

**NAVY LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
POSITION PAPER: TANKER SECURITY PROGRAM
AUGUST 25, 2020**



NAVY LEAGUE POSITION: Congress and the White House must fund a Tanker Security Program as a first step to address a dangerous shortfall, and expand our strategic sealift tanker capacity in case of a national contingency

ISSUE: In the event of a national contingency, a major military engagement, our forces would have access to only nine government and commercial tankers capable of answering the call. It is estimated that American forces would require at least 80 such tankers to support any sort of large-scale military engagement.

BACKGROUND: While American forces were able to charter foreign flagged tankers during past contingencies, the strategic environment has fundamentally changed. Major competitors like Russia and China might not have objected to third nations providing chartered vessels when our operations didn't impact their strategic goals, but they will likely exert significant pressure on those countries to reject charter requests if our engagement is in the Pacific or the South China Sea. The U.S. will need its own capacity moving forward.

DISCUSSION: It is critical to our continued military readiness that the U.S. has a robust and effective tanker fleet capable of providing timely refueling and petroleum transport services to our forces around the globe. This is even more vital to our national security as we redirect our efforts toward great power competition with nations like China and Russia. The Navy League strongly supports a program which utilizes Congressional appropriations for the purpose of reinforcing our currently inadequate tanker fleet.

POLICY POSITION: For this reason, and many more, Congress and the White House must work together to establish and fund an initial fleet of 10 Tanker Security Program ships capable of meeting the needs of a forward postured American naval and Marine presence. Based on the successful Maritime Security Program, this program would provide a stipend to tankers in exchange for the commitment to make their ships available upon request of the Secretary of Defense during times of war or national emergency.

Additional Resources:

- [Navy League VP Kaskin: More Tankers Needed to Support a Pacific War – Seapower Magazine](#)