exercises and wargaming, partner nations gain a better understanding of our deployment and distribution requirements and are more willing to permit access to mobility nodes. Additionally, these engagements help identify opportunities to address construction of common use infrastructure.

76. Senator HAWLEY. General Van Ovost, how do you see the Pacific Deterrence Initiative supporting these kinds of critical activities?

General VAN OVOST. The Pacific Deterrence Initiative reinforces the U.S. role as a trusted ally and effective competitor in the region. Investments in the Indo-Pacific region help to establish new relationships and strengthen partnerships in geo-politically sensitive areas. The initiative also enables our ability to potentially gain access to, or protect, lines of communication, while supporting transportation and infrastructure requirements of the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise.

SUPPORT TO AIR FORCE AGILE COMBAT EMPLOYMENT

77. Senator HAWLEY. General Van Ovost, how is TRANSCOM working with the Air Force to support the operational concept of Agile Combat Employment (ACE), since it appears that TRANSCOM would play a significant role in ACE?

General VAN OVOST. USTRANSCOM engages with all the Military Departments on their emerging operational concepts, to include the Air Force's Agile Combat Employment (ACE). In particular, USTRANSCOM, as synchronizer for the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise (JDDE), supports the geographical COCOMs and enables concepts like ACE by helping set global posture (infrastructure, equipment, and forces), as well as advocate for access, basing, and overflight (ABO) permissions from partner nations. If confirmed, I will continue to collaborate with the U.S. Air Force and work to incorporate the concepts articulated in ACE into our global posture priorities, operations, exercises, wargames, and studies.

[The nomination reference of General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN237**

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
March 5, 2021.

*Ordered,* That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

*To Be General*

Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, 2289

\_\_\_\_\_, 2021.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr. Reed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed.

☐ The nominee has agreed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

[The biographical sketch of General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]



## BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

### GENERAL JACQUELINE VAN OVOST

Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost is Commander, Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The command serves as U.S. Transportation Command's air component, executing the air mobility mission in support of the joint force, allies and partners with a fleet of nearly 1,100 aircraft. The command encompasses Eighteenth Air Force, the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, the 618th Air Operations Center and 17 wings and two groups, which provide rapid global mobility from more than 100 locations worldwide. Nearly 107,000 active-duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Airmen and civilians comprise the air mobility Total Force, providing command and control of inter-theater and intra-theater airlift, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation, global air mobility support, and presidential and senior leader air transport in support of national interests.



Gen. Van Ovost has commanded an air refueling squadron, flying training wing and the Presidential Airlift Wing. She also served as the Director of Staff for Headquarters Air Force, Vice Director of the Joint Staff, the Director of Mobility Forces for U.S. Central Command and as the Vice Commander of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center. Gen. Van Ovost graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1988. She is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School and a command pilot with more than 4,200 hours in more than 30 aircraft, including the C-32A, C-17A, C-141B, KC-135R and KC-46A.

Prior to assuming her current role, Gen. Van Ovost served as the Deputy Commander, Air Mobility Command.

#### EDUCATION

1988 Bachelor of Science in aeronautical engineering, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.

1994 U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

1996 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

1996 Master of Science, Mechanical Engineering, California State University, Fresno

1999 Master of Military Arts and Sciences, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2004 Master of Strategic Studies, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2008 Air Force Enterprise Leadership Seminar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



2009 National Security Management Course, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.  
 2009 Leadership Development Program, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.  
 2017 Driving Government Performance, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Boston

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. August 1988 - August 1989, student, Undergraduate Pilot Training, Reese AFB, Texas
2. August 1989 - June 1993, C-141B Pilot, 17th and 76th Airlift Squadrons, Charleston AFB, S.C.
3. June 1993 - June 1994, student, USAF Test Pilot School, Edwards AFB, Calif.
4. June 1994 - October 1997, Experimental Test Pilot, 417/418 Flight Test Squadron, Edwards AFB, Calif.
5. October 1997 - July 1998, Test Pilot Instructor and Chief, Scheduling Branch, U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School, Edwards AFB, Calif.
6. July 1998 - June 1999, student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
7. June 1999 - June 2001, Chief, C-17 Acquisition Branch and C-17 Program Element Monitor, Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Arlington, Va.
8. July 2001 - December 2001, Assistant Director of Operations, 350th Air Refueling Squadron, McConnell AFB, Kan.
9. January 2002 - July 2003, Commander, 384th Air Refueling Squadron, McConnell AFB, Kan.
10. July 2003 - June 2004, student, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
11. July 2004 - April 2007, Chief, Standards Branch then Chief, Joint Operations Division, Operations and Plans Directorate, U.S. Transportation Command, Scott AFB, Ill.
12. May 2007 - March 2008, Vice Commander, 12th Flying Training Wing, Randolph AFB, Texas
13. March 2008 - February 2010, Commander, 12th Flying Training Wing, Randolph AFB, Texas
14. February 2010 - March 2012, Commander, 89th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Andrews, Md.
15. March 2012- September 2013, Vice Commander, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, Travis AFB, Calif.
16. September 2013 - February 2015, Deputy Director for Politico-Military Affairs (Europe, NATO, Russia), Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (J5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
17. February 2015 - August 2017, Vice Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
18. August 2017 - November 2017, Special Assistant to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
19. November 2017 - April 2020, Director of Staff, Headquarters Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
20. April 2020 - August 2020, Deputy Commander, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill.
21. August 2020 - present, Commander, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill.

#### **SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS**

1. July 2004 - April 2007, Chief, Joint Operations Division, Operations and Plans Directorate, U.S. Transportation Command, Scott AFB, Ill., as a lieutenant colonel

2. September 2013 - February 2015 Deputy Director for Politico-Military Affairs (Europe, NATO, Russia), Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (J5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a brigadier general
3. February 2015 - August 2017, Vice Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a major general

**FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Rating: command pilot  
 Flight Hours: 4,200  
 Aircraft Flown: C-32A, C-12C, C-17A, C-23A, C-141B/A, KC-135R, KC-46A, F-15B, F-16B, T-1A, T-37B and T-38A

**MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Distinguished Service Medal  
 Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster  
 Bronze Star Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters  
 Air Medal  
 Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster  
 Joint Service Commendation Medal  
 Air Force Commendation Medal  
 Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster

**EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Second Lieutenant June 1, 1988  
 First Lieutenant June 1, 1990  
 Captain June 1, 1992  
 Major Aug. 1, 1998  
 Lieutenant Colonel May 1, 2001  
 Colonel Dec. 1, 2006  
 Brigadier General Aug. 2, 2012  
 Major General May 22, 2015  
 Lieutenant General Nov. 8, 2017  
 General Aug. 20, 2020

(Current as of February 2021)

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[The Committee on Armed Services requires certain senior military officers nominated by the President to positions requiring the advice and consent of the Senate to complete a form that details the biographical, financial, and other information of the nominee. The form executed by General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF in connection with her nomination follows:]

117<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2021 -- 2022  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
ROOM SR-228  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6050

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE  
INFORMATION REQUESTED OF NOMINEES  
FOR CERTAIN SENIOR MILITARY POSITIONS

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOMINEE: Answer all questions and provide all requested information. If more space is needed, attach an additional sheet of paper to the Questionnaire and cite the part of the Questionnaire and the question number (e.g., A-9, B-4) to which the continuation of your answer applies. Unless otherwise required, an answer of "yes", "no", or "not applicable" is appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE, PART A

NOTE: Information furnished in this part of the Questionnaire will be made available in Committee offices for public inspection prior to the hearing, if any, and will be entered in the hearing record, also available to the public.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC

1. Name (Include any former names you have used): Jacqueline D. Van Ovost
2. Position to which nominated:  
Commander, United States Transportation Command
3. Date of nomination: March 5, 2021
4. Government experience (List any advisory, consultative, honorary, and other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed in the service record extract provided to the Committee by the applicable agency/department/board): N/A
5. Business relationships (List all positions currently held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, and of any educational or other institution): I am a partner in my family's small business (Whitewater Aviation Corporation in Copperhill, TN). My husband is the controlling partner and the Vice President. He manages the business on a full-

time basis with my father. My father is the President. I serve in an unsalaried position as the secretary. This position was reviewed by the Air Force ethics counselors in March 2017, and there were no legal or ethical objections.

6. **Memberships (List all memberships and offices that you currently hold, as well as any memberships and offices you have previously held, in professional, fraternal, scholarly, civic, business, charitable, and other organizations):** Member Only in: 99s; Women Military Aviators; Women in Aviation International; Air Force Association; USAFA Endowment; Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association; Faith Fellowship Assembly of God; National Museum of the United States Air Force.
7. **Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements, in addition to those listed in the service record extract and biographical provided to the Committee by the agency or department):** None.

#### **COMMITMENTS IN FURTHERANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT**


**NOTE:** In order to exercise their legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress timely receive testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch. A simple “yes” or “no” response is appropriate.

8. **Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress?** Yes.
9. **Do you agree, if confirmed, and when asked before this Committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate Committees of Congress to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the position of the Administration?** Yes.
10. **Do you agree, if confirmed, to provide this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so timely?** Yes.

11. Do you agree, if confirmed, to consult with this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Yes.
12. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Yes.
13. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this Committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Yes.
14. Do you agree, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this Committee? Yes.
15. Do you agree, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this Committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Yes.

[The nominee responded to Parts B-E of the committee questionnaire. The text of the questionnaire is set forth in the Appendix to this volume. The nominee's answers to Parts B-E are contained in the committee's executive files.]

I hereby state that I have read and signed Parts A and B of the foregoing Senate Armed Services Committee Questionnaire, and that the information provided therein, and in any document appended thereto, is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, current, accurate, and complete.

  
 JACQUELINE D. VAN OVOST  
 General, USAF

This 5th day of March, 2021

[The nomination of General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USAF A was reported to the Senate by Chairman Reed on September 28, 2021, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on October 1, 2021.]