

## U.S.-Flag Shipping Companies, Unions Continue Teamwork on Crucial Issues

### Work Proceeds Despite Partisan Battles in D.C.

History has repeatedly proven that our country must maintain a strong, privately owned U.S.-flag merchant marine to protect and enhance our economic and military security. In times of war or other international emergency, U.S.-flag commercial vessels and their U.S.-citizen crews have responded quickly and effectively to answer our call, providing the sealift capability and maritime manpower necessary to support our forces overseas.

“Since I became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I have come to appreciate first-hand why our merchant marine has long been called our nation’s fourth arm of defense,” General Colin Powell told the graduating class at the United States Merchant Marine Academy in 1992. “In war, merchant seamen have long served with valor and distinction by carrying critical supplies and equipment to our troops in far-away lands. In peacetime, the merchant marine has another vital role: contributing to our economic security by linking us to trading partners around the world and providing the foundation for our ocean commerce.”

U.S.-flag vessels and their U.S.-citizen crews are on the front lines in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. American vessels and American crews carry the supplies and equipment that support our troops, whenever and wherever they are needed.

Our industry is now embarked on a bipartisan effort to achieve full funding in fiscal year 2011 for the Maritime Security Program (MSP). Congress

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had authorized \$174 million for fiscal year 2011 to support the operation of the 60-ship maritime security fleet, and the Obama Administration, in its budget submission to Congress earlier this year, requested the same amount to fully fund MSP.

To remind members of Congress of the importance of the Maritime Security Program and to ensure that the authorized amount is appropriated, we are working with Congressmen Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) and Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) to generate broad bipartisan support for MSP funding. Skelton is chairman of the Armed Services Committee and McKeon is the committee’s ranking Republican.

In a letter to their colleagues in the House of Representatives, Skelton and McKeon correctly state that, “The MSP is a proven, successful national security program enacted to ensure that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial capability and trained U.S.-citizen merchant mariners it needs in time of war or other international emergency. It is one of the most cost-efficient and effective defense-related private industry and government partnerships.”

Most importantly, they note that “the continued funding and implementation of the MSP ensure that America will in fact be able to support our troops overseas by guaranteeing that American-flag vessels and American crews—and not foreign-flag vessels and foreign crews—will continue to be available to transport the supplies and equipment our troops need.”

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*The ‘winner-take-all, you lose-I win’ approach that is unfortunately so evident in politics today is completely different from the way we have conducted ourselves over the years. The maritime unions have traditionally worked with each other and with the U.S.-flag carriers, and together, the unions and carriers have worked with members of both political parties to ensure that the Maritime Security Program is fully funded and to preserve the Jones Act.*

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We will continue to press for full fiscal year 2011 funding for the Maritime Security Program and to work with all members of Congress who share our concern about strengthening America’s commercial sealift capability, as well as our commitment to preserving jobs for American maritime workers and supporting America’s troops. It is expected that the Congressional committees on Appropriations will consider their respective fiscal year 2011 funding bills prior to the Congressional summer recess.

Unfortunately, it has become a fact of life in our Nation’s Capital that every issue, every debate and every vote is reduced to what is essentially a zero-sum exercise in politics. For too many of our elected officials, Congress has become a game in which one side wins and one side loses: a game in which “if you win, I lose.” There is no real and meaningful negotiation; there is no legitimate give-and-take to reach a fair compromise; there is no honest effort to act on legislation so that everyone—including and especially the American people—win. Rather, there is a hardcore group of politicians who have decided that they will do anything and everything, including reversing their own long-standing positions on issues and policies, to ensure that nothing gets done and that “the other side” loses.

Of course, this rabid partisanship affects our activities and has blocked enactment of legislation important to American merchant mariners

and the U.S.-flag maritime industry. At this point in the legislative term, approximately 300 pieces of legislation that have passed the House of Representatives have seen no action in the Senate. Included in the measures awaiting Senate action are the Coast Guard authorizations bill and the authorizations legislation for the Transportation Security Administration, both of which contain important provisions relating to maritime security and the Transportation Workers Identification Credential (TWIC) program.

Of course, this “winner-take-all, you lose-I win” approach to legislative action is not the way we have conducted ourselves over the years. Rather the maritime unions work with each other, the unions work together with the U.S.-flag carriers, and together, the unions and carriers work with members from both political parties representing all political philosophies to:

- ▶ ensure that the Maritime Security Program is fully funded;
- ▶ preserve, protect and enhance the Jones Act and the domestic shipping industry and to fight against those who want to turn over the carriage of America’s domestic trade to foreign-owned and foreign-controlled shipping interests;
- ▶ maintain the applicability of the cargo preference laws over food aid and other U.S. government generated export and import cargoes;

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- ▶ fight against those who want to dismantle longstanding in-kind aid programs and instead simply give away U.S. cash with no requirement that it be used to buy or ship American.

That is why we need to maintain and increase our presence and activities in Washington.

We must never allow ourselves and our programs to become the property of one political party or one ideology or to be held hostage by one political party or ideology for someone else's benefit.

We must instead continue to work to gain supporters on both sides of the aisle, individuals who understand and appreciate the role of our industry in furthering our nation's economic and military objectives. We need to continue to work with both Republicans and Democrats to create new opportunities for U.S.-flag vessel operations and new job opportunities for American maritime workers. We need to work with both Republicans and Democrats to make America's tax laws work to encourage investment in U.S.-flag vessel operations and to encourage the employment of American mariners. We need to work with both Republicans and Democrats to stop the exodus of vessels from our flag and to put a stop to the outsourcing of American maritime jobs to the benefit of foreign-flag vessel operations and their foreign crews.

If we are to achieve these things and be able to work in the future as we have worked in the past, we must have a strong, vibrant Political Contribution Fund to support all members of Congress who support us, our issues and our industry. We must be in a position in which we are able to stand up and help those who help us.

If this is not the case, we will be putting at risk the seats of members of Congress who support fair trade policies that put American industries on an equal footing with their foreign competi-

tion; who advocate for a strong defense and understand the role our industry plays in protecting America's interests and America's troops; who put jobs for Americans before tax breaks for companies that send jobs overseas; who are ready,

willing and able to add their name, their support and their votes to the programs, policies and legislation important to the survival and growth of our industry.

If we are not able to help those who fight alongside us, members of Congress will find themselves increasingly vulnerable to the attacks from single-issue advocates and political extremists who are willing to sacrifice anything and anyone, including their own, for personal political gain.

None of us should have any illusions about the difficulty of the challenges we face and the enormity of the task ahead. Especially in these times of partisanship and rancor in which nothing but the fewest possible critical actions are taken, it becomes harder and harder to believe that we will succeed, and that it is worth our effort to try.

But if we work together for a common goal, and we all, each and every member of our union, support MM&P's Political Contribution Fund and participate in the political process by voting for those who stand up for our jobs and our U.S.-flag fleet, we can make a difference.

If we don't, we know we will lose. If we do, we have a greater chance to succeed.

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