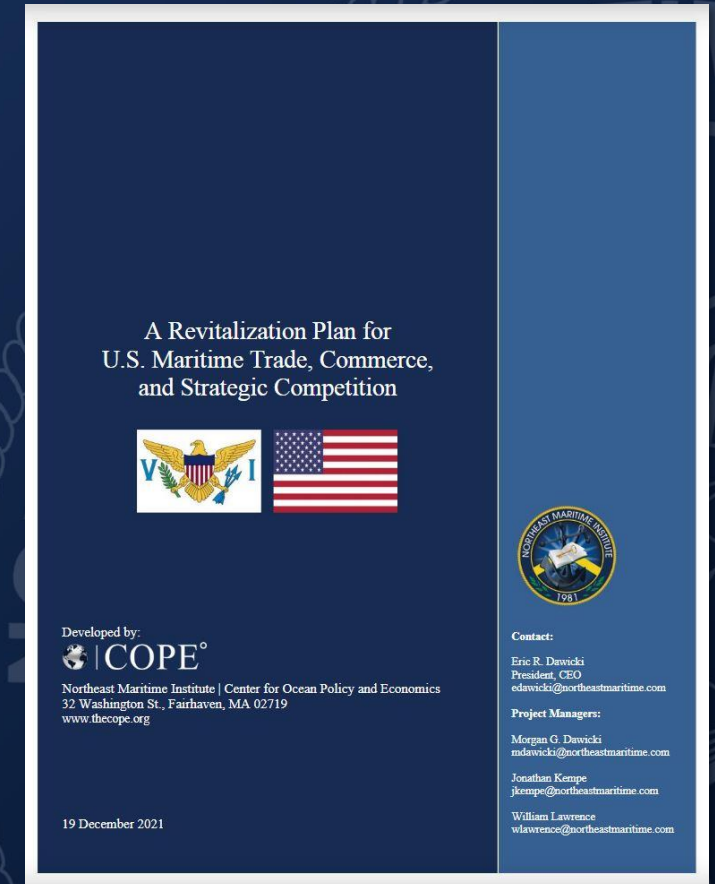


# A Revitalization Plan for U.S. Maritime Trade, Commerce, and Strategic Competition

**An initiative to facilitate America's participation in  
international maritime trade**



# Key Challenges

US participation in international shipping is essentially zero!

- US-flag internationally trading vessels constitute 0.0004% of the world commercial fleet – 28 vessels of 74,000.
- Less than 2% of imports arrive on US owned ships. The top 10 carriers control 80% of volume, none of these companies are American.
- China, Hong Kong, and Macau combine to create the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest ship registry in the world. America is 21<sup>st</sup>.
- US shipbuilding accounts for 0.05% of the global total.
- China's control of shipping could shut down the US economy within weeks.
- Despite having one of the smallest merchant fleets in the world, the US merchant marine still has a labor shortage and requires new thinking for workforce development.

# Key Solutions

- Establish an open international U.S. ship registry in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) to provide responsible and transparent oversight to a commercial fleet of internationally trading vessels both foreign and domestically owned.
- Develop a secure, high-throughput, and technologically advanced transshipment hub in St. Croix, USVI to increase U.S. trade capacity and resiliency, with an emphasis on secure cargo and efficient, sustainable short sea shipping.



# USVI Flag – A Flag of Responsibility

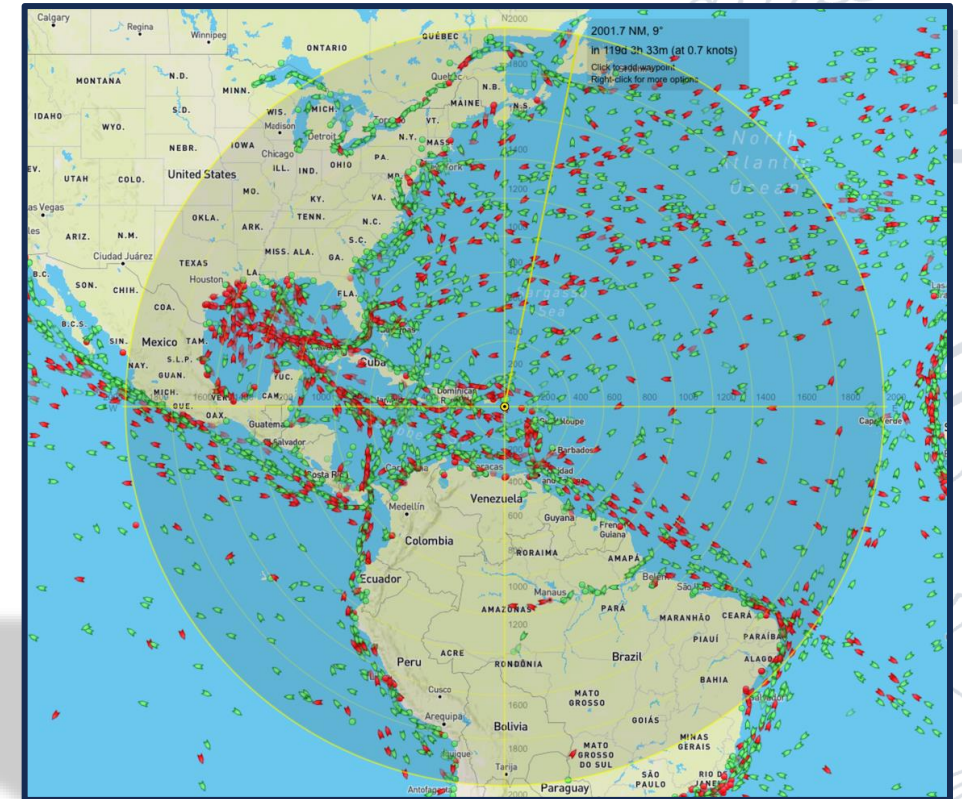
- An open, transparent, and responsible USVI international ship registry delivers a legitimate international maritime trade, commerce, and strategic competition pathway to solidify America's economic and national security.
- Promotes US values in the global maritime industry, workforce, and increases US participation.
- Challenges the current Flag of Convenience system and expands US commercial shipping capacity.





# USVI Transshipment Hub

- Short sea shipping.
- Alleviate congestion on I-95 & I-10 Corridors.
- Target carbon reduction by using ships not trucks.
- Mitigate congestion in major port areas.
- Increase US ship building for smaller short sea shipping vessels to grow US fleet.



*USVI with a 2000nm radius overlay.  
Approximately 14000 vessels pass by the  
USVI annually.*

# Job Opportunities for the Blue Economy

- Mariners - America needs more mariners.
  - Commercial
  - Yachting
  - Cruise
- Port
  - Shoreside jobs for transshipment
- Shipbuilding
  - US-built vessels for short sea shipping. We're already building these size vessels for the offshore industry!
  - Shipyard opportunities in the USVI



## St. Croix – a Singapore of the Caribbean

- A comprehensive maritime strategy with the USVI as an underpinning can help the United States compete in international trade.
- A USVI flag, transshipment hub, and positive business climate will achieve success like the Singapore model.
- Singapore's transshipment hub, open registry, and business climate have made it a maritime powerhouse.



**USVI can become  
the Singapore of  
the Caribbean -**

an anchor for growing America's  
maritime economic security.

Promoting job growth  
through verifiable blue  
economy development for  
the US Virgin Islands and  
greater Caribbean region.





## Benefits to the USVI: Highlights

- Direct capital investment
- Revenue from Flag Registry
- Foreign Maritime Entity and corporate registration
- Growing Tax-Free Zones
- Growing the maritime South Shore Trade Zone
- Growing the manufacturing base
- Blue Economic Development to maintain local talent
- Jobs, Jobs, Jobs





## Benefits to the US: Highlights

- Cargo security
- Cargo clearance and expedience
- Economic security
- Enhanced maritime compliance and oversight
- Increased international shipping capacity
- Growth of domestic fleet to service short sea shipping
- Jobs, Jobs, Jobs



# Strategic Competition

- Current inflationary pressures can be strongly attributed to existing deficiencies in maritime trade and commerce. Foreign competitors have been manipulating cargo throughput and shipping activity to drive inflation even higher.
- To challenge our adversaries, we must compete in international shipping. Countering China, Russia, and Iran's maritime activities, especially commercially, is a key challenge of American foreign policy.
- The US needs more tools to manage the maritime domain. Global maritime security is at risk. We need more than a strong navy. Commercial presence shows a US commitment to free international trade. The US lacks the commercial tools to compete and project soft power in shipping lanes.

# Conclusion

- Our international trade is virtually non-existent. We need a fleet of ships trading internationally.
- We will never get rid of open international ship registries – our greatest threat is that our competitors are using them for ill-begotten gains and statecraft.
- The USVI is well positioned to grow its Blue Economy and admirably serve as an anchor for America's maritime and economic security.
- Transshipment can help relieve shipping bottlenecks and increase cargo transparency.
- Global tonnage tripling by 2050 provides great economic opportunity for the US if we choose to participate.

*Visit:* [www.thecope.org/usvi](http://www.thecope.org/usvi)