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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

RELEASED

LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

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The Honorable Claiborne Pell
United States Senate

Dear Senator Pell:

Your letter of February 14, 1977, asked us to investigate the Department of Defense practice of using chartered commercial aircraft instead of military aircraft to transport military personnel and their dependents. You wanted to know if military aircraft would be a less expensive means of transportation.

The Department currently uses commercial passenger aircraft whenever practicable. Considering commercial carrier's commitments to the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF), we believe the Department's policy is in the best interest of the Government and is consistent with congressional intent and the transportation policy of the Federal Government.

COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT ARE COMMITTED TO CRAF

The CRAF program is a coordinated effort to insure that the Nation's airlift resources can be mobilized to meet Defense requirements. CRAF is composed of U.S. civil air carriers contractually committed to providing aircraft, support personnel, and facilities to Defense under emergency conditions. It makes commercial airlift resources available for both peacetime and wartime augmentation of military airlift capability.

In return for this commitment, Defense contracts with participating carriers to transport its passengers and cargo. As of March 1977, CRAF had 20 air carriers with 308 committed aircraft, including 225 long-range international aircraft.

The CRAF program enables Defense to obtain supplemental airlift in emergency situations, at the same time giving financial inducement for carriers to invest in aircraft suitable for defense purposes. The Government does not need to invest heavily in aircraft that are needed only in emergency situations.

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THE CONGRESS FAVORS USE OF
COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT

During the development and acquisition of the C-5A and C-141 aircraft fleet, the Congress repeatedly expressed its intent that these aircraft would not be used for scheduled passenger service. Also, in the Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal years 1961 and 1962 on the use of funds for developing these aircraft, the Congress included a provision that none of the allocated funds should be used for procuring aircraft for scheduled passenger service.

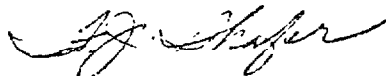
As further evidence of congressional intent, the Appropriations Act (Public Law 94-419) for fiscal year 1977, set aside \$100 million for procuring commercial transportation service from carriers participating in CRAF. A similar provision was included in prior appropriation bills.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY
TO USE COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT

Both the Interstate Commerce Act and the Federal Aviation Act indicate that the transportation policy of the Federal Government is to encourage the development and promotion of a sound commercial transportation system.

The use of military aircraft in direct competition with commercial aircraft would, in our opinion, be contrary to that policy.

Sincerely yours,



F. J. Shafer
Director