

(Mr. HOLT 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.)

MORATORIUM ON OFFSHORE DRILLING IS THE SECOND DISASTER IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the moratorium on deepwater offshore drilling will prevent drilling in the Gulf of Mexico for the next 6 months or longer.

Why do we have the moratorium? What is the purpose?

When we have a plane crash, as disastrous as that might be, we don't close down the entire airline industry for 6 months—that wouldn't make sense—but now we want to close down the drilling offshore for 6 months.

What is the reason?

The 6-month moratorium on drilling will be another economic catastrophe for the United States. Six months is a long time in the drilling business. These wells can't start and stop overnight, and neither can the support industries.

Mr. Speaker, this chart right here shows the coasts of Texas and Louisiana, and on this chart, out in the Gulf of Mexico, there are about 4,000 offshore rigs. These 4,000 rigs will not be allowed to drill, based upon the administration's moratorium, for the next 6 months. All of these yellow dots represent a drilling rig that is offshore, and they go about 75 to 150 miles off the Texas-Louisiana coast, not counting those off of Mississippi and Alabama.

Some companies are already moving workers to Brazil and to the Middle East because of this absurdity of a moratorium. Texas and Louisiana will lose an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 jobs just in this industry, not counting all the related industries that are onshore. The people who supply those rigs—the food, the transportation, communications, goods and services—all of those jobs will be gone if these rigs are not allowed to drill. The longer the uncertainty continues here in America, the worse it will get, and there is no guarantee these jobs will ever come back. That is not only a threat to our economy. It is a threat to national security.

That means the United States will now import more oil from countries that don't like us—like the Middle East and Venezuela. Now China and

Russia, two of our buddies, are going to drill off the coast of Cuba with Venezuela and Vietnam.

Isn't that a lovely experience?

The loss of our domestic source of oil in the Gulf of Mexico will make us further dependent on foreign oil and will increase energy costs to all Americans, and that will also increase tanker traffic bringing that oil into the Gulf of Mexico. There have been 16 large international oil spills of over 30 million gallons, and only three of those have been from offshore drilling rigs. The rest have been from oil tankers bringing oil from one place to another. So we need to put a proactive plan in place so we can better deal with accidents in the Gulf of Mexico.

It took 9 days for the administration to make remarks about the impact of the Deepwater explosion and for DHS to declare the spill of national significance. There was no clear chain of command for who was in control of the disaster. There doesn't seem to be any plan. There should have been a plan in place immediately to respond. That's the government's responsibility. Some say it was the Coast Guard's. Others say it was the EPA's. It is still somewhat of a mystery as to who was supposed to be in charge and who was supposed to be in control of the cleanup and of the containment when the explosion occurred.

It took 37 days to attempt the top-kill procedure. Why so long? We don't know the answer yet. The majority of the pollution is a result of the delay, not of the explosion. I repeat: The majority of the pollution is the result of the delay and not of the explosion itself.

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Now government is overreacting to the aftermath and making the economic impact worse by prohibiting the drilling of these other 4,000 wells. The moratorium could end up being a worse economic problem than the accident itself. It's the second disaster now in the Gulf of Mexico.

The EPA was created in 1970 to address industrial pollution, and they have somewhat of a history of overreacting and overregulating. And the bottom line is they are driving and have driven American manufacturing jobs to other countries. We cannot allow this to happen again with offshore drilling.

As much as we need to use all alternative sources of energy, right now our economy runs on fossil fuels, and that's not going to really change anytime soon. So we either have to import more oil or we have to allow these rigs to drill.

America doesn't yet run on windmills and moonbeams. We need a plan for future disasters, to include who is in charge of stopping the leak, who is in charge of containment of the oil spill, and who is in charge of the cleanup. As of today, there does not seem to be a comprehensive plan to implement.

And that's just the way it is.

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the privilege of speaking by telephone with one of the most important and respected leaders of the pro-democracy movement inside Cuba, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, "Antunez," from his house in the town of Placetas in the province of Villa Clara.

I always learn when I speak to Antunez. He conveyed to me some facts that I think should be known by my colleagues.

Fact: There are not 200 political prisoners in Cuba; there are thousands of political prisoners in Cuba. As Amnesty International has recently admitted in one of its published reports, the dictatorship uses criminal penal charges and sentences for so-called crimes, such as contempt against authority and dangerousness—criminal charges to deny, to hide the status, the political status, of prisoners of conscience.

Fact: Various pro-democracy leaders and political prisoners are on hunger strikes, as we speak, in Cuba. Most well-known is the hunger strike being carried out by the peaceful pro-democracy leader Guillermo Farinas, a psychologist and journalist who demands the release of the 25 most gravely ill prisoners of conscience to their homes.

But there are others also engaged in hunger strikes at the moment, and their heroic efforts need to be known as well. Guillermo del Sol Perez, a former political prisoner, is on a hunger strike in Santa Clara. And the following current political prisoners are engaged in hunger strikes at this moment: Egberto Angel Escobedo Morales, Mario Alberto Perez Aguilera, and Ernesto Mederos Arrozarena.

Fact: There are many political prisoners who are gravely ill and, yet, have not been included on any of the lists that have been made public—for example, Armando Sosa Fortuny and Cecilio Reinoso Sanchez.

Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, "Antunez," is a great leader and one of my heroes.

Before being released from prison in 2007, he spent 17 years as a political prisoner due to his peaceful advocacy for democracy in Cuba.

He and his wife, also photographed here, Iris Perez Aguilera, have been detained, harassed, spat upon, and beaten innumerable times since his release in 2007 from prison. But Antunez never gives up. He told me this morning he has a new blog, “Ni me callo, ni me voy”—“I won’t shut up, I won’t leave.”

I not only learn, Mr. Speaker, when I am able to speak with Antunez, I receive strength from his courage, patriotism, and devotion to the struggle for Cuba’s freedom.

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

(Ms. RICHARDSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

DESTRUCTION AND DEVASTATION IN THE FIFTH DISTRICT OF OHIO

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to remember the five lives of five constituents from my district who were killed this past weekend as a severe thunderstorm which produced two tornados swept across my district, leaving a trail of absolute destruction and devastation.

Mary Walters and her 4-year-old son, Hayden, in addition to Ted Kranz, Kathy Hammitt, and Bailey Bowman, all died during the storm.

On Sunday I rode with the Fulton County sheriff, and on Monday I rode with the Lake Township, Wood County chief of police to get a firsthand view of the devastation left behind by these tornados. During these visits, I spoke with many residents who survived the storms and heard them relate their miracle tales of survival.

I also want to recognize the 2010 graduating class of Lake High School in Wood County for their steadfast will and character in the wake of this deadly storm. One of the tornadoes hit Lake High School, completely destroying the school. This happened only hours before the senior class of 110 students were scheduled to hold their commencement ceremony Sunday afternoon. And, sadly, the class valedictorian, Katie Kranz, lost her father during that storm.

The true character, compassion, and strength of the people of America come

through in times like these, as the surrounding communities have stepped up to help in whatever way possible during the recovery effort. The local chapter of the Red Cross and other volunteer organizations were quickly on the ground to lend their support.

The local elected officials and administrators of Wood and Fulton Counties should also be commended for their organization and leadership during these trying times. Their quick response to help those in need has held the community together during this time.

I also want to commend other communities in the area, like the city of Northwood, who helped by letting the Lake Township Police use its communications headquarters after the Lake Township Police Department was destroyed, as well as the administration building.

The city of Oregon has lent three police cruisers to the township, as well as the Wood County sheriff lending two. Why? Because the Lake Township lost six of their cars during the storm.

Yesterday I sent a letter to President Obama requesting that Wood and Fulton Counties be declared Federal disaster areas as soon as possible. This will be important for the counties so that they may have access to as many resources as possible during the recovery efforts.

This afternoon, Governor Strickland is also asking for a declaration for Federal assistance, and I thank him for it.

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

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

HONORING THE LEGACY OF COACH KENNETH CARTER

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, after 49 years of dedicated service to the Marietta community, Coach Kenneth Carter is retiring from his position with the Physical Education and Health Department and as a tennis coach for Marietta High School.

Coach Carter has been a dedicated educator and a role model for sports teams in the Marietta school district for as long as I can remember. He has coached football, basketball, track, and, most memorably, tennis, where he had a record of 16 consecutive wins, one State championship, and nine region championships.

He received the Georgia Tennis Coach of the Year award and also was inducted with the 1985 tennis team into the Marietta High School Hall of Fame.

Prior to his career with Marietta City Schools, Ken Carter worked for

the Atlanta YMCA, teaching and training children. He drove a bus back and forth from the Y, making sure that underprivileged kids had access to the facility. Coach Carter has always said that behavior is the number-one problem with youths, and the training he gave at the YMCA taught kids how to be both good athletes and good people.

It was here that Coach Carter met the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. King went to the YMCA often to swim, and Carter would listen to his stories about civil rights issues. Coach Carter says working with King was a source of personal inspiration and many life lessons.

Coach Carter has also been very active with his church and served as the superintendent of Sunday School for 22 years.

His dedication and selfless attitude are well-known, as Coach Carter has been recognized as the Outstanding Man of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and has also received an Outstanding Service Award.

Congratulations, Coach Carter, on your retirement, and thank you for everything you have given to Marietta’s school system.

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT THE GAZA FLOTILLA

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, recently, Israeli military personnel intercepted a flotilla of ships headed towards Gaza. The world outcry has been deafening. It has also been misplaced.

The Israelis have been portrayed as committing violence in order to prevent food and humanitarian supplies from reaching women and children in the crowded Palestinian community of Gaza.

Yes, that would certainly be an outrage if that is what was going on. But the actions taken by Israel are aimed only at preventing rockets from being shot into Israel, not denying food or medicine to the Palestinians. The image in the public’s mind is totally distorted. And what the world needs to do is take a closer look at what is being presented to them.

Even Al Jazeera, the most prominent Arabic TV news station, could not block out the reality of so-called activists, peace activists, who were really thugs, attacking Israeli soldiers with lead pipes and clubs. The soldiers are seen refraining from using their weapons as they watch fellow troopers being beaten into a bloody pulp and lying on the ground, their lives in danger.

Well, who first initiated violence, the violence that we are talking about, is not in question. Even Al Jazeera could not hide that fact. Yet, photos of the wounded and dead who ended up—and these were wounded and dead activists, after they had started beating to death