

U.S. Ship Subsidies Enhance Global Status

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Body

To the Editor:

In your Oct. 1 editorial against the subsidizing of the American merchant marine fleet, you suggest we rely on ships owned by the Government or hire foreign ships to do the job. And you point to the Persian Gulf war as an example of how we have no use for a merchant marine.

The \$1 billion authorized over the next decade to subsidize the fleet is a lot. But it is critical for our national defense. An adequate fleet is necessary, and the American merchant marine was the key source of sealift to support our forces in the gulf war.

You state that the fleet "is outperformed commercially by more efficient foreign-flag vessels." This works fine so long as there is no hostility where we want to send our goods. Can we always rely on other nations and their citizens to support America?

EZRA SCHNEIER

President, Marine Index Bureau Inc.

Ewing, N.J., Oct. 9, 1996

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