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March 20, 2026

Admiral Brad Cooper
Commander
U.S. Central Command
7115 South Boundary Boulevard
MacDill AFB, FL 33621

Dear Admiral Cooper,

I write with urgency regarding U.S.-flagged and U.S.-crewed commercial vessels currently operating in the Persian Gulf amid ongoing hostilities with Iran.

U.S.-flagged vessels are stranded in the region, operating in a highly contested environment marked by persistent drone activity, missile threats, and maritime insecurity. These vessels appear to have received no warning or direction to reposition prior to the onset of hostilities and now face significant challenges in accessing safe resupply, maintaining reliable communications, and identifying a pathway to safe transit.

Crews aboard these vessels are reportedly rationing water and provisions, while operating under sustained psychological and operational stress. The safety and welfare of American mariners in this environment demands immediate attention.

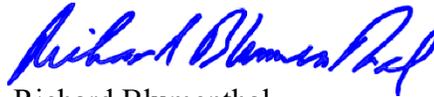
Accordingly, I request the following:

- Prioritize resupply and port access for U.S.-flagged and U.S.-crewed vessels operating in the Persian Gulf, including fuel, food, and potable water.
- Provide to Congress the anticipated port call plan and associated security measures to enable safe resupply of these vessels. If operational details are classified, this information may be transmitted via CAPNET or via classified briefing.
- Establish a reliable communications framework for U.S.-flagged vessels in the region, ensuring regular updates, emergency contact pathways, and the ability for mariners to communicate with U.S. authorities.
- Explain what steps, if any, were taken to notify or reposition U.S.-flagged vessels prior to the onset of hostilities, and how the Department will ensure improved warning and protection mechanisms in future contingencies.

The United States has long recognized the strategic importance of its civilian mariners and maritime workforce, not only as commercial actors, but as a critical component of national security and sealift capacity. In moments such as this, that commitment must extend beyond rhetoric to tangible protection and support.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and request a response as soon as practicable, but no later than March 24, 2026.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate

cc: General Dan Caine
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff