

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE  
REQUIRED FORCE LEVEL OF STRATEGIC  
Airlift Aircraft Mandated by Title 10,  
United States Code, and the Adminis-  
tration's Request to Eliminate That  
Requirement in Review of the De-  
fense Authorization Request for Fis-  
cal Year 2012 and the Future Years  
Defense Program**

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**WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m., in room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Reed, Wicker, and Ayotte.

Committee staff members present: Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk; and Jennifer L. Stoker, security clerk.

Majority staff member present: Creighton Greene, professional staff member.

Minority staff member present: Christopher J. Paul, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Brian F. Sebold and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Joseph Lai, assistant to Senator Wicker; and Brad Bowman, assistant to Senator Ayotte.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED, CHAIRMAN**

Senator REED. The subcommittee will come to order.

And I want to extend a welcome to our witnesses and thank each of you for appearing before the Seapower Subcommittee today.

The subcommittee will hear from the Honorable Christine Fox, director of the Office of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation, or CAPE; General Duncan McNabb, commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, or TRANSCOM; and General Raymond Johns, commander of the Air Force's Air Mobility Command. And we welcome you all and thank you for your service.

I would note that this hearing is principally the result of the excellent work that Senator Ayotte has done, together with her staff,

to call to the attention of the subcommittee the issue of the inventory of strategic lift, which is a vital topic to this subcommittee. And her work has caused us to, I think, take a very close look at what you are proposing, what the administration is proposing, and be prepared, we hope, appropriately for the authorization bill when it comes to the floor.

But I would be remiss if I did not very, very strongly and with great appreciation express my thanks to Senator Ayotte and her staff for her excellent work.

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

Senator REED. Thank you.

Today, we would like to hear about the department's request to eliminate the provisions of Section 8062 of Title 10, United States Code, which require that the department maintain at least 316 strategic airlift aircraft in the inventory.

For these purposes, the term "strategic airlift aircraft" is defined essentially as C-5s and C-17s. Congress established that requirement based on previous assessments of strategic airlift requirements for supporting wartime operations.

It is appropriate that we consider this change very carefully. We need to be sure to get this decision right since we could be incurring large expenses if we get the decision wrong in either direction, either maintaining too many aircraft or too few, given the potential contingencies going forward.

If we keep more aircraft than we really need, we have to pay operating and support costs. If, on the other hand, we retire more aircraft than is prudent, we may face the need to reactivate retired aircraft—and that is always an iffy proposition, both in terms of cost and in terms of the availability and the condition of these aircraft—or, more likely, consider buying new strategic airlift aircraft.

I suspect that either one of these options would be very expensive to the point that it would quickly wipe out any planned near-term savings in operating support costs achieved by retiring too many aircraft. So getting the number right is absolutely important.

And I think also it is important—and again, I hope the value of this hearing is so that we understand the logic, the analysis, and that we also are able to feel comfortable about whatever proposal is adopted.

We are in a situation of retiring aircraft not because the C-5A aircraft are worn out—I think there is a lot of serviceable life left in these aircraft—but the Congress bought essentially 43 more C-17 aircraft than the Air Force said it needed a few years ago. Had we stopped production at 180 C-17 aircraft, we would not be in the position of retiring any C-5A aircraft currently slated for retirement under the Air Force's plans.

And unlike other parts of our aircraft forces, the C-5A aircraft we retired have not expended all of their useful service lives. The reason that is suggested to retire these aircraft would be to save operating and support costs, not because they are worn out. And frankly, there are some classes of aircraft in our inventory that are closer to the wear-out situation than the C-5A.

So I suspect that many other aspects of the Air Force would love the luxury of being able to retire aircraft that still have useful life. In fact, General Johns, I think in a previous position, you identified

potential fighter Air Force structure shortfall of some 800 aircraft in the next decade because they were wearing out, not because we just didn't need them.

So over the years since the late 1970s, assessments of our wartime requirements have fluctuated, generally increasing, except in the past few years. And to my knowledge, previous analyses have never explicitly addressed requirements for a strategic airlift to support peacetime operations.

Last year, despite operating fewer aircraft than the current requirement for 316 aircraft, we were told that strategic airlift forces were flying harder than ever before. To that specific point, because of a lack of availability of strategic airlift aircraft to support peacetime operations, TRANSCOM had to hire former Soviet strategic airlift aircraft to carry mine-resistant ambush vehicles, MRAVS, to the theater to support combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So it raises a host of questions about the Reserve air fleet, leasing, other nationality aircraft, how many C-17s, how many C-5s? I must say I have looked at the testimony, and I will just initially say how thoughtful I believe you have considered this issue. So thank you for that thoughtfulness.

And I look forward to the testimony, and I also look forward to a good round of questioning because, like any serious issue, you have raised many questions with your thoughtful analysis. And we would like to answer them today.

With that, let me recognize Senator Wicker. And I would certainly like to recognize Senator Ayotte, if she would have comments.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER**

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this important hearing today.

I want to thank our witnesses for their attendance and for their valuable service to our Nation.

I will be relatively brief, and I appreciate the chair and his willingness to allow Senator Ayotte also to make an opening statement.

The national military strategy has continued to evolve since 2005, when the Department of Defense conducted its last study to determine the right mix of aircraft, ships, personnel, and facilities to move cargo and passengers for military operations. Although the ability to prosecute two nearly simultaneous conventional campaigns remains a cornerstone of U.S. defense policy, the current strategy places increased emphasis on irregular warfare, stabilization operations, and support to homeland defense.

Furthermore, defense planning recognizes the reality of long-term U.S. involvement in globally dispersed operations, which may include commitments to major campaigns.

In order to provide an updated comprehensive assessment of DOD's mobility system, the United States Transportation Command last year completed the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study-2016, MCRS-16. In its fifth comprehensive mobility study—it is the fifth comprehensive mobility study conducted by the Defense Department and the second mobility study conducted since 9/11.

The objectives of MCRS-16 were to determine the mobility capabilities and requirements needed to deploy, employ, sustain, and redeploy joint military forces in support of national military strategy in the 2016 timeframe. Also, to determine capability gaps and overlaps associated with the program mobility force structure and to provide insights and recommendations to support the QDR.

MCRS-16 assessed the military's strategic airlift, large cargo aircraft; intra-theater airlift, small cargo aircraft; sealift aerial refueling; ashore and afloat prepositioning surface transportation; and infrastructure. This was done by assessing whether the military has the right type of equipment against a set of operational metrics to determine whether available forces met warfighter objectives within desired timelines.

MCRS-16 found the department's planned mobility capabilities are sufficient to support the most demanding projected requirements. Some specific findings are, number one, large cargo aircraft airlift capacity exceeds the peak demand in all the scenarios considered, which covered a broad spectrum of military operations. Based on the study's findings, the military needs only 264 to 300 large cargo aircraft.

Number two, lack of foreign infrastructure or access to foreign infrastructure to support major force deployments remains the fundamental constraint when attempting to reduce deployment timeliness in support of U.S. objectives.

Number three, sealift is the primary means for delivering large ground forces.

Number four, DOD relies on the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, with commercial air carriers as the primary means of delivering passengers. Projected passenger airlift capacity greatly exceeds the requirement in all scenarios considered.

And number five, intra-theater airlift using the Air Force's programmed amount of C-130s exceeds the peak demand, covering a broad spectrum of military operations. Those are the findings.

In his prepared testimony for this subcommittee, one of our witnesses today, General McNabb, says, "With the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study-2016 complete, we now have the analytical justification to recommend repeal of the 316 strategic airlift floor."

I agree. Eliminating the 316 large cargo aircraft floor restriction would allow the Air Force to retire an additional 15 C-5As and provide substantial savings by freeing up billions in taxpayer dollars over the next few years. Given the current climate of fiscal austerity, which requires that we look to all corners of the defense enterprise to determine how DOD can conduct itself more efficiently, this is a move in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the testimony of our distinguished witnesses. I can only say one other thing. I have heard a wild rumor that General McNabb may be in the process of retiring in October.

Surely this couldn't possibly be true. But if it is, we will miss his services, and he is doubly due the praise and the admiration of this committee and this Congress.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I very much appreciate your holding this hearing.

And I also want to thank Ranking Member Wicker for holding this hearing today.

During the markup process for the defense authorization, I brought forward during that process an amendment that would have changed the strategic airlift requirement, allowing the Department of Defense to reduce that number from 316 to 299.

I did that because, in looking at this issue, it came to my attention that the Department of Defense and the Air Force had done very careful analysis when the proposal was submitted through the President's budget to the Armed Services Committee for consideration. And that is why I was going to bring forward that in the markup.

And I very much appreciate the chairman and ranking member in having, when that issue was brought up in the markup, they realized how important this was and decided to have this hearing today. So I am very appreciative of their work on this issue.

And I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here, for your thoughtful analysis. Because what has been done by the Air Force on this issue, there was an extensive study done in 2010 to identify the peak of demand for airlift capacity, which has already been referenced, and that that airlift capacity would be 32.7 million tons per day. And we would be able to meet that capacity with reducing to 299 strategic airlift aircraft.

And why is that important? I mean, it is very important, as the chairman and the ranking member have already mentioned, is all of us want to ensure that our military can meet our strategic airlift requirements. I know the witnesses share that concern, and that is why you undertook such a careful analysis in the coming to this conclusion.

But we also want to make sure that, in this time of difficult fiscal times for our country and for the Department of Defense, that we aren't spending money that we don't need to, to maintain aircraft that we no longer have a capacity or need for. And if we were to change the strategic airlift requirements in a way that I hope will happen as we go forward from this hearing, we could—in retiring the unneeded C-5A models, we could save up to \$1.2 billion in taxpayer dollars across the future years defense plan over the next 4 years.

And that, of course, is resources that could be better used, either to upgrade our C-17s for other uses within the military, given the difficult choices that we are going to have to be making going forward. And we, as you all know and appreciate, with \$14 trillion in debt and with Admiral Mullen I think rightfully identifying the National debt as the greatest threat to our National security, all of us, when we find that we have too much of something that we need, it is very important for us to act on, in my view, your recommendations. And that is what prompted me to raise this issue in the committee.

I am looking forward to hearing each of the witnesses' testimony today. And just to follow up on something that the chairman said, one of the reasons that we had too many C-17s is because mem-

bers of Congress, rather than what you asked us to produce, actually, through the earmark process, had more of those aircraft produced than the Air Force had requested.

So we, in part, in Congress have created this situation. And so, I am hopeful that we will heed your careful analysis and advice going forward so that we can right-size and still meet our strategic airlift requirements.

So thank you very much.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

All of your testimony has been submitted and will be made part of the record. You may be free to summarize your testimony.

And we will begin, I believe, with Director Fox and then General Johns or General McNabb, whoever wants to go next.

Director Fox, please.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTINE H. FOX, DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Ms. FOX. Mr. Chairman, Senator Wicker, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss Department of Defense requirements for strategic airlift.

The Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation has extensively studied strategic airlift requirements through a series of studies, beginning in the early 1990s.

Last year, we completed the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study, which assessed peacetime and wartime demands on our airlift system. We conducted this study in conjunction with U.S. Transportation Command. It serves as the analytic underpinning of the U.S. Air Force's current fleet management plan and supports retirement of 32 C-5 aircraft.

Here, I will briefly summarize the results of that study. As you said, sir, we have submitted a more detailed written statement.

The study assessed steady-state and surge requirements for airlift, sealift, and prepositioned assets for various scenarios, providing the department a comprehensive understanding of our mobility system in time of peace and time of war.

An understanding of the steady-state demand is important because it quantifies the level of effort needed to support daily operations without mobilization. It also sets the conditions for the location of forces and mobility assets at the commencement of the surge events.

For our analysis of steady-state demand, we evaluated both historical support to global logistics and, through modeling, the deployment, employment, redeployment, and sustainment of forces supporting globally dispersed operations. Historical data included missions flown in support of combatant commanders, such as cargo and passenger missions, exercise missions, and special assignment airlift missions conducted over the past 7 years.

The special assignment airlift missions include movement of nuclear means and related material, presidential support, special operations support, and other time-sensitive, high-priority missions.

For our analysis of the surge requirements, we developed three different cases to evaluate peak airlift demands. Each case included homeland defense and major campaigns.

The results of our study showed that it is the surge events that drive the size of the strategic airlift fleet. These events are periods of finite, but extremely high levels of demand for strategic airlift. In comparison, steady-state demands represent prolonged requirements, but with significantly lower peaks. While these requirements contribute to the surge demand, they do not drive the size of the airlift fleet.

So based on the study findings, the department needs a military airlift fleet capacity between 29.1 and 32.7 million ton miles per day, which can be met with 264 to 300 aircraft. These results support the Air Force desire to retire 32 C-5 aircraft. It is our assessment that the retirement of these aircraft will not increase operational risk.

Without this change, the department would be required to maintain a strategic airlift fleet in excess of what is required, costing the department billions of dollars over the life of the aircraft.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fox follows:]

Senator REED. Thank you, Director Fox. And once again, thank you for your very thoughtful written testimony.

Since I don't know date of ranks—okay, General Johns. General McNabb, you are recognized because General Johns does know date of ranks. [Laughter.]

**STATEMENT OF GEN. DUNCAN J. MCNABB, USAF,  
COMMANDER, U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND**

General MCNABB. Chairman Reed, Senator Wicker, and distinguished members of this subcommittee, I would like to express my gratitude to this committee for your support to the United States Transportation Command and to the men and women who strive every day to protect our Nation and its freedom.

It is my distinct honor to be with you today, representing the more than 145,000 soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, coast guardsmen, and civilians that are U.S. Trans Command. Daily, our total force team provides the warfighter the force and sustainment they need to win.

I am also privileged today to be joined by two of my good friends and colleagues, General Ray Johns and Ms. Christine Fox. Great to be up here with you all.

Rapid global mobility is among our Nation's greatest asymmetric advantages. And the ability to mobilize forces and materials within hours, rather than days or weeks, depends on the right-sized fleet of versatile, ready, and effective air mobility forces.

I fully support the administration's proposal to repeal the statutory requirement for the Air Force to maintain a strategic cargo fleet of 316 aircraft. The congressionally directed floor of 316 strategic airlifters was established before the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study, MCRS, 2016 determined the strategic airlift requirement to be 32.7 million ton miles per day. Our analysis con-

firms this capacity can be met with approximately 300 strategic airlift aircraft.

Additionally, a strategic airlift aircraft reduction allows the Air Force to retire an additional 15 C-5As and, as the Senator mentioned, with a substantial saving of over \$1.2 billion in taxpayer dollars across the FYDP and, most importantly, focus our critical infrastructure, aerial port, and aircrew personnel and resources on a right-sized fleet.

The current program fleet of 222 C-17s, 52 C-5Ms, and 27 C-5As satisfies this requirement and is far more modern and capable than any strategic airlift fleet in our history. To underscore this point, our strategic airlift fleet of approximately 350 aircraft in 1999 provided about 26 million ton miles per day capacity. Yet today, a fleet of only 300 aircraft will provide over 32 million ton miles per day.

This also allows us to meet our peacetime requirements. Indeed, in 2010, while supporting both the troop withdrawal from Iraq and the surge into Afghanistan, our busiest day in Air Mobility Command was on March 23rd, when we performed 16.6 million ton miles per day of lift. For comparison, prior to September 11th, on 9/11, the busiest day in 2001 for AMC was 5.5 million ton miles per day.

When these numbers are compared with our projected capacity, the U.S. Air Force program fleet can meet all readiness and peacetime requirements, as well as be surged to meet wartime needs.

In addition to a more modern and capable fleet, we also continuously improve the efficiency of air mobility operations. For example, with the use of multimodal operations, we move large volumes of cargo by sea to locations in close proximity to the area of operations, then by truck from the seaports to the nearby airfields, and finally by air to its destination.

This concept has been used with great success throughout 2010 and 2011 as we moved almost 7,000 mine-resistant attack platforms and MATVs to Afghanistan. Utilizing the combination of air, land, and sea modes of transportation, we increased velocity, employed aircraft more efficiently, and ultimately reduced transportation costs by almost \$400 million in 2010 alone.

Multipurpose aircraft will also improve the efficiency and capacity of our airlift fleet. The KC-46 fleet, the new tanker—and thank you for your support of that—will be sized based on war plan tanker requirements. In those plans, when not at aerial refueling peak demand periods, the KC-46 can supplement the heavy airlift fleet by conducting a variety of airlift and air medical evacuation missions.

Not only will it dramatically change our air refueling concept of operations, but it will also allow us to make the whole air mobility system that much more efficient.

Our commercial partners also provide superb modernized and cost-effective airlift support in peace and in war. Their ability to move bulk cargo and passengers around the world complements our organic capabilities. I depend on them in wartime.

The CRAF program's ability to augment our organic airlift fleet helps to reduce the operational burden on our military assets and allows us to deal with short-term surges without having to mobilize



total force assets. Based on all these factors, I reiterate my full support to repeal the 316 statutory floor.

At U.S. TRANSCOM, we view our success through the eyes of the warfighter. We know that combatant commanders around the world absolutely depend on us to deliver the forces and their sustainment day in and day out.

We are committed to deliver to the warfighter, while also being responsible stewards of the taxpayers' trust and dollars. The men and women of TRANSCOM, our components, and industry partners are proud to provide world-class support to those who put themselves on the line every day. We want them to absolutely know that we will always, always deliver.

Chairman Reed, Senator Wicker, and all members of this committee, thank you for your continued superb support of U.S. TRANSCOM and of all of our men and women in uniform.

Thank you for including my written statement for the record, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General McNabb follows:]

Senator REED. Thank you, General.

General Johns?

**STATEMENT OF GEN. RAYMOND E. JOHNS JR., USAF,  
COMMANDER, AIR MOBILITY COMMAND**

General JOHNS. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the 135,000 active duty Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve airmen of Air Mobility Command, we thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about our strategic airlift fleet.

As you know, AMC airmen are employed every day around the world, providing global mobility for the Nation. We answer the call of others so that they may prevail. We thank you for your steadfast support for our efforts over the past many years.

As a force provider, AMC is charged with maintaining our strategic airlift fleet and ensuring it has the capability and capacity required by United States Transportation Command and the geographic combatant commanders. The strategic airlift fleet is a national asset, allowing America to deliver hope, to fuel the fight, and to save lives anywhere in the world within hours of getting the call.

We are also keenly aware of the fiscal challenges our Nation is facing and take very seriously our role in fulfilling our requirement not only today, but as we look out into the future. It is incumbent on us to maintain effectiveness across the spectrum of operations in the most efficient manner possible.

We are devoted to managing the strategic airlift fleet responsibly. As part of the fiscal year '10 NDAA, several restrictions were placed on the Air Force regarding strategic airlift, including a floor of 316 aircraft and several reporting requirements prior to any C-5 retirements.

The Secretary of the Air Force met the C-5A retirement restrictions earlier this year, and we greatly appreciate the committee allowing us to begin retiring our oldest and least capable C-5s. We are still constrained by the 316 floor and currently are only able to retire one C-5A for every C-17 delivered.

AMC fully supports the President's request to repeal the 316 strategic airlift floor and allow the Air Force to manage its fleet. MCRS-16, the most recent study completed on the strategic airlift requirement, was wholly informed by the National security strategy and the National military strategy. The foundation of MCRS-16 analysis is directly tied to the Quadrennial Defense Review, and its conclusions reflect our Nation's strategic priorities.

Based on MCRS-16 requirements of 32.7 million ton miles per day, we believe the program fleet size of 301 C-5s, C-5Ms, and C-17s is sufficient. By allowing the Air Force to retire the additional C-5As as requested, \$1.2 billion, ma'am, as you stated, of unprogrammed cost will be avoided across the FYDP.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to come before you. Today is an important issue, and we sincerely thank you for your strong continued support. I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of General Johns follows:]

Senator REED. Thank you very much, General Johns.

We will do an 8-minute first round, and I think this is a topic that is of significant technical complexity and also interest that we will do a second round. And we might have other members join us, too.

But let me just sort of preface my remarks by saying - - and this might be more folklore than fact—but I think one of the reasons there was a floor placed with respect to strategic lift is there are strong intramural and extramural pressures sometimes to avoid buying airlift and buying other platforms. And I hope that is not, you know, the case going forward.

Because, frankly, I think, as you have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate every day, strategic and tactical airlift is central to everything we do, everywhere we do it, and it deserves sort of premier attention, not sort of secondary attention. So that is just a preface to my questions.

First, in terms of the analysis, there are several terms that are running around. And Director Fox, you talk in two sort of categories, steady state and surge. Other people talk about peacetime and wartime.

Do you equate steady state as equals peacetime and surge equals wartime? Just for clarification.

Ms. FOX. Yes, sir. Essentially, that is correct. In the wartime, it includes homeland defense operations concurrent with the war fight. Perhaps that is part of the confusion. But, yes, what you said is correct.

Senator REED. And the surge is not only homeland security. It is also a major campaign, which would be a conventional fight, unlike sort of the irregular warfare we are seeing now?

Ms. FOX. Absolutely, sir. The most stringent cases, two overlapping, large land warfare campaigns, plus three simultaneously homeland defense—

Senator REED. And that leads to a 32.7 million tons per day figure to meet that?

Ms. FOX. Yes, sir. The max.

Senator REED. And the max. And that is what you feel you can obtain, even with these reductions down to 301 aircraft, basically?

Ms. FOX. Yes, sir. A point of clarification, if I could?

Senator REED. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. FOX. The maximum needed is not that. It is 20. But when you look at how you schedule, how you load, the size, so it is really quite conservative. The model tries to go through that so we don't get caught short in our inability to provide it.

Senator REED. And just in terms of modeling, so the range of error—can you quantify that in terms of—were you told to get this within a 2 percent error, or was that not a modeling factor?

Ms. FOX. You know, sir, the model—I ought to be able to answer your question, but I will have to get back to you. We were not told to get to something. What we have tried to do is model it as accurately as we can.

Of course, you are right. There are errors in any model. And I should know that, but I am afraid I—

Senator REED. No, that is quite all right.

The other issue, just a clarification, of steady state. Steady state is essentially what we are in right now.

We have got a major operation in Afghanistan. You are doing major operations out of Iraq, particularly airlifting equipment out of Iraq. You have ongoing support requirements globally. So this is steady state?

Ms. FOX. That is correct. Steady state is intense.

Senator REED. Okay. General McNabb, let me—and General Johns or Director Fox, if you feel that you want to comment, please. One of the realities that is facing us right now is in this steady-state process, we are relying upon one of our allies, Pakistan, for terrestrial transit, you know, their roads, et cetera. But given the political dynamics there, I will just ask the question.

The loss of Pakistan as a land transit point would not in any way affect your plans to retire the C-5As you currently have on duty or in any way change your request to—at least in the short run—to go down to as low as 301 aircraft?

General MCNABB. No, sir, it wouldn't at all. We were really constrained going into Afghanistan by the throughput of the airfields in Afghanistan. It is not a matter of number of airplanes that we have. It is how many you can get in through and have and flow through there.

So one thing that we have done is by using those multimodal operations, where we bring stuff by surface as far forward as possible and then maximizing C-17s going back and forth, or C-5s, that has really allowed us to optimize those slot times that we have in Afghanistan. And so, we will continue to work very hard at that.

But, no, this would in no way restrict—

Senator REED. Right. But the commander on the—one of the reasons you have been able to do this successfully is most of what you are moving is into the ports in Pakistan and then up through Pakistan. If that option is gone and you have to deliver by air, now you either shift to K2, I guess, in Uzbekistan or you just have to be much more efficient in those airfields. Is that—

General MCNABB. Sir, two things that we are doing there. One, we opened up the operations in the north. We call it the northern distribution network. So we are bringing a lot of the resupply up through the north.

In fact, to the tune of about 35 percent comes from the north, about 30 percent comes through the Pakistan ground, and about 35 percent by air. Everything that is high value, everything that is lethal, everything that is special, we bring in by air now.

What we would have to do is absorb that and bring more of that stuff either through the north, or we would have to bring in by air. Air is kind of our ultimate ace in the hole. Ideally, we will have other ways of getting that in, and right now, we have worked very hard to make sure we have good options.

Senator REED. Right. Let me ask another question. And I will direct it to you, Director Fox, but it might be General Johns's area.

So who gets the savings if we go ahead and retire these aircraft?

Ms. FOX. That would probably be a point of issue between OSD and the Air Force. But I am sure the Air Force thinks the Air Force gets the savings. We have to see how all of the budgets and the requirements come out this year. He won't like my answer.

Senator REED. Okay, General Johns? I think your answer is fine.

General JOHNS. What we have done by assuming the savings and the retirements, as we submitted our fiscal request through OSD, was to actually use those resources to support other air forces in the effort. So they have already been spread, and then we will have that discussion with—

Senator REED. So put it another way, you have already spent the savings, conceptually, on Air Force programs?

General JOHNS. Yes, sir. I wouldn't say we spent the savings. We basically—yes, sir, the simple term is, we said if we don't have to preserve these aircraft, we would use them against other obligations.

Senator REED. Okay. And I think—and again, probably best to follow up with a question to give us an idea of how you are distributing the savings, and we will follow up with a question.

General JOHNS. Yes, sir. It wasn't like there was the savings there. It was more as we built the POM, we reduced the requirement. So it was used across the Air Force.

Senator REED. So you lowered the amount of request going forward?

General JOHNS. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Senator REED. But we will, I think, follow up with a question, try to get an idea of what you are doing with those.

General JOHNS. Yes, sir. But again, it was pretty much spread across. So it is hard to track and say, "This dollar went here, and this dollar went there."

Senator REED. Okay. Thank you.

Let me ask another—General McNabb or General Johns, et cetera, particularly in your testimony, General McNabb, you said the C-17s will continue to meet TRANSCOM future requirements through currently funded purchases, upgrade programs, and fleet rotation.

So you have—all of you in this study assumed no additional acquisition of C-17 aircraft. Is that correct?

General McNABB. Sir, that is true.

Senator REED. That is true.

General McNABB. Just make sure that we upgrade—continue to upgrade the older models so that we have a common model of C-17s across the board with common capabilities.

Senator REED. Now just another question, and I will - - as I said, we will have a second round. So let me at this point recognize Senator Wicker, and then I will see you again.

Senator Wicker?

Senator WICKER. I have been absent from the room, and I haven't heard all of the questions. And if it is all right, I think I will let Senator Ayotte go before me, if that is all right, Mr. Chairman?

Senator REED. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you so much, Senator Wicker.

I just want to make sure that we are clear on the results of the 2010 study. As I understand it, according to Director Fox's written testimony—and I would like to make sure that we have the concurrence of the two generals that are here—that if we have reduced the airlift capacity to 32.7 million tons per day, as the conclusion was of the study, that would still allow us the capacity, based on the results of the study, to do two overlapping large-scale land campaigns occurring in different theaters, three nearly simultaneous homeland defense consequence management events, and ongoing, as we have right now, steady-state operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

General McNabb and General Johns, do you concur with that analysis in terms of what capacity we would be left with if we reduce the number to, say, a 301 or in that range, whatever your recommendation would be?

General McNABB. Yes, ma'am. We can do that. Basically, that 32.7 was that two major land campaigns, separate theaters, just as you mentioned, and our ability to still handle the steady-state requirement.

Now, if you talk about an Afghanistan and Iraq along with that, then now you are starting to go a little bit beyond what they were talking about. We are talking in the neighborhood—we actually did a scenario where we did a steady state that was very similar to Afghanistan, along with one land campaign, and that was one of the other scenarios that we ran to make sure that we could do a much larger steady state, like we have today, along with another scenario.

So based on how you just said that, if you, depending on how you would define Iraq and Afghanistan, you know, what level we are at when you brought that up, that is the one where I would go it would depend how large we are still in Iraq and Afghanistan and then to be able to go do two theater wars.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, General, I just wanted to follow up. The situation right now, for example, in—let us assume we stay where we are, current operation in Afghanistan, which would be peak right now, given the number of troops we have there with the surge before any of them are withdrawn, and we also were to be in a situation where we decided to leave additional troops, because the Iraqis have asked us to, in Iraq because we have obviously seen

some flare-ups there because of the influence of others that want to undermine our success.

If we change the capacity, would we be able to handle that type of situation? Because I think that is, obviously, a very real scenario we could face in the coming year.

General MCNABB. Yes. And I think what we would do is we would be taking a very hard look at—because a lot of it is the number of forces you have engaged there. So it wouldn't be—lift probably wouldn't be the thing that you would start looking at. It would be all the ISR assets, all the other assets—

Senator AYOTTE. Right.

General MCNABB.—that you would have to bring all that to bear.

Senator AYOTTE. Right.

General MCNABB. So lift, I would say that from the standpoint we will move what needs to be moved where it needs to be moved. It is just that overall capacity, if you mirror that with two very large land campaigns along with that, I would say we would have to prioritize within that.

Senator AYOTTE. Okay.

General MCNABB. That is beyond, I think, what the MCRS looked at. I don't know, Ms. Fox, how you see that. I saw that as the one option that we looked at for the scenario in Africa. Go ahead.

Ms. FOX. So the least stressful case that we looked at was an OIF, Iraq-like sustained campaign, plus a major ground war, land war campaign concurrently. So, yes, I agree with General McNabb.

But the most stressing case was two large land campaigns, separate theaters. The steady state was more—was not the OIF peak, but it was consistent with OEF at a lower level, the Afghanistan.

Senator AYOTTE. And really, the point would be this is a very, very conservative estimate. I mean, if we are in a position where we are engaged in two major, large-scale land campaigns and obviously a situation like we are sustaining right now in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, I mean, that is a very significant engagement level for our country. I am not saying that we shouldn't be prepared to be there. I think our readiness should always be well beyond where we are.

But as I understand your analysis, it is very conservative in terms of what you have provided for testimony if we were to reduce our capacity to 301. Is that right?

Ms. FOX. If I could add don't forget three additional concurrent homeland events at the same time. So, yes, I would say it is very conservative.

Senator AYOTTE. So anyone that would be concerned about our readiness posture should be satisfied if we were to reduce the fleet to 301?

General JOHNS. Yes, ma'am. Again, from Air Mobility and the Air Force perspective, we want to deliver on the requirements that come from TRANSCOM through the analysis of CAPE. And so, we will look at that to ensure across the spectrum to do the two MCOs, as you talk about.

But as we look at Iraq and Afghanistan today, you know, they are at a surge period, per se, and probably a little bit above what we consider steady state.

Senator AYOTTE. Okay. Thank you. Appreciate—

General MCNABB. Senator, could I mention one other thing, is the other part to that is when we think about doing two major theater land campaigns, you really are going to mobilize the complete force, mobilize all our total force, and activate our Civil Reserve Air Fleet. So this is you are bringing everything to the game.

And as I mentioned last year, during the very peak of the surge, our highest requirement was in the 16 million ton miles, about half of what we would surge to. But it gives you an idea of what all we would then bring to bear, and that is kind of how—every once in a while that gets lost in it, is that you are taking everything. And everything we have in Reserve all goes.

Senator AYOTTE. So, General, just to use your example, you said March 23rd was the peak, and that is only half, in terms of Afghanistan and the surge, of what you have been doing. So that was really only—that was only half the capacity of what we would still have as a capacity if we reduce to 301?

General MCNABB. That is right. Now we did not fully mobilize now, but we did mobilize, do a partial mobilization of C-17 and C-5 crews to be able to handle that increase.

Senator AYOTTE. Okay. General Johns?

General JOHNS. Yes, ma'am. Yes, Senator.

We called March, the March 2011 -? 2011—we called that “March madness,” as we looked at it from the mobility force. We had Japan going on. We had the support of Libya. We had a presidential banner mission. And we had Afghanistan and Iraq working.

And in my history, that was the busiest period. So, again, March madness of a different silk.

And in looking at that, around the 23rd of March to about the 29th is where we had our heaviest commitment of our gray tails, of our mobility fleet. It was 127 C-17s, 33 C-5s, and 208 tankers across the globe. So I have never seen such a heavy demand, but still that is less than half of what we could deliver.

Senator AYOTTE. Great. I really appreciate your putting it in that perspective. When you think about that much activity, and that is only half of the capacity that we would still be leaving here if we reduce the fleet to 301 or near that level.

I also wanted to follow up, some who have been critical in the past of reducing the strategic Air Force airlift capacity to the requirements that you are recommending have cited the fact that we lease commercial aircraft as an argument against reducing or eliminating the aircraft floor. Yet I am also told by the Air Force that we sometimes lease aircraft for two reasons.

First, in order to meet short-term surges in airlift demand, and sometimes it is more cost effective to lease commercial assets for a brief period rather than purchasing and having to continually maintain an asset.

General McNabb, can you address this issue to those that might raise this issue in terms of concerns about leasing and our capacity?

General MCNABB. Certainly, Senator.

The way we—I basically run an enterprise, and I have three parts to that enterprise. I have the active duty fleet. I have the Guard and Reserve total force augmentation of that as well. So I

have the total force to augment that. And third, I have our commercial partners.

And all three of them are integral parts, and my job is to match the capability against the requirement. And what goes into that is, is it a military-type mission like air drop or going into some high-threat fields where I have to use a military airplane? Second, it goes into cost. How much will it cost me if I end up taking MRAPs or MATVs?

And in fact, in general, if I can use our commercial partners, if I can use them, it is normally cheaper than if I use military airplanes. That does the two things you mentioned. It preserves their longevity. It preserves those airframes for when I need them later. Saves you in the long term.

But more importantly, if I have an immediate requirement, then I have that extra capacity to go. We are always mixing and matching. As General Johns mentioned, March madness, we were pivoting—we were pivoting the enterprise to take care of Iraq and Afghanistan, pivoting it to Libya, pivoting it to Japan, pivoting it to South America for the movement of the President. All of those things are going, and our ability is to swing that very rapidly.

A lot of questions came up, and Chairman, you brought up the 124s. Well, the 124s actually were part—are a subcontractor to one of our Civil Reserve Air Fleet members, in this case Atlas Air. They actually could move MRAPs cheaper on that than we could on any other airplane, cheaper than C-17s, cheaper than C-5s. It also then freed up C-17s to be able to go do the additional air drop that we do in theater.

Those are the kinds of things that I will be looking at. And again, if I am helping our commercial partners, our Civil Reserve Air Fleet, they obligate their fleet to us in wartime for peacetime business. So when I give them business, it is good for everybody. It is good for them to operate in our system. It brings jobs. And it is also cheaper for the taxpayer to do it that way.

And again, it preserves my military capability for where I need it, and it normally has to do with threat and then also availability. If I was running short of airplanes, then, in fact, I would say, well, okay, I am out of C-17s. I am going to have to use one of these others.

I haven't had to do that in the last couple of years. It has been because of cost where I have used them.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, General.

My time is expired. Appreciate it. Thank you.

Senator REED. Senator Wicker, please?

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much.

This has been a very informative hearing. Let me just see if I can nail a few things down.

General McNabb, would a programmed fleet of 301 strategic airlifters provide enough capacity to meet wartime and peacetime requirements?

General MCNABB. Yes, sir.

Senator WICKER. And General Johns, do you agree?

General JOHNS. Yes, Senator.



Senator WICKER. And gentlemen, would there be any increased risk at all in getting your jobs done by moving to this reduced number?

General McNABB. Senator, it would not. In fact, from my standpoint, those facilities, those air crew, the maintainers, the aerial porters, making sure that I have got them targeted on our best assets is smart business and actually helps me because I better manage a right-sized fleet.

Senator WICKER. The risk would be reduced, in your view?

General McNABB. Sir, I hate to have folks working on stuff that I don't need. Manpower is absolutely critical.

And again, as I think about this, running it like a business, you know, those facilities and the people are the most critical factor in all of this. The \$1.2 billion is a savings, but it is really the taking full advantage of our great people.

Senator WICKER. And General Johns, do you concur?

General Johns. Senator, I do concur. I think the excess above 301 is over capacity. And I may not use the term "risk." I may say it is extra workload on our airmen to keep that capability when we don't need to utilize it.

Senator WICKER. So it is more than getting rid of a luxury. It is actually getting rid of something that stands in the way of doing our best job?

General Johns. Yes, Senator.

Senator WICKER. General Johns, why does the number change? During previous testimony, we have been told 316 was the right number. Why does that change?

General Johns. Sir, I think when we were here last time—or before me. In fact, when General McNabb was the AMC commander, we didn't have the results of MCRS-16. And so, that number really was not definitized until we saw the results of MCRS-16. And once we had that, we now had the analysis to articulate a position based on facts.

Senator WICKER. General McNabb, how long have you seen this coming? I have been meeting with you for a long time.

General McNABB. For the 300?

Senator WICKER. Yes.

General McNABB. The fact that about 300 was what we were going to need, and as we went above that—

Senator WICKER. Indeed. Moving from the larger number to the 300, how long have you really honestly seen this coming?

General McNABB. Well, I think ever since MCRS-2016 was complete. Because what changed really was we, from MCRS—

Senator WICKER. That was when?

General McNABB. I am sorry? Oh, 2010. It was 2010.

Senator WICKER. So that was just last year, okay.

General McNABB. And so, but where we—you know, at MCRS-05 we had a range, 292 to 383. And the administration came in, and we said that we needed 292 fully modernized aircraft. That is C-17 and C-5M.

What changed was the Nunn-McCurdy breach on the C-5 reliability re-engining program. And basically, we looked at that, and the department got together and said, "Okay, what is the best way to address this?"

When we did this, they said, well, if we don't do all of the C-5s because of cost, if it is not cost effective to do all of them, let us use—the JROC came up with a requirement, 33.9, and said here is how much we want to take all the alternatives and then cost the different ways of getting at that. That is where the 316 came from.

But we always acknowledged that MCRS-2016 was going to relook at all of the things that you mentioned, like steady-state requirements, how would we do intra-theater, all the things that you mentioned earlier in your opening statement, sir. And we did that.

And we always knew that once we had the results of MCRS-2016, we would come back and take a look at that and see is 316 the right number, or would it be less? It ended up being less, 301.

Senator WICKER. We are looking at very serious budget constraints. General McNabb, based on your illustrious career and your vast experience, is this more or less an isolated savings, or do you think if we dig deeply we can find this Air Force wide?

And would you—and I ask that question in the context of the desire of many people in the public arena saying that there is a real savings that can be made in the defense budget.

General McNABB. Yes, sir. I think, you know, that is what Secretary Gates, now Secretary Panetta are really after on efficiencies. “Go take a look at every part of what you do.”

We happen to have the opportunity to look at this as an enterprise because it is all parts. It also includes our ability to use land and air, use commercial versus military, all of those things. And go back and say every nickel we can save, we need to save, and look at every part that you do.

And I think that that is what—Ms. Fox can actually talk to this for the whole department. But from my standpoint, that is what I was tasked to do by the Secretary. And I think all the COCOMs and the services were asked to do the same thing. Go take a look at every part of your operation and say is there places where we can save money prudently, smartly? Still get the capability that we need but make sure that we are not wasting any money.

Given the demands, as you mentioned and the chairman mentioned, on, you know, there are a lot of things out there that are really wearing out that you need to spend dollars on. We want to make sure we are putting the dollars against the right thing.

We have had great support because of what we have done the last 10 years in the mobility world. I mean, the Congress has been tremendously supportive, as has the administration. We have been able to do lessons learned. We have been able to try to figure out how to use C-17s and C-5s in commercial and different ways.

And what that has done is allowed us to look into some of these things and come up with alternative ways of using airplanes, different concept of operations that would allow us to maybe say, hey, we can actually do this better, save some money, and actually reduce risk.

This is one of those departments where I think when the 316 number came, we always said we will use MCRS-2016 to make sure that we refine that number, take full advantage of the C-17, the full 222—at that time 223 C-17s being in the inventory. Let us see how that plays out. Let us see how the C-5M does. Let us make sure that we model that.

And let us see how this whole thing comes together with how we do the lessons learned from doing 10 years of surge, and let us put that together. And that is the results that you have.

And I am very comfortable with the results. TRANSCOM and CAPE co-led that and did that together, and I am very comfortable with the results on that. And I think that it captured services, COCOMs, all the agencies, and made sure that we had all the parts to the puzzle and everybody had a voice. And I think, in general, I have not had a lot of pushback on the MCRS results within the department at all, at least from my standpoint.

So we are basically saying we have done that. Now we come back and tell you here is what the answer that we get, this is what the analysis shows, and I am very comfortable with saying that you can come down to the 300 strategic airlifters.

Senator WICKER. And finally, who can tell me what will become of the 32 C-5A aircraft?

General JOHNS. Sir, the C-5As will go down to AMARC and put into our storage there.

Senator WICKER. Is that the most efficient thing we can do with them?

General JOHNS. Senator, as opposed to selling them or doing something else, sir, I think that preserves us the capability of putting them into storage there down at Arizona.

Senator WICKER. All right.

General JOHNS. And then potentially using some of those to sustain the other aircraft down the road. You know, we will have to look at the discussion about do you take some of the parts from those to sustain the fleet to reduce operating costs in the future? So there is the tradeoff there we look.

Senator WICKER. Well, thank you very much.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thanks, Senator Wicker.

Let me initiate a second round. I have a few questions.

And one, just for the record to clarify Senator Wicker's question, Director Fox, this is the opinion not just of the Department of the Air Force TRANSCOM. This is the Department of Defense, the Secretary, presumably as General McNabb said, all the CINCs, commanders, have been able to weigh in. And so, this is the conclusion of the Department of Defense, all the way up to the Secretary, about the right number?

Ms. FOX. That is correct, sir. This has been vetted by everyone in the department, and it does have the support of the Secretary.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

General McNabb, particularly in a surge, you have to call on the civilian fleet. And what number of millions of tons per day or miles per tons per day would they have to contribute in a surge?

Because, i.e., that 32.7 is just what your organic aircraft are delivering. There is another number, and that number is what? Do you know?

General McNABB. Yes, sir. And I will get that for the record for you, but it is about 20 million ton miles per day.

Senator REED. Right.

General McNABB. We plan on doing 37 percent of our cargo movement done by our Civil Reserve Air Fleet in those two thea-

ters that we were talking about. So 37 percent. So over a third will be done on the commercial, and 93 percent of our passengers.

So when you say how have you sized your fleet, the gray tails—the C-17s, C-5s—are tailored toward rolling vehicles and military-type cargo because that is what they are optimized for. Where all your bulk cargo, your pallets and all that, would be carried on commercial.

The one thing that makes it a little different that you have to throw in there is that sometimes the commercial can't go all the way forward because of the threat and then we have to transload. And we have that built in there. But that is also where the one tanker, if it is not being used for tanking, would make a very big difference because it has the defensive systems to be able to do that.

Senator REED. You obviously have less control over the composition terms of airframes of the civilian fleet. Are there any concerns you have about commercial companies buying different aircraft that might support passengers, but not any kind of bulk or pallets or, i.e., has that been factored in?

General MCNABB. Yes, sir. And we work very closely with the commercial industry, and we have a mix of passenger and cargo. And we make sure that we meet both of those.

And just for clarification, you know, you brought up the An-124s, we don't plan on using any of that during those surges. This will be totally our U.S. commercial fleet, and they do a great job. And the good part there is that they already are incentivized to modernize. They are already incentivized to take care of all the other things to get better, more efficient, fuel efficient, all of those things, because they can't survive in the commercial market if they don't do those things already.

Senator REED. Let me ask you another question, which is in this—I think it is looking at the worst possible case, but that, in some cases, is what we get paid for. What about attrition of aircraft, either through normal wear and tear or through combat action? Has that been built into the model?

General MCNABB. Yes, sir. What I would say is that for the big airplanes, we have lost one C-17 and one C-5 in the last, you know, 8 to 10 years.

I would say that one of the things that General Johns—and I will ask General Johns to jump in here. Because primarily the Air Force, then—one of the reasons they talk about 301—and I think it comes up was at 299 or 301—a lot of that is to make sure that he has got the right-sized BAI, and he has got that factored in.

But again, for the large airplanes, because we don't lose very many, it is not the same as what we do in fighters and others, where you know that you are going to lose some airplanes.

And so, I would say we do it a little differently. I think we capture it. The BAI helps us do that. And by the time that we really have to get at, usually we are into another platform, and we can adjust at that time.

Senator REED. Let me just—a follow-up question before I recognize General Johns. Is that the point you raise about—right now, in the steady-state environment, the ability, the willingness of commercial entities to fly is a lot more—is a lot, I guess, better than

the situation where they are afraid or the insurance companies are afraid they might get shot at.

General MCNABB. Right.

Senator REED. So, you know, have you effectively sort of factored in a situation, and particularly in the surge, where, for many reasons, just the insurance companies simply saying, “you ain’t flying,” that you would not be able to meet your—

General MCNABB. Yes, sir. And a couple things that you do there. One, we work with the FAA to guarantee insurability, wartime insurance. So we already do that. And so, whenever you have operations into Afghanistan or Iraq, that is one of the things that I will sign off and say, you know, we recommend that we allow that.

But to your point, we also are not going to put any of our airplanes into harm’s way unless they have the defensive systems and the training and all the things that go with that. So what we will do then is we will transload. We will take it as far forward as possible, and then we will transload.

And that is where these multimodal ops, sometimes it is surface-to-air, sometimes it is commercial air-to- military air. We do that in Manas now. All of our passengers going into Afghanistan will go in on a C-17 and 130. But we take them commercially to Manas and then transload them onto an airplane where they have the defensive systems. They have night-vision goggles. They have the tactics, techniques, and procedures to get our folks in and out in the safest possible way.

Senator REED. General Johns, your comments on that? I have a few other questions for you.

General JOHNS. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

With the large aircraft, because we haven’t experienced the losses, we don’t build in attrition Reserve, as we do with the tactical aircraft. So our model basically is how many aircraft do you need to accomplish your mission? And then we have a backup inventory to allow us to have enough aircraft available and still have aircraft in the depot.

So we have the two model. We don’t add the third element, which is attrition Reserve. It hasn’t been warranted, and that would cause us to have more capacity than we need.

Senator REED. Let me ask you a follow-up again on Senator Wicker’s very good question about what happens with the C-5As. Have you done—and this is, again, the worst- case, and again, we have to ask these questions—an analysis of how much it would cost you to take a C-5A out of the desert and put it back in the air, if all this very thoughtful analysis proves to be wrong? Because that happens sometimes.

Is that part of the—you know, would all the savings evaporate in two or three retrofits and recommitments?

General JOHNS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to take the specific numbers for the record, if I may?

Senator REED. Absolutely, sir.

General JOHNS. But we look at putting them in storage and keeping at different levels of readiness and then having to take them out and make sure they are current for the wartime employ-

ment or the safety employment. So let me take the specific numbers.

But it is still very low in comparison to keeping that many aircraft, and the likelihood of needing them also is considered.

Senator REED. One other follow-up, and that is, you know, part of the savings going forward that you are projecting are a function of Congress changing the law. And just as a just sort of book-keeping or policy wise, how often do you do that, Director Fox, in terms of the defense budget? Like, well, these guys will get it. We have a lot of confidence in them. Is that—

Ms. FOX. Sir, I would like to tell you that we only do that when we have the best analysis available to support the decision.

Senator REED. Well, you know, that is a very good answer, but just it raises some policy issues with us.

Ms. FOX. Yes, sir, I understand.

Senator REED. But I just wanted to flag it.

Ms. FOX. Yes, sir.

Senator REED. I don't think it—

Ms. FOX. It is a very fair question, sir.

Senator REED.—is a major issue at the moment.

My time expired. And I just must say I think this has been a very useful hearing. I am going to recognize Senator Wicker for any questions, Senator Ayotte?

Senator WICKER. I will pass, and I understand that Senate Ayotte has—

Senator REED. Senator Ayotte?

Senator AYOTTE. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I have one brief follow-up. Director Fox, is it fair to say that Congress has added, by earmarks, C-17s over and above what the Department of Defense has requested, particularly in the years of 2007 and 2008?

Ms. FOX. Yes, Senator, it is.

Senator AYOTTE. Is that one of the reasons why, in part, we find ourselves here and examining this important issue of what is the right size that we have?

Ms. FOX. I do believe that the number of C-17s that we are ending up with, above what we had planned, is a factor. As we look at what we would do to get to the number that the study says we need, it obviously points you in a particular place. So, yes.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, thank you. And obviously, I hope going forward that we rely on your recommendations, as opposed to it is one of the reasons that when I ran this past fall, I decided to swear off earmarks. And so, I appreciate what can be the unintended consequences of some of our perhaps well-intentioned actions on behalf of our constituents.

So, thank you all.

Senator REED. Senator Wicker has a second round.

Senator WICKER. Let me just follow up on that. If there were earmarks that increased the number of these aircraft, they were based on the Air Force's studied opinion at the time, that those were appropriate numbers. Is that not correct?

Because we have testimony that the requirement changed last year after MCRS-16.

Ms. FOX. Sir, let me get back to you with the record of exactly what we asked for. But it is my understanding the number—the total number of aircraft that you need, yes, sir, that has changed. It has come down. It is small—

Senator WICKER. It just changed last year?

Ms. FOX. It is a small change, frankly, but it is a change. You are right. And it went up, actually, a little bit from what we had thought before. But the Congress wanted it to be 316 for a safety margin, as General McNabb has explained, until we finished the MCRS study.

The mix within that total number is, I think, perhaps the question with regard to C-17s, and the Congress has given us more C-17s than we have requested in the past. But I don't have with me the exact numbers we requested and what we received. But that is the history.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Senator REED. Well, my only comment is, and I think it is trying to encapsulate what Senator Ayotte said, had we not added additional C-17s, either at the request of the Air Force or the request of Congress, then we would not be able to retire these C-5As. So any way you look at it, the debate today about retiring C-5As is a function, at least in some respect, of the additional C-17s.

Now one of the issues, and I think this goes to one of the points that Senator Ayotte made and one that I suggest, is that your analysis assumes that we will not add any additional C-17s, that the Air Force is not going to come up and recommend that we build more C-17s because, unfortunately, this study has reduced the number of aircraft and we need more aircraft. Is that fair to say, General Johns?

General JOHNS. Mr. Chairman, the Air force is very content with the 222 C-17s. It will not be asking for additional ones.

Senator REED. And the swing, if you will, if—again, I think this analysis is very thoughtful. But if there are conditions, unpredictable at the moment, the swing comes out of civilian fleet. It comes out of, as you have suggested, you will have at least the capacity of reactivating C-5As which have not flown their full life of service. And those options, I presume, would be advanced to us prior to any other options?

Ms. FOX. Yes, sir, absolutely. And we have done a lot of cost analysis of those various options. So, again, my testimony today is about the total number.

Senator REED. Right. Right.

Ms. FOX. And then the mix within is something that you also look at for cost.

Senator REED. General Johns?

General JOHNS. And Mr. Chairman, as we talked about how do you take them out of the depot if they are there? You know, what you have to do is you have to unwrap them, and you may have to put them through a depot itself. You may have to do some modernization.

But what you are hugely saving is the annual flying hour program of not having to fly them. And so, we have to look at then do we put them all in that type of storage, or do we allow some to be used to part out and support the other aircraft?

Senator REED. Sure.

General JOHNS. So there is a mix there between the type of storage we use. That is the biggest difference.

Senator REED. If there are no additional questions, again, I think, as we reflect upon these issues, we might have written questions, which we will submit to you. And I think there has been some indications that you would like to provide some written information.

We would accept that, and we would like to let us give ourselves a week, until next Wednesday, for written questions submitted to the panel. And we would ask you to respond as quickly as you could to any written request made by the committee.

[The information follows:]

[SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator REED. Again, I have to thank Senator Ayotte because she has raised this issue, and she has done it with great insight into an important program. And I think this hearing has been very useful to me, and I thank her for urging us to do it.

Senator AYOTTE. I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member, Senator Wicker, again because I raised the issue, but this has provided much more helpful information to be able to bring this to the floor of what the right number is and also really support for such an important issue.

So I think this hearing was very, very helpful. I want to thank both of you for accommodating me having it. And really, rather than having that vote in committee, I think this is really a better place to be in terms of how much information we have.

Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you.

If there are no further questions, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:46 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]