VISA OBJECTIVES

- Assure DOD access to critical sealift capability for national security contingency requirements.
- Engage in joint pre-planning with government and industry.
- Support defense requirements while minimizing commercial disruption of the U.S. transportation system and national economy.
- Support the emergency deployment and sustainment of U.S. military forces.
- Establish pre-negotiated rate methodology.
- Allow for a seamless transition from peacetime to wartime with commercial U.S. transportation providers.

U.S. MERCHANT SHIPS SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration

Office of Sealift Support
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

For additional information call 1-800-99-MARAD or visit the Maritime Administration's Web Page at http://www.marad.dot.gov

July 2015

U.S. Department of Transportation

Maritime Administration

Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement

VISA

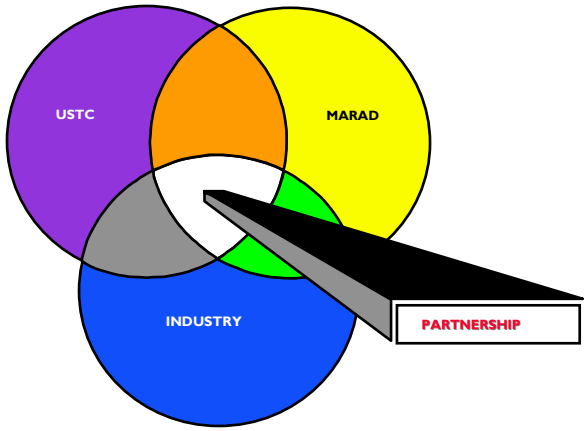
THE VOLUNTARY INTERMODAL SEALIFT AGREEMENT (VISA)

The VISA program creates a partnership between the U.S. Government and the maritime industry to provide commercial sealift and intermodal shipping services and systems necessary to meet mobilization requirements. VISA exists under the Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation authority for voluntary agreements with industry under the Defense Production Act of 1950, as amended, and the Maritime Security Act of 2003. The Maritime Administration and its national security partner, the U.S. Transportation Command, co-chair the VISA Joint Planning Advisory Group (JPAG). VISA was approved by Secretary of Defense, William S. Cohen on January 30, 1997.

Through the VISA program, transportation solutions are developed in peacetime to anticipate Department of Defense (DOD) requirements. The program provides for a seamless, time-phased transition from peacetime to wartime operations.

The keystone of VISA is that it brings the carriers into the DOD planning process through participation in JPAG meetings with DOD and the Maritime Administration. This enables carriers to better meet defense transportation needs while maintaining ongoing commercial arrangements during contingencies.

The VISA program can be activated in three stages as determined by DOD with each stage representing a higher level of capacity commitment. In Stage III participants must commit at least 50 percent of their capacity. Dry cargo vessels enrolled in the MSP must commit 100 percent during Stage III. VISA participants get priority preference when bidding on DOD peacetime cargo.



Government & Industry Partnership:
Providing commercial transportation resources to meet national security requirements, in a timely efficient, and cost effective manner

MSP & VISA ARE COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAMS

The importance of the link between VISA and the MSP is clearly apparent. More than 90% of the militarily useful vessels in the U.S.-flag fleet are committed to the VISA program and over 75% of that capacity comes from MSP vessels.

Approximately 128,000 20-foot equivalent units (TEU's) plus 2.9 million sq. ft. of militarily useful capacity is available from MSP participants. In this manner, the Government leverages a relatively modest investment to gain "assured access" to a global commercial transportation network for use in national emergencies.

HOW TO ENROLL IN VISA

The VISA program is open to U.S.-flag vessel operators of oceangoing militarily useful vessels. Enrollment in the VISA program is conducted annually during an "open season" window. Notification of the open season is published in the Federal Register. The only exception to the "open season" is for qualified non-VISA operators that reflag a vessel into U.S. registry. Those operators may apply for VISA enrollment at any time after the vessel is documented under the U.S. flag. VISA applications can be obtained from the Maritime Administration's Office of Sealift Support.