

United States places very few restrictions on the use of our ports to facilitate international trade. Some countries, such as China, however, have imposed unfair burdens on United States and other foreign vessels conducting business there in an effort to protect their own businesses. The FMC, under Chairman Hal Creel's leadership, appropriately moved to head off problems in Japan's ports during the 105th Congress and is increasingly concerned about the situations in China and Brazil.

While our Nation encourages open competition in the commercial maritime sector, America only demands that it be fair and meet minimum standards for protecting our environment and our citizens. However, as a January 3, 1999, New York Times article reported, flag-of-convenience ships are using their foreign status and the lax oversight of their flag states to escape punishment for their intentional dumping of oil in the ocean not far from our coast. America should not allow the unscrupulous operation of unsafe ships with ill-trained crews to threaten the oceans, our coastlines, or our citizens.

I challenge the Administration to aggressively combat these actions to the fullest extent of U.S. law. Under the leadership of Senators KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON and JOHN MCCAIN, the 105th Congress provided the FMC with increased authority to address unfair foreign shipping practices. I invited the Administration to work with the 106th Congress to provide increased legislative authority to counter attempts by foreign-flag ships to escape punishment for such unconscionable behavior.

Second, we must level the playing field for U.S. companies competing in the commercial maritime arena. On the financial side, U.S. shipping companies provide equal or higher quality service than their foreign competitors at a similar cost, yet foreign shipping companies are growing and U.S. shipping companies are shrinking. This happens because, unlike U.S. shipping companies, most foreign shipping companies pay little or no income taxes. In this capital intensive business, investments are flowing to those companies which provide a better return on investment, and the tax differential tilts this flow toward foreign shipping companies. This is why foreign shipping companies are buying their U.S. counterparts instead of the other way around. This Nation's tax policies should promote business growth, not stifle it. We need to level the playing field for U.S. shipping companies in the international marketplace. I look forward to working with Senator JOHN BREAUX to develop specific provisions. My colleague and friend shares an interest in maritime policy, and together we serve on both the Commerce Finance Committees. This provides us with an ability to shape maritime policy in the regulatory, tax, and trade environments.

Mr. President, U.S. shipping companies can compete and succeed in the world's international trade marketplace when competition is fair.●

U.S.S. "PHAON"

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask the Senate to join me in commending those brave Americans who served aboard the U.S.S. *Phaon*.

During World War II, the *Phaon* compiled an outstanding record as a battle damage repair ship. She was part of three major battles and helped the U.S. fleet to remain in action throughout the Central Pacific campaign.

The *Phaon* was an important part of mobile Service Squadron Ten, whose battle role was to remain within the battle area and conduct repairs—keeping fighting vessels in action, preventing the loss of damaged vessels by making them seaworthy, and returning repaired vessels to action as soon as possible. To accomplish this, the Navy converted tank transports into battle damage repair ships.

The *Phaon* was one of the original mobile service squadron vessels that arrived in the Central Pacific in late 1943 to test new concepts in naval logistics and mobile repair. Their work began under fire at Majuro with restoration of all types of craft from the invasion of Tarawa and repairs to the battleships *Washington* and *Indiana*.

By early 1944, the *Phaon's* crew was skilled, experienced, and ready to participate in the campaigns to advance across the Pacific. In March, she was with the fleet at Kwajalein and Eniwetok. In June, she joined the invasion of Saipan. In July, she was at Tinian. She was subject to more than sixty air raids while working.

Time and again, the *Phaon* heroically entered the fray to repair a damaged ship. At Saipan, the destroyer *Phelps* was hit while engaged in ground support shore bombardment. She called the *Phaon*, and the two ships tied bow to stern. While the *Phelps* continued to bomb the shore, the *Phaon* repaired her damage and replenished her ammunition. At the same time, the *Phaon* dispatched several off-ship repair crews to other vessels and had alongside for repairs a tank landing craft, a minesweeper, and the destroyer U.S.S. *Shaw*. One month later, at Tinian, the *Phaon* performed similar feats to repair the destroyer *Norman Scott* and the battleship *Colorado*.

By the war's end, the *Phaon* had repaired at least 96 ships and more than 2,000 vessels and crafts of all types. She played a major role in the success of Service Squadron Ten, of which Rear Admiral W.R. Carter said:

Had it failed, the war would have lasted much longer at much greater cost in blood and dollars. . . . It was a never-ending job, and the men and officers . . . were as much a part of the fleet which defeated Japan as were . . . any battleship, carrier, cruiser, or destroyer.

Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander of the Central Pacific Force,

called the record of the *Phaon* and Service Squadron Ten achievements of which all Americans can be justly proud, but about which most of them have little or no knowledge.

Mr. President, I hope that these remarks increase our knowledge and respect for the critical role that damage repair ships played in the Pacific campaigns. I know you will join me and every American in saluting the brave crew of the U.S.S. *Phaon*.●

THE 1999 MISS USA PAGEANT

● Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, it is an honor and privilege to rise today to acknowledge and honor the nearly 400 Missouri volunteers of my home state who have donated countless hours and resources to the 1999 Miss USA pageant being held in Branson, Missouri, in February.

The volunteer corps is made up of many talented people who have worked in food services, secretarial and administrative positions, provided transportation, medical and emergency services, salon services, and entertainment. The "behind the scenes" efforts of these volunteers have done much to make this pageant a great success.

The people of Branson and the surrounding area have come together with their many diverse talents and abilities to assure the success of the 1999 Miss USA Pageant. Millions of people around the world will focus their eyes on Branson and Missouri on Friday, February 5, 1999 when the new Miss USA is crowned.

The people of Branson have made a significant contribution to the pageant, and deserve recognition and gratitude for their efforts. These volunteers embody the best of the American spirit. Mr. President, I ask that members of the Senate join me in recognizing and honoring the great work of these volunteers.●

TRIBUTE TO LT. GEN. NORMAND G. LEZY, USAF

● Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Lieutenant General Normand G. Lezy of the United States Air Force, who will retire on March 1st after more than three decades of outstanding service to our nation. Norm Lezy is an extraordinary officer whose leadership skills, professionalism and service before self are a tribute to our country's military.

General Lezy is a native of Rhode Island, and was commissioned into the Air Force in November 1964 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Throughout his career, General Lezy has earned a well-deserved reputation as a leader who truly cares about people. Whether he was commanding his student training squadron, a Minuteman I combat missile launch crew, an air base squadron, a combat support group or working in his many key staff assignments, Norm Lezy made people his priority.