

CNOOC is very different from most other companies because it is owned by the Chinese government. It could be directed to sell oil only to the Chinese, taking a large portion of its resources off of the international oil market. As a result of this possibility, the sale of Unocal raised great concerns in the American public. If it had occurred, the Chinese government would have gained control of a significant American player in the energy industry, just as we are struggling with sky-rocketing gas prices and concerns about a secure supply, especially from the volatile Middle East.

Although CNOOC withdrew its bid to buy Unocal, it did not stop looking for other sources of oil. The interest of Chinese companies in Canadian oil is especially troublesome. In May, CNOOC purchased almost 17 percent of MEG Energy Corporation, a Canadian-owned company that owns oil sand leases on almost 33,000 acres of Alberta land. Another Chinese company, SinoCanada Petroleum, has formed a joint venture with Canada's Synenco Energy to develop oil sands projects in Canada which are estimated to produce 5 tons of synthetic crude oil. These initial investments illustrate the worrisome growing Chinese interest in the estimated 178 billion barrels of recoverable oil in Alberta.

Canada is our highly respected neighbor, and our strong relationship has provided many benefits for both of our countries. Canada is our greatest trading partner with more than \$1 billion a day in goods and services traded. Canada exports almost 99 percent of its oil to the U.S., and the U.S. imports more oil from Canada than from any other country, with 16 percent of our total imports coming from our northern neighbor. With the increasing development of Alberta's oil sands, this percentage could significantly increase.

If CNOOC had purchased Unocal, it would have owned an American company but few oil resources in North America. But now, China is interested in not just in North American companies, but in Canadian oil reserves as well, the most secure source of oil outside of our own borders.

As the Chinese become more involved, the U.S. needs to become more engaged with the Canadian government and the provincial government of Alberta in discussing the potential ramifications. Let me be clear on this: Neither Congress nor the Bush Administration can or should ever be seen to be telling Canada or Alberta what to do. However, our government should utilize our good relations and strong economic ties to learn more about the Chinese interests in Canadian oil and to discuss the potential shared security concerns.

The administration has shown an interest in this important issue. Treasury Secretary Snow visited Alberta in July and Vice President CHENEY was scheduled to tour the area in September before Hurricane Katrina forced

him to cancel his visit. The Senate sent a delegation to Alberta in August. I strongly encourage the Vice President to reschedule his trip, as well as encourage other Members of Congress to travel and to learn more about this close energy source.

This is a critical time to be concerned about secure energy supplies for the future of the United States. We need to be more diligent about conservation and energy efficiency. We need to be working harder to develop alternative sources of energy. But no matter what we do and how successful we are in weaning ourselves from oil, gas and other conventional energy sources, our Nation will still be in need of foreign fossil fuels for many years to come. In the unpredictable world in which we live today, it would be best to rely on secure sources of energy close to home.

That is why I urge Congress and the administration to learn more about Alberta's oil sands and the potential to supply U.S. energy needs. We must continue to work closely with our neighbors on the north on this important security issue.

WEST GEORGIA BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the West Georgia Boys and Girls Club, an exemplary community organization in the 11th District of Georgia.

The West Georgia Club serves the youth of Troup and Meriwether counties, and it does so with distinction. The four facilities operated by the Boys and Girls Club are always buzzing with students, volunteers, friends and events.

On an average day, you will find a host of activities that contribute to the Boys and Girls Club's goal of providing every child with the essential tools needed for success and a bright future.

After-school tutoring gives students the skills they need to achieve. Friday night movies and social events give teens an alternative to street life. Service projects, leadership and skill development, even National Kids Day are all part of what makes the West Georgia Boys and Girls Club a true leader in community involvement and service.

And do not just take my word for it. The West Georgia Club has been recognized and honored on a national level for their amazing work with the youth of Georgia. At the 2005 Boys and Girls Club National Conference in California this year, the West Georgia club won seven national awards. That is right, seven awards.

These included awards for public service announcements, special events, web page, newsletter and even their an-

nual telethon, which I was proud to participate in this year. Most impressively, the West Georgia Boys and Girls Club was selected as the best overall program for clubs with a budget under \$400,000.

Madam Speaker, an organization is only as successful as the men and women who commit their time to making it great. And the West Georgia Club has a first rate team. Chris Patton and Wally West oversee the club, and its board members, Judy Wilkerson, Linda Griffies, Emmitt Clark, Mel Jackson-Kendrick, Frank Walls, Rev. Dalton Hammock, Charlie Martin and the many other volunteers from Troup and Meriwether counties give their time to ensure this club is one of the best in the Nation.

It is the commitment and creativity of community organizations like the West Georgia Boys and Girls Club that make our neighborhoods more than simply a collection of homes and buildings. The American spirit is alive and well at the West Georgia Club, and the beneficiaries in our community have a brighter future because of the club's dedication.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking the West Georgia Boys and Girls Club for their creativity, their commitment and, above all, their willingness to help those in need.

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

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

FREEZING IN THE DARK

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, when the ladies of the gulf, Katrina and Rita, came barreling through recently, we learned many lessons. Unfortunately, in the aftermath we learned that the gulf coast oil and natural gas production can be easily disrupted to the detriment of the Americans. Although there were around 2,900 platforms pelted in the path of the ladies of the gulf, very little environmental impact resulted. In the wake of these hurricanes, the need for American petroleum and natural gas and dependence on ourselves has become evident.

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The United States must be more self-sufficient when it comes to energy.

The United States imports 60 percent of its crude oil from foreign countries. In doing so, we are subject to the illegal price fixing cartel known as OPEC. The Gulf of Mexico is responsible for one-third of the domestic oil production and 22 percent of the domestic natural gas production. We learned

from Katrina and Rita, oil and natural gas production can be disrupted to the detriment of consumers throughout the United States because production is too concentrated in the gulf coast region.

To correct these problems, I have introduced H.R. 3811. This legislation would allow for safe oil and natural gas exploration along the Outer Continental Shelf. This bill would do away with all appropriation moratoriums and executive orders that limit leasing activities, while maintaining environmental safeguards.

It is imperative that the United States begin drilling in other parts outside of the gulf. Madam Speaker, as my colleagues can see from this map, there is a wide range of areas where we can drill. Right now, the United States drills right here off my home State of Texas and Louisiana; yet, there is crude oil still in the Gulf of Mexico, on the east coast and, yes, Madam Speaker, even off the sacred coast of California. It is imperative that we think and consider drilling in these areas.

Since the 1980s, Congress has been placing appropriations moratoriums on drilling on all of these red areas that are outlined on this map. They are doing so by withholding leases. It started in California, and now about 90 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf is off limits to energy developments. All these people on these coastal States want cheap gasoline, they want natural gas, but they say do not drill in our neighborhood.

Madam Speaker, this is hypocritical. This does not make sense. It violates common sense. In this Outer Continental Shelf, there are about 300 cubic feet of natural gas and more than 50 billion barrels of oil yet to be discovered, enough to replace current imports from the Persian Gulf for 60 years and produce sufficient natural gas to heat 75 million homes for 60 years.

Madam Speaker, it would seem to me that opening up these areas would be the obvious choice. We are the only major industrial power in the world that has this silly rule about not drilling off our own shores. They drill in the North Sea, and around the world, and yet, they do so safely.

My bill would allow the Department of the Interior's Mineral and Mining Service to begin processing these leases. This would bring in additional lease revenue to Americans. Right now, Americans are receiving in this blue area \$7.5 billion a year in lease revenue. Imagine what we could get from these red areas if we allowed drilling in these areas.

It is important that we use some common sense. Americans worry about skyrocketing energy prices and want solutions. The decision on where to drill is going to have to be made and made soon. This is a price issue, but it is also a national security issue.

Hurricane season is not over and it will be back next year. It is inevitable that more storms will come down hur-

ricane alley right here in the gulf, and they are going to stop in Louisiana or Texas. With all the rigs in the same place, we are destined to repeat history. Although most of the rigs survived Hurricanes Rita and Katrina with minimal damage, there will be more storms, wind and disasters.

Those that say no to offshore drilling have no solutions to the energy problem. We can drill offshore safely, environmentally correct, when you get over the fear factor proposed by the anti-drilling people, and take control of our own energy needs. Otherwise, Madam Speaker, we will freeze in the dark. That is just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FORBES 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 Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the 5 minutes that the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) would have had.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

THE GROWTH OF THE U.S. ECONOMY

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to talk about a very important issue which, frankly, has not gotten a great deal of attention and that is the growth of the U.S. economy and what it is we have been able to see over the past several weeks and months.

Virtually everyone has acknowledged the fact that Hurricane Katrina was, if not the worst, one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States of America, and we all know that in the wake of that disaster where we saw the tragic loss of life and, of course, the devastation of property along the gulf coast, we assumed that there would be a very, very deleterious effect on the U.S. economy. Today, we received what is news that is not what you would call overwhelmingly positive, but certainly not news that was anything like what had been anticipated.

Today, we received the news that following the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina there has been a net job loss based on the payroll survey, which is the old survey structure that has been put into place to determine the jobless rate in the country, a payroll jobs rate reduction of 35,000 nationwide.

Madam Speaker, I think it is important to note that many economists had predicted that that job loss number was going to be in excess of 200,000 in the wake of the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. I think it is important to also recognize that as we focus attention from the United States Congress and the State and local officials, the President of the United States, focus on reconstruction, dealing with the tragic circumstances in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one of the most important things we can do is to make sure that the entire U.S. economy continues to grow as boldly and as dynamically as possible.

Let us look at the policies that we have seen put into place that have led to tremendous economic growth. We saw throughout the year of 2004 gross domestic product growth of 4.4 percent, a very positive sign of growth. This year, the number has not been quite as high, about 3.3 percent on average of GDP growth. So we have gone through the 15th quarter of positive economic growth, a very, very good indicator of what we can do as a Nation to help address the needs of those who have been victimized by this natural disaster.

One of the things that has happened is we have seen many people from that region obviously find job opportunities in other parts of the Nation. I was in my original hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, just a few weeks ago, and I met a man who said he had worked at Brennan's Restaurant in New Orleans, and he is now working in a food service capacity in Kansas City. Obviously, economic growth in other parts of the country played a role in creating opportunities for people who were subjected to that horrible natural disaster.

So, Madam Speaker, one of the things that we have got to do is make sure that we continue to keep in place our very positive, pro-growth, pro-trade, pro-economic opportunity policies.

Now, what are those policies? Those policies obviously consist of tax reduction. Tax reduction has stimulated the economy and, in fact, as we all know, generated a level of revenues to the Federal Treasury that exceeded expectations. In fact, it exceeded expectations to the point where we have now received \$94 billion in unanticipated revenues to the Federal Treasury, reducing the deficit projection from the February projection by, as I said, \$94 billion.

Madam Speaker, that is a very positive sign. It is not a Republican number that I am offering. That is a number that has come from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office. Again, it is tax cuts that have brought