

Efficiency Drive May Cut the U.S. Maritime Administration in Half

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The Secretary of Defense recently approved a series of efficiency initiatives. The initiatives will have a substantial affect on DoD operations including eliminating or modifying 140 of DoD's 952 general and flag officer positions. Among the efficiencies are several items affecting sealift. For example, all Army watercraft and associated operating forces will be assigned to the U.S. Transportation Command to be operated by the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), a USTRANSCOM component. Of interest to the U.S. Maritime Administration, the Secretary has proposed transferring the entire fleet of 49 Ready Reserve Force vessels (35 of which are roll-on/roll off vessels) from MARAD operational control to Military Sealift Command (a U.S. Navy command) control. MARAD would have to approve the transfer. The funding for the RRF fleet was historically provided from a Department of Defense revolving fund. The \$407 million anticipated budget authority for fiscal year 2012 for the RRF is about half of MARAD's overall budget (which includes the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, the Maritime Security Program and MARAD operations).

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