

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

COMMANDER

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE

**FY 1991 AUTHORIZATION FOR THE MARITIME PROGRAMS
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

MARCH 14, 1990

**Not For Publication Until Released By The
Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries,
Subcommittee on Merchant Marine
United States House of Representatives**



***Vice Admiral
Francis R. Donovan, USN
Commander,
Military Sealift Command***

Vice Admiral Francis R. Donovan, USN, a native of Arlington, Massachusetts, enlisted in the United States Navy in April 1952. He served in USS TIMMERMAN (DD 828) and received a fleet appointment to the United States Naval Academy in June 1955. He was graduated with the Class of 1959.

He has served in USS THE SULLIVANS (DD 537) as a junior officer and, later, as Executive Officer/Navigator of USS RICHARD L. PAGE (DEG 5). Vice Admiral Donovan has commanded USS SALISH (ATA 187), USS CLAUDE V. RICKETTS (DDG 5), USS MEREDITH (DD 890), USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13), and USS BELLEAU WOOD (LHA 3). From February 1987 to September 1988, Vice Admiral Donovan was Commander, Amphibious Group Three.

Among his assignments ashore, Vice Admiral Donovan has attended the Naval War College Command and Staff Course with a subsequent tour as Military Planning Supervisor at the Naval War College; served as Deputy Commandant of Midshipmen and Director of Professional Development, U.S. Naval Academy; and served as Deputy Director for Operations in the National Military Command Center, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has attended the National War College, the Navy's postgraduate program in oceanography at the University of Washington and holds a Master of Marine Affairs degree from the University of Rhode Island.

Vice Admiral Donovan has served three tours in the Naval Military Personnel Command. He has been assigned as a Surface Warfare assignment officer; Director, Distribution Department/ Assistant Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command; and Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command/Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel and Training)/ Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel. He assumed command of the Military Sealift Command on 5 March 1990.

Vice Admiral Donovan is married to the former Martha Dwyer Lyons of South Attleboro, Massachusetts. They have eight children.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee on Merchant Marine of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Military Sealift Command and our ability to support this nation's credible deterrent posture via sufficient sealift to project forces anytime, anywhere.

I have assumed command of the Military Sealift Command at an exciting time in history. To borrow from the vernacular of the modern era, freedom is "in" these days. The fast-moving developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have left the world in a state of disbelief mixed with hope and joy.

The impact of these historic changes--both short and long range--on strategic sealift cannot be fully judged here and now. One thing, however, is unanimously held by all military strategists: precipitous, impulsive actions to reduce the nation's defense and war-fighting capabilities would not be in the best interests of the United States or the free world. The very hope and joy I mentioned above are tempered with the threat posed by the instability visible in Eastern Europe and the Third World today.

Contingencies--such as Panama and Grenada--terrorism, regional disputes, resurgent nationalism, the President's National Drug Control Strategy, plus the continuing responsibility to maintain freedom of the seas, all point to a continuing reliance on a strong U.S. Navy. That, in turn, implies a strong and dependable U.S. merchant marine.

The Military Sealift Command relies on the U.S. flag merchant marine in peace and in war. We have a key interest in the fortunes of our maritime industry and are most eager to see a revitalization of the industry. Despite all of the initiatives being undertaken today towards reductions in forces and tensions, strategic sealift will remain as vital as ever to our national strategy. If anything, it will become even more important since we will probably have fewer forces forward deployed. The importance of strategic sealift was given special recognition in 1984, when it was designated as an official function of the Navy. It is one of four functions, along with sea control, power projection and strategic deterrence.

In 1987, the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) was established to provide common-user air, land and sea transportation and terminal services to deploy and support U.S. forces worldwide. USTRANSCOM has three component commands--the Military Sealift Command, the U.S. Army's Military Traffic Management Command, and the U.S. Air Force's Military Airlift Command. One year after its establishment, on October 1, 1988, USTRANSCOM assumed combatant command of the common user assets of the three component commanders. However, each component commander exercises daily operational control of assigned forces.

The scope of operations at MSC is best understood by a familiarity with the three-fold mission of the command and the forces that carry out those missions. They are the Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force, Special Mission Support Force and Strategic

Sealift Force. In total, these forces are made up of 67 privately-owned and 70 government-owned ships, augmented in wartime by the Ready Reserve Force and the U.S. merchant marine.

The Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force of 48 ships supports combat ships at sea, providing fuel, ammunition, supplies, spare parts, towing service and ocean surveillance.

The Special Mission Support Force of 21 ships carries out a variety of special missions, such as cable laying and repair, tracking of missiles and ocean survey and research.

MSC's Strategic Sealift Force--the chief concern in this deliberation because of its heavy dependence on a viable U.S. maritime industry--provides the assets to transport equipment and supplies across the oceans for use by our armed forces wherever deployed.

For its strategic sealift mission, MSC has 60 privately owned cargo ships and tankers under long-term charter. Included are 25 ships of the Afloat Prepositioning Force. These ships are loaded with military unit equipment and supplies and are strategically located around the world for use in contingency situations. Thirteen of the 25 ships are Maritime Prepositioning Ships, which were specially designed to transport combat equipment and 30 days of essential supplies and ammunition for three Marine Expeditionary Brigades.

During peacetime, MSC transports 20 million tons of cargo annually. All of this cargo is moved in privately owned U.S.

flag ships except when we encounter a situation where no U.S. flag ships are available.

Sealift assets in peacetime are readily available. Our main concern, from a military point of view, is the availability of sealift capacity in a war or emergency. There will be no catch-up period following the breakout of future hostilities such as there was in World War II. It will be a come-as-you-are event, with only those forces available that are available at the onset of conflict. Consequently, the peacetime merchant marine, augmented by what I call our transition force (Fast Sealift Ships, Ready Reserve Force, etc.) will constitute our unilateral capability to deploy and sustain our combatant forces.

The longer the contingency, the greater our dependence on available merchant shipping. More than 95 percent of cargo and petroleum products required to support our military forces overseas must be transported by strategic sealift. There is simply no other practical method to carry the vast quantities of supplies and equipment needed.

More directly impacting the military situation has been a change in the type of ship being used in commercial transportation. Container ships, while productive and profitable in commercial shipping, are not as useful militarily. For a war or contingency, we need ships able to transport large, bulky, military unit equipment, such as tanks, trucks and helicopters.

To offset the decline in availability of militarily useful ships, the U.S. Navy has funded strategic sealift at a cost of \$7

billion during Fiscal Years 1982 through 1989. The program included repositioning of equipment and ships, expansion of the Ready Reserve Force, and acquisition of eight Fast Sealift Ships. The Navy has also developed and procured sealift enhancement features, including flatracks and seasheds--large, box-like structures that can be inserted into the holds of regular container ships enabling them to carry military unit equipment.

The Ready Reserve Force, comprised chiefly of breakbulk ships, now numbers 96 ships. These ships, which are deemed no longer commercially profitable, are needed for national defense to counter the decline in unit equipment/militarily useful ships in the U.S. merchant marine.

The RRF is programmed to increase to 142 ships by 1994. The growth and modernization of this force was jeopardized when Congress cut 63 percent from the FY90 RRF budget request. Budget authority for this important force in reserve has recently been reclassified as a defense related item. I urge your full support for this program. The RRF provides a significant portion of the unit equipment surge shipping capability that would be required on short notice to support rapid deployment of U.S. forces. RRF ships are maintained in a 5, 10, or 20 day readiness state, which allows us to activate the ships on a programmed schedule.

The Maritime Administration has administrative and maintenance responsibility for these ships. The MSC fleet, including U.S. flag ships, Effective U.S. Control ships, and the RRF, gives us the capability to move approximately 80 percent of

the unit equipment surge goal established in the 1980s. The goal is to provide a capacity to lift about one million short tons of unit equipment in a single move. Because of its ability to carry bulky military cargo and its early availability, the RRF is an essential part of this capacity. Thus, funding of the RRF is critical to the wartime surge and resupply equations of our war plans. From a sustainability viewpoint, we need both a capable Ready Reserve Force and a strong, active merchant marine; the former to provide the surge movement of equipment and the latter to move the follow-on sustaining cargo and supplies. We can currently satisfy our sustainment goals; but this capability could be jeopardized if the U.S. flag fleet continues to decline.

All of my predecessors have endeavored to maintain close working relationships between MSC and the maritime industry. I intend to continue that mutual interest and dialogue. The Department of Defense must remain an active advocate of viable programs to reverse the U.S. maritime decline. Toward that end, MSC fully supports the National Sealift Policy signed by President Bush on October 5, 1989. That policy acknowledges that Sealift is essential to our national security and economic freedom.

At the request of the DoD member of the Policy Coordinating Committee for Emergency Preparedness and Mobilization Planning, MSC is participating in a task force to develop recommendations needed to execute this policy. This National Security Sealift Strategy task force will develop fiscally sound sealift

proposals and, if necessary, develop supporting legislative language for submission to the Congress. As a baseline, the task force will adhere to the policy guidelines in the President's national security sealift policy.

While our primary concern over the state of the U.S. maritime industry is related to our mobilization base, it is also true that the nation needs a strong and flexible merchant fleet to compete in the economic arena. The changing scene in Europe and the Soviet Union may be expected to lead to greater competition in the world trade market and in the maritime industry.

In summary, the Navy invested over seven billion dollars in the 1980s to meet our forward defense strategy and our Strategic Sealift requirements. I have some concerns about the future; the world is changing, and our capabilities must meet these changes. However, funds will be decreased in the 1990s. We must work towards finding solutions to enhance the maritime industry's competitiveness. A viable maritime industry, especially the merchant marine, will continue to make an important contribution to our current and future defense strategy and economic survival.

#####