

Statement to the
National Commission on the Future of the Army
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In support of the National Defense Strategy, the Army's ability to deploy rapidly is critical as are the joint lift capabilities necessary to deploy the Army anywhere in the world and sustain the Army until the mission is complete. Given the nature and size of Army equipment, sealift is the primary means of delivering the consequential combat power to combatant commanders. Thus, the Army and USTRANSCOM are inextricably linked together as we deploy and sustain forces with the right capabilities, to the right places, at the right time.

The DoD organic surge sealift fleet provides an immediate response capability for crisis or contingency sealift scenarios. The fleet's unfettered availability to sail within five days is critical to meeting national defense requirements. Since the early 1990s, mobility studies have concluded an enduring need for a total of approximately 19 million square feet of Roll-on/Roll-off (RO/RO) capacity, which includes sealift from prepositioned vessels loaded with Army and Marine Corps equipment, Surge Sealift from the United States on DoD owned organic RO/ROs and commercial sealift from U.S. flagged RO/ROs and alliance shipping. In the future, DoD will be challenged to meet this capacity requirement as the organic Surge Sealift fleet starts reaching the end of its service life in the early 2020s if no action is taken.

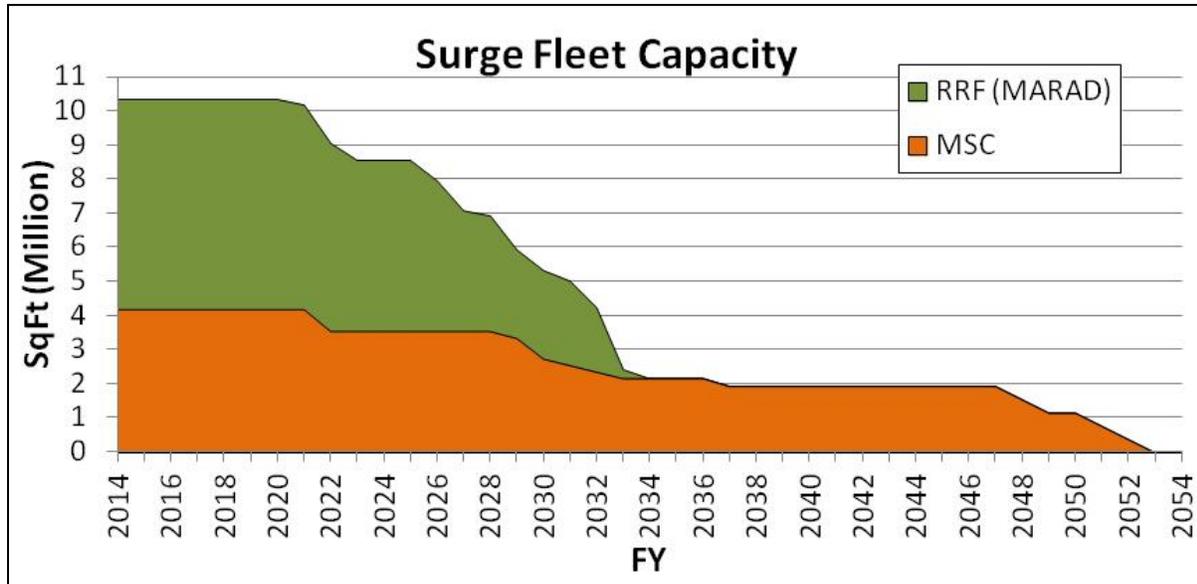
The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance states "ground forces will be responsive and capitalize on balanced lift, presence, and prepositioning to maintain the agility needed to remain prepared for the several areas in which conflict may occur." From a mobility perspective, the Department's ability to support the stacked demands for "defeat/deny" with homeland defense creates the most demanding transportation challenge to project the Army as the nation's dominant land force.

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review further states that the three pillars of the defense strategy are built on the ability to protect the homeland, build security globally and project power and win decisively, which includes the ability to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. For these missions, the ability to strategically deploy the Army is essential for the Army's relevance in the future.

In fact, power projection capability will continue to be central to the credibility of our Nation's overall security strategy. When it comes to rebalancing the force to Project Power and Win Decisively, the QDR report states "sustaining superior power projection forces – enabled by mobility capabilities including airlift, aerial refueling, surface lift, sealift, and prepositioning – will remain a top priority for force planning and development even in an austere fiscal environment."

The Department of Defense has evaluated the end-to-end mobility capabilities and capacities necessary to deploy the Army within the acceptable timelines to meet the Department's defined planning scenarios. All elements must work together to deliver the Army to destinations in the theater and in many cases, other Service capabilities are essential to ensure the Army arrives on-time and in the

configuration necessary to support the combatant commander's objectives. We maintain these capabilities in a state of readiness to support the immediate out load of Army's unit equipment in a configuration to support immediate integration into combat-ready formations. Looming capacity issues for both military and commercial transportation, specifically strategic sealift, may challenge the ability to deploy the Army in a timely manner if not addressed in the near future. Recent mobility capacity was assessed as adequate with 91 ships to deploy forces by sealift; 65 of those are DOD owned ships from either prepositioned locations or Surge Sealift from the United States and the remainder commercial RO/RO vessels.



This chart shows the precipitous decline of capacity within the organic surge sealift fleet if no actions are taken to recapitalize DoD RO/ROs. Of note, 9 of the 50 RO/ROs in the DoD surge fleet, approximately 1.6 million square feet, will age out by 2023. To address this looming loss, USTRANSCOM is working closely with the Department of the Navy on a strategy to sustain necessary capacity. One option under consideration is purchase of used Roll On/Roll Off ships from commercial industry. Unfortunately most of these ships were built in foreign shipyards and 10 § USC 2218 contains a very specific limitation against the purchase of foreign built ships for this purpose.

In addition to the organic surge fleet, USTRANSCOM relies on vessels and mariners from U.S. flagged commercial providers incentivized through the Maritime Security Program (MSP). It is through the commercial fleet that we access additional capacity, commercial networks, and infrastructure as well as maintain a pool of mariners required to man the organic surge fleet during a deployment for about 180 days. While currently adequate, both U.S. flagged commercial ships and merchant mariners are in decline. The reduction in DoD and Cargo Preference Act cargo along with competitive pressures in the international market exacerbate the challenge of maintaining adequate U.S. sealift capacity in the future.

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The Army's success today and in the future is critically dependent on U.S. sealift capabilities, via both DoD vessels and U.S. flagged commercial vessels and mariners. Ensuring adequate sealift capability and capacity is as critical to the Army as maintaining adequate Army force structure -- both are necessary to keep the Army relevant to combatant commanders.

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