

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

**Resolution No. 29: Commercial Shipbuilding for Defense**

**Origin: Nebraska**

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security  
(As amended)**

WHEREAS, The United States emerged as the world's foremost economic power and trading nation after the Cold War, and America's policymakers have neglected to use these advantages to sustain the nation's naval and maritime power; and

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Maritime Administration the number of merchant vessels sailing internationally flying the U.S. Flag has been reduced from 1,072 to 191 over the last six decades; and

WHEREAS, In 1955, the U.S. Flag fleet represented almost 25% of the world's overall tonnage while the U.S. share today is approaching a mere 2% of total world tonnage; and

WHEREAS, The 600-ship navy envisioned by President Ronald Reagan would have kept the ship yards busy; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Navy active ship levels have been reduced from 559 ships in 1975 to approximately 274 today, including 11 aircraft carriers, 22 cruisers, 60 destroyers, 26 frigates, 2 littoral combat ships, 9 amphibious assault ships, 2 amphibious command ships, 9 amphibious transport docks, 12 dock landing ships, 53 attack submarines, 14 ballistic missile submarines, 4 guided missile submarines, and 14 mine countermeasures ships; and

WHEREAS, The question of how the United States should respond to China's naval modernization effort has emerged as a key issue in U.S. defense planning and this question is important to the U.S. Navy because many military programs for countering improved military forces would fall within the Navy's budget; and

WHEREAS, A U.S.-Chinese military conflict is possible however unlikely, due to the significant economic linkages between the two countries and the tremendous damage that such a conflict could cause on both sides; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Navy programs for countering improved Chinese maritime military forces need to positively influence the political evolution of the Pacific region so that the United States can protect its national interests in the Pacific and around the world; and

WHEREAS, China's naval modernization effort encompasses a broad range of weapon acquisition programs including anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), submarines, and surface ships along with improved maintenance, logistics, and training systems; and

WHEREAS, Potential issues for Congress include whether or not the U.S. Navy will be large enough to adequately counter improved Chinese naval capabilities and have the ability to counter Chinese ASBMs and submarines; and

WHEREAS, U.S. commercial build rates are not large enough to provide the strategic sealift needed in an emergency, or to support a shipbuilding industry large enough to meet future U.S. naval needs; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion urge Congress to stop further erosion of our vital maritime capability; and be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the President and Congress to boost naval budgets, promote commercial shipbuilding, expand the use of U.S. flagged ships in world commerce, and resist foreign actions that would further damage America's defense industrial base.**