

Ready Reserve Force and Commercial Strategic Ports

ISSUE: Strategic mobility is the rapid focused response of airlift, sealift, and prepositioned forces to a specific threat anywhere in the world. The Department of Defense (DOD) relies on the U.S. commercial transportation system and industry as well as government-owned (Navy and DOT) ships and 15 DOD designated commercial strategic ports to provide end-to-end delivery of equipment and supplies throughout the world. The DOT-owned sealift fleet is the Ready Reserve Force (RRF).

The RRF and the DOD designated strategic ports have the following issues:

- Re-capitalization of the RRF is needed
- Intermodal and port infrastructure congestion in the continental U.S.

ACTION NEEDED: None – For Information Only

BACKGROUND:

Sealift requirements are being re-evaluated by DOD in its Mobility Capitalization Requirement Study and must be constantly re-assessed. The Ready Reserve Force (RRF) is a subset of the National Defense Reserve Fleet and is composed of a group of vessels that are maintained in a ready, reliable, responsible condition to provide strategic sealift to the armed forces of the United States and to provide, with the concurrence of the United States Transportation Command, humanitarian support during national emergencies.

- As of 1 October, the RRF is comprised of 52 vessels; primarily Roll-on/Roll-off type vessels, which DOD prefers due to ease of loading.
- The RRF can be activated in 5 days, except two ships that can be activated in 10 days (per DOD-DOT Memorandum of Agreement)
- RRF vessels are positioned throughout the United States.
- Recapitalization of the RRF is required
 - The age of RRF vessels ranges from 20 to 60 years old
 - Service life extension studies have been performed
 - Estimated life extension takes ships to 50 years of age, if funding is available

Port and intermodal facilities provide the critical interface between the water and surface modes of transportation, handling both commercial and military cargoes. As DOD reduces its overseas presence, it must rely more on transportation resources located in the continental United States. During military mobilizations, DOD must be able to move equipment and supplies through designated commercial port facilities quickly to ensure optimal logistics flow to overseas commanders. The Maritime Administration is responsible for establishing DOD's prioritized use of ports and related intermodal facilities during DOD mobilizations. When military cargo movement is time critical, the Maritime Administration ensures that designated strategic ports are available.

Submitted by: Maritime Administration, Associate Administrator for National Security

Prepared by: William Cahill, william.cahill@dot.gov, 202-366-1875

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