

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2026 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE
PROGRAM**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

S. 2296

TO AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 FOR MILITARY
ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, FOR MILITARY CON-
STRUCTION, AND FOR DEFENSE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY, TO PRESCRIBE MILITARY PERSONNEL STRENGTHS FOR
SUCH FISCAL YEAR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

PART 3

READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

MARCH 5, 2025



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CONTENTS

MARCH 5, 2025

	Page
UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND	1
MEMBER STATEMENTS	
Statement of Senator Dan Sullivan	1
Statement of Senator Mazie K. Hirono	3
WITNESS STATEMENTS	
Reed, General Randall, USAF, Commander, United States Transportation Command	4
Questions for the Record	42

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATIONS FOR FIS-
CAL YEAR 2026 AND THE FUTURE YEARS
DEFENSE PROGRAM**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

UNITED STATES SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m. in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Roger Wicker (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Sullivan, Wicker, Fischer, Scott, Hirono, Reed, Shaheen, Kaine, and Warren.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

Senator SULLIVAN. This hearing will come to order. The Readiness Subcommittee today meets to receive testimony on the posture of the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM). I want to thank our witness this afternoon, General Reed, for being here today. Sir, it was good meeting with you earlier in the week.

I want to say upfront, TRANSCOM is a very, very important combatant command. It's not the one that you always hear about, but it's really critical to our military, our readiness, and our ability to win wars, and our ability to project power, and sustain our forces.

As a Senator from Alaska, I'm keenly aware of the unique challenges and strategic opportunities our State presents in the broader national security landscape, but we are also operating in an area where logistics and sustainment are no longer a given in any potential conflict.

What used to be an asterisk, or an incorrect assumption, or what they call in the military "fairy dusting" away a problem, on the Department of Defense (DODs) part with regard to sustained and contested logistics, has allowed our adversaries, such as China and Russia, to actively develop capabilities aimed at disrupting our mobility and sustainment operations across multiple domains.

Currently, the theaters from the Indo-Pacific region, to the Arctic, to the European Theater, and in the Middle East, all present significant, unique challenges in military contested logistics. Our

military must ensure that pre-position stockpiles, robust transportation networks, and harden infrastructure are available to sustain forces in high-end conflicts.

I'm particularly interested in how TRANSCOM is addressing contested logistics through enhanced resiliency in sealift, airlift, and overland transportation. I would also like to hear your thoughts, General, on how we can better leverage infrastructure, our ports, and airfields to strengthen our power projection capabilities in both the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific regions.

As the Air Force looks to the KC-46 and other next-generation programs for its air refueling needs, we cannot forget about the programs that are actually doing today's missions. The KC-135 has been a cornerstone of the U.S. Air Force's air mobility in refueling capabilities since the 1950s. That's not an incorrect statement; since the 1950s. But it needs advances in technology to evolve with military needs.

While this is not a budget hearing today, I hope, General Reed, to hear about how TRANSCOM has informed the Air Force's tanker strategy moving forward, especially in light of the long delays in KC-46 deliveries, and recent reports about cracks in certain components of the aircraft.

Air refueling tankers play a vital role in extending the range and endurance of fighter aircraft bombers, surveillance planes, enabling them to perform long-range missions without relying on forward operating basis. They're crucial to America's Fight Tonight mandate, and as we talked about earlier, General, this morning, they're actually very crucial in my home State of Alaska where Russian and Chinese incursions over the last year have spiked.

The men and women who fly these intercept missions from Alaska do nearly 2,000-mile round trips to intercept Russian and Chinese strategic bombers, and they, of course, rely heavily on TRANSCOM tankers to get them to the intercept and to get them home safely.

We also want to hear about the challenges with regard to shipbuilding and military sealift command, which is another element of what TRANSCOM does and does so well. Modernization of our sealift capacity must be a top priority if we are to maintain our ability to surge forces anywhere in the world in a crisis.

The recently initiated tanker security program is a natural progression, but broader efforts are needed to ensure that we do not face a mobility crisis in the coming decade. I'm particularly interested in hearing about the status of sealift recapitalization efforts, including any challenges TRANSCOM is encountering so that when the fiscal year 2026 budget is released, we can followup to see if funding support is needed to accelerate modernization efforts.

The well-being of our troops and their families is, obviously, a top priority of this Committee. We must ensure that the different changes that we've seen in the Global Household Goods Contract (GHC) challenges are made in a way that provides seamless transitions during Permanent Change of Station moves. General Reed, I look forward to getting an update on this program in light of the challenges.

Finally, I want to thank the men and women of USTRANSCOM for the critical work they do every day to sustain our military

forces and project power globally. Again, this is an incredible combatant command that not enough Americans know about, understand, and appreciate, and this hearing is, in part, to help change that.

With that, I want to recognize Ranking Member, Senator Hirono for her opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

Senator HIRONO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. General Reed, it's good to see you. Thank you very much for your service.

Senator Sullivan, it's good to continue our work on this Subcommittee, this time, you as chair and me as ranking. So, we will continue our efforts together.

General Reed, thank you for your service to our Nation, and I thank the servicemembers under your command around the globe conducting missions even as we speak. TRANSCOM plays a critical role in the movement of people, supplies, and equipment anywhere in the world. Your command remains the backbone of our military to ensure the joint force remains agile and responsive.

However, as the landscape for logistics continues to evolve, we must adapt to the new reality and full spectrum of emerging threats ranging from cyberattacks to kinetic strikes on ports and airfields. We need to recognize that contested logistics will be a battlefield in itself.

Fortunately, the Air Force is currently taking steps to modernize its aerial refueling fleet, shifting toward a new tanker design that can operate in contested environments. The Blended Wing Body (BWB), aircraft is a promising solution offering 90 percent more range, upwards of 50 percent more fuel efficiency, 80 percent more fuel offboard capability for sortie generations, takes up to 40 percent less space on airfields, flies 2,000 feet higher, and requires less landing and a takeoff distance. All I can say is, wow, and very impressive. We have to make it happen.

Beyond these critical benefits, the blended wing body design would save at least \$900 million per year on fuel. \$900 million. In the short-term, 3D-printed microveins on transport aircraft reduced drag, pay for itself in just 7 months, and yield a few percentages on fuel as well.

While that may not sound like much at first glance, the DOD spends over \$10 billion each year on operational energy costs. To be clear, investing in operational energy programs is not just about cost savings. It directly enhances our lethality, readiness, and ability to sustain operations in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Unfortunately, the TRANSCOM assets have been recently used in a very inefficient manner and at great cost to the Department of Defense, all for, in my view, political show. The use of C-17s and C-130's to transport some 5,000 migrants at three times the cost of Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-chartered flights, and the DOD electing to do so on a non-reimbursable basis is not only inefficient, but also detracts from our core military mission.

Just last year, the Department of Homeland Security removed over 685,000 individuals without DOD assistance. The largest amount of people since 2011, obviously, during the Biden years that the DHS managed to do this. Yet, the DOD has opted to fly

at least three times through India, each trip costing taxpayers over \$2.5 million, and at least one of which tasked a refueling tanker to fly from New Jersey to Honolulu only to return the next day.

Beyond the questionable legal basis under which this is occurring, I want to know who is making the decision to fly in such an inefficient and costly manner. There was a time when my Republican counterparts would object to DOD writing a blank check to do the job of another government agency. TRANSCOM must remain focused on strategic mobility and not burdened with missions that are outside its intended purpose.

TRANSCOM would be far better off returning to its rightful focus on contested logistics because energy security remains a critical challenge. Our forces in the Indo-Pacific rely on vulnerable fuel shipments. In the event of conflict, these fuel supply lines would be prime targets for our adversaries. A more resilient energy strategy, incorporating distributed energy assets and more efficient technologies is essential for maintaining operational effectiveness.

TRANSCOM is a key pillar of our national security, but we must ensure that it remains focused on its core mission, whether by modernizing our tanker fleet or strengthening contested logistic capabilities. We must make the right investments and policy decisions. So, General Reed, again, I thank you for your leadership. I look forward to your testimony

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Hirono. I see that we have the Ranking Member of the entire Committee, the former Chairman of the Armed Services Committee here with us, my good friend, Senator Jack Reed. Senator Reed, would you wish to say a few opening comments?

Senator REED. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your hospitality, but I would just wait for my questions.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay. Thank you. General Reed, the floor is yours, and a longer written statement we can make sure it gets submitted for the record.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL RANDALL REED, USAF,
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND**

General REED. Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member Hirono, distinguished members of the subcommittee, good afternoon. I am honored to join you today with my lovely bride, Len, and Senior Enlisted Leader, Chief Master Sergeant Brian Kruzelnick, to represent the men and women of the United States Transportation Command.

A warfighting command, we project, maneuver, and sustain the joint force anytime, anywhere in support of our national objectives. Our warfighting elements consist of three service component commands, military surface deployment, and distribution command, military sealift command, air mobility command, and our direct subordinate, the joint enabling capabilities command. Beyond our core military units, USTRANSCOM maintain strong partnerships with the commercial transportation industry, our fourth component, to fully execute our unified command plan tasks.

Today's security environment presents numerous complex challenges to force projection and logistics as adversaries actively seek to disrupt, degrade, and deny our transportation networks, especially within the homeland. With 85 percent of U.S. combat power residing within the continental United States, resilient transportation networks fortified against malicious cyberattacks, now prioritize the crucial fort-to-port transportation segment.

Even after overcoming initial deployment disruptions, we must continuously enhance our matériel capabilities to maintain a decisive advantage. Decisive advantage demands a modernized and connected sealift, airlift and air refueling fleet. By 2032, 54 percent of our government-owned sealift ships will reach the end of their service life. To support our maritime industrial base and protect a healthy pool of qualified crews to crew the vessels, we need fully-funded maritime security program, tanker security program, the Jones Act, and adherence to cargo preference laws.

The start of a recapitalization plan is due for our airlift fleet. Because of the long lead time for platform development, we welcome the service-led recapitalization plans of the air refueling fleet, which must continue uninterrupted into the future. Even after the Air Force accepts the final contracted KC-46, the average age of the remaining KC-135 fleet will be 67 years old.

Finally, we remain committed to the ongoing transformation of the Global Household goods program. Moving is an integral part of our life, and while most of us relocate every two to 3 years, and learn better ways of doing it every time we move, it is always challenging. The department began transitioning to the Global Household Goods Contract (GHC), in April 2024, with the goal of providing an improved moving experience for servicemembers and their families. This transformation is a monumental task and reaches into every aspect of a servicemember's relocation.

Because GHC is reshaping how we move servicemembers, their families, and their memories, we remain in close collaboration with the services to identify and then take action to resolve issues. Because we are centered on servicemembers and families, just this past week, we made an adjustment to the transfer rate to the prime contractor, and while it has not been an easy path, there have been issues. There should be no doubt we will see this through.

These challenges may sound daunting, however, USTRANSCOM has the global transportation awareness and authorities to address them, and I will be clear, that I have no doubt that our professionals will overcome any disruption. We are emboldened by our guiding principles to be ready, united, and decisive.

USTRANSCOM was created as a purpose-built force to provide the essential surface, ocean, and airlift capacity to project and sustain American military power anywhere in the world at any time. Thank you for your continued and unwavering support for our mission and our people.

I welcome your questions, and together, we deliver.

[The prepared statement of General Randall Reed follows:]

Statement of
General Randall Reed, United States Air Force
Commander, United States Transportation Command



Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the State of the Command

05 March 2025

Who We Are – Our Mission

We are the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), a warfighting command who projects and sustains combat power at any time and any place our national objectives require. As one of eleven combatant commands, we are the functional command responsible for global transportation. Our warfighting force consists of three Service component commands and a subordinate command, all augmented by the interagency, commercial partners of the broader Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise (JDDE), and the Joint Petroleum Enterprise (JPE).

Our mission is to move and maneuver the Department of Defense (DoD), the interagency, allies, and partners in peace, competition, crisis, and conflict. We fulfill this responsibility through capacity, posture, and command and control. Our capacity consists of our air, sea, and surface fleets. Our posture includes seaports, airports, railways, terminals, and agreements to access partner nation infrastructure. Our command and control consists of authorities, joint enablers, communication tools, and data processing systems. Our Joint Force is unique because it is the only one in the world capable of defending the homeland *while* deterring on a global scale. Our Joint Force depends on USTRANSCOM for its uniqueness and USTRANSCOM depends on focused investments outlined below to strengthen the lethality of the Joint Force.

USTRANSCOM was created as a purpose-built force to overcome the challenge of projecting and sustaining our Joint Force via air, land, or sea anywhere in the world. We alone possess the transportation awareness and authorities to traverse oceans and continents to execute our global mission.

USTRANSCOM's global mission is derived from our Unified Command Plan responsibilities and authorities through our component commands and subordinate command. These are: the Army's Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, the Navy's

Military Sealift Command, the Air Force's Air Mobility Command, and the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command. Our greatest strength is our Fourth Component--our commercial industry partners. Together, we maintain credible deterrence and use data-driven decision making to succeed in our sealift, strategic seaports, air refueling, airlift, patient movement, domestic rail, global bulk fuel management, and motor transport missions for the Joint Force.

Our commercial industry partnerships provide critical transportation capacity, petroleum infrastructure, global networks, and contracts to meet day-to-day and wartime requirements. USTRANSCOM also partners with the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and other government agencies. DOT's Maritime Administration (MARAD) operates and maintains the government-owned sealift fleet, oversees the health of the merchant mariner workforce and supports the Nation's seaports. We also partner with DOT's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Railroad Administration to evaluate the readiness of key road and rail transportation networks to support defense requirements.

Our ability to fund rapid growth in transportation capacity through the Transportation Working Capital Fund (TWCF) provides the agility and flexibility to rapidly respond to complex and unplanned operations while guaranteeing our transportation capabilities are ready and responsive. USTRANSCOM spends approximately 10.5 billion dollars annually on military and commercial transportation services to execute Defense Department missions.

Our global reach is swift and precise; it demonstrates to adversaries that our agile transportation enterprise can swiftly meet any aggression and reassures allies and partners. The Command provides credible deterrence despite aging fleets of sealift vessels (including two hospital ships), air refueling tankers, and airlift aircraft that need recapitalization. We are building international partnerships to increase interoperability and allow the access, basing, and

overflight (ABO) required for the JDDE to provide world-wide logistics operations at the time and place of our nation's choosing. Meanwhile, determined and sophisticated adversaries increasingly demonstrate the ability to extend a contested environment across the globe and to our homeland with the specific aim to disrupt the responsive and strategic reach of USTRANSCOM. We are committed to overcoming these challenges by developing resilient transportation networks and investing in Research and Development Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) for a variety of service programs that transform how the DoD executes the logistics and distribution enterprise. Our RDT&E investment portfolio includes technology that would provide autonomous transportation platforms, rocket cargo, and long-range precision aerial delivery platforms. We are encouraged by additional service programs that will reduce the challenges of a contested logistics theater. An example of these programs is the Department of Navy Transferrable Reload At-sea method which allows our combat vessels to be rearmed by Military Sealift Command vessels while at sea.

Credible Global Mobility Capacity

USTRANSCOM's future focus centers on safeguarding our ability to address simultaneous global demands in increasingly complex environments, ultimately advancing national security interests. Our continued success hinges on the credibility of our capacity – the intersection of capabilities, readiness, and capacity –to operate where and when we choose, supported by a robust global network of allies and partners. This demands deliberate investment to ensure sufficient ready force capacity while we pursue vital modernization and recapitalization funding that impact all USTRANSCOM Unified Command Plan (UCP) missions. Achieving sufficient ready force capacity requires enhancing our air, land, and sea transportation capabilities within our military and commercial fleets. This enhancement necessitates recapitalization to replace aging Tanker

aircraft and maritime Ready Reserve Force vessels. Furthermore, we must ensure our military aircraft, maritime ships, and surface transportation network possess the connectivity necessary to survive in a contested environment.

Global Mobility Posture forms the foundation of power projection and serves as the backbone of our global mobility capacity. Our strong relationships with Allies and partners provide asymmetric advantages, assuring access to key regions and creating a robust basing and logistics system. USTRANSCOM collaborates with Geographic Combatant Commands to communicate and foster security cooperation initiatives that bolster ABO requirements across various regions. We will maintain necessary agreements for uninterrupted access to a resilient global mobility system and forge new agreements to guarantee access before crises or contingencies arise. Bilateral training exercises allow us to strengthen relationships and gain experience operating in key airports, terminals, and seaports – locations critical to future conflicts.

While we strive to strengthen relationships, adversaries actively seek to compromise foreign infrastructure and hinder our global mobility capacity. For example, the People's Republic of China has dispersed technology across a global network of commercial maritime ports. This technology introduces physical and cybersecurity vulnerabilities into the global maritime information and operational technology systems that underpin both U.S. military transportation operations and the global supply chain. These vulnerabilities provide the People's Republic of China with ample opportunities for intelligence collection, malicious cyber activities, and sabotage.

Surface Capability in the United States

USTRANSCOM's domestic transportation infrastructure networks include highways,

railroads, and seaports for the safe and rapid transportation of equipment and supplies from port to port of embarkation, both in support of overseas contingency operations as well as day-to-day movement of materiel supporting military training and sustainment needs. USTRANSCOM closely monitors the capability and condition of these networks and collaborates with civil and commercial transportation entities to integrate national defense needs into their transportation policies and investments through two programs: Highways for National Defense and Railroads for National Defense. USTRANSCOM assesses that while the nation's highway and rail networks meet current military needs, continued private and public investment is necessary to preserve and enhance the resilience of these transportation capabilities.

The Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) is designated by the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with appropriate Federal agencies and the States which identifies the highways most important for national defense. Currently, the STRAHNET comprises the entire Interstate Highway System of approximately 48,800 miles, as well as an additional 13,600 miles of major non-interstate highway corridors and 1,800 miles of connectors between important military installations, airports, and seaports. The military relies on the Federal Highway Administration, State Departments of Transportation, regional planning organizations, and other local government agencies to manage, operate, and maintain the network of public roads on the STRAHNET.

State Departments of Transportation and local agencies are not required to consider national defense needs in project funding decisions. Preserving and enhancing the capability of the nation's highway transportation necessitates a close partnership with federal, State, and local transportation officials to promote their consideration of defense needs in highway project planning and programming.

The Railroads for National Defense program designates the Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET) in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration. STRACNET identifies the domestic rail infrastructure most important to national defense which provides a rail network of approximately 30 percent of the total U.S. freight rail network that connects 141 defense sites. Unlike highways, most of the U.S. rail network is privately owned and maintained. Therefore, STRACNET relies heavily on private capital investment to maintain or improve capabilities. While we assess that private investment is adequate to maintain a safe and reliable network, competitive grants benefiting freight rail offer both direct and indirect benefits to national defense.

Opportunities

USTRANSCOM currently employs 563 unique, heavy-duty, chain-tiedown railcars designed specifically to carry M1 Abrams tanks and other heavy tracked vehicles on the U.S. rail network. These railcars are owned, maintained, and employed by our Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command and are regularly used in support of deployments, movements to training centers, and sustainment. These railcars were built in the 1980s and are quickly approaching the end of their 50-year lifespan as regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration. Procurement of replacement railcars is currently in the design phase. There are no equivalent commercial rail cars available with the capabilities needed to meet our deployment requirements. USTRANSCOM will work in partnership with the Department of Army to ensure successful replacement.

Strategic Seaports

USTRANSCOM relies on commercial seaports along the east, west, and Gulf coast to rapidly deploy forces and equipment globally. Our Army component designated 18 commercial

seaports as crucial to USTRANSCOM due to their potential role in supporting large-scale deployments, emergencies, or disaster response. Additionally, there are two military ocean terminals that are considered the most vital to our operational planning. Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) in North Carolina and Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO) in California are the Department's Strategic Seaports for shipping ammunition worldwide. There are no other facilities on either coast that can meet the ammunition throughput capacity or net explosive weight limits that MOTCO and MOTSU provide. Continued investment in the mission critical infrastructure at these terminals is necessary to preserve the ammunition outload capacity required to support deployed combat forces.

Opportunities

Approximately 91% of our non-contingency shipments rely on commercial carriers and seaports who operate on unclassified networks. Both the carriers and USTRANSCOM understand the increasing threat of cyberspace attacks from adversaries who are determined to infiltrate private networks and devices. USTRANSCOM is dedicated to sharing information and collaborating with our partners to ensure uninterrupted support to our operations.

Continued investment in modernizing capabilities, coupled with support from law enforcement and counterintelligence agencies, will strengthen mission assurance for operations while protecting the economic viability of commercial carriers and port authorities. USTRANSCOM continues to partner with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency under the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Coast Guard to identify and mitigate threats.

Maritime

The commercial sealift industry partnership with USTRANSCOM continues to be the backbone of our nation's strategic sealift portfolio and source of the workforce needed to bring the

government-owned Ready Reserve Force from reserve status to fully operational during crisis response. MARAD's sealift emergency preparedness programs with close coordination with USTRANSCOM, manages the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) and the Voluntary Tanker Agreement (VTA), supported by Maritime Sealift Program (MSP) and Tanker Security Program (TSP), with vessels trading internationally, are force multipliers and strategic deterrents that provide assured access to the sealift capacity needed to project and sustain our Joint Force. In wartime, VISA provides close to 20% of the overall dry cargo force projection capacity and more than 95% of the over-ocean dry cargo sustainment capacity. Likewise, the VTA is critical to reducing reliance on foreign flag tankers by providing assured access to a growing U.S. flag tanker fleet for the transportation of liquid petroleum products. After its renewal in 2022, the VTA has expanded to sixteen total tankers, including ten medium-range tankers operating internationally under the U.S. flag in the TSP.

Opportunities

USTRANSCOM is concerned with the reduction in capacity, readiness, and availability of the organic Ready Reserve Force. The median age of the 46 Roll-on/Roll-off ships we use to surge from the continental United States is 47 years; 14 of the 46 ships are 50 years old or older. A proactive strategy to recapitalize and modernize this fleet are vital to maintain credible deterrence globally. Therefore, USTRANSCOM supports the Navy's strategy to recapitalize the government-owned fleet by acquiring foreign-built sealift ships from the commercial used market while also removing limitations on the number of used sealift vessels that the DoD can procure by providing the Secretary of Defense discretionary authority to access the commercial market as needed. Working with MARAD, we purchased seven used vessels and expect to purchase two more in FY25 with over 1.5 million useful square feet capacity. We are grateful that Congress increased

the statutory limit to ten used ships in the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act. The Navy and MARAD are expected to reach that ten-ship limit in FY26 yet our ability to maintain credible capacity will remain constrained because 30 ships are scheduled to retire between 2026 and 2034.

A comprehensive recapitalization strategy will provide a modern and ready fleet to deter adversaries, reassure allies, and support national objectives globally.

Air Refueling

The air refueling fleet remains USTRANSCOM's most stressed deployment, sustainment, and combat capability. The fleet is critical to rapid global mobility and is the lifeblood of the Joint Force's ability to deploy forces across all National Defense Strategy mission areas. Credible air refueling capacity must simultaneously cover global demands for no-fail wartime missions by the combat air forces. Aging fleets, considered against the context of increasingly capable adversaries, underscore the need for tanker recapitalization and modernization.

Opportunity

USTRANSCOM supports the Defense Department plan to recapitalize our aging air refueling aircraft with a fully capable KC-46 and endorses the Air Force plan to accelerate delivery of an advanced air refueling capability. The Congressionally-established minimum of 466 tanker aircraft is at elevated risk to meet the JDDE demand for simultaneous homeland defense, strategic deterrence, and theater combatant command wartime requirements. Over the next decade, the aging KC-135 aircraft fleet will be an ever-increasing readiness concern. When the Air Force accepts the last KC-46 on contract the average age of the remaining KC-135s will be 67 years. It is critical that the Air Force continues a full recapitalization program while investing in a future Next Generation Air-Refueling System to maintain credible capacity and provide the persistent

connectivity, improved survivability, and increased agility necessary to operate in contested environments.

Strategic Airlift

Strategic airlift is a national asymmetric advantage critical to global force projection at velocity; no other nation or combination of nations can provide comparable global airlift output. The strategic airlift fleet, composed of 52 C-5M, 223 C-17 aircraft, and commercial partners stands as the cornerstone of our nation's ability to project power globally. The C-5M and C-17 fleets are particularly important for the movement of outsize and oversize cargo early in a near-peer conflict, a requirement the Civil Reserve Air Fleet cannot meet. Sustaining our current fleets is a strategic imperative, and we must also pursue modernization to improve survivability in an increasingly contested environment.

Opportunities

Low readiness is a key concern across the airlift fleets with observed aircraft availability rates falling below programmed levels. The three most recent DoD-level mobility studies, including the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act-directed Mobility Capability Requirements Study (MCRS-20), each validated an organic strategic airlift requirement of 275 strategic airlift aircraft. Because timelines to develop and field new aircraft are measured in decades, USTRANSCOM encourages the Air Force to begin considering recapitalization plans soon to align with projected service life limits.

Intra-Theater Lift

Simultaneous mission requirements and emerging warfighting concepts severely stress

intra-theater lift in the Indo-Pacific region. The programmed C-130 fleet of 271 total aircraft inventory is at elevated risk to meet the demands for globally integrated requirements, which include transload movements from strategic aircraft and sealift vessels, time-sensitive movement of forces and supplies, and aeromedical evacuation in theater and within the contiguous United States. Especially within the Indo-Pacific, recent analysis highlights a tight coupling between air and sealift assets required to maneuver and sustain fielded forces given the dearth of ground lines of communication. The magnitude and scope of intra-theater maneuver and sustainment demands outpace the programmed capacity of theater sealift, which levies additional requirements on an already stressed theater airlift fleet and increases demand on strategic airlift to augment intra-theater movement. This system of systems is foundational to global force projection, maneuver, and sustainment.

Opportunities

Increased investment in theater sealift is needed to alleviate stress on the theater airlift fleet. Joint and Service operating concepts entail maneuvering forces across broad distances via airlift while also sustaining forces across broadly distributed operating locations. These concepts elevate the demand for theater lift in and around the Indo-Pacific.

Global Bulk Fuel

The Command made significant strides as the single manager for Global Bulk Fuel Management and Delivery since achieving Initial Operational Capability in February of 2023. Over the past year, we closed capability gaps identified across the Joint Petroleum Enterprise. For example, the FY23 Petroleum War Reserve Requirement (PWRR) identified the need for further analysis of war reserve stocks of bulk fuel globally. Conducting this analysis led to a complete

revamp of the process and provided a better understanding of risks to combatant command operational and contingency plans. The Department used the revamped process for the FY25 PWRR analysis to achieve higher fidelity wartime requirement planning. The Bulk Fuel Feasibility Assessment proof of principle, completed in 2023, is another example of our ability, as the single manager, to more effectively assess fuel requirements. Since the proof of principle, we added combatant command bulk fuel assessments with analysis of the associated “family of plans” which account for consequences of contested environments. Lastly, while pursuing the development of a Global Bulk Fuel Common Operational Picture, we discovered data across the enterprise data was disparate, dated, and varied in accuracy. We are focused on establishing a Single Source of Truth that will be the basis for informing bulk fuel tools and reports along with supporting tools.

Opportunities

Bulk fuel distribution across the wide swath of the Pacific theater is a constraint to our operational planning. After its renewal in 2022, the Vessel Tanker Agreement program continued to expand to sixteen total tankers, including ten medium range tankers operating internationally under U.S. flag in the TSP. Despite growth in the TSP fleet, demand for fuel in the Pacific exceeds capacity. The unique geography of the Indo-Pacific theater and the limited presence of U.S. flagged vessels underscores the importance of accessing fuel distribution platforms from allies and partner nations. To address this challenge, USTRANSCOM is pursuing a multi-faceted approach which includes establishing bilateral agreements with partner nations, working with MARAD to expand the TSP fleet, and collaborating with industry to access their capabilities and develop more solutions for intra-theater fuel distribution.

Global Patient Movement

Patient Movement is one of our Unified Command Plan responsibilities providing global patient movement for the DoD supporting the Range of Military Operations. On average, USTRANSCOM moves at least 14 routine and critical care patients a day with highly skilled Aeromedical Evacuation crews and Critical Care Air Transport Teams equipped with litter configurations, patient care units (IV pumps, blood oxygen monitors, heart monitors, etc.) and trained aeromedical staff. The asymmetrical advantage of global patient movement we enjoy today will be challenged in scale and scope of a high-end conflict. Exercises in the Indo-Pacific help us address the challenges of the high-end conflict. At home, the patient distribution mission within the continental U.S. requires the combined expertise of USTRANSCOM, United States Northern Command, the Defense Health Agency, and others to develop the Defense Department's Integrated CONUS Medical Operations Plan.

As a supporting command to this plan, USTRANSCOM develops an updated CONUS Patient Distribution Plan (CPDP) to provide aeromedical evacuation within CONUS to distribute patients among the National Disaster Medical System Federal Coordinating Centers for definitive care. CPDP provides aeromedical evacuation of large numbers of DoD casualties that arrive in the United States from an OCONUS theater and distribute them to U.S. based hospitals for inpatient care in DoD military treatment facilities, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers, National Disaster Medical Center civilian hospitals, and TRICARE reimbursed civilian hospitals. In the CPDP, DoD casualties are delivered to Aerial Ports of Debarkation and transported to Federal Coordinating Centers which are owned and operated by DoD and the VA, and are a part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)-led National Disaster Medical System.

USTRANSCOM has multi-year, longstanding personnel, training and equipment readiness gaps for aeromedical evacuation of large numbers of DoD casualties. Specifically, highly skilled, trained, and available Total Force Critical Care Air Transport Teams, and biocontainment capabilities to move high consequence infectious disease patients if military personnel are exposed during military operations. Additionally, a plan to aeromedically evacuate large numbers of DoD casualties from OCONUS theaters to other countries for inpatient care in DoD MTFs and other Ally/Partner Nation military and civilian hospitals, and forward to the United States for medical care at home, must be developed with U.S. government partners (e.g., Department of State, HHS).

Connectivity

Today's contested environments demand all USTRANSCOM air, land, and sea fleets to be connected to each other and the rest of the joint force. Connectivity between multi-domain fleets require cyber defenses and must extend to our Fourth Component, the commercial industry. Connectivity equates to battlespace awareness, survivability, and lethality.

Opportunities

USTRANSCOM recognizes the growing importance of data and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve data reliability, performance, and security for faster, more informed decision-making in global operations. We are actively pursuing and advocating for connectivity solutions for both our organic fleet and our commercial partners.

Joint Communications Support Element

As the DoD's global standing joint force headquarters capability, the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC) is uniquely postured under USTRANSCOM to rapidly support the

Department with joint command and control communications nodes. The JECC's Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE) operates a Global Enterprise Network that provides 24/7/365 coverage which allows its communication teams to deploy worldwide to support Joint Force Headquarters, special operations, DoD executives, and coalition forces on Immediate Response Force timelines. The JCSE uses its Global Network Operations Center to allow users rapid access to the DoD Information Network. This critical capability is housed in an outdated warehouse plagued by frequent HVAC and power failures which disrupt operations. Additionally, the Element must relocate to a less capable continuity of operations center during flood threats or disasters because the JCSE compound is situated eight feet below the MacDill AFB flood plain resulting in additional disruptions to operations. Furthermore, operational oversight of expeditionary missions is spread over several buildings vulnerable to extreme weather, cyber security, and physical security challenges. Without this capability, USTRANSCOM cannot guarantee assured joint communications in crisis and contingency.

Opportunities

To be effective in contested or denied environments, the JCSE leverages a unique modernization program to purchase and field diverse multi-spectrum transport communication links. This allows the networking equipment to minimize disruptions to operations by dynamically detecting communication link failures and restore command and control services using available military and commercial satellite constellations, cellular networks, and direct connections to commercial terrestrial internet connections. The JCSE's modernization program, funded by the Military Departments, must continue to be resourced at directed levels so the JCSE can successfully modernize rapidly evolving command, control, communications, and computer technologies.

Global Household Goods Contract

The Global Household Contract (GHC) transformation is designed to improve the relocation experience for Defense Department and Coast Guard personnel and their families while addressing long-standing limitations that exist within the legacy program. Key components of the transformation are enhanced communication support, simplified claims filing and settlement processes, modern digital management systems, and more scheduling options due to improved industry resource utilization.

Under the legacy Tender of Service program, commercial moving companies around the world manage household shipments for the Defense Department. The sheer number of vendors makes it difficult for the government to hold companies accountable in a meaningful way for individual performance failures. This generates friction, frustration and capacity challenges, which led to the transformation of having a single company manage all moves worldwide through a contract overseen by the Defense Department at the installation, service and joint levels. The GHC transformation institutes formally defined standards, oversight responsibilities, incentives, and consequences to improve accountability and service. In short, the government holds the single company accountable to the terms laid out in the contract.

Over the last year USTRANSCOM, on behalf of the Defense Department, shifted from GHC planning and development to GHC implementation. Since beginning the transition, 133 installations or 76.4% of domestic sites phased into the GHC construct through the prime contractor HomeSafe Alliance.

Oversight of HomeSafe Alliance includes continuous contract performance reviews. During initial program roll-out in 2024, DoD members reported record-high customer satisfaction.

Recent increases in business volume uncovered challenges and a decrease in satisfaction. Even so, DoD members remain highly favorable of the smooth information technology integration between contractor HomeSafe Connect system and the government MilMove system. This integration marks a key milestone in providing our service members and their families with greater visibility through a modern digital moving experience. USTRANSCOM remains committed to the relocation transformation and we will continue domestic market phase-in through the summer of 2025 May and begin the international transition in September 2025.

Joint Transportation Management System

The Joint Transportation Management System will deliver business reform across the JDDE's financial and transportation domains to standardize disjointed business processes, reduce legacy Information Technology technical debt, and improve transportation mission capability while ensuring auditability throughout the entire process. USTRANSCOM continues to lead the JTMS program, one of the largest non-weapon-system Information Technology reform initiatives in the DoD, and continues substantial progress in collaboration with Military Services and agencies to map current business processes, continue business process reengineering, and execute acquisition processes to procure a commercially available Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution. The program's analysis of the DoD transportation and financial processes identified thousands of findings which validated gaps that prevent the Department from meeting Financial Improvement and Audit Remediation objectives. JTMS's ERP software will be key to obtaining a clean audit opinion through the development and implementation of internal controls, transaction level transparency, and mitigation of existing material weaknesses and significant deficiencies. USTRANSCOM is on schedule to award a contract for the ERP solution by the summer of 2025.

Conclusion

USTRANSCOM alone possesses the global transportation awareness and authorities necessary to project the Joint Force via air, land, or sea anywhere in the world. Powered by a dedicated team, USTRANSCOM underwrites the lethality of the Joint Force, advances American interests around the globe, and provides the nation's leaders with strategic flexibility – all while creating multiple dilemmas for our adversaries. The JDDE provides credible deterrence daily despite an increasing number of disruptions from determined and sophisticated adversaries and an aging fleet of sealift vessels, air refueling tankers, and airlift aircraft that need recapitalization. The responsive and strategic nature of USTRANSCOM means we must continue to innovate and accelerate the changes necessary to remain ready now and into the future. Contested environments highlight that our actions to deliberately recapitalize organic mobility capabilities, and to modernize the JDDE, must continue for the DoD to maintain our asymmetric advantages and deliver on our national security requirements. I thank Congress for your continued support to the men, women, and mission of USTRANSCOM. We remain dedicated to fight, deliver, and win!

Together, We Deliver!

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, General, and thank you, again, to you, and the men and women at USTRANSCOM for the exceptional work that they do. I'm going to yield my first round of questioning to my colleague, Senator Fischer, and then we'll go in the regular order here. Senator Hirono will be next.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Senator Sullivan, and thank you for your courtesy in letting me go ahead. Welcome, General Reed.

During your confirmation hearing, you described how you intended to sharpen TRANSCOM's contribution to the lethal joint force. This includes a ready tanker fleet that is able to support both

contingencies around the world, and U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), and also U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) missions that we have here in the Homeland.

As the B-21 bomber enter service, which will modernize increase and increase our bomber fleet, we must also ensure that we have an adequate tanker fleet to support this platform and the important missions it will perform. I understand that the Air Force will make the ultimate decision on its tanker acquisition strategy, but I'd like to better understand how TRANSCOM is working with the Air Force to communicate its requirements.

Are you expressing your needs to the Air Force on what you need to support a nuclear bomber force so that it remains effective and a credible deterrent globally?

General REED. Yes, Senator. Just within the last month, my staff and I took a trip to USTRANSCOM, and we sat down with the commander there and his staff to hold warfighter talks.

During that time, we described what it is that he's called to do so that we can more efficiently and effectively understand how we need to be there with him. During that same time, we got a really deep understanding in terms of how they plan to employ their new aircraft, and that will drive a slightly different way in which we are to support them, which actually means that it's going to be a little bit higher requirement specifically in the field transfer.

As a result, he and I are both working together to go to the service to explain to them what's required and what's expected in order for us to work together to get that done.

Senator FISCHER. If there's anything we can do on this committee to help you with that endeavor, please let me know.

General REED. Yes, Senator. Thank you.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. General Reed, it is clear that in a great power conflict, the U.S. would be unlikely to achieve the level of air or sea superiority that it achieved in recent wars. This means that ships and aircraft that will be part of any sealift or airlift effort must be prepared to operate in a contested environment with the assumption that they will be targeted in various ways to prevent material from reaching its destination.

I appreciated our discussion on this topic during your confirmation hearing, and in our meeting we had in the Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) last week. Since you've taken command, what steps have you taken to better prepare TRANSCOM to perform strategic lift in a contested environment?

General REED. Senator, one of the things that I've done is I've made travels around the world to talk to my peers. I've looked at the world as they see it. I've looked at the threats as they see it. I've also made sure that our staffs are working closer together in the planning aspect, which is actually carrying over into how we exercise together.

So, with that being said, we have a much better understanding of what the adversaries are likely to do, how they would fight, what they're most likely to do. With that being said, we adapt that to the plans, evaluate how that would change the force, look to see what kind of options we have left, and then what we can decide to do from that point on. So, it's a very robust way ahead, ma'am.

Senator FISCHER. As you know, our sealift assets are important to ensuring that our forces and material arrive on time, in enough time to rapidly execute their mission. Unfortunately, over the years, an integral part of our sealift fleet, the Ready Reserve Force has suffered from a reduction in capacity and readiness as a result of the aging vessels and the underinvestment.

Given this situation, can you provide an update on the recapitalization of the Ready Reserve fleet, and how you are working with The Maritime Administration (MARAD) to increase capability and capacity in that regard?

General REED. Together, we're working to get ships in any way that we absolutely can. The address last night by the Commander in Chief, stated that sealift is absolutely something that we need to do. He intends to make sure that we can return to the seas, so we need to both build here and we actually need to buy used.

Senator FISCHER. Could you repeat your last sentence, please?

General REED. Yes, ma'am. We need to build new and we need to buy used.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Reed, a next-generation tanker, and I mentioned this in my opening statement, in the form of a Blended Wing Body aircraft would save between 30 to 50 percent in fuel, which would be invaluable to operations in the Indo-Pacific in terms of extended range sortie generation and reducing contested logistics vulnerabilities.

As a pilot who has flow of more than 3,500 hours in various types of transport aircraft, how important is it for the Air Force to continue investing in the Blended Wing Body and other operational energy programs, and do you think they have benefits that increase lethality and readiness?

General REED. Senator, we are actively advocating for any and all technology that can make sure that we can use the least amount of fuel possible, that our aircraft can go as long as possible and they can stay aloft as long as they as they can.

As we have been looking at what's possible in order to operate, some of the criteria that we also look at, as you mentioned in your statement, is how long or how short of a runway can we operate on and balance that with how much fuel we can carry. Then how far we can go. When it comes to force projection and sustainment of the force, the more fuel efficient an aircraft is, then the more effective we'll be and also the more options we will have.

Senator HIRONO. So, all of you are open to other developments that would save you fuel, et cetera, but would the Blended Wing Body development be one of those important modernizations that you would you hope will come about?

General REED. Ma'am, it's a very promising technology, and if it's something we can get and something we can use. I will absolutely take it. The other thing that we consider is that at some point, the commercial world will most likely catch up with this. When they're able to produce it, we will already have done the work to make sure that we can use it as well.

Senator HIRONO. I mentioned in my opening that just the consternation with the use of your assets to transport, frankly, just the very few migrants at a cost in the instance that I mentioned of \$2.5 million to move only about 100 migrants to India. Contrast with the prior administration, it was 685,000 people were removed through Homeland Security's own programs.

So, I wanted to know, because this is very out of proportion in my view, to what should be undertaken by TRANSCOM. So, who makes the decision to fly in this inefficient manner using your assets?

General REED. The Department of Homeland Security is the lead agency for this in that the Department of Defense is supporting them. The lead combatant command within our department is NORTHCOM, and we work with them to receive the task to actually fly sorties.

Senator HIRONO. So, you are saying that you did not make this decision to use your assets to fly 100 people to India?

General REED. No, ma'am, I did not.

Senator HIRONO. Are you going to be tasked to do more of this kind of transport?

General REED. Ma'am, if I get the task, I'll absolutely fly it.

Senator HIRONO. But do you have some sort of an understanding already of what the expectations are and these are all non-reimbursable to you events?

General REED. Ma'am, in a few conversations that I've had, I am to expect maybe more flights. I will tell you that within the last 48 hours, we have not flown any.

Senator HIRONO. I think that it is really important for me, at least as the ranking person on this committee, that we express our concern to you that this would not be the kind of use of your assets that we should contemplate. Since you are not the person to make that decision, that there are no guarantees that that this use of your assets will not continue.

So, if you are given this decision to transport more people, I would like this committee to be informed of that. As of now, that's what you're telling me, you have no idea whether you'll be tasked to conduct this kind of mission in a way that I think it's not part of your mission. So, will you let this committee know if you begin to use your assets for these kinds of transport?

General REED. Yes, I will.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. So, you did mention that you have an aging fleet and there is the possibility of you purchasing used ships from other countries, and I think we put a limit on what you can do there. For the long-term, obviously, I think we need to create a capability for shipbuilding because you have an aging fleet. But for the short-term, what would be helpful to you?

General REED. In the short-term, we would need maximum flexibility to buy used foreign ships on the commercial market, obtain those ships, refurb them here in the States, and then put those ships to sea.

Senator HIRONO. Well, Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, we put a limit on the number of these kinds of ships. So, I'm asking whether in the short-term, how many more ships would you like to be authorized to buy from foreign sources?

General REED. Yes, I would—I am asking for the limit to be raised beyond 10 to allow us to actually shop the market. Currently, there are 10 ships available for us to pursue.

Senator HIRONO. Are you asking for authorization to buy 10 more?

General REED. I'm asking authorization to buy 10 more.

Senator HIRONO. Well, good luck with that. No, that was—forget I said that. I mean, we want you to be able to do your job. Just one more thing. You mentioned the Jones Act. Are people who, sometimes, do not understand the importance of the Jones Act. Can you very briefly tell us why the Jones Act is important to TRANSCOM and to national security?

General REED. The Jones Act allows us to actually have shipping resources here and a fleet, and so, because of that Act, we actually have a way to make sure that we can build ships here in the United States, that we can sail those ships to maintain commerce, that we can actually produce the crews that actually sail those ships so that we have a core of folks that can actually operate. At the same time, if the Nation needs folks to go to sea, we can call on that force to actually sail, and there are citizens, and then we will be more secure in that way.

Senator HIRONO. Yes. One aspect of the Jones Act that's very important is that you can work with the commercial shippers, private sector ships. Isn't that correct?

General REED. That that's correct, ma'am.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman for your indulgence.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Hirono.

General, I'm going to ask my round of questions now. Let me just followup on a couple of questions. Senator Hirono asked. For the going above the 10-ship cap. Does that require—is there a waiver authority that we can grant, that can be granted by someone in DOD, or does that require a change in legislation?

General REED. Chairman, that's a change in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and so, if we can get that changed, ideally what we would need to recap the fleet are four ships a year. If they're available on the market, we would pursue that. At a minimum, we would need two a year.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask, 2 years ago, your predecessor told us that by 2023, 37 of the 50 Government-owned surge sealift ships will approach the end of their service life. Military Sealift Command (MSC) and the Navy announced in November that it would sideline 17 ships from the MSC to ease the stress of civilian mariners. These ships, obviously, play a very important role like oilers, hospital ships, cable layers.

Can you walk us through the current TRANSCOM plan, General, for increasing and manning maintenance programs for the MSC vessels so they are not left sidelined in the long term?

General REED. Chairman, on the Navy side, the MSC commander with his Navy hat made that decision mainly for the welfare of the crews, and so, the problem is that

Senator SULLIVAN. He knows there are civilian mariner crews?

General REED. That's correct, and so, the challenge there is that with the number of ships and the shortfall of the crews, it was very

hard to manage the crews in a way that was sustainable. So, he did that separate from that for under the Department of Transportation and the Maritime Administration.

What we're seeking to do there is for the civilian crews that we have there, these are merchant mariners in the commercial fleet that when called, come to sail with us and support our needs, what we would like to do for them is to build new ships, if we can, and to buy younger used ships so that they have much better equipment. In that same way, when they have the better equipment, then they're more likely to stay with us, and that is our way to make sure that we can sustain that force.

Senator SULLIVAN. Okay. Thank you. We've recently seen a number of incidents in the Taiwan Strait and the Baltic Sea whereby undersea cables were damaged or destroyed by ships with connections to Russia and China. Can you talk specifically about the current condition of our cable layers, and whether or not you think we are ready to respond to the types of attacks we may see in any kind of conflict? Or heck, the Russians and Chinese are doing it in non-conflict situations that relate to our undersea cables. By the way, I know you know this, General, nearly 95 percent of the world's internet traffic goes through these cables.

General REED. Chairman, those are specialty ships that we have. We don't have very many of them. They are old. The ships that crew them those ships are very capable. Those are also ships that we actually need to make sure that they're younger, that they're faster, and that they're more reliable as well.

Senator SULLIVAN. Do we have any ships online that you see coming into the fleet that are those kinds of ships you just described?

General REED. Chairman, I do not.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask about another challenge that you highlighted, and Senator Fischer already mentioned. Can you walk me through the kind of broader readiness concerns that you have with the KC-135 and KC-46 tankers? I know this is a top priority, so how you integrate them, how you use one set, which is, as you mentioned, up to 70 years old, and then the incoming one that's been plagued with problems. I think Boeing really needs to get its act together on this. What's your sense of how we're integrating that in your strategic plan?

General REED. Chairman, the KC-135 is a fantastic airplane. I was qualified in it once, and it's gotten me around the world and back. It needs to consistently be looked at to improve, to update. Over the years, we've increased the electronics in it. Years back, we improved the propulsion systems. But as we go forward, what's the most important for that is that it gets connected to the joint force. Connectivity is king for that aircraft as it goes forward. If it's not connected, it's not as survivable as it should be.

The KC-46 is a great airplane as well. I've had the fortune to fly it. There are some things that the manufacturer needs to fix, but when that airplane works, it works in fine fashion. It is an airplane that, I think, that they are going to fix. We need to stick with it and we need to keep going.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, General. Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, General Reed. I must say that's quite an impressive name you have, but I'm very impressed.

Senator SULLIVAN. No relation, I assume?

Senator REED. We are related in an emotional way.

[Laughter.]

Senator REED. We're both committed. He's much more committed than I.

General Reed, TRANSCOM relies heavily on commercial aircraft in peace time, and also depends on commercial aircraft who participate in the Civil Reserve Air Fleet craft for wartime needs. Craft participants are always concerned about how much cargo capacity TRANSCOM will purchase from them. First, are you taking action to rely more heavily on craft fleet in peace time?

General REED. Senator, we do have access to those aircraft, which most important to note is that craft, if we were to activate it, would be in case of wartime or a severe crisis. In return of those aircraft being in the craft program, we do use them and they are able to operate with us.

But what's most important is, when we have the need for something beyond what we have in the gray hole, they make themselves available in this way. We can keep them ready and trained to operate with us. In this way also, for the organic craft that we have, we can use them for higher priority sorties.

Senator REED. Now, there's been some discussion about the transportation of detainees and others. Have you considered using craft participants rather than military aircraft to move these people?

General REED. Senator, right now, we have authorization to fly these sorties in support of the Department of Homeland Security on a non-reimbursable structure. So, as such, I'm not able to use craft.

Senator REED. So, DOD is paying for this movement of detainees?

General REED. That's correct, Senator.

Senator REED. As I mentioned in our meeting, I heard that the Air Force personnel on these aircraft were not wearing name tags or unit symbol. Is that accurate, and what can be done about that?

General REED. That is accurate, Senator. If you don't mind, I'd like to discuss that in a separate session.

Senator REED. That's quite all right, sir. I appreciate that. Thank you.

We've talked a lot about contested logistics here. What requirements are you trying to levy on the system to get the services to pay greater attention on operating the logistics system and contested areas, the requirements you're asking for. Can you briefly describe those?

General REED. One of the clearest ways that we're doing that is in our new role for global bulk fuel management and delivery. As we do fuel assessments, we are doing fuel assessments with our fellow combatant commands. We did an initial one with INDOPACOM. We learned some lessons in that one. We next took the assessment to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

As part of that, when we look at where the fuel should be, how it should be set up, what the infrastructure is, and how to meet the needs, we also run a contested logistics scenario on it. Then once we do that, that allows us insight into what's required from the theater as well.

Senator REED. General, we all recognize the importance of cyber. In fact, it's more important, it seems, every moment. The issue of cyber seems to be particularly challenging when it comes to our civilian aircraft, the craft aircraft. Could you tell us what you're trying to do to enhance their cybersecurity and their ability to communicate with Air Force aircraft?

General REED. The cyber domain is very problematic, especially for USTRANSCOM. Because as stated before, most of our capability actually resides in the commercial realm. So, their networks are not within ours and they're not as protected as ours. Fortunately, we have a lot of help with law enforcement, also cyber command, and also with the U.S. Coast Guard, to make sure that we can share information, we can collaborate both for aircraft and for sealift.

Senator REED. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Chairman. General Reed, thanks for your service. I appreciate the opportunity to sit down with you. Thank you for your service, your family's service, everything. Everything you do. Go Navy.

It's my understanding that the Department of Defense is now moving servicemembers and their families under new Global Household Goods contract. With peak moving season just around the corner, can you share some of the feedback you've received on implementing the contract? Can you explain the Army's decision to pause moves under this program that do not have enough lead time?

General REED. Senator, first and foremost, the reason for the contract is to correct past performance that wasn't as strong as it should be to get after years of frustration from those of us who move. Also, years of frustration from yourselves to help us to try to fix it.

In this transition, what we are actually doing is we are having a transformation within a market that still exists. With this transformation, we actually have a structure, both IT and with rule structure, that actually allows us to see more what's happening in the market, to monitor trends that are positive, monitor trends that are not so much so, and actually have the tools to actually do something about it.

We are about 2 years into what is actually a 10-year contract, if you will, base contract of 6 years with four 1-year options. So, we're fairly new at this. There are some performance issues. We are able to see those, and we're actually able to do something about that.

With regards to the comment about what the Army has done, the Army has not paused their participation in the contract. What we're doing instead is we, in conjunction with the services, are monitoring the rate of the transfer to the contract because this is not about the vendor, it's not about the program, it's about those

who move. So, as we support those who move, we will match them up for success as we help the transformation mature.

Senator SCOTT. So, you've got enough capacity to do the moves? Because I guess the summer's your biggest moves, is that right, just based on school years?

General REED. Summer is the peak season, and usually during that time, both combined Continental United States (CONUS) and Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS), it's about 300,000 moves, although we are not putting OCONUS moves out just yet. But with that, we have moves that are still in the contract piece and there are still moves that are in the current system as well.

Senator SCOTT. What's happening with the international move. Is that being impacted at all?

General REED. Not at all. That's designed to come at a much later date once we solve this piece here.

Senator SCOTT. Okay. Our Ready Reserve Force program plays a critical role in making—you know, our ability to deliver equipment and critical supplies. With about 20 of those, we got 20 of the ships that are over 50 years old. Do you have any concerns about the military's ability to keep up?

General REED. I do. These ships are really, really old. The reliability of them sometimes are in question because of that. I take my hat off to the crews that are actually on them to keep them warm. But to give an idea of the State of the ships, some of these ships are still run by steam. The last time that I was on a steam ship, I was a high schooler in Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). So, the sailors that we actually put on these ships and the crews that we put on these ships, they deserve something younger.

Senator SCOTT. So, do you think if we had a conflict in the Asia Pacific, do you think you could perform?

General REED. We could perform. We would have some challenges with that. We would struggle, but we would not perform to the level that I would like to.

Senator SCOTT. Okay. Thank you, General. Thank you, Chairman.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to defer to our chairman of—

Thank you, General Reed, for being here and for taking time to meet with me before this hearing. As we discussed in that office meeting, New Hampshire's home to the 157th Air Refueling Wing. It's the only KC-46 wing in the country to reach an initial operating capacity. Had to get that in.

But you referenced this in your previous statements that TRANSCOM has assessed that the aerial refueling fleet of KC-135s and KC-46s would be subject to considerable stress during wartime. As you're looking at what this new Administration is talking about with respect to funding cuts in the defense budget, is the KC-46 program exempt from those funding cuts?

General REED. Senator, in this case, I would have to defer to the Air Force for that. But I have spoken to the service, and I've let them know that I am concerned in terms of the choices that they

have to make. We absolutely have to have those aircraft fully supported and funded. Whatever I can do to help the service, I'll certainly do that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I agree with that. As we discussed, again, in that meeting, the ongoing logistic composite model, which I know the chairman of the subcommittee understands well because it's been an issue in Alaska. But they're doing the study right now, Pease is, and it's the result of the Air National Guard's Releveling initiative, which under the current projections, would reduce the 157th's ability to support TRANSCOM by 22 percent. Would that have an impact on your needs should you need to use that 157th for a refueling mission?

General REED. Senator, in this case, I'd have to defer to the service in terms of what they see as the outcomes for that. However, that being said, being familiar with that model, I know that they're going to take a very good look at not only the aircraft itself which will change how folks work on it, but they'll also look at how we use that aircraft in the unit that it's associated with.

So, the fact that it's in a Reserve component is another aspect of actually looking at how folks will work the tasks. That should get looked at when they worked that study, and I'll wait to see how that study concludes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I appreciate that, and I know that you're looking for opportunities to come up to Pease to see firsthand how the 157th is operating and how they're working with the KC-46. So, I look forward to welcoming you there sometime in the near future.

General REED. If I may add. Yes, your unit was the first one, KC-46 that we employed. They went to CENTCOM, and they did a fantastic job. So, thank you so much for that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. We will definitely make sure that the 157th knows that you said that. I appreciate that. We also discussed your desire to increase TRANSCOM's sealift capacity. It's something that you've already referenced here, and to increase the 10-ship limit on the buy used.

Again, I know that you are not the person who's going to decide about the 8 percent cuts that are being projected at the Department of Defense, but if you had to cut 8 percent out of your sealift capacity, what would that mean for your ability to address the mission that you're charged with

General REED. In our pursuit to buy used on the market, that would limit the flexibility that we would have to actually shop the market and find the ships that we need and get them at a suitable price.

Senator SHAHEEN. So, as you're thinking about—you have the capacity to do 10 ships this year, is that correct, under the NDAA and hopefully we can get another 10 ships. So, what are you hoping to get within the next—this year in terms of that additional sealift capacity

General REED. This year, the most immediate need would be to make sure that we can have on the order of about \$210 million. That would allow us to secure two ships on the market, make sure that we could get them into a shipyard, and then reflag them within about 9 to 14 months.

Senator SHAHEEN. How concerned are you about having the civilian workforce that it's going to operate those ships?

General REED. Right now, we have the workforce. My main concern is making sure that I have a young, reliable ship to keep the workforce.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. It's good to know the 157th is up and running with the—I didn't know the KC-46 had a full squadron. So, that's great.

Senator SHAHEEN. Oh, we'd love to have you come and visit.

Senator SULLIVAN. I would love to see it. That's great news. We want them all over the country. We are honored to have our Chairman of the full Committee, Senator Wicker. Mr. Chairman, the floor is yours.

Chairman WICKER. Yes. We don't need to be cutting the KC-46 program. Now, let's see. I don't know if contested logistics has been asked in this regard, but there's been conversation about coalescing around a single manager for contested logistics.

So, let's talk about that. Is it time to look for a single manager for contested logistics, and might TRANSCOM be where that role might be assigned. If the balloon goes up? Do you think the department currently has a joint contested logistics strategy in place that would be successful?

General REED. When faced with a conflict, we figure it out, Senator. So, whether or not we could get the job done or not, we'll get the job done. But to your question, in terms of having a structure and someone who can lead that way prior to a conflict, I am aware of the deep discussions. We've had some of those, and it is time to look at some aspect of that.

Chairman WICKER. Can you give us your best advice here?

General REED. Senator, my best advice is to allow me to look at that, and structure that, figure out how best TRANSCOM can contribute to that with the current authorities that we already have. It's aligned in a good way, and I think there's a way forward.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. More later on that. The Red Hill facility has been closed. It amplifies the logistical challenges in the Indo-Pacific. I think you'll agree. What about leveraging existing U.S.-flagged platform supply vessels to enhance military sustainment capabilities in the region?

My understanding is that there are at least 13 at sea resupply ships afloat and ashore near this environment. What do you think about that?

General REED. If I understand your question, you're asking how do we work fuel in the theater, whether it's ashore or afloat. That is one of the things that we look at in TRANSCOM.

When it comes to the ships to actually do that, we are looking to the employment strategy of the theater commander in terms of how he would want to move the fuel around, to look at where that fuel needs to be. When it comes to some of the vessels that we would use for that, I understand that that there is a class of ship that has been mentioned to me that's built here in the states. That shallow draft vessel has some potential, perhaps, in the dry cargo arena, but not necessarily for fuels because the tanks that it has is only a single layer.

Chairman WICKER. Okay. So, right now, where would you say the plans are? Is it just some—I think you said you're looking at it. You don't specifically have plans yet to leverage those platforms?

General REED. We do not, Chairman, have plans to leverage those particular ships.

Chairman WICKER. Okay, and then, one other thing; on unfunded requirements. You said during your confirmation you'd be a fierce advocate to get all the equipment that our folks needed. Do we still have your commitment that you are going to give us a complete list of what you need in terms of these unfunded requirements?

General REED. Chairman, I am a fierce advocate to give the force whatever they need using any lever that I have right now for an unfunded requirement. Since I have not seen the budget I'm not there yet.

Chairman WICKER. Oh, okay. Yes. But my exhortation to you is that you not hold back on what you need. Tell us. I mean, you're new, and you haven't had a chance to assess all this. But do I have your commitment that you will give us as complete a list as possible of those requirements?

General REED. Absolutely, Chairman.

Chairman WICKER. All right. Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator Warren.

Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing.

So, TRANSCOM is responsible for making sure that our military and our allies get everything they need to win on the battlefield, whether it is a new engine for a fighter jet in the Middle East or a missile battery in the Philippines. That means that TRANSCOM knows better than anyone why it is a very big problem if the military doesn't have the right to repair its own equipment.

General Reed, one of TRANSCOM's major workhorses is the C-5M Super Galaxy, a strategic transport aircraft that carries cargo and DOD personnel all around the world. But in 2022, it was able to fly its mission only 52 percent of the time. That means that nearly half the times that commanders needed it, it wasn't there.

Congress saw this, said that is not acceptable, and gave the Air Force \$10 billion to fix that problem. General Reed, about how often was the C-5 mission-ready the next year after you got the money?

General REED. What I can tell you is that in 2023, the mission capable rate of the C-5 was about 46 percent.

Senator WARREN. About 46 percent. So, it went from 52 percent to 46 percent. So, we could reasonably ask what happened? Well, the Air Force said the supply chain for replacement parts had dried up. When companies can't or won't meet DOD's needs, one option is for the military to actually make the parts themselves so you can get things up and running. It's often cheaper and faster anyway, but you can't do that if big defense contractors slip restrictions into their contracts that deny the military the technical data that they need to be able to make these repairs.

So General Reed, it's your responsibility to make sure the warfighter gets everything that they need. How important is it to

national security for C-5s to be ready to respond to commander's requests to carry cargo and personnel?

General REED. The C-5 is a key aircraft for us, and some of the things that we may be asked to do in the future, it would actually produce about 20 percent of the lift for us, so.

Senator WARREN. So, you need this thing?

General REED. Yes, we do.

Senator WARREN. Ready to go. So TRANSCOM's job is getting harder here because our enemies are making it more difficult to send ships and planes to our troops. As Senator Wicker was talking about a minute ago, this is contested logistics.

TRANSCOM models show that "The Fight to Get into The Fight" means that getting critical materials to our troops is only going to get harder over time. That means the last thing our troops should be doing is waiting around for contractors who charge more for slower repairs. So, General Reed, do you agree that giving the military more flexibility to repair parts in the field will increase our military readiness?

General REED. I do, Senator.

Senator WARREN. Good. Thank you, General Reed. Senator Grassley and I got a provision into last year's NDAA for the military to start a pilot program to reverse-engineer parts for sole source programs. It's a good start, but it is a backstop because reverse engineering can actually take years to get done. But if DOD negotiates with contractors for the right to repair from the start, that means our men and women in uniform get their equipment faster and at a lower cost to the taxpayers.

That is exactly what my Servicemember Right to Repair Act does. It has bipartisan support here in the Senate and on the committee. What's happening right now is fundamentally wrong, and we can put a stop to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. General Reed, good to see you.

I want to ask about a couple of topics. My colleagues have covered some of the others that I hope to ask about adequately. One is about the connection. If we want to have adequate sealift for military purposes, the connection between that and our food aid programs. So, you know, we're all grappling with cuts, pauses. The Supreme Court rendered a ruling today that may reopen the door on humanitarian assistance through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Food aid, about 40 percent of our humanitarian aid programs are food aid, and it's the delivery of U.S. grown food to other nations. Just using Africa, the African continent as an example, the U.S. flagships that deliver the aid sort of count on that as what they call one leg of a three-legged stool. They transfer food aid, they transfer DOD cargo, and they transfer Foreign Military Sales (FMS) or other executive agency cargo. By transferring all of those and earning revenue for doing it, it maintains a business model where they can keep these ships available for sealift capacity.

If food aid were to disappear and one leg of that three-legged stool were to go away, what would the effect be on the availability

of U.S.-flagged vessels to be around when we need it for sealift chores?

General REED. U.S.-flagged vessels with U.S. crews are critical. We need to make sure that they can go to sea and stay afloat. By us following cargo preference laws, we can actually provide the material for them to actually sail. What that does is it makes them ready. I need them ready. I need them to have a job and know that they have something that they can do, and so, when they actually get called to be there for the Nation, they're actually there. If for some reason they were not there, then we don't have U.S. citizens supporting us at sea.

Senator KAINE. This is really important. My colleagues did a good job of asking, for example, about the need to purchase more, you know, high quality used vessels so we'd have more sealift capacity, but with the existing capacity we have, if we were to fundamentally change the sort of business model that keeps those ships ready and on the water by cutting out one part of their revenue, that food aid, for example, then we would reduce even further the capacity that we need so that it might not be available at the time that we need it. Would you agree with that?

General REED. I agree.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that. My colleagues asked some questions and you talked in your opening testimony about the DOD contract for the Global Housing Goods Contract, 40,000 DOD personnel in Virginia—I'm sorry, 120,000 Active Duty in Virginia, and assuming you move about every 3 years, that's 40,000 moves out and 40,000 moves in.

You talked a little bit about how the transition is going, but there was a specific question I wanted to ask. There's something called the continuing to use the tender of Service legacy program during the ongoing GHC ramp up program. So, the kind of the old way of doing it now, the rates associated with the legacy program are often 20 to 30 percent higher than those outlined in the GHC contract. So understandably, some suppliers might be hesitant to transition to the GHC program if they're able to secure more favorable rates by remaining under the legacy system. So this creates an odd situation where two programs are unintentionally positioned against one another, and TRANSCOM can incur significantly higher costs under the legacy program.

So how are you managing this legacy to GHC program so that there's not this perverse incentive to remain in the legacy program because the rates are higher?

General REED. So, the rates are set by what we call a government-constructed cost, and we are only able to adjust those rates once a year, which actually happens in May. So once again, we're in a situation where to allow the process to go, we have to wait until May when we have the next opportunity to adjust the rates, which we will do. Those rates will be more in line with the constructed costs. So therefore, it will be a less of an incentive to stay outside than to join the GHC.

Senator KAINE. Great. I'll follow back up after May to see how much we've narrowed that gap and whether that's doing what it needs to do. I will express my support for a position, I think my colleagues have already gotten that, that if you need authorization

within the NDAA to expand the fleet by purchasing more high-quality used vessels, I really would like to make sure you have that authority and I'll join with my colleagues to see if we can be helpful in that regard. I'll yield back, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

General, we're going to do a quick second round of questions, and then, we'll move this to a classified setting for a couple additional questions. I want to go over this map and handout that you and I discussed in our meeting today.

[The information referred to follows:]



You know, there's a lot of discussion on what's happening on the southern border, not so much about what's happening on the northern border. As you and I talked about, we've had a really high level of Russian and Chinese incursions both into our Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) and into our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on the water, and very disturbingly and unprecedented, a number of these are joint Chinese/Russian operations, including strategic "Bear" bomber and Chinese strategic bomber incursions into our ADIZ this past summer with armed MiG fighters.

As you know, the operations to go intercept these incursions take a lot of work. Our young men and women in the military do a fantastic job up in Alaska, but they also need a lot of tanker support for these kinds of missions. Similarly, with they need fuel support for our Navy when we're doing operations in the Northern Pacific and the Arctic, which we've been doing a lot over the last three summers. Additionally, there's a lot of attention paid to the Central and South Pacific logistics lanes for any kind of conflict in Taiwan.

But I think it's important to also look at the Northern Pacific logistic lanes as it relates to any kind of conflict like that. During World War II, General Simon Bolivar Buckner called the Aleutian Island chain, which obviously goes out there, "a spear pointing right at the heart of Imperial Japan." By that he meant it was a very strategic location, not only attacking Japan, but forgetting logistics into the fight as our forces throughout the Pacific move closer to Japan.

Right now, if you look at one of the ports there, the Port of Adak, which is on this map, the closest the U.S. Navy base that is a gateway to the Arctic, but is also on the flank of China. It has three piers, two nearly 8,000-foot runways, and one of the largest bulk fuel storage facilities in the world. A lot of people don't know that. So the distance, too, in terms of where Adak sits, it's about 2,900 nautical miles from Okinawa. While our good friends in Hawaii are about 4,000 nautical miles from Okinawa, making Adak the closest U.S. port outside of Guam to Okinawa to Taiwan.

So, President Trump has talked about ensuring Alaska gets more defense investment as we fully rebuild our military, especially as Russia and China are making menacing moves in the Pacific. Admiral Paparo and General Guillot have testified that Adak would provide them with very significant logistical and basing needs, and that we should reopen it.

In terms of logistics, including with the shutting down a Red Hill, what's your thought on this base in terms of for logistics capability, fighter, and aviation, and navy shipping support? There's also was a submarine base there. I'd like your view on that, General?

General REED. North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and NORTHCOM when it comes to the great State of Alaska and the forces that they have there do a fantastic job of letting us know when they need our help. So, whenever they ask, we're always there. We've never failed them.

As they continue to look at how far, forward they can go for the extension, if they're going to be present, so will we. Coming from the other direction, Admiral Paparo, I have given him my word that I will always be there with him wherever he needs us to be.

If there's an opportunity to establish more of a footprint in the region, we will be there as well.

Senator SULLIVAN. Let me ask just real quickly. You were up in Alaska recently. I appreciated the visit in January. Can you give me a sense of kind of lessons learned? I know you're at the Port of Anchorage, which is a really important DOD strategic port, again, relating to these kinds of logistical issues. We think it's important to have additional infrastructure capability in my State. But any main takeaways from the visit you had in January, General, and I really appreciate you coming up to our great State.

General REED. Chairman, it was a great visit. Went there, intentionally, in the winter time. Good to see the conditions there. Unfortunately, it was colder in Illinois than it was in Alaska, and I got in trouble with—

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, we've had a little bit of a warm winter, particularly with the Iditarod last week.

General REED. But being in Alaska again and having a really good feeling standing there, almost standing on top of the world, looking at what's around us and how close it is, it is incredibly strategic. The reach that you can have from that location is incredible, and it's a big advantage to the United States.

Looking at the Port of Alaska and that port cluster, I was very impressed with what I saw there. The port is well situated where it is, despite the fact that there was ice on the sea they were still able to operate, the ability of the port authority to adapt to the conditions. The snow and the ice didn't stop them. There was a tremendous amount that we learned there in terms of how to just adapt. Period.

The other thing was I was very impressed with the conditions in terms of the tides and the tide swings, which I understand can be as high as 12 to 17 feet swing.

General REED. But the port authorities there and the folks who work the port, they know how to time it and they know how to marshal things. They know how to line it up, and when it comes time to load and unload, some of the best I've ever seen. So, I was incredibly impressed by that.

With the U.S. forces that are there, they have a very good handle on their strategic role not only in terms of what they can project, but the forces that they may host to operate there or the forces that will actually flow through. So, when we combine all of that together I'm really impressed with the platform we have in that State.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you very much. I just actually had a meeting with our mayor of Anchorage, and we had a lot of discussion on the port, and we'll keep you apprised on the, you know refurbishing of that port. It's really important for our military. It's also really important for the people of Alaska, as that's where the vast majority of our supplies, and food, and everything, and fuel come through the Port of Anchorage. We want to keep that viable, strong, and we're continuing to work on that with you, and NORAD, and others. So, thank you very much on that, General. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. This was an interesting conversation because the fuel that was sort of Red Hill was massive, mainly to be used

by the Air Force. I think that there are concerns relating to the how fuel ought to be distributed more than located in Red Hill.

I have a question. July 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) does not know the extent to which its officers are taking enforcement actions against individuals who could be U.S. citizens. Between fiscal year 2015 to 2020, 674 U.S. citizens were arrested, 121 were detained, and 70 were moved outside the U.S. by mistake.

The GAO recommended that ICE should systematically collect and maintain electronic data on its encounters with individuals for whom there is probative evidence of U.S. citizenship, but ICE has yet to do so. This lack of accountability is troubling.

General Reed, ICE gives TRANSCOM a copy of every flight manifest prior to transporting migrants. But I understand that you take no steps to verify the identity of the people you are transporting on your aircraft. Is that so?

General REED. We do get a list of everyone that we fly. However, ICE maintains control of everyone that's on the aircraft. So, from that standpoint, they have the responsibility for the verification.

Senator HIRONO. So, since there have been mistakes made by ICE in terms of them erroneously transporting people who are citizens that shouldn't be transported. So that's an issue. Do you know what the legal basis is for transferring non-citizens arrested inside the U.S. via military aircraft to a location outside the U.S. for deportation for detention?

General REED. I do not know that completely.

Senator HIRONO. To date have any U.S. citizens or individuals not charged with any crimes been mistakenly flown to Guantanamo Bay on TRANSCOM assets?

General REED. I'm not aware of any.

Senator HIRONO. What steps have you taken to ensure the answer you just gave me is accurate?

General REED. For the air crew, we make sure that they follow established procedures to get a list of the folks and also to make sure that ICE is complying with the things that they tell us that they need to do to maintain control.

Senator HIRONO. We know that Guantanamo Bay is subject to various weather events. What is the evacuation plan for all of the migrants being sent to Guantanamo Bay in the event of a hurricane or other disaster in Cuba. This is especially important in light of the fact that the President has said he's planning to send some 30,000 migrants to Guantanamo Bay. So, do you know what kind of evacuation plans?

General REED. I would have to defer that one to U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).

Senator HIRONO. Okay. Another concern. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, General, thank you very much for your testimony. What we plan on doing, we have a vote around 4. We will close the hearing here, and I want to thank you. If there's additional question for the record from members, we will send those to you in the next couple days, and we ask that you try to respond to those within 2 weeks.

We will reconvene in SVC-217 for a classified scene setter. We'll try and do that in the next 10 to 15 minutes. We'll break now. I'm going to go vote, and then we will come down and be ready to have a classified update as well in the classified SCIF in the Senate.

So, with that, thank you, again, very informative hearing. This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:49 p.m., the Subcommittee adjourned.]

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED BUDD

GLOBAL HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONTRACT

1. Senator BUDD. General Reed, regarding reported issues with the GHC, is it your sense that these issues are simply due to the transition from one contract to another or are there systemic challenges with household goods shipping that must be addressed?

General REED. GHC transformation does not simply shift from one contract to another; it transforms individual tender-based contracts with over 800 vendors into a single contract with improved accountability requirements. This single contract is a network integrator who oversees the entire DOD moving enterprise. The tender-based program lacks accountability and operates in a fractured manner. Contractors bid on each of the approximately 300,000 annual moves in isolation, replicating the process 300,000 times. This system prevents network optimization for servicing moves and makes it nearly impossible to identify trends (positive or negative) or proactively mitigate issues.

The GHC contract addresses the systemic issues and incorporates key performance metrics and a more rigorous contract performance oversight process, adding accountability previously absent from the program.

The Defense Personal Property Program historically faced capacity deficiencies. The GHC allows the prime contractor to build capacity in addition to working with the vendors that previously operated under the legacy program.

As this transition continues, providers in the legacy program may hold out for higher rates under the legacy Tender of Service program. We are implementing strategies to align 2025 Tender of Service rates with the market and maximize DOD's buying potential. The GHC prime contractor is working to attract the necessary capacity and provide vendors with competitive compensation to deliver the standardized, quality customer experiences our servicemembers, and their families, deserve.

2. Senator BUDD. General Reed, how long do you expect the transition to full implementation of the GHC under the HomeSafe Alliance will take?

General REED. USTRANSCOM uses a conditions-based approach focused primarily on the performance of the GHC prime contractor. USTRANSCOM and the Military Services will continuously assess the GHC prime contractor's performance and make collective decisions to move forward at the conclusion of peak season in September 2025.

USTRANSCOM currently projects completion of the domestic transition in Fall 2025 and plans to transition international shipments no earlier than September 2025. HomeSafe's performance during the peak summer moving season will significantly influence transition timelines. Pending demonstrable improvements in contractor performance, DOD site readiness, and systems integration, USTRANSCOM will continue shifting volume until it completes the GHC transition.

3. Senator BUDD. General Reed, if there are already so many issues affecting the moving cycle now, how will USTRANSCOM ensure household goods moves will be effectively executed during the peak moving season in the late spring, early summer?

General REED. For the 2025 peak moving season, USTRANSCOM will operate both GHC and the legacy Tender of Service program to meet Military Service demands. Both programs face capacity constraints and exhibit less than satisfactory customer satisfaction scores. However, USTRANSCOM now has visibility into the portion transitioned to GHC and possesses contractual levers to address performance with the prime contractor. While it has not been an easy path and there have been issues, there should be no doubt—we will see this through for our fellow

servicemembers and military families who deserve an improved moving experience, and we are going to deliver an improved moving experience.

MILITARY PORT INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

4. Senator BUDD. General Reed, Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point in North Carolina plays a critical role in shipping ammunition to the warfighter. I've been concerned about the aging infrastructure on the terminal. Can you provide an update on infrastructure challenges there and what resources, if any are needed to ensure Sunny Point is able to successfully complete its mission for decades to come?

General REED. USTRANSCOM agrees on the criticality of Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU), as well as the Department of Defense's other ammunition terminal, Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO) in California. We keep a very close eye on the condition of infrastructure at these unique seaports. Congress' ongoing interest and support, most recently at MOTCO, has been invaluable to preserving the ability of these terminals to conduct ammunition resupply operations.

MOTSU's waterfront infrastructure dates from the 1950s and is beyond its original design life. DOD has programmed a project to construct a new wharf at MOTSU for fiscal year 2031. I have communicated the importance of this project to the Office of the Secretary of Defense as well as to the Army, which has MILCON responsibilities for these terminals.

There is ongoing work to improve or replace aging infrastructure at MOTSU. My primary concern, however, is not the infrastructure, but rather a shortfall in rail operating crews to operate MOTSU's assigned locomotives. We are working with the Army to identify and implement a solution.

5. Senator BUDD. General Reed, how resilient are our ports of embarkation like Sunny Point in the event of conflict and should our adversaries decide to conduct cyberattacks or sabotage nearby infrastructure?

General REED. USTRANSCOM takes all of our ports of embarkation very seriously and regularly assesses the ability of our ammunition terminals, including MOTSU, to meet ammunition resupply requirements. These assessments test the resilience of the ammunition sustainment network by simulating various delays and measuring its ability to overcome challenges and meet requirements.

With respect to unit cargo operations, USTRANSCOM periodically completes holistic assessments of the Strategic Seaport Program to ensure there is enough excess capacity on each coast to mitigate the impacts of kinetic or non-kinetic disruptions. We are currently confident there is sufficient seaport capacity available to meet unit cargo deployment requirements.

6. Senator BUDD. General Reed, how can Congress help improve resiliency of these critical nodes?

General REED. Congress can help preserve global ammunition delivery capabilities by authorizing and appropriating as requested the MILCON funding for major infrastructure projects, like the new wharf at MOTSU.

Both the Military Ocean Terminals and the Strategic Seaports depend on a resilient commercial rail network to deliver containerized ammunition and heavy DOD equipment. Congress can help by continuing funding and support of our partners in the Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration and their work to regulate and inspect cybersecurity hygiene for the commercial rail carriers serving ports important to us.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

SOUTHWEST BORDER SECURITY

7. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, the Trump administration, through the Department of Homeland Security (DHA), has directed your C-17s and C-130s to conduct deportation flights. Would you agree that providing non-reimbursed support to move migrants for DHS at a significant cost to the Department of Defense (DOD) is wasteful when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) already has the funding, the charter contracts, and the capacity to move more migrants for far less money and at no cost to DOD?

General REED. At this time, DHS requests only non-reimbursable support, which by statute only military airlift can provide. However, it is USTRANSCOM's understanding that DHS' intent is to use its own contracting office for any commercial

airlift requirements. Additionally, DOD obtains an operation and training benefit for its pilots and support staff flying Mil-Air for this DHS support.

8. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, to what extent, if any, do you evaluate cost-effectiveness before allowing ICE to use your aircraft?

General REED. We conduct a mission cost estimate so the Command is fiscally informed, but perform all missions tasked to us by the SecDef.

9. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, if this non-reimbursable request from DHS continues to deport another requested 4,000 migrants, how will this impact your core mission this spring when you must also transport the surge of force rotations around the globe?

General REED. There is no impact to our core mission.

KWAJALEIN ATOLL

10. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, Kwajalein Atoll and other strategically important locations throughout the Indo-Pacific rely on shipments of diesel fuel and other non-renewable sources of energy to power their missions. In your professional military opinion, in the event of a conflict, how likely is it that China or another adversary would target a vulnerable fuel supply like diesel shipments to Kwajalein?

General REED. Historical precedent and strategic considerations suggest adversaries will target logistical vulnerabilities, including movement and storage of bulk fuel. The People's Republic of China, with its advanced ballistic and hypersonic missile capabilities, can target locations like Kwajalein Atoll. USINDOPACOM mitigates this threat by dispersing assets and investing in redundant supply points. As the Single Manager for bulk fuel, I analyze and mitigate identified vulnerabilities, particularly within the bulk fuel network, in close coordination with USINDOPACOM and other combatant commands. USTRANSCOM supports this resiliency with a mix of organic and commercial maritime tankers, providing fuel delivery flexibility and dispersing targets throughout the USINDOPACOM Area of Responsibility.

11. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, if so, would it be in DOD's interest to pursue a more resilient energy strategy so the joint force is better postured throughout the Indo-Pacific?

General REED. The DOD benefits from pursuing more resilient energy strategies. DOD policy supports mission readiness through assured and resilient operational energy availability. Achieving resilience by diversifying energy sources, expanding and positioning capacity, minimizing military-specific applications, and strengthening supply chains incurs costs and potential sustainability challenges requiring consideration. Operationally, the DOD will remain reliant on petroleum for the foreseeable future, a responsibility I bear as DOD's Single Manager for bulk fuel. Regarding energy diversification strategies for installations and operating locations, I defer to the Service Chiefs and their title 10 authorities.

CIVILIAN MARINERS

12. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, the Military Sealift Command has implemented a plan to remove crews from 17 Navy support ships due to a lack of qualified civilian mariners in a "force generation reset." Do you agree this "force generation reset" was necessary, and how can we reverse these concerning manning issues?

General REED. The Military Sealift Command's (MSC) placement of these ships in extended maintenance and redistributing its finite pool of Civil Service Mariners to mission-critical ships is less a choice and more an operational imperative to ensure its continued ability to sustain worldwide Navy operations amid a nationwide shortage of skilled, licensed mariners, and an atrophied maritime industry. I am supportive of MSC's initiatives to build trust and address the quality of service and compensation concerns of its workforce to make it the industry employer of choice. It is encouraging to see Congress consider legislation like the SHIPS for America Act aimed at the revitalization of our Nation's shipbuilding and Merchant Marine workforce. The Bill's passage into law would benefit both USTRANSCOM and MSC.

13. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, what operational impact does sidelining these 17 ships have on your ability to resupply the joint force around the world, including the Indo-Pacific?

General REED. Actions supporting the MSC workforce initiative predominately impact the combat logistics support of Navy and Marine Corps operations. These ac-

tions do not directly affect USTRANSCOM since global deployment capabilities rely on the use of ships with contract mariner crews vice government civil service mariners. However, it is important again to note that there is a national shortfall of merchant mariners that is affecting the readiness of all ships supporting national defense requirements.

GLOBAL HOUSEHOLD GOODS CONTRACT

14. Senator HIRONO. General Reed, I remain concerned about how the roll-out for the Global Household Good Contract (GHC) is proceeding. Recently, the Army, and possibly also the Air Force, have issued directives pulling back all moves that have been awarded through the GHC vehicle that do not have 21 days lead time. I would like to get a commitment from you to personally keep the relevant Armed Services Committee staff apprised, (Creighton Greene and John Quirk, minority staffers), as well as my National Security Advisor, (Adam Yost), of any additional issues associated with GHC and provide regular updates throughout 2025 as the roll-out continues. This is an extremely important issue as peak Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move season is approaching.

General REED. The change from the Tender of Service to the GHC necessitates a deliberate process. USTRANSCOM will continue to inform the congressional defense committee staff, to include your committee staff, on the issues with the transition to GHC. Our servicemembers and their families have faced challenges with GHC. However, a single company does not define GHC. Our servicemembers' and their families' experiences will ultimately define GHC. We owe them our best, and I am determined to ensure they receive the quality experience they deserve.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN

GUANTANAMO BAY

15. Senator WARREN. General Reed, what has been the number of shipments and the content of cargo transported to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay since January 20, 2025?

General REED. USTRANSCOM conducted 31 military and contract airlift missions to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay between January 20, 2025, and March 25, 2025. These missions transported 715 passengers and 1016.9 short tons of cargo. The cargo consisted of sustainment supplies and equipment in support of Operation Southern Guard. This included both supplies for the base's general operations and equipment specifically designated for Operation Southern Guard.

16. Senator WARREN. General Reed, what is the total number of flight hours U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) has flown transporting migrants on deportation flights since January 20, 2025, and what has been the average cost per flight hour?

General REED. As of 08 April, USTRANSCOM has flown a total of 46 flights on military aircraft in support of migrant deportation flights. The flights total 802.5 hours at an average cost of \$26,277 per flight hour.

17. Senator WARREN. General Reed, has TRANSCOM used contractors to transport personnel or cargo related to migrants held at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay since January 20, 2025?

General REED. USTRANSCOM used contract airlift for a portion of the 31 missions mentioned previously to transport personnel and equipment in support of Operation Southern Guard. None of these contract flights transported migrants to or from Guantanamo Bay. Military aircraft handled all migrant transport.

18. Senator WARREN. General Reed, please provide a list of all contracts paid, agreed to, or modified since January 20, 2025, including the cost, for transporting personnel or cargo related to migrants held at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay?

General REED. USTRANSCOM has a single-award contract that provides liner services of containerized and breakbulk cargo (food, household goods, privately owned vehicles, etc.) between Jacksonville, FL and US Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (NSGB), Cuba in support of DOD personnel stationed at NSGB. The contract supports the Navy, awarded in July 2024 for a base year plus four option years at ?\$83M. There have been no modifications to the contract or costs identified or associated to transporting cargo related to the migrants held at NSGB.

Since January 20, 2025, USTRANSCOM has contracted 10 flights, operated by the carriers identified below, to support migrant operations. None of the contracted flights moved any migrants to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

Contract Number	Carrier	Type	Cost
HTC711-25-D-CC04	ATLAS AIR INC	Cargo	\$ 194,104.00
HTC711-25-D-CC05	DELTA AIRLINES INC	Passenger	\$ 200,000.00
HTC711-25-D-CC15	OMNI AIR INTERNATIONAL	Passenger	\$ 490,463.04
HTC711-25-D-CC17	UNITED AIRLINES INC	Passenger	\$ 660,814.30
HTC711-25-D-CC29	SUN COUNTRY, INC	Passenger	\$ 126,077.50
			\$1,671,458.84

19. Senator WARREN. General Reed, please describe any steps TRANSCOM is currently taking to prepare to increase its capacity to transport people or goods to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

General REED. In anticipation of U.S. presence and increased capacity at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and support to Operation Southern Guard, USTRANSCOM has temporarily increased the number of weekly rotator flights to three, consisting of two passenger and one cargo (previously one of each). In addition, USTRANSCOM deployed a Contingency Response Element to enhance throughput and provided USSOUTHCOM with Joint Enabling Combatant Command planning, communications and public affairs support.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARK KELLY

COMMERCIAL MARITIME CAPACITY

20. Senator KELLY. General Reed, the job of TRANSCOM is to be able to move personnel, equipment, and cargo for the U.S. military around the world—correct? Can you do that job without shipping goods by sea?

General REED. No. Sealift is critical to execution of the current Operation Plan (OPLAN) and sealift moves roughly 90 percent of unit equipment and sustainment cargo in times of war. The ability to deploy and sustain a sizable land force is fundamental to current and future defense strategies and drives the need for a responsive sealift fleet. As an example, moving two Armored Brigade Combat Teams would require 612 C-17A airlift sorties, which would make any OPLAN difficult if not impossible. Airlift alone cannot move a force big enough to matter or fast enough to be useful.

21. Senator KELLY. General, Reed, does the Government—through Military Sealift Command (MSC)—have sufficient capacity to move all of the equipment and cargo you are responsible for moving?

General REED. While the Nation possesses a significant fleet of government-owned and leased vessels, they fall well short of the required capacity of approximately 19 million square feet. The Nation's Strategic Sealift requirement is satisfied through a combination of the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) Ready Reserve Force (RRF) and U.S. commercial shipping companies' participation in the Maritime Security Program (MSP)/Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) programs. The age of the ships in the RRF is creating readiness problems. We must continue to recapitalize the organic capacity within the RRF to maintain strategic deterrence through Force Projection.

22. Senator KELLY. General Reed, you rely on the commercial maritime industry—that is U.S.-flag vessels crewed by American mariners—to move goods by sea, correct?

General REED. Yes.

23. Senator KELLY. General Reed, those vessels are basically a part of the Maritime Security Program (MSP) and Tanker Security Program (TSP), right?

General REED. The MSP and Tanker Security Program (TSP) participants provide USTRANSCOM significant capacity operating in international trade. USTRANSCOM also relies on participants enrolled in the VISA and the Voluntary

Tanker Agreement (VTA) programs, with some vessels operating internationally and others operating in the U.S. domestic Jones Act coastwise trade.

24. Senator KELLY. General, Reed, how many vessels do we have in both of those programs combined and is that enough vessels to meet TRANSCOM's immediate requirements, as well as any requirements you may have to move equipment and cargo overseas in a time of conflict?

General REED. The U.S. currently has 95 ocean-going dry cargo ships in the VISA program, of which 60 of those vessels are also enrolled in MSP. Thirteen tankers in the VTA program of which 10 of those tankers are in TSP. While these four major programs (VISA, MSP, VTA and TSP) provide a vital capability, USTRANSCOM relies on a mix of assets—including our organic fleet, commercial U.S.-flag, and commercial foreign-flag vessels—to meet the full spectrum of our requirements in a major conflict. USTRANSCOM is constantly evaluating the adequacy of our sealift capacity and work closely with the Navy, the Maritime Administration, and the maritime industry to address shortfalls.

25. Senator KELLY. General Reed, even if we did have enough vessels, are there enough credentialed merchant mariners—both licensed and unlicensed mariners—to crew the number of ships we need during a time of conflict?

General REED. In accordance with Presidential Directives and National Policy, USTRANSCOM relies on the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) to determine whether adequate manpower is available to activate and operate the ships of the Ready Reserve Force as well as the commercial fleet during a crisis. Past assessments indicated sufficient mariners to initially activate and operate both organic and commercial sealift assets, but insufficient mariners for sustained operations on both the organic and commercial fleets requiring crew rotations. USTRANSCOM participated in MARAD's 2024 Maritime Workforce Working Group, mandated by Congress and formed to reassess mariner sufficiency and operational risk, and DOD looks forward to the recommendations and way forward.

26. Senator KELLY. General Reed, the reason for that is a self-fulfilling prophecy, right? Because we don't have enough ships, we don't have enough jobs for mariners, which means people find other jobs doing something else and then their license expires, right?

General REED. There are many factors that affect the number of mariners. For example, maritime operators adjust the size of their fleets based on cargo and must have sufficient cargo opportunities to keep the ships and mariners employed. Without cargo, the maritime operators struggle to sustain their fleets and remain economically viable. The success of the DOD sealift mission is inextricably linked to the health of the U.S. commercial maritime industry.

27. Senator KELLY. General Reed, what's the average age of one of those ships—either the Government-owned cargo ships through MSC or the commercial MSP and TSP ships?

General REED. In the commercial fleet, MSP and TSP ships are limited in age by statute. Ships must be replaced in MSP at a maximum age of 25 years and replaced in TSP at a maximum age of 20 years. Due to this self-recapitalization, the average ages are 14.5 years for MSP ships and 9.5 years for TSP tankers. For the government-owned ships through the MARAD Ready Reserve Force (RRF), the average age is 43 years, with 14 ships more than 50 years old.

28. Senator KELLY. General Reed, are all of those ships built in shipyards in the United States? Are most of them?

General REED. Currently no U.S.-built ships are in MSP or TSP. Within MARAD's RRF, of 52 total ships, there are 16 U.S.-built ships.

29. Senator KELLY. General Reed, in planning for a wartime contingency—is it TRANSCOM's responsibility to plan to ensure we have enough cargo vessels to support our economy during war time? But you would agree during a wartime contingency, the United States will need to keep our economy functioning? So, in reality, we probably need more ships than even TRANSCOM projects, correct? For economic sustainment, replenishment of lost vessels, and more?

General REED. The responsibility for ensuring sufficient military and civil maritime resources to meet defense deployment and essential economic requirements, as defined in National Security Directive on Sealift (NSD 28), extends beyond USTRANSCOM to a national level. The NSD 28 emphasizes the need for the United States to be prepared for unilateral responses to security threats outside of alliance

commitments, requiring sufficient U.S.-owned sealift resources. While USTRANSCOM's primary focus is projecting and sustaining military power, we consider the broader impact on the Nation's economic well-being by working with the Maritime Administration and the commercial shipping industry to understand their needs and vulnerabilities in wartime scenarios, recognizing potential temporary disruptions to commercial trade when prioritizing national strategic objectives.

30. Senator KELLY. General Reed, if Congress set a goal of bringing 250 ships under the U.S.-flag and operating in international commerce, do you believe that is an appropriate target that fully meets TRANSCOM's requirements and could sustain our economy?

General REED. While a significant increase in the size of the U.S.-flag fleet is an encouraging goal, the exact number needed, such as a proposed 250, depends on vessel specifics like size, deck strengths, draft, carrying capacity, and port accessibility. Although 250 ships would undoubtedly improve our current posture, it's crucial to consider the mix of ship types and capabilities required, the need for a larger pool of skilled mariners, and the long-term commitment from both government and private sectors to build, sustain, and utilize such a fleet, including having sufficient cargo. USTRANSCOM will be an active partner in this endeavor to restore the United States as a maritime powerhouse.

31. Senator KELLY. General Reed, if we sought to remove regulatory barriers and create incentives to bring more vessels into the fleet, we would want them to be operating, correct? Because then they'd have a full crew who was training on the vessel and keeping their credentials current?

General REED. USTRANSCOM depends on both the commercial fleet and the government-owned organic fleet for our operations. Regarding the commercial fleet, removing barriers and creating incentives are beneficial to grow the fleet, and operating ships serve as optimal training platforms. For the organic fleet, we need MARAD's RRF to be in the Continental United States (not operating in trade) and readily available for rapid force deployment surge outbound.

32. Senator KELLY. General Reed, thank you for reviewing the SHIPS for America Act that I introduced last year. As we prepare to reintroduce the bill, will you make sure that your team gives us any and all technical assistance we need to make sure our bill serves TRANSCOM's needs?

General REED. Thank you for the multiple opportunities to review the draft SHIPS for America Act and provide USTRANSCOM's inputs to your staff. USTRANSCOM supports legislation intended to strengthen our Nation's maritime posture and will provide technical assistance whenever your staff requests the assistance.

AIR MOBILITY COMMAND/MIGRANT DETAINEES

33. Senator KELLY. General Reed, last month, the committee had the opportunity to speak to your colleagues at U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command about the DHS support mission the military has been tasked with. What are the impacts of utilizing TRANSCOM assets like C-17s to transport migrants?

General REED. Using strategic airlift assets to transport migrants is not an efficient use of these military aircraft. By committing strategic airlift assets to transport migrants, they are unavailable for the joint force to conduct other real-world operations and training.

34. Senator KELLY. General Reed, how are these missions impacting your budget and operational readiness?

General REED. USTRANSCOM does not expect these actions to result in any net financial impact. The Transportation Working Capital Fund (TWCF), a revolving fund, provides upfront funding for mission-critical expenses and the subsequently reimbursement of the expenses to the TWCF maintain a zero-sum budgetary effect. As of 04 April, USTRANSCOM incurred \$38.1 million in expenses and reimbursed \$28.2 million from the Air Force.

35. Senator KELLY. General Reed, are these costs affecting TRANSCOM's ability to meet other mission requirements, and how are they being accounted for within your budget?

General REED. The border mission costs are not impacting USTRANSCOM ability to meet other mission requirements. The Transportation Working Capital Fund's

current balance can maintain working capital fund operations at present levels. As of 04 April, USTRANSCOM incurred \$38.1 million in expenses and reimbursed \$28.2 million from the Air Force.

36. Senator KELLY. General Reed, while TRANSCOM is transporting DHS detainees, what does the chain of custody look like? Who is responsible for the detainees from start to finish and has that been officially recorded anywhere?

General REED. DOD is in support of DHS for these operations. DHS agents maintain custody of detainees on USTRANSCOM removal flights, with one exception on a recent Guantanamo Bay to El Salvador flight where JTF-SG (USSOUTHCOM) security forces were responsible. Consistent with the Immigration and Nationality Act, DHS, as the lead Federal agency, retains legal, physical, and administrative control of illegal aliens and fulfills those responsibilities through the direction of DHS personnel, as reflected in the relevant classified DOD execute orders.

