

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on
Readiness and Management Support

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED
STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND IN REVIEW OF THE
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026
AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

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8 U.S. Senate
9 Subcommittee on Readiness and
10 Management Support
11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.

13
14 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m. in
15 Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Roger
16 Wicker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

17 Committee Members Present: Senators Sullivan
18 [presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Scott, Hirono, Reed, Shaheen,
19 Kaine, and Warren.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER, U.S.

2 SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Senator Sullivan: This hearing will come to order.

4 The Readiness Subcommittee today meets to receive testimony
5 on the posture of the United States Transportation Command,
6 USTRANSCOM. And I want to thank our witness this
7 afternoon, General Reed, for being here today. Sir, it was
8 good meeting with you earlier in the week.

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

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

20 What used to be an asterisk, or an incorrect
21 assumption, or what they call in the military "fairy
22 dusting" away a problem, on DODs part with regard to
23 sustained and contested logistics, has allowed our
24 adversaries, such as China and Russia, to actively develop
25 capabilities aimed at disrupting our mobility and

1 sustainment operations across multiple domains.

2 Currently, the theaters from the Indo-Pacific region,
3 to the Arctic, to the European Theater, and in the Middle
4 East, all present significant, unique challenges in
5 military contested logistics. Our military must ensure
6 that pre-position stockpiles, robust transportation
7 networks, and harden infrastructure are available to
8 sustain forces in high-end conflicts.

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

16 As the Air Force looks to the KC-46 and other next
17 generation programs for its air refueling needs, we cannot
18 forget about the programs that are actually doing today's
19 missions. The KC-135 has been a cornerstone of the U.S.
20 Air Force's air mobility in refueling capabilities since
21 the 1950s. That's not an incorrect statement; since the
22 1950s. But it needs advances in technology to evolve with
23 military needs.

24 While this is not a budget hearing today, I hope,
25 General Reed, to hear about how TRANSCOM has informed the

1 Air Force's tanker strategy moving forward, especially in
2 light of the long delays in KC-46 deliveries, and recent
3 reports about cracks in certain components of the aircraft.

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

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

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

24 The recently initiated tanker security program is a
25 natural progression, but broader efforts are needed to

1 ensure that we do not face a mobility crisis in the coming
2 decade. I'm particularly interested in hearing about the
3 status of sealift recapitalization efforts, including any
4 challenges TRANSCOM is encountering so that when the Fiscal
5 Year 2026 budget is released, we can follow up to see if
6 funding support is needed to accelerate modernization
7 efforts.

8 The well-being of our troops and their families is,
9 obviously, a top priority of this committee. We must
10 ensure that the different changes that we've seen in the
11 Global Household Contract goods challenges are made in a
12 way that provides seamless transitions during permanent
13 change of station moves. General Reed, I look forward to
14 getting an update on this program in light of the
15 challenges.

16 Finally, I want to thank the men and women of
17 USTRANSCOM for the critical work they do every day to
18 sustain our military forces and project power globally.
19 Again, this is an incredible combatant command that not
20 enough Americans know about, understand, and appreciate,
21 and this hearing is, in part, to help change that.

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

24

25

1 STATEMENT OF HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 HAWAII

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
4 And, General Reed, it's good to see you. Thank you very
5 much for your service.

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

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

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

21 Fortunately, the Air Force is currently taking steps
22 to modernize its air refueling fleet, shifting toward a new
23 tanker design that can operate in contested environments.
24 The blended wing body, BWB, aircraft is a promising
25 solution offering 90 percent more range, upwards of 50

1 percent more fuel efficiency, 80 percent more fuel offboard
2 capability, takes up to 40 percent less space on airfields,
3 flies 2,000 feet higher, and requires less landing and a
4 takeoff distance. All I can say is, wow, and very
5 impressive. We have to make it happen.

6 Beyond these critical benefits, the blended wing body
7 design would save at least \$900 million per year on fuel.
8 \$900 million. In the short-term, 3D printed micro veins on
9 transport aircraft reduced drag, pay for itself in just
10 seven months, and yield a few percentages on fuel as well.

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

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

25 Just last year, the Department of Homeland Security

1 removed over 685,000 individuals without DOD assistance.
2 The largest amount of people since 2011, obviously, during
3 the Biden years that the HS managed to do this. Yet, the
4 DOD has opted to fly at least three times through India,
5 each trip costing taxpayers over \$2.5 million, and at least
6 one of which tasked a refueling tanker to fly from New
7 Jersey to Honolulu only to return the next day.

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

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

25 TRANSCOM is a key pillar of our national security, but

1 we must ensure that it remains focused on its core mission,
2 whether by modernizing our tanker fleet or strengthening
3 contested logistic capabilities. We must make the right
4 investments and policy decisions. So, General Reed, again,
5 I thank you for your leadership. I look forward to your
6 testimony

7 Senator Sullivan: And thank you, Senator Hirono. I
8 see that we have the ranking member of the entire
9 committee, the former chairman of the Armed Services
10 Committee here with us, my good friend, Senator Jack Reed.
11 Senator Reed, would you wish to say a few opening comments?

12 Senator Reed: Mr. Chairman, thank you for your
13 hospitality, but I would just wait for my questions.

14 Senator Sullivan: Great.

15 Senator Reed: Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

19 Today's security environment presents numerous complex
20 challenges to force projection and logistics as adversaries
21 actively seek to disrupt, degrade, and deny our
22 transportation networks, especially within the homeland.
23 With 85 percent of U.S. combat power residing within the
24 continental United States, resilient transportation
25 networks fortified against malicious cyberattacks, now

1 prioritize the crucial fort-to-port transportation segment.

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

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

20 Finally, we remain committed to the ongoing
21 transformation of the Global Household goods program.
22 Moving is an integral part of our life, and while most of
23 us relocate every two to three years, and learn better ways
24 of doing it every time we move, it is always challenging.
25 The department began transitioning to the Global Household

1 Goods Contract, or GHC, in April, 2024, with the goal of
2 providing an improved moving experience for service members
3 and their families. This transformation is a monumental
4 task and reaches into every aspect of a service member's
5 relocation.

6 And because GHC is reshaping how we move service
7 members, their families, and their memories, we remain in
8 close collaboration with the services to identify and then
9 take action to resolve issues, because we are centered on
10 service members and families. Just this past week, we made
11 an adjustment to the transfer rate to the prime contractor,
12 and while it has not been an easy path, there have been
13 issues. There should be no doubt we will see this through.

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

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

25 I welcome your questions. And together, we deliver.

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

7 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Sullivan, and
8 thank you for your courtesy in letting me go ahead.
9 Welcome, General Reed.

10 During your confirmation hearing, you described how
11 you intended to sharpen TRANSCOM's contribution to the
12 lethal joint force. This includes a ready tanker fleet
13 that is able to support both contingencies around the
14 world, and STRATCOM, and also NORTHCOM missions that we
15 have here in the homeland.

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

24 Are you expressing your needs to the Air Force on what
25 you need to support a nuclear bomber force so that it

1 remains effective and a credible deterrent globally?

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

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

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

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

22 General Reed: Yes, Senator. Thank you.

23 Senator Fischer: Thank you. General Reed, it is
24 clear that in a great power conflict, the U.S. would be
25 unlikely to achieve the level of air or sea superiority

1 that it achieved in recent wars. This means that ships and
2 aircraft that will be part of any sealift or airlift effort
3 must be prepared to operate in a contested environment with
4 the assumption that they will be targeted in various ways
5 to prevent material from reaching its destination.

6 I appreciated our discussion on this topic during your
7 confirmation hearing, and in our meeting we had in the SCIF
8 last week. Since you've taken command, what steps have you
9 taken to better prepare TRANSCOM to perform strategic lift
10 in a contested environment?

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

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

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

8 Given this situation, can you provide an update on the
9 recapitalization of the Ready Reserve fleet, and how you
10 are working with MARAD to increase capability and capacity
11 in that regard?

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

18 Senator Fischer: Could you repeat your last sentence,
19 please?

20 General Reed: Yes, ma'am. We need to build new and
21 we need to buy used.

22 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

23 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Fischer.
24 Senator Hirono.

25 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 General Reed, a next generation tanker, and I
2 mentioned this in my opening statement, in the form of a
3 blended wing body aircraft would save between 30 to 50
4 percent in fuel, which would be invaluable to operations in
5 the Indo-Pacific in terms of extended range sort generation
6 and reducing contested logistics vulnerabilities.

7 As a pilot who has flow of more than 3,500 hours in
8 various types of transport aircraft, how important is it
9 for the Air Force to continue investing in the blended wing
10 body and other operational energy programs, and do you
11 think they have benefits that increase lethality and
12 readiness?

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

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

1 Senator Hirono: So, all of you are open to other
2 developments that would save you fuel, et cetera, but would
3 the blended wing body development be one of those important
4 modernizations that you would you hope will come about?

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

12 Senator Hirono: I mentioned in my opening that just
13 the consternation with the use of your assets to transport,
14 frankly, just the very few migrants at a cost in the
15 instance that I mentioned of \$2.5 million to move only
16 about 100 migrants to India. Contrast with the prior
17 administration, it was 685,000 people were removed through
18 Homeland Securities own programs.

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

23 General Reed: The Department of Homeland Security is
24 the lead agency for this in that the Department of Defense
25 is supporting them. The lead combatant command within our

1 department is NORTHCOM, and we work with them to receive
2 the task to actually fly sorties.

3 Senator Hirono: So, you are saying that you did not
4 make this decision to use your assets to fly 100 people to
5 India?

6 General Reed: No, ma'am, I did not.

7 Senator Hirono: Are you going to be tasked to do more
8 of this kind of transport?

9 General Reed: Ma'am, if I get the task, I'll
10 absolutely fly it.

11 Senator Hirono: But do you have some sort of an
12 understanding already of what the expectations are and
13 these are all non-reimbursable events?

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

17 Senator Hirono: I think that it is really important
18 for me, at least as the ranking person on this committee,
19 that we express our concern to you that this would not be
20 the kind of use of your assets that we should contemplate.
21 And since you are not the person to make that decision,
22 that there are no guarantees that that this use of your
23 assets will not continue.

24 And so, if you are given this decision to transport
25 more people, I would like this committee to be informed of

1 that. And as of now, that's what you're telling me, you
2 have no idea whether you'll be tasked to conduct this kind
3 of mission in a way that I think it's not part of your
4 mission. So, will you let this committee know if you begin
5 to use your assets for these kinds of transport?

6 General Reed: Yes, I will.

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

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

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

23 General Reed: Yes, I would -- I am asking for the
24 limit to be raised beyond 10 to allow us to actually shop
25 the market. Currently, there are 10 ships available for us

1 to pursue.

2 Senator Hirono: Are you asking for authorization to
3 buy 10 more?

4 General Reed: I'm asking authorization to buy 10
5 more.

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

13 General Reed: The Jones Act allows us to actually
14 have shipping resources here and a fleet. And so, because
15 of that Act, we actually have a way to make sure that we
16 can build ships here in the United States, that we can sail
17 those ships to maintain commerce, that we can actually
18 produce the crews that actually sail those ships so that we
19 have a core of folks that can actually operate at the same
20 time. If the nation needs folks to go to sea, we can call
21 on that force to actually sail, and there are citizens, and
22 then we will be more secure in that way.

23 Senator Hirono: Yeah. One aspect of the Jones Act
24 that's very important is that you can work with the
25 commercial shippers, private sector ships. Isn't that

1 correct?

2 General Reed: That that's correct, ma'am.

3 Senator Hirono: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman
4 for your indulgence.

5 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

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

12 General Reed: Chairman, that's a change in NDAA. And
13 so, if we can get that changed, ideally what we would need
14 to recap the fleet are four ships a year. And if they're
15 available on the market, we would pursue that. At a
16 minimum, we would need two a year.

17 Senator Sullivan: And let me ask, two years ago, your
18 predecessor told us that by 2023, 37 of the 50 government-
19 owned surge sealift ships will approach the end of their
20 service life. Military sealift command and the Navy
21 announced in November that it would sideline 17 ships from
22 the MSC to ease the stress of civilian mariners. These
23 ships, obviously, play a very important role like oilers,
24 hospital ships, cable layers.

25 Can you walk us through the current TRANSCOM plan,

1 General, for increasing and manning maintenance programs
2 for the MSC vessels so they are not left sidelined in the
3 long term?

4 General Reed: Chairman, on the Navy side, the MSC
5 commander with his Navy hat made that decision mainly for
6 the welfare of the crews. And so, the problem is that

7 Senator Sullivan: He knows there are civilian mariner
8 crews?

9 General Reed: That's correct. And so, the challenge
10 there is that with the number of ships and the shortfall of
11 the crews, it was very hard to manage the crews in a way
12 that was sustainable. And so, he did that separate from
13 that for under the Department of Transportation and the
14 Maritime Administration.

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

24 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Thank you. We've recently
25 seen a number of incidents in the Taiwan Strait and the

1 Baltic Sea whereby undersea cables were damaged or
2 destroyed by ships with connections to Russia and China.
3 Can you talk specifically about the current condition of
4 our cable layers, and whether or not you think we are ready
5 to respond to the types of attacks we may see in any kind
6 of conflict? Or heck, the Russians and Chinese are doing
7 it in nonconflict situations that relate to our undersea
8 cables. By the way, I know you know this, General, nearly
9 95 percent of the world's internet traffic goes through
10 these cables.

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

17 Senator Sullivan: Do we have any ships online that
18 you see coming into the fleet that are those kinds of ships
19 you just described?

20 General Reed: Chairman, I do not.

21 Senator Sullivan: Let me ask about another challenge
22 that you highlighted, and Senator Fischer already
23 mentioned. Can you walk me through the kind of broader
24 readiness concerns that you have with the KC-135 and KC-46
25 tankers? I know this is a top priority, so how you

1 integrate them, how you use one set, which is, as you
2 mentioned, up to 70 years old, and then the incoming one
3 that's been plagued with problems. I think Boeing really
4 needs to get its act together on this. What's your sense
5 of how we're integrating that in your strategic plan?

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

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

22 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, General. Senator Reed.

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

1 Senator Sullivan: No relation, I assume?

2 Senator Reed: We are related in an emotional way.

3 [Laughter.]

4 Senator Reed: We're both committed. He's much more
5 committed than I.

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

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

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

25 Senator Reed: Now, there's been some discussion about

1 the transportation of detainees and others. Have you
2 considered using craft participants rather than military
3 aircraft to move these people?

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

8 Senator Reed: So, DOD is paying for this movement of
9 detainees?

10 General Reed: That's correct, Senator.

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

15 General Reed: That is accurate, Senator. And if you
16 don't mind, I'd like to discuss that in a separate session.

17 Senator Reed: That's quite all right, sir. I
18 appreciate that. Thank you.

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

24 General Reed: One of the clearest ways that we're
25 doing that is in our new role for global bulk fuel

1 management and delivery. As we do fuel assessments, we are
2 doing fuel assessments with our fellow combatant commands.
3 We did an initial one with INDOPACOM. We learned some
4 lessons in that one. We next took the assessment to
5 CENTCOM.

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

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

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

1 can collaborate both for aircraft and for sealift.

2 Senator Reed: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman.

4 Senaror Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Reed. Senator
5 Scott.

6 Senator Scott: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.
7 General Reed, thanks for your service. I appreciate the
8 opportunity to sit down with you. And thank you for your
9 service, your family's service, everything. Everything you
10 do. Go Navy.

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

18 General Reed: Senator, first and foremost, the reason
19 for the contract is to correct past performance that wasn't
20 as strong as it should be after years of frustration from
21 those of us who move. And also, years of frustration from
22 yourselves to help us to try to fix it.

23 In this transition, what we are actually doing is we
24 are having a transformation within a market that still
25 exists. And with this transformation, we actually have a

1 structure, both it and with rule structure, that actually
2 allows us to see more what's happening in the market, to
3 monitor trends that are positive, monitor trends that are
4 not so much so, and actually have the tools to actually do
5 something about it.

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

11 With regards to the comment about what the Army has
12 done, the Army has not paused their participation in the
13 contract. What we're doing instead is we, in conjunction
14 with the services, are monitoring the rate of the transfer
15 to the contract because this is not about the vendor, it's
16 not about the program, it's about those who move. And so,
17 as we support those who move, we will match them up for
18 success as we help the transformation mature.

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

22 General Reed: Everything summer is the peak season.
23 And usually during that time, both combined CONUS and
24 OCONUS, it's about 300,000 moves, although we are not
25 putting OCONUS moves out just yet. But with that, we have

1 moves that are still in the contract piece and there are
2 still moves that are in the current system as well.

3 Senator Scott: And what's happening with the
4 international move. Is that being impacted at all?

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

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

13 General Reed: I do. These ships are really, really
14 old. The reliability of them sometimes are in question
15 because of that. I take my hat off to the crews that are
16 actually on them to keep them warm. But to give an idea of
17 the state of the ships, some of these ships are still run
18 by steam. And the last time that I was on a steam ship, I
19 was a high schooler and Navy junior, ROTC. And so, the
20 sailors that we actually put on these ships and the crews
21 that we put on these ships, they deserve something younger.

22 Senator Scott: So, do you think if we had a conflict
23 in the Asia Pacific, do you think you could perform?

24 General Reed: We could perform. We would have some
25 challenges with that. We would struggle, but we would not

1 perform to the level that I would like to.

2 Senator Scott: Okay. Thank you, General. Thank you,
3 Chairman.

4 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Scott. Senator
5 Shaheen.

6 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm
7 happy to defer to our chairman of --

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

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

21 General Reed: Senator in this case, I would have to
22 defer to the Air Force for that. But I have spoken to the
23 service, and I've let them know that I am concerned in
24 terms of the choices that they have to make. We absolutely
25 have to have those aircraft fully supported and funded.

1 And whatever I can do to help the service, I'll certainly
2 do that.

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

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

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

24 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.
25 And I know that you're looking for opportunities to come up

1 to Pease to see firsthand how the 157th is operating and
2 how they're working with the KC-46. So, I look forward to
3 welcoming you there sometime in the near future.

4 General Reed: And if I may add. Yes, your unit was
5 the first one, KC-46 that we employed. They went to
6 CENTCOM, and they did a fantastic job. So, thank you so
7 much for that.

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

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

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

24 Senator Shaheen: So, as you're thinking about -- you
25 have the capacity to do 10 ships this year, is that

1 correct, under the NDAA and hopefully we can get another 10
2 ships. So, what are you hoping to get within the next --
3 this year in terms of that additional sealift capacity

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

10 Senator Shaheen: And how concerned are you about
11 having the civilian workforce that it's going to operate
12 those ships?

13 General Reed: Right now, we have the workforce. My
14 main concern is making sure that I have a young, reliable
15 ship to keep the workforce.

16 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

21 Senator Shaheen: Oh, we'd love to have you come and
22 visit.

23 Senator Sullivan: I would love to see it. That's
24 great news. We want them all over the country. We are
25 honored to have our chairman of the full committee, Senator

1 Wicker. Mr. Chairman, the floor is yours.

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

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

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

20 Chairman Wicker: Can you give us your best advice
21 here?

22 General Reed: Senator, my best advice is to allow me
23 to look at that, and structure that, figure out how best
24 TRANSCOM can contribute to that with the current
25 authorities that we already have. It's aligned in a good

1 way, and I think there's a way forward.

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

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

11 General Reed: If I understand your question, you're
12 asking how do we work fuel in the theater, whether it's a
13 shore or a float. That is one of the things that we look
14 at in TRANSCOM.

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

25 Chairman Wicker: Okay. So, right now, where would

1 you say the plans are? Is it just some -- I think you said
2 you're looking at it. You don't specifically have plans
3 yet to leverage those platforms?

4 General Reed: We do not, Chairman, have plans to
5 leverage those particular ships.

6 Chairman Wicker: Okay. And then, one other thing;
7 own unfunded requirements. You said during your
8 confirmation you'd be a fierce advocate to get all the
9 equipment that our folks needed. Do we still have your
10 commitment that you are going to give us a complete list of
11 what you need in terms of these unfunded requirements?

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

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

22 General Reed: Absolutely, Chairman.

23 Chairman Wicker: All right. Thank you. And thank
24 you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator

1 Warren.

2 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
3 you for holding this hearing.

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

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

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

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

23 Senator Warren: About 46 percent. So, it went from
24 52 percent to 46 percent. So, we could reasonably ask what
25 happened? Well, the Air Force said the supply chain for

1 replacement parts had dried up. And when companies can't
2 or won't meet DODs needs, one option is for the military to
3 actually make the parts themselves so you can get things up
4 and running. It's often cheaper and faster anyway, but you
5 can't do that if big defense contractors slip restrictions
6 into their contracts that deny the military the technical
7 data that they need to be able to make these repairs.

8 So General Reed, it's your responsibility to make sure
9 the warfighter gets everything that they need. How
10 important is it to national security for C-5s to be ready
11 to respond to commander's requests to carry cargo and
12 personnel?

13 General Reed: The C-5 is a key aircraft for us. And
14 some of the things that we may be asked to do in the
15 future, it would actually produce about 20 percent of the
16 lift for us, so.

17 Senator Warren: So, you need this thing?

18 General Reed: Yes, we do.

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

24 And TRANSCOM models show that "The Fight to Get into
25 The Fight" means that getting critical materials to our

1 troops is only going to get harder over time. That means
2 the last thing our troops should be doing is waiting around
3 for contractors who charge more for slower repairs. So,
4 General Reed, do you agree that giving the military more
5 flexibility to repair parts in the field will increase our
6 military readiness?

7 General Reed: I do, Senator.

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

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

22 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator
23 King.

24 Senator Kaine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. General Reed,
25 good to see you.

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

9 Food aid, about 40 percent of our humanitarian aid
10 programs are food aid, and it's the delivery of U.S. grown
11 food to other nations. Just using Africa, the African
12 continent as an example, the U.S. flagships that deliver
13 the aid sort of count on that as what they call one leg of
14 a three-legged stool. They transfer food aid, they
15 transfer DOD cargo, and they transfer FMS or other
16 executive agency cargo. And by transferring all of those
17 and earning revenue for doing it, it maintains a business
18 model where they can keep these ships available for seal of
19 capacity.

20 If food aid were to disappear and one leg of that
21 three-legged stool were to go away, what would the effect
22 be on the availability of U.S.-flagged vessels to be around
23 when we need it for sealift chores?

24 General Reed: U.S.-flagged vessels with U.S. crews
25 are critical. We need to make sure that they can go to sea

1 and stay afloat. By us following cargo preference laws, we
2 can actually provide the material for them to actually
3 sail. What that does is it makes them ready. I need them
4 ready. I need them to have a job and know that they have
5 something that they can do. And so, when they actually get
6 called to be there for the nation, they're actually there.
7 If for some reason they were not there, then we don't have
8 U.S. citizens supporting us at sea.

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

19 General Reed: I agree.

20 Senator Kaine: Thank you for that. My colleagues
21 asked some questions and you talked in your opening
22 testimony about the DOD contract for the Global Housing
23 Goods Contract, 40,000 DOD personnel in Virginia -- I'm
24 sorry, 120,000 active duty in Virginia. And assuming you
25 move about every three years, that's 40,000 moves out and

1 40,000 moves in.

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

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

19 General Reed: So, the rates are set by what we call a
20 government-constructed cost. And we are only able to
21 adjust those rates once a year, which actually happens in
22 May. So once again, we're in a situation where to allow
23 the process to go, we have to wait until May when we have
24 the next opportunity to adjust the rates, which we will do.
25 Those rates will be more in line with the constructed

1 costs. So therefore, it will be a less of an incentive to
2 stay outside than to join the GHC.

3 Senator Kaine: Great. I'll follow back up after May
4 to see how much we've narrowed that gap and whether that's
5 doing what it needs to do. I will express my support for a
6 position, I think my colleagues have already gotten that,
7 that if you need authorization within the NDAA to expand
8 the fleet by purchasing more high-quality used vessels, I
9 really would like to make sure you have that authority and
10 I'll join with my colleagues to see if we can be helpful in
11 that regard. I'll yield back, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

12 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

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

18 You know, there's a lot of discussion on what's
19 happening on the southern border, not so much about what's
20 happening on the northern border. And as you and I talked
21 about, we've had a really high level of Russian and Chinese
22 incursions both into our ADIZ and into our EEZ on the
23 water. And very disturbingly and unprecedented, a number
24 of these are joint Chinese/Russian operations, including
25 strategic "Bear" bomber and Chinese strategic bomber

1 incursions into our ADIZ this past summer with armed MIG
2 fighters.

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

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

22 Right now, if you look at one of the ports there, the
23 Port of Adak, which is on this map, the closest the U.S.
24 Navy base that is a gateway to the Arctic, but is also on
25 the flank of China. It has three piers, two nearly 8,000-

1 foot runways, and one of the largest bulk fuel storage
2 facilities in the world. A lot of people don't know that.
3 So the distance, too, in terms of where Adak sits, it's
4 about 2,900 nautical miles from Okinawa. While our good
5 friends in Hawaii are about 4,000 nautical miles from
6 Okinawa, making Adak the closest U.S. port outside of Guam
7 to Okinawa to Taiwan.

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

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

20 General Reed: NORAD and NORTHCOM when it comes to the
21 great State of Alaska and the forces that they have there
22 do a fantastic job of letting us know when they need our
23 help. And so, whenever they ask, we're always there.
24 We've never failed them.

25 As they continue to look at how far, forward they can

1 go for the extension, if they're going to be present, so
2 will we. Coming from the other direction, Admiral Paparo,
3 I have given him my word that I will always be there with
4 him wherever he needs us to be. If there's an opportunity
5 to establish more of a footprint in the region, we will be
6 there as well.

7 Senator Sullivan: And let me ask just real quickly.
8 You were up in Alaska recently. I appreciated the visit in
9 January. Can you give me a sense of kind of lessons
10 learned? I know you're at the Port of Anchorage, which is
11 a really important DOD strategic port, again, relating to
12 these kinds of logistical issues. We think it's important
13 to have additional infrastructure capability in my state.
14 But any main takeaways from the visit you had in January,
15 General, and I really appreciate you coming up to our great
16 state.

17 General Reed: Chairman, it was a great visit. Went
18 there, intentionally, in the winter time. Good to see the
19 conditions there. Unfortunately, it was colder in Illinois
20 than it was in Alaska, and I got in trouble with --

21 Senator Sullivan: Yeah, we've had a little bit of a
22 warm winter, particularly with the Iditarod last week.

23 General Reed: But being in Alaska again and having a
24 really good feeling standing there, almost standing on top
25 of the world, looking at what's around us and how close it

1 is, it is incredibly strategic. And the reach that you can
2 have from that location is incredible, and it's a big
3 advantage to the United States.

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

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

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

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

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

12 Senator Hirono: This was an interesting conversation
13 because the fuel that was sort of Red Hill was massive,
14 mainly to be used by the Air Force. And I think that there
15 are concerns relating to the how fuel ought to be
16 distributed more than located in Red Hill.

17 I have a question. And July of 2021, the GAO found
18 that ICE does not know the extent to which its officers are
19 taking enforcement actions against individuals who could be
20 U.S. citizens. And between Fiscal Year 2015 to 2020, 674
21 U.S. citizens were arrested. 121 were detained, and 70
22 were moved outside the U.S. by mistake.

23 The GAO recommended that ICE should systematically
24 collect and maintain electronic data on its encounters with
25 individuals for whom there is probative evidence of U.S.

1 citizenship, but ICE has yet to do so. This lack of
2 accountability is troubling.

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

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

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

19 General Reed: I do not know that completely.

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

23 General Reed: I'm not aware of any.

24 Senator Hirono: What steps have you taken to ensure
25 the answer you just gave me is accurate?

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

6 Senator Hirono: We know that Guantanamo Bay is
7 subject to various weather events. And what is the
8 evacuation plan for all of the migrants being sent to
9 Guantanamo Bay in the event of a hurricane or other
10 disaster in Cuba. And this is especially important in
11 light of the fact that the President has said he's planning
12 to send some 30,000 migrants to Guantanamo Bay. So, do you
13 know what kind of evacuation plans?

14 General Reed: I would have to defer that one to
15 SOUTHCOM.

16 Senator Hirono: Okay. Another concern. Thank you
17 very much, Mr. Chairman.

18 Senator Sullivan: Well, General, thank you very much
19 for your testimony. What we plan on doing, we have a vote
20 around 4:00. And we will close the hearing here. And I
21 want to thank you. If there's additional question for the
22 record from members, we will send those to you in the next
23 couple days, and we ask that you try to respond to those
24 within two weeks.

25 And we will reconvene in SVC-217 for a classified

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

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

7 [Whereupon, at 3:49 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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