

Window on Washington: The Drive Toward Revitalization of the U.S. Merchant Marine

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Many in the U.S. maritime industry remain hopeful that the Trump Administration will unveil programs aimed at protecting and promoting both the U.S.-flag fleet and the mariner base, crucial to trade and the United States' ability to provide national defense sealift capability when needed in times of war and national emergency. At times, the White House has intimated it would build maritime infrastructure as part of a broader national initiative, increase the U.S. fleet through the strengthening of promotional programs, and reduce regulatory burdens which may hamstring the maritime industry's ability to compete.

The Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) inside the Department of Transportation have also fueled the drive towards revitalization and strengthening of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Testimony by the Commander of the United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) and the MARAD Administrator has underscored concerns that the internationally trading fleet has declined by approximately 25% in the last five years, and the mariner base has eroded to the point that the United States may no longer be able to satisfy DOD sealift requirements.

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