

# Safe passage on seas a must for nation's goods

The recent seizure and harassment by Iranian naval forces of container ships filled with consumer goods should be of great concern to American consumers and businesses.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of safe passage on the world's oceans to the U.S. economy and consumers. Ninety percent of the world's commerce travels by sea, including 60 percent of America's imports and exports; 95 percent of the world's intercontinental voice and data traffic travels through undersea cables, including trillions of dollars in banking transactions; and 75 percent of the world's maritime trade and half of the oil trade pass through a handful of international straits and canals.

From OshKosh B'Gosh to Jockey to Woodman's Market, every business in Wisconsin relies on the free flow of goods shipped by sea from and to the United States.

The global presence of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps is critical to ensuring that commerce at sea goes unmolested by terrorists, rogue nations like Iran and pirates. We are well aware of the contributions the Navy-Marine Corps team makes to our security. What we tend not to see are the daily and unique contributions the team makes to the nation's economic security and prosperity. This lack of vision may cost us dearly in the years ahead if it is not corrected.

The Navy League of the United States has begun a grassroots campaign, "America's Strength," to warn the country about this looming crisis. An investment in the Navy-Marine Corps team is an investment in the U.S. economy. I urge you to spread the word that our leaders in Washington need to provide this investment, for, without it, the Navy-Marine Corps team will be unable to continue the critical work of promoting regional stability and securing the oceans for the free flow of goods.

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