

Atomic-Powered Merchant Ship Expected To Carry Bigger Cargo

Washington — (U.P.) — The atomic-powered merchant ship announced by President Eisenhower is expected to be a sleek, trim vessel designed to go farther, faster, and carry more cargo than any similar ship now afloat.

It may or may not have a smoke stack—depending on how bound to tradition its designers are. But its atomic engines will have no need for one.

Administrative officials gave these glimpses of the ship to tomorrow after Mr. Eisenhower disclosed in a speech that the ship now is on the drawing boards.

They also predicted that the vessel cannot be launched before 1957. After that a lengthy fitting out period will be required.

Visit Ports of World
Mr. Eisenhower in announcing the project Monday said it will visit "the ports of the world... and will demonstrate to people everywhere this peacetime use of atomic energy, harnessed for the improvement of human living."

The new queen of the merchant fleet will be built in a private shipyard, at a cost obviously greater than the \$8,500,000 price of the best freighters now available, but probably substantially less than the \$55,000,000 atomic submarine Nautilus.

Two yards already are studying the hull requirements of an atomic ship for the Navy, and a third is working on reactor designs. There has been no indication here which builder will get the contract for the first experimental ship.

Congressional atomic energy experts meanwhile praised the plan to build the ship as a floating advertisement for the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Their reaction indicated Congress will go along with Mr. Eisenhower's request for construction funds. The President said he will make a funds request soon and give Congress a better description of the vessel.

Produce More Results
Chairman Clinton P. Anderson (D-N.M.) of the Joint Congressional Atomic Energy Committee said it is "fine to put atomic reactors in merchant ships, carriers and planes—as well as in submarines."

But he expressed surprise that any particular directive was required for the new project. He said it is "the sort of thing the Atomic Energy Commission could—and should have been studying for some time."

Rep. James E. Van Zandt (R-Pa.) said the project, and others like it, should produce more results than "from all the billions spent on foreign aid."

Mr. Eisenhower spoke of the

new ship's virtually limitless range when he said she "will not require refueling for scores of thousands of miles of operation."

Elimination of the vast fuel tanks found on conventional ships will mean greater cargo space for the atomic model. However, her atomic reactor and the shielding which must surround it may take as much or more space than the traditional unit which it replaces. Size of the turbine and other installations presumably would remain the same.