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No, sorry, paying inflated costs for shipping and shipbuilding is not how a country becomes wealthy.

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Trump is right to want to revive US maritime power
An America First foreign policy is impossible without it

4:53 AM · Apr 24, 2025

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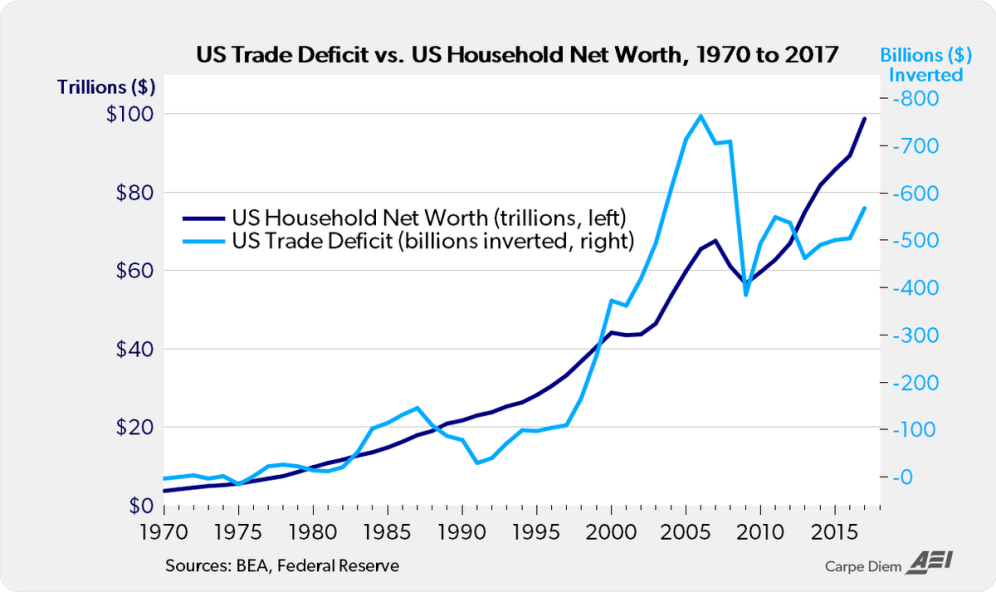
This is why Trump's direction to Mike Waltz, the national security adviser, to create a shipbuilding office focused primarily upon commercial shipbuilding is smart, both economically and militarily. The president understands that the maritime sector generates wealth at every stage of its lifecycle. At the construction stage every job in a shipyard generates five jobs elsewhere in the economy, from the mines where the metal is extracted from the earth, to the steel mills, to casting and forging factories, to advanced electronic firms that make the radars, navigating displays and computers that guide them.

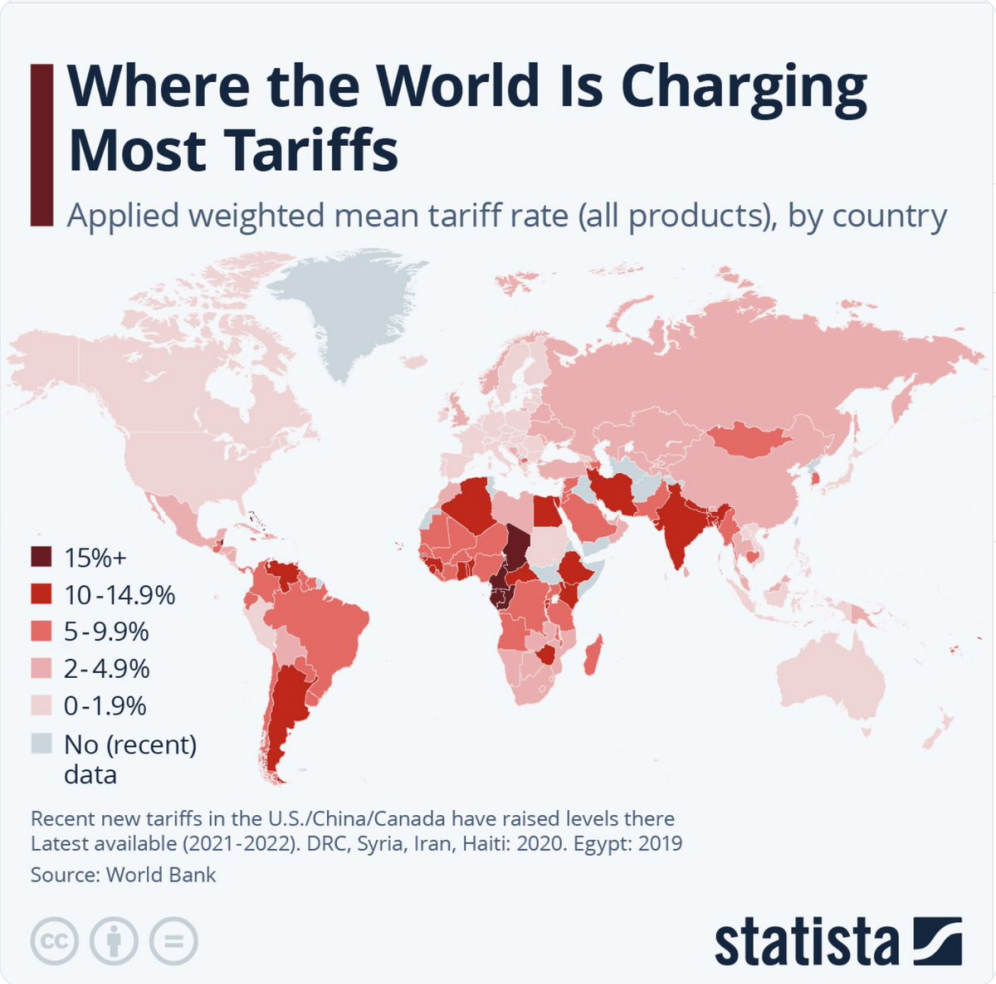
Next, the ships themselves, American flagged and crewed by American merchant mariners, generate wealth coming from and going to foreign ports around the world. This income will increase exponentially as Trump's proactive "art of the deal" leadership on negotiating "reciprocal" tariffs lowers trade barriers to US goods around the world, allowing the country to become a major net export nation again.

Also no reason to think becoming a "major net export nation" promotes prosperity
https://www.aei.org/carpe-diem/chart-of-the-day-us-trade-deficits-vs-us-household-net-worth-theyve-risen-together-over-the-last-half-century/



Tariffs don't make a country powerful and are collected from importers, not shipping lines. This view has probably been absent because it isn't true.

> In taking this action, Trump has placed himself alongside great maritime presidents like William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, who understood that American power comes from the wealth generated by trade, predominantly maritime, in the form of both fees paid to American-flagged ships and tariffs collected from foreign shipping lines at ports of entry. It is a view of the world that has been absent from the White House for far too long.



If Trump wants a reciprocal lowering of trade barriers, he should pursue free trade agreements: https://www.cato.org/blog/reciprocal-trade-barrier-reductions-are-goal-free-trade-agreements-are-solution

Also see: https://www.cato.org/commentary/reinventing-trade-deal-wheel-only-much-worse

A blog post from several years ago directed at the author of the FT piece: https://www.cato.org/blog/robert-c-obrien-supports-jones-act-does-he-understand-it

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