



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

STUDIES

Sustaining the Fight: Resilient Maritime Logistics for a New Era

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Resources: Forces & Capabilities

CSBA's new report, *Sustaining the Fight: Resilient Maritime Logistics for a New Era*, finds that the United States lacks the right maritime logistics force to support the 2018 National Defense Strategy in general and major military operations in a war with China or Russia in particular.

In *Sustaining the Fight: Resilient Maritime Logistics for a New Era*, authors Timothy A. Walton, Ryan J. Boone, and Harrison C. Schramm identify challenges to the logistics force and propose a new, resilient architecture that would allow the fleet to fight in a more effective, distributed, and sustained manner while supporting U.S. Joint Force power projection.

The U.S. Navy's logistics force is currently optimized for uncontested operations and is too small and vulnerable to support the current fleet - much less a larger or more distributed one - in a conflict with a peer adversary. Additionally, the Strategic Sealift force, the cargo ships that transport military vehicles, equipment, and supplies, can only generate 65 percent of the Department of Defense's required capacity. The Strategic Sealift force also faces an imminent decline in capacity as many of its obsolete ships are retired; it experiences a shortage of mariners; and the U.S. commercial fleet- from which the Department of Defense draws ships and mariners- is either barely stable or continues to shrink.

As the report's lead author, Timothy A. Walton, noted "Although logistics has traditionally been a U.S. strength, it now risks becoming a major weakness that could cause the United States to lose a war against China or Russia." The authors recommend rapidly fielding a larger, more differentiated, and more cost-effective fleet that relies on a mix of U.S. Government ships and U.S. commercial ships of the U.S. Merchant Marine.