

(Mr. GREEN of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EDWARDS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OCEAN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have been in the majority for basically 10 years, and we have done a number of very positive things. What I would like to speak to this august body about tonight is an issue of oceans.

In 1994, when the Republican majority took over, they began to reorganize the committee process. At that time, they wanted to make it more applicable to the Members to represent their districts, to represent their regions and to be more efficiently organized, to spend the taxpayers dollars wisely.

What we did, however, was to consider that we will continue to reorganize the process as the years went by to ensure that Members had an opportunity to serve on the committee that not only represented their districts, but that also represented their desire to be a visionary Member of this Congress.

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One of the committees that was eliminated was the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee that dealt with oceans issues, fisheries issues, the Great Lakes and things of that nature.

The reason that one single standing committee was important was because there are billions and billions and billions of dollars that are generated in the U.S. economy as a result of the world's, and especially the jurisdiction of the oceans, that fall in the United States, of the oceans, whether that is trade, whether that is commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, marine habitat, the weather, the climate, the

rain that sustains the country. All of these issues are dealt with because of ocean and Great Lakes issues.

The committee, however, was reduced to a subcommittee and put under the jurisdiction of the Interior Committee which was renamed the Committee on Resources.

There is still a great deal of effort to put forth a good ocean policy by the Federal Government. However, since the full committee was reduced to a subcommittee, much of the jurisdiction was taken away. On the House side, there are 19 full and subcommittees that deal with a myriad of ocean issues; and, as a result of that, even though committees work well together in their area of jurisdiction, the issues dealing with oceans are relegated to a very small piece of any one single committee, even the Committee on Resources, where that full standing committee became a subcommittee.

Because the issues are so fragmented, there is no one particular center of gravity to develop policy, in my judgment, for the U.S. ocean policy.

What I am suggesting that we do in the next Congress is that we create a standing committee that has full jurisdiction over the oceans, that takes that \$120 billion annual economy that is generated by oceans, that deals with the commercial fishing activity from Alaska to Hawaii, to the Pacific, to the Gulf of Mexico, to the Atlantic Ocean, an area whose jurisdiction is larger than the 50 States combined. We take all of those issues and we combine it into one full committee, and that one full committee will have jurisdiction over the issues that are dealt with as far as the oceans are concerned.

Let us just take commercial fishing activity, for example. Everybody has gone into a store and purchased fish. Everybody has gone into a restaurant and ordered fish. That generates billions upon billions of economic activity. But 75 percent of the commercial fish caught in U.S. waters spawn in tidal estuaries, and one of the problems with tidal estuaries is they are being polluted. They are being fragmented. They are being dammed. They are being degraded in a whole host of ways. And there is not really one single entity in the Federal Government that can work with the State government, the private sector and various groups to take a look at the loss, which is as much as 20,000 acres on an annual basis.

So just on the perspective of an economic agenda I feel confident that an oceans committee, which would be the center for the perspective on developing coordinated U.S. policy on oceans issues, is vital in the next Congress.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues, when this comes up for an issue, to vote favorably in this direction.

ASKING ADMINISTRATION TO URGE A U.S. VOTE AGAINST AZERBAIJAN'S U.N. RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to bring to our attention Azerbaijan's recent introduction of an ill-advised United Nations General Assembly resolution regarding what Azerbaijan erroneously refers to as "the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan."

This intentionally disruptive resolution directly and significantly threatens efforts towards a peaceful settlement over the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. Furthermore, it jeopardizes the principles and procedures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and specifically the Minsk Group mediation effort, co-chaired by the United States, France and Russia, to resolve the Karabagh conflict.

Azerbaijan's proposal represents a hostile declaration against the entire peace process, aimed only at fostering increased divisiveness. Its consideration can only set back the cause of peace.

Mr. Speaker, it is disturbing to note that this resolution was recently approved to be included on the U.N. General Assembly's agenda. Even more alarming is the fact that the United States has thus far failed to compellingly address the resolution, choosing to instead abstain from every vote in which they had an opportunity to halt the advancement of this destructive measure. This failure by the administration now has the potential to undermine U.S. interests and American values in the strategically important Caucasus region.

Mr. Speaker, the vital role the United States plays as an honest broker in the Nagorno-Karabagh peace process is gravely threatened by the administration's continued lack of decisive action. Given our commitment to keeping the parties talking and moving forward, it is necessary for the U.S. to act forcefully against destabilizing steps that will unravel the peace process. Our interests are best served by the continuation of dialogue on the outstanding issues related to Nagorno-Karabagh within the OSCE framework and not by the fragmentation of this orderly process.

Since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, Armenia has been committed to finding a peaceful solution. Moreover, I cannot stress enough the crucial role that the U.S. plays in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabagh to help the people of this region find a lasting and equitable peace. These actions by Azerbaijan subvert these efforts and seriously complicate our diplomacy in the Caucasus region. A failure on our part to forcefully and