

## Study Released on U.S. Maritime Administration Role



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On November 29, 2017, a panel of the National Academy of Public Administration issued its study entitled, “[Maritime Administration: Defining its Mission, Aligning its Programs, and Meeting its Objectives](#).” The study was commissioned by MARAD in June 2017 in connection with President Trump’s first budget request submitted to Congress. The 140-page study examined all of MARAD’s functions and makes 27 recommendations.

With regard to MARAD’s national defense sealift mission, the study concludes that MARAD “has been effective in meeting sealift needs and has provided a bridge between the military and civilian merchant marine force.” In response to suggestions that MARAD be moved to the U.S. Department of Defense, the study determined that there are “no apparent benefits to move MARAD and its commercial partnerships which provide defense-related capabilities.”

On national defense sealift, the study also found the current Maritime Security Program (MSP) to be effective and that MSP “is considerably better for the national security interests—both military and monetary—than would be the case by shutting down the MSP, turning remaining vessels in the RRF (Ready Reserve Force) over to the Navy and building an ‘in-house’ military sealift capability in DoD.” Despite that, the study recommended that a working group be convened to include MARAD, the Military Sealift Command, TRANSCOM and the U.S. Navy “to conduct an assessment of the sealift mission to determine the most cost-effective mix of the Ready Reserve Force, Maritime Security Program, the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement, and cargo preference provisions.”

The study confirmed the warning being provided by MARAD and U.S. Transportation Command Commanders that the “demand for U.S.-flag commercial vessel services is not currently adequate to maintain the pool of qualified mariners necessary to meet TRANSCOM/MSC’s (Military Sealift Command) sealift activation and sustainment needs.” The study concludes that the “nation’s security risks will increase should the Maritime Administration be unable to provide an adequate number of ships and qualified mariners to serve our national defense needs.”

Among the other recommendations was a recommendation to “take appropriate actions in order to enhance access and transparency” of MARAD decisions, because “MARAD’s track record of making its data and decisions accessible to the public in a timely manner has markedly deteriorated in recent years.”

Another recommendation was to have MARAD issue long-stalled regulations on cargo preference implementing 2008-enacted legislation and otherwise to “take reasonable steps to improve its oversight of the cargo preference

program,” such as creating a mechanism to collect data on shipments to ensure cargo preference compliance.

Other recommendations covered the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, the Title XI government guaranteed financing program, management of Ready Reserve Force vessels, and other MARAD programs.

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