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THE FUTURE OF OCEANS POLICY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SANDALOW: Welcome to Brookings. My name is David Sandalow. It's great to see many old friends and such a good crowd. I'd like to start with a few thank yous.

First, thank you to Strobe Talbott, the President of Brookings, and to Jim Steinberg, our Vice President for Foreign Policy. Strobe and Jim are both in China today, but they are very much with us in spirit. They have both been very strong supporters of our work on oceans and, for that, I am very grateful.

I would also like to thank my Brookings colleague, Nigel Purvis. Together, Nigel and I direct Brookings' new environment and energy project, which is designed to help policymakers shape practical and innovative solutions to environmental and conservation problems, and ocean governance is very much at the top of our list and one of our principal interests in this project.

I'd like to thank several people for their advice and guidance in connection with planning today's event, including Tom Kitzos, Christof Tulou, Mark Spalding, Dave Festa, Margaret Spring, Tom Jenson, Captain Charlie Dias and my tremendous research assistant, Hannah Volfson. And last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank the Ocean Foundation for their generous support of today's event.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are standing at a pivotal moment in Ocean's policy. For the first time in a generation, a high-level federal commission has recommended comprehensive reform of the way the United States governs the oceans. A prestigious private commission has also recommended comprehensive reform. With the new presidential term about to begin, with a new Congress to be sworn in next month, the possibilities for progress beckon.

But the agenda in this town is full, as always. Those who are interested in ocean policy reform will need to find common ground and work together. For me, a summer trip to Alaska underscored the importance of this task. On the Alaska coast, in August, I saw both the splendor of the oceans and the importance of ocean resources to the livelihoods of many. Talking to fishermen, to conservationists, to scientists, to state legislatures, I heard in detail about some ways in which Alaska's management of the oceans can be a model for the rest of the nation and some ways in which improvement is needed.

And one message was reinforced, the importance of dialogue and, to use a terrestrial metaphor, of seeking common ground. Only when different interests understand each other can we shape proposals with broad enough support to make a difference.

This morning, we are very honored to have, as our opening speaker, a lifelong leader on oceans issues. Congressman Curt Weldon is the senior Republican in the House delegation from the State of Pennsylvania. He is most important, for our purposes today, a founder and co-chair of the House Oceans Caucus. As a member of the Science Committee, Congressman Weldon has been one of the most outspoken advocates for the oceans on Capitol Hill, sponsoring leading oceans legislation and shaping the views of colleagues and others on these topics.

I suspect that those facts are very well known to everyone in this room. Some of you may not be as aware that Congressman Weldon is also an expert on Russian relations. He was a major in Russian studies in college, I am told. He was a founder of the Duma Congress Study Group and has made improving relations with Russia one of his major efforts in Congress.

Congressman Weldon is only with us for about a half an hour today. We are delighted to have his time. He's going to speak for a few minutes and then take questions. He is a man of boundless energy and many talents. We are delighted to welcome Congressman Curt Weldon.

[Applause.]

MR. WELDON: Thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be here. I apologize for not being able to stay for the entire session, but I will have staff here, and knowing that my good friend/, Jim Watkins, is following me, I know pretty much what he's going to say. In fact, he could write my speech, and I could write his speech, and that Leon Panetta is on his way down is also something that's very pleasing to me, as we begin what I think will be the ending of this session of Congress and the beginning of a new session in 2005, and what I predict will be the year of the oceans.

And I don't think it's just that, in terms of a cliché, but actually I think all the stars are lined up, and if we do our job over the next year and two years, I think we really can move the oceans agenda to the forefront of this nation and the world. And I say it's about time.

I've been in Congress about 18 years. I've been on the Science Committee all of that time, actually, since the demise of the old Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, where I was a ranking member on the Oceanography Subcommittee. And I've been on the Armed Services Committee the entire 18 years and currently serve as Vice Chairman, overseeing our entire military budget. Some people say, well, how can you work both defense and environmental issues, and in fact it's interesting that those two issues come together and converge more often than not. And as someone who has spent the largest part of my 18 years trying to take our former adversaries or would-be

adversaries and turn them into our friends or partners, Oceans oftentimes becomes a key mechanism to allow that process to occur.

In fact, before the end of this year or actually over the next eight weeks, I expect to make my second trip into North Korea. I am the only elected official that's been invited and has actually led a delegation into Pyongyang, the first in May a year ago. And I will lead the second delegation there. I'm about ready to get the formal invite this week, this coming week.

And what's interesting is that North Korea, perhaps, today is one of those countries that is most perplexing to us from the standpoint of where they're going and what Kim Jong il is about to do next. In my first meeting with the North Koreans and the two follow-up sessions over a year with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials from DPRK, one of the topics that helps open the dialogue and has helped to break the ice has been a discussion of the oceans and the fact that DPRK is so dependent on the seas and how we can find common ground and then deal with the more difficult issues of finding a way to have them abandon their nuclear program.

Time and again, what I have found in my 18 years in Congress is that the oceans agenda is not just an agenda that all of us have to focus on because over one-half of our population lives in watersheds, and not just because one-half of our gross domestic product, about \$4.3 trillion is generated from those areas that directly border the oceans and our watershed system, but because the oceans agenda provides so many other opportunities for us as a people to solve not just environmental problems, but to bring people together in ways that perhaps we really haven't thought possible.

And so that's why I've been so supportive of the oceans in my tenure in Congress. And I couple that with the fact that it's so obvious that we should be focusing on the oceans just because of the facts that I've just given to you. Half of our population lives in areas directly impacting our watersheds, and one-half of our GDP is directly generated from ocean and ocean-related activities. Yet, you look at what we're putting in the way of resources as a country, and it's absolutely embarrassing.

In fact, when I chaired, for six years, the Defense Research Committee, my job was to oversee approximately \$38 billion a year of our defense budget that went into the research for our military to be able to have the best technology, the best research known on the face of the earth to assist our war fighter.

And at the same time that I was serving in that capacity as Chairman of the Research Committee, I was also a senior member of the Science Committee, which oversees NOAA, oversees the National Science Foundation, NIST, NIH and our other research, nonmilitary-based entities.

But what was amazing to me is perhaps best summed up by a person like Sylvia Earl, my good friend, as she has said time and again, that the years that she was in government and working on Capitol Hill, we were spending more on the waste disposal system for the space station than we were for an entire year on our undersea research program. And that's an embarrassment.

It's an embarrassment that the largest funder of oceanographic research, when I chaired the R&D Subcommittee, was not NOAA, it was not EPA, it was not any other organization or agency, it was the U.S. Navy, and the Navy does an outstanding job. And that's why, back in the mid '90s, I put together a piece of legislation, convinced my friend and colleague, Patrick Kennedy, to co-sponsor it, and with Jim's support, we passed and implemented the National Oceans Partnership Program.

That was a modest effort to begin to coordinate the research activities of, at that time, nine federal agencies, the lead agency of which was the U.S. Navy, to find a common oceanographic research agenda that the federal government could provide more focus on. We / had hoped that that effort, establishing the National Oceanographic Partnership Program, would expand the base of ocean research dollars. Unfortunately, it has not had the effect that we thought and hoped it would have and that oceanographic research budget has not increased the way that it needs to be increased.

And so, as a result, there was much work to be done. And so the obvious question that someone has to ask in this city, if it's so logical that we should be doing more in the area of oceans, if there are so many opportunities that the oceans provide to us in the way of economic, in the way of the environment, in the way of homeland security, in the areas of commerce, and trade, and culture, and history, then why aren't we spending more? We have to look at the two fundamental reasons why that has been the problem in Washington.

The first, in my opinion, has been the lack of a national focus by Democrat and Republican administrations. I've been here 18 years, and I've served under both Democrat and Republican Presidents, and I can honestly say I have not seen a comprehensive ocean strategy come out of either party or either White House, under Democrat or Republican control. In fact, I have to go back to the Stratton Commission, which is over 30 years ago, to see the first comprehensive effort on moving forward with an oceans agenda.

The second problem has been the lack of focus within the Congress. We haven't had a coordinated effort. And when you compound the fact that we haven't had a coordinated effort with the disjointed oversight of the various aspects of ocean governance, you see why we don't have a common focus coming out of the legislative body of our federal government. There are so many committees and subcommittees in the House and Senate that have pieces of the jurisdiction of the oversight of oceans policy that it's very difficult, if not impossible, for Congress, as an entity, to come together with one joint program or one joint agenda. Well, all of that has changed, and that's why I am

convinced that 2005 can be, should be, and I hope will be a banner year for the oceans agenda.

First of all, as you're going to hear today, we had two major commissions do outstanding work over the past 18 months, 2 years. The two commissions that are going to present to you today, led by two very able people, one of the people that I consider my role model in Washington, Admiral Jim Watkins, who is a man of many talents, but certainly has the full credibility of a retired Navy admiral, among the other things that he advocates, has produced an outstanding document which I have had the pleasure of working to follow and to be a part of and to support when it was finally released last year.

And the second is the outstanding work done by the Pew Commission, headed up by Leon Panetta, who will be here today, also, and equally has done an outstanding job, from the private sector standpoint, in giving us a road map. And so the one aspect of what I saw or I see as a shortcoming over the past 30 years in Washington has been addressed.

We now have two road maps, two blueprints. And when you bring them together, there are many areas of commonality in those two documents and recommendations of the two commissions. In fact, after both documents and both commissions had reported to Congress, and the White House and the American people last year, a group of us, four of us, in fact, the four co-chairs of the Oceans Caucus, came together in a very rapid manner, put together a bill that I call Oceans 21. Oceans 21 is, in my opinion, the first significant comprehensive oceans legislation brought forward in my years in Congress. It's a beginning. It's not the end. It's a work in progress. We brought it out, even though we knew the end of Congress was near in the fall of this year, but we wanted to have a document in place that we could build on when the new Congress came into being in January of 2005. And that document will become a working document that can be added to, modified, changed and will be done in that regard based on the input of many of you in this room and the organizations that you represent here today. And so the commissions have given us the blueprint of where we need to go.

Now, over in the Congress, where I mentioned the disjointed oversight of oceans agenda items, we have begun to take our role and accept our responsibility. Several years ago, we formed the Oceans Caucus. I was happy to be a part of the organization of that effort, one of the founding members and current co-chairs of the Oceans Caucus, and that caucus is growing by leaps and bounds.

One of the other areas that you can assist us, as the new Congress organizes in January of next year, is to identify those members of Congress that are returning, and those new members of Congress just elected to make sure that they lend their names to the support of the Oceans Caucus, so that we develop a large, bipartisan coalition in Congress, covering all of those diverse committees and subcommittees that can help us put together the support for the legislative action that we think needs to occur, and can occur, in the next session of Congress.

The Oceans Caucus has regular updates and briefings for members. We have regular staff orientation sessions just by having a member of Congress lend his or her name. That means they have to dedicate one staff person to the oceans issue, to the oceans agenda, so that we have a working group of staff people inside the Hill community who have identified themselves as being those point persons in those congressional districts across America that are receptive to our ocean recommendations.

The other thing that we're doing, and I've had discussions with folks like Wayne Gilchrest and Jim Saxon on the Republican side, as well as the Speaker, we've had discussions with our Democrat counterparts, Tom Allen, Sam Farr, Steny Hoyer, on developing a way to begin to organize the oversight process of oceans legislation and oceans governance.

Now, that's going to be a more difficult task. We are currently going through that in the discussion of homeland security, where we ended up having 88 committees and subcommittees of the House and the Senate that can claim jurisdiction over homeland security. If you were to add up all the committees and subcommittees in the House and the Senate that can claim jurisdiction on the oceans, it's probably the same number, which means that almost 500 members of Congress in the House and the Senate, on one subcommittee or another, can claim that they have some jurisdictional oversight of our oceans agenda. And the problem with that is it's very difficult to get the push, to get the momentum to get major legislation through.

So one of the objectives of the Oceans Caucus over the next two years, besides growing our numbers, is going to be identifying specific ideas in both parties to convince the leadership, in the House, especially, we obviously can't control that of the Senate, to assist us in providing a streamlined process, perhaps even a select committee that would convene over the next two years on the oceans agenda.

One of my additional requests of the administration, which I first broached to the White House and to the President directly and his political advisers in mid-year this year, was the establishment and the convening of a White House Task Force on the Oceans. I am convinced that in 2005, as the President gives his response to the Commissions' recommendations, that he look at, seriously consider and announce the convening of a White House conference so that we can put some meat on the bone in terms of the recommendations of both commissions, response to the legislation that we've come out with in the Congress, and then a concrete plan of action to move forward with an oceans agenda.

So all of those items are really on the plate for 2005 and for the next session of Congress. We, in the Oceans Caucus in the Congress, have been working hard to sensitize the leadership in both parties in the House and in the White House on the need to make the oceans an opportunity, a challenge for us to take up as a nation next year. We will never have a better opportunity in our lifetime than we have right now based on the

work of the commissions, the development of the Oceans Caucus, the efforts in the Congress, in both Democrat and Republican parties, to move the ocean agenda forward.

The key challenge for us is to sustain that momentum, to develop linkages to as many members of Congress in the House and the Senate that we can possibly interact with and then to move the process forward by applying the appropriate pressure not in a partisan way because, as the four co-chairs discussed over and over again last year during the presidential campaign, we think the worst thing that could happen would be for the oceans agenda to become a partisan agenda of one party or the other. Rather, we want the oceans agenda to be an agenda of both parties, where leaders of both parties in both Houses, those in the White House and those that want to be in the White House, are solidly behind the kinds of ideas, the kinds of recommendations that are contained in the two Commission recommendations, and they are documented in the legislation that we put forward.

Now, besides the Oceans 21 legislation, and I think most of you are probably already aware of that legislation, and that is H.R. 4900, it has a number of specific provisions. I'm not going to go through them all with you today. You can pull it up on our website where you can pull up the bill itself. But it strengthens NOAA, it provides a national federal coordinating process, it calls for the development of a national plan and a policy that all of us can get behind, and has the Congress come/ together in a constructive way with the White House in implementing the oceans policy for the next several years.

That legislation is getting strong bipartisan support, will be a major focus of both of our conferences starting in January of next year, and our big push is going to get as many co-sponsors to move that piece of legislation forward. Now, again, it is a work in progress. We developed that bill in a very short period of time. We're looking for suggestions, ideas, comments, critiques, ways to strengthen it, maybe ways to further clarify it. That's one of the reasons why we wanted to come down today, on behalf of the four caucus co-chairs, to ask you to provide your input as we begin the new session of Congress on what additional changes you'd like to see in Oceans 21.

Another piece of legislation that I'm championing, and I've asked Tom Allen to be my lead co-sponsor, which he's accepted, is H.R. 5001, which is basically the Ocean and Coastal Observation System Act. I believe it's extremely important that we develop an international observation system. When I chaired the Research Committee for the defense of our nation and my job was to oversee all of the funding of the Office of Naval Research and the work of our Navy, I saw tremendous assets that not only are important for our military and for the security and operation of our Navy, but assets that offer tremendous opportunity for the environmental assessments that we need worldwide to assist us in better understanding climatic conditions and better understanding of what's happening to the global environment.

And so I'll be pushing very hard, with the support of the Oceans Caucus, on that companion legislation as an adjunct to Oceans 21, and I'm going to be pushing to get the support of my colleagues in both parties to move that legislation forward as well. And, again, that will be done in a bipartisan way.

You know, the opportunity we have here is a unique one. It was mentioned in the introductory comments that during my 18 years I have been heavily focused on the former Soviet Union, and I have, from my undergraduate degree days, when I got my degree in Russian and Soviet studies and learning the language to my early days in involving myself with the American Council of Young Political leaders, where I first met Steny Hoyer, where I first started working on issues involving former Soviet states.

Way back 14 years ago, when Steny and I started to do my Congress effort, which he and I still co-chair, the earliest topic that I can remember discussing with my Soviet Communist counterparts, soon to be leaders of the Democratic Reform Movement in Russia, involved the environment and the oceans. The earliest meetings we had were on the problems of the Soviet's disposal of their nuclear contaminants. One of my earliest friends, and a friendship that continues to this day in Russia, is Dr. Alexei Yablokov, who is one of the leading environmentalists in Russia, who chairs an environmental working group inside of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, who was chairman of the Yablokov Commission, who back in the era of Gorbachev documented the fact that over a period of three decades the Soviets had illegally dumped their nuclear waste and their used reactors in the oceans and the seas off of their coast.

And that effort, in working with the Russians, first the Soviets and then the Russians, continues to this day. But the point is that it was the oceans agenda that brought us together to develop friendships that today have us working on a more broader based agenda with our Russian friends. The Duma Congress initiative has expanded greatly to include areas of energy, security, health care, education, agriculture, science and technology, space. All of that evolved out of a common interest between the leaders in the former Soviet states and the leaders in America on the environmental agenda and expanding that to include other areas of mutual concern and cooperation.

I mentioned a moment ago that when I took the first and only congressional delegation into Pyongyang, and I might add I had to fight my own administration to take that trip, but as I traveled to Pyongyang, and for three days sat across the table from Kim Gui-gwon, their lead negotiator, we found reasons to discuss a common concern.

One of the areas that was open for discussion at the earliest possible time of our talks was a common agenda dealing with the oceans and the seas and the concerns of DPRK relative to their border security, to the concerns relative to their maritime exposure, to being able to use the seas for trade. And we agreed that we would continue that dialogue in future sessions when I go back to North Korea in the next several weeks

on my second trip, again, with a bipartisan delegation. The oceans and the maritime agenda will again be a part of our discussions.

And I'm convinced, based upon the mood and the sentiment of the discussions we had from Kim Jong il's top leaders on the first trip, that we can achieve a diplomatic peace in North Korea. But, again, one of the vehicles to open that dialogue is a discussion of the oceans.

I remember traveling to Communist China in the mid '90s. One of the friendships I developed was with the Minister of the Environment and the Agency called NEPA in China, whose name was Minister Shi, and he was considered the top environmentalist in Beijing. And what was our primary topic of concern? It was China's interest in the seas. It was China's relationship with its neighboring partners. It was the focus of the Chinese Navy on their efforts to build a broader Navy, a blue water Navy.

In fact, on two occasions, when I traveled to Beijing, I had the honor of speaking at the National Defense University of the PLA. And as I met with 400 of their senior military leaders, one of the topics that we discussed was the peaceful cooperation of our Navy and their Navy, the peaceful cooperation of our environmental groups and their environmental groups on finding common ways to cooperate on protecting the oceans, strengthening the oceans, dealing with issues like declining fish stocks, degradation of coral reefs, contamination of the oceans, ratification of the Law of the Seas Convention and a whole host of other issues. But, again, a would-be potential adversary of the U.S.—China—and a way that we can find common ground again was discussions of the oceans agenda.

In January and in March of this year, I took the first two delegations into Libya. When I stepped foot on the Tripoli tarmac, at the end of January of this year, again, with three Democrats and two other Republicans, the first Americans to set foot on that land in 39 years, we didn't know what to expect from the Libyans. We didn't know what to expect from Muammar Qadhafi. We had all of our meetings with the ministers and ended our three-day visit in a tent in the desert across the desert from Qadhafi's home that we had bombed back in 1986.

And as Qadhafi walked in the tent for these discussions, first-ever discussions with American elected officials, we thought to ourselves, what are we going to talk about? We have so much in disagreement. We have so many things that have been wrong with the relationship of Libya and America, Libya and the rest of the world? One of our first topics was a discussion of the Mediterranean in ways that once we got beyond the stalemate over their weapons of mass destruction program and their support of terrorism, we got into a constructive dialogue about how we could work together. Their Parliament, their Jamahiriya, which is their government, and our Congress.

At the end of that session, Qadhafi invited me to come back and address the Libyan people nationally on March the 2nd, which I did. Again, I took a delegation, and along with me I invited Senator Joe Biden, who arrived the day that we were leaving. Because of Senate votes, he couldn't join the delegation, but came over with us and was there to give the second day of speeches.

And, again, we talked about the need to move beyond the past, where America and Libya were arch enemies, where Libya was a pariah nation, a supporter of terrorism that had done some very dastardly things in the world to harm humanity. And we said that if Libya continued on the path of removing their weapons of mass destruction, if they continued to work with the free world on understanding the roots of terrorism and how we could work together, and if Libya continued to abide by those commitments made by Qadhafi publicly, then we, in fact, could establish an agenda of cooperation together.

On both of those trips, I spoke at el Fateh University, the largest university in Libya, to the students themselves, to the faculty, and the administration and the provost. And one of the topics we discussed as an early focus was a topic that focused on the environment and an oceans agenda. On Monday morning of next week, the first Libyan-American Economic Development Conference will take place in Tripoli.

Senator Conrad Burns, Solomon Ortiz and I will give the opening keynote speeches at 4 o'clock in the morning from the studio of the Rayburn Building because the Speaker called us back in for a lame duck session of votes. We would have been in Tripoli, Democrats and Republicans, building on that opening that's been provided in Libya.

And what I would say to you again is the ocean agenda is an agenda that allowed us to move that process forward. In July of next year, we have planned a conference in Tripoli that has already received the support of the Italian government, the British government, the United Nations and the U.S. government to have a major environmental agenda program in Libya of cooperation on the need to protect the Mediterranean and on Libya's need to have the cooperation of NGOs and entities from around the world to support them as they move toward economic development.

So, again, time and again, I have seen the oceans agenda not just be good for America because of the obvious, because of the economic impact, the environmental impact. I have seen the oceans and the oceans agenda become a vehicle to open doors to nations that in the past have been our adversaries or perhaps will be our adversaries in the future.

As a senior member of the Homeland Security and Armed Services Committee, someone who is concerned every day with our security and avoiding war and finding diplomatic solutions, let me say that I see the future of the oceans as perhaps one of the most important security efforts that I can focus on in my tenure in Congress.

If we have that global observation system that I think has to be one of our top agenda items internationally and which was a subject of a major international conference that I co-hosted with Vice President Al Gore back in 1998 on Capitol Hill, then we more fully understand the oceans, more fully understand the impact of phenomena like El Niño or La Niña, then perhaps we can understand where the next drought will occur, where the next torrential rain will occur which will lead to a flood because droughts and flooding oftentimes are the precipitators of actions of nations to take property, to move toward hostilities against neighboring entities. And if we can use a better understanding of the oceans to understand climatic change, then we actually can develop a process to predict when those phenomena will occur and perhaps avoid war and conflict.

So I see the oceans providing all of those support mechanisms for a civilized world, and that's why, in my tenure in Congress, as long as I'm in Washington, I will continue to press the support of the recommendations of the two commissions, the Oceans 21 bill that we've put together as a bipartisan team, working to convince this White House that a White House Conference on the Oceans is essential in the first half of next year, and that we, as a people, have a responsibility to make the oceans agenda America's agenda in the 21st century.

It's also a political unifier. I remember back in that conference in 1998, I had leaders from 35 nations, at that time I was, as I am today, Vice President of the Advisory Council On Protecting the Seas, which is ACOPS, a London-based group, and I was also Chairman of the Global Task Force on Oceans for GLOBE, Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment. And so in that capacity, I invited 35 nations to come to Washington for three days. The government sponsored the conference. Vice President Gore's office was a key player in that financial support. We had meetings on Capitol Hill. Many of you, in this room, I think, were involved, all of our NGOs were involved, 200 delegates were there.

And I remember specifically one day of the activities. We had a lunch in the Capitol—actually, it was in the Capitol—and the speaker was Newt Gingrich, who at that time was the Speaker of the House, and he talked about his vision for the oceans. And that night we had dinner for the delegates in Statuary Hall in the Capitol, and Vice President Gore was our speaker and did an outstanding job.

The following day was the end of the session, and I had comments put out for the various delegates to respond to what they thought about the conference. We developed what we called the Potomac Declaration, which was a series of recommendations that all 35 nations would look to implement. But the thing that struck me most was the delegates from these other nations saying to me, You know, Congressman, what was so amazing about yesterday was we heard Gingrich speak at lunch and Gore speak at dinner, and they talked about the oceans, and it was almost as if their speeches were written by the same person. They both had the same ultimate objectives. They first had the same ideas—one a conservative Republican, the other a Democrat Vice President, and yet their vision for the

future was one that was very close. And this came from foreign leaders who were giving their impressions of that day on the Hill.

As I have told the White House many times, the oceans agenda is a political unifier agenda. It can bring Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, urban, suburban and rural legislators together because it has common concerns that benefit everyone. I know that a lot of environmental issues split our Congress, sometimes along party lines, sometimes along environmental lines, and I am proud to consider myself a green Republican. But the oceans agenda brings everyone together.

Our task and our challenge for 2005 and the new session is we have brought you to the point of success. And when I say "you," I'm talking about the NGO community, I'm talking about the media, I'm talking about the oceanographic research community. But now it's your turn. The Commission reports are out there. The recommendations have been given. The Congress has already drafted initial legislation. The momentum is building. The Oceans Caucus is growing.

But for this truly to become a success in 2005 and 2006, it's going to require your action. It's going to require your efforts. It's going to require your sustained commitment. You've got to help us grow the size of the caucus in both parties. You've got to help us lean on the White House for the White House Conference. You've got to hold forums and workshops, as Brookings is doing today, and I applaud Brookings for taking a leadership role, and I hope you'll stay with us through the entire process. Because if you take up the challenge, we've given you the leadership, we've given you the vision. Leon Panetta, Jim Watkins, their reports are out there. Now, it's up to us to deliver. And if we do that, at the end of 2005, we'll be able to say what I said at the end of 2004, that 2005 was definitely the Year of the Oceans in America and around the world.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. WELDON: If you have a couple of questions, I will try to answer them. I can guarantee you one thing. I'm an expert on my own opinion.

[Laughter.]

MR. WELDON: If anyone has a question, just tell me who you are and what group you're with, and I'll be happy to try to answer your question for you.

Yes, sir?

QUESTIONER: Chris Mann, with the Center for Sea Change.

Congressman, you mentioned a possible Select Committee on the Oceans, and I know Wayne Gilchrest has been very interested in that. How important do you see that as being in moving this effort forward, in terms of the community, what they should place their priorities on?

MR. WELDON: If I were, as I am today, talking to the community about my recommendations, the first is, before the Congress convenes, to communicate with every member of the House to join the Oceans Caucus. And that might sound trivial. But when we get a member of Congress to lend his or her name to the Oceans Caucus, they don't have to give us any money—we're not asking for that—but they have to give us the name of a staff person. That staff person becomes our contact.

If we don't have contacts within the members of office, we don't have a way to have structural involvement of that member on the oceans agenda. So the number one priority for every NGO in this room and across the country is to help us grow the Oceans Caucus. That gives us a vehicle to network with, to bring the workshops, to take the field trips, to interact with the staff of the two commissions, to look at the recommendations, to sensitize, to become more well-versed in the issues that all of you know so well.

The second priority, for me, would be to help us convince the administration to move toward the creation of a Select Committee. And I make that second because, I'm going to be honest with you, that's going to be extremely difficult. I led the effort to form the Homeland Security Committee. I offered the resolution two years ago in the Republican Conference that passed unanimously. We wanted to make a full Authorization Committee, and we had to accept a Select Committee as an alternative, which really doesn't have the dollar jurisdiction that we really need to have. This session, we're moving for that full authorization status, with the Speaker's support.

It's important to begin the process, as Wayne Gilchrest has talked about, as Jim Saxon has talked about, as Tom Allen, and Sam Farr and I have talked about, of creating a Select Committee. Because if we create that dialogue, the Speaker might come back to us, along with Leader Pelosi, and say, Well, how about if we establish an ad hoc effort? That's a beginning. It's a movement toward consolidation and coordination of the oversight of the oceans agenda.

The ultimate goal that we have to shoot for is the eventual establishment of a coordinating legislative oversight body like a Select Committee. Whether or not we can do that in one year is still something that I'd rather not predict. So I would not discount that. I support that effort, but the bigger priority, the more immediate one, is growing the Oceans Caucus. Once we have over 250 members on the Oceans Caucus, then anything we do leadership in both parties have to listen to.

I'll give you a comparison quickly. I used to be a firefighter before I went to Congress. I was a volunteer fire chief. When I came to Congress 18 year ago, I told my staff, I'm going to form a Fire Caucus, and they laughed at me, "A Fire Caucus?"

"Yeah, to represent all of these firefighters in America, paid and volunteer."

And they said, "Come on, Curt. Washington, firefighters? Nobody is going to pay any attention."

That was 18 years ago. Over the past 18 years, the Fire Caucus, which I started, has been the largest caucus in the Congress, with 360 members. We formed a nonprofit 17 years ago called the Congressional Fire and EMS Institute, which has an annual budget of \$500,000, has a full-time paid staff off the Hill. Every spring we have a dinner where 2,000 leaders come from around the country. Every president comes to the dinner and speaks. Clinton came twice, Gore came, George W. Bush, George Bush's father. All the speakers, everybody comes every year of that event.

The bottom line is, since 2000, this is before 9/11, over the past four years, in a tough budget environment, we have authorized \$10 billion—\$10 billion—for firefighters across the country. The first program I authored in 2000. That was a year and a half before 9/11. So you can't say it's because of 9/11. In 2000, I authored the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. It was passed. In the past four years, we have appropriated \$2.6 billion to that program.

Imagine a \$2.6-billion increase for the oceans agenda. Is it possible? Absolutely. If the firefighters can do it, then the ocean community can do it. You've got to work the process, you've got to build a coalition. We're doing that. Now, you've got to help us bring it home. You've got the agenda out there, the recommendations. We're building you that base through the Caucus. I'm convinced, over the next two years, we can take the oceans agenda and turn it into reality if all of you are a part of taking up that challenge.

QUESTIONER: Congressman, my name is Mark Spalding, and I'm from the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Alaska Ocean's Program.

First of all, I would like to invite you to bring a bipartisan group to Alaska, as David Sandalow did last summer, and see half of America's coastline and over half of America's commercial fish catch.

But, today, I would like to ask you to speak a little bit more about what's your advice to the conservation community that looks at oceans issues to work with this administration on getting the recommendations of these commissions moved forward?

MR. WELDON: Thank you. First of all, I spent a week up in Alaska after the Valdez and traveled all through the coastal area and have been back several times since.

It's a beautiful state, and I'm a strong supporter of the work being done in Alaska and your organization.

I guess I will give you a comment that I use frequently when I speak around the country about Congress because it's hard for people to understand that one of the last criteria that we use to make decisions in Washington is logic. We are political animals. We are driven by what our constituents think are important. And we have a lot of logical things that we could be doing in Washington, a lot of things that are absolutely vital for America, a lot of things that are critical, that are important.

We've got so many things on that agenda that it's hard for individual members of Congress to focus on any one of those things unless their constituent base says this is what I want you to focus on.

My job, when I came to Congress and wanted to know about the firefighters, was to take that one group of small people in America and convince the Congress that it was important that they support them. Well, we've done that. We just passed a new bill last November called the SAFER bill, \$7.7 billion of authorization over the next seven years. Now, why did that happen? Yes, it was logical, but it was logical 20 years ago. It happened because we motivated the people who are involved at the grassroots level to interact and communicate with their elected officials that this was vitally important for them.

So what are my recommendations to the oceans community? It's the same recommendation I've given to Jim Watkins' group when he was the head of CORE, to the Consortium for Oceanographic Research, and I have given this speech probably four or five times, Jim, over the past five years. You've heard me say it. You know, if you look at the defense budget a lot of our oceanographic research institutions benefit from that research dollar. All of those institutions ought to be doing an outreach effort with all of their students, all of their faculty, all of their vendors about the importance of federal spending in oceanographic research. It's not just about those who belong to the League of Conservation Voters or the Sierra Club or the Defenders of Wildlife, it's those people who are involved in the oceanographic industry, ocean research, ocean commerce.

We've got to build a base of all of the concerns around the oceans and establish a common effort to raise the agenda. Now, a lot of those groups fight with each other, especially those involving commerce and the environment. One wants more restrictions, one wants less. Well, that's always going to be the case.

I remember when I organized the fire effort, I had the paid firefighters, and I had the volunteers. They're always at odds. And I said to them we're not going to be able to do anything for any of you unless you agree to come together with a common agenda, first of all, and then agree to disagree. And that's perhaps the most important message for the oceanographic community. You all need to come together as one entity concerned

about raising the awareness of the oceans and then agree to disagree on your individual concerns.

But if you come in, in a disjointed way, and if the Congress doesn't get the / bigger picture that we need to focus on the oceans as an item and deal with the oceans and even understand there are nuances, where different NGOs may have different agendas, that's okay. But first of all, we've got to raise this issue to national prominence. In my opinion, it should be one of the five top issues that the country deals with next year, but that's not going to happen unless we all get in the same boat and row together.

And so that's the number one priority I would give to the NGO community. Help us by coming together and establishing a common interest and focus on the oceans. You've got two outstanding documents to build on. You've got a Congress building a coalition to work with you. Take advantage of it. You do your part, and the rest will happen automatically.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. SANDALOW: Thank you, Congressman, for those excellent and really visionary remarks. The Congressman's comments on the role of the ocean agenda in promoting dialogue among adversaries, indeed, in promoting peace, is especially timely. One week from today, in Oslo, the Nobel Peace Prize is going to be awarded to an environmental activist, and this, I thought, was a superb first-hand testimony to the vision of the Nobel Prize Committee in awarding that honor to an environmental activist.

We have two extraordinary men who are about to speak. What we are going to do is hear about 20 minutes of presentation from each and then go up here, and we'll take questions from all of you.

Admiral Jim Watkins will start. He needs no introduction in this crowd, but I'll provide a quick one. He was a career Naval officer. He rose through the ranks to the top uniform position in the U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Operations. He was Secretary of Energy in the first Bush administration. He then helped found CORE, with offices located right in this building—I suspect he knows the Brookings cafeteria well—and then, of course, for the last several years, has led the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, doing that with remarkable distinction, winning widespread acclaim. We're delighted to have him here today—Admiral Jim Watkins.

[Applause.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: Thanks very much, David. What he didn't tell you, I was also the Chairman of the Presidential Commission on AIDS under Reagan. Why would

an admiral, particularly an antique maritime admiral, take over such a role? I said, "I didn't know how to put on a Band-Aid, Mr. President. I'm not sure I like doctors," and he said, "You're just the man we're looking for."

[Laughter.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: So, at any rate, he left out that one little bit. And I thought that was a tough commission. This was really tough because of the breadth and the depth of what we're talking about.

So I am delighted, David, that you set this agenda today for Brookings. I think it is extremely important to be here, also, with Curt Weldon, a long-time friend of the oceans I've worked with to get legislation passed on the Hill and so forth and also Leon Panetta here, who ran a wonderful commission. And many people don't know why Oceans Act 2000 passed. The reason it passed, after five years of intense effort on the part of the Senate and some members of the House, it passed because Leon put a prestigious group together to run a national ocean policy investigation, and that scared the people that had a hold on Oceans Act 2000, which finally passed in the year 2000.

So it takes that kind of pressure, it takes that kind of constituency interest. People were fed up with the fact that we weren't doing the kinds of things that Curt Weldon talked about this morning.

So, anyway, I'm going to start my presentation this morning on ocean policy with one of my favorite quotations. It's one that establishes a broad philosophical and moral foundation on which to discuss any of the many ecological crises now confronting the world. Of course, our focus today is on the national ocean and coastal ecology. So here's the quotation:

"When the ecological crisis is set within the broader context of the search for peace within society, we can understand better the importance of giving attention to what the earth and its atmosphere are telling us; namely, that there is an order in the universe which must be respected and that the human person, endowed with a capability of choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order for the well-being of future generations. I wish to repeat that the ecological crisis is a moral issue."

That was taken from a paper, entitled, "The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility," by Pope John Paul, II, 14 years ago.

So, now, 14 years later, I'll tell you why the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy was formed over three years ago by the Congress, why there is a clear ecological crisis, and what some of the Commission's important findings and recommendations are to meet our "common responsibility" to regress this crisis. However, let me provide you now with just a brief history of the Commission.

I already talked about the establishment of Oceans Act 2000, a critically important act very well put together in afterthought, as I look back on our Commission's work over the past three years, a thoughtful bill that included language, particularly in the Senate version of the bill, which was perfect. It was right on the mark and gave the rationale of why that act was so important.

Sixteen members came out of that independent bipartisan group, three-quarters of whom were selected by the Congress and appointed by the President. The President had four selections—an excellent group of people. We also were challenged to bring science advisers in. We had 26 of the finest minds in the country as our science advisers.

We held 16 public meetings. We did everything under FACA, the Sunshine in Government Act, which is the way to move a topic like this into the public view and not spend all of our time arguing how it was conducted. So the open process was vital to this because it touches the heart and soul of so many Americans. We made individual regional site visits to where the action was really being carried out. We had 450 witnesses to testify before us from all over the country, from all points of view.

We put out a preliminary report, on April the 20th, that was also called, "The Governors' Draft." We were required by the law to send it to the governors for comment before we prepared our final report, and we did that.

The comments from 37 governors and 5 tribal chiefs were received, and their views were taken seriously into account. You can see this stack up here. The top one is the basic report. The others are the appendices. Some of those appendices required by Oceans Act 2000 are brand new, such as the inventory of all marine facilities, public and private; the legal review, which isn't even there yet, but is another tome that is coming out very shortly, which is review of the 140 laws. You can't imagine what the discontinuity is between the laws.

And when Curt had talked about setting up Select Committees, it's not just a Select Committee for money, it starts with ecosystem-based management on the Hill to bring all of those entities together. Otherwise they're at odds with themselves. You can sue under the Endangered Species Act and countersue under Mammal Protection Act. Both lawyers are right. The judge makes the decision on what the policy is. That's not a good way to run the business.

So where are we today, then? Well, on September the 20th, we delivered our final report to the President and the Congress that you see up here on the stage, with all its appendices. The release of the final report triggered a 90-day clock for the President to submit to the Congress a statement of proposals to implement or respond to the Commission's recommendations.

We understand that the President intends to meet the December 20 deadline, and we remain hopeful that he will meet this challenge with a visionary response that draws heavily from the recommendations contained in an ocean blueprint for the 21st century in our report.

Similar to the recent 9/11 Commission Report, the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy centered on the need for a major overhaul of government structures and approaches. It's been 35 years since the bulk of our nation's ocean policy structure was created in response to the Stratton Commission. But those structures have been allowed, in the intervening years, to atrophy, giving rise to an outdated, Byzantine patchwork of confusing, and sometimes contradictory, federal and state authorities and regulations.

As the President himself said recently, "We have a changing world, and yet the fundamental systems haven't changed. They were created for the world of yesterday not tomorrow." Well, our commission fully agrees. And while he made these statements in the context of changes needed in the nation's tax code and Social Security program, these comments are equally applicable to the management of our oceans and coast as they were in homeland security.

This nation should respond to the new realities facing our nations, and coasts and Great Lakes, and now is the time to effect fundamental change, and I think Curt outlined the whole issue of continuing this positive momentum that is now underway. It's no secret that the nation's oceans and coasts are in serious trouble. In numerous reports and studies over the past couple of years, including the ones chaired by Leon and myself, have made that well-documented fact clear.

Right now, however, our commission is convinced that we still have a window of opportunity to reverse the damage, expand upon some promising opportunities and put a new national ocean policy in place, but there is no time to waste. Fortunately, some members of Congress have realized the importance of the threat to our oceans and coasts and have already introduced legislation, as you heard about earlier today. In fact, in the closing 108th Congress, there are approximately 63 ocean-related bills—42 in the House and 21 in the Senate—many of which reflect elements of our 212 recommended actions. I'd say, of all of those, about 10 percent are substantive bills, and they are very important bills, but the others need to be integrated into an ecosystem-based approach. However, given the very limited number of days left, clearly, no legislative action is expected until the start of the 109th.

It is our desire to see the ocean and coastal legislation included high on the list of priority action on the congressional agenda. The year '05 is going to be a telling year. My experience, as Secretary of Energy, was that you never want to push legislation in the even years, only in the odd years.

[Laughter.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: I know you understand that. So '05 is critically important for a bipartisan, solid set of new legislative efforts along the lines we have recommended, both the Pew Commission and the U.S. Ocean Commission.

As you all know, America's oceans, coasts and Great Lakes are an unequalled asset to the nation. They are the very source of the planet's life support. I don't know how many people really understand that. That's where the oxygen comes from and climate control.

You know, I was involved in the first real Convention on Climate Control, which was called CED at the time, but it's the same thing. And I thought the United States was poorly prepared for that. We did not come out with a lot of prestige as a result of that because advocacy drove without the scientific and technical underpinnings so essential to carry out or to see if we could carry out the advocacy. And so we needed to have in parallel something we didn't have, and that was an ocean science and technology component, internationally coordinated so we could move forward on what we know, what we don't know about the climate, and be sensible about what our actions are going to be.

Ocean-dependent industries, such as fisheries, tourism and marine trade, directly contribute more than \$117 billion annually and support well over two million jobs. But the economic activity and the broader expanse of coastal watershed counties accounts for nearly 76 million jobs, and over the \$4.5 trillion that Curt Weldon talked about annually of the gross national product or about half of gross national product.

So the relatively small footprint of coastal watershed counties, then, within which this economic activity takes place results in heavy environmental pressures on our coasts and its natural resources and the oceans are calling for help. We've allowed this to go too long now, and we're getting to the point that if we don't get on this now, five to ten years from now, it's going to be unrecoverable in many areas.

Unfortunately, through an inattention, inefficient information and lack of urgency, we have degraded water quality, depleted fisheries, despoiled recreation areas, drained wetlands, endangered our own health and security and compromised the economic viability of our oceans and coasts. Other than that, we've done a hell of a job.

[Laughter.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: So, rather than continue on this path and deal with problems piecemeal as we do now, we need a comprehensive national ocean policy, grounded in an understanding of ecosystems which address the complex interrelationships among the land, the ocean, the air, all living creatures. And I'm saying,

in all living creatures, I mean also including humans. I know that's a strange statement to make. But I think, unless—

[Tape change: T-1A to T-1B.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: —socioeconomic aspects of our decisionmaking, we're going to keep running into hurdles that we can't jump over. We've got to be sensible about the balance. And we were told by the Congress to balance economy with environment, and we think we've done that in our report.

The new ecosystem-based management approach which we are recommending will lead to better decisions that protect the environment, while promoting the economy and balancing multiple uses of our ocean and coasts. In its final report, the Commission identified three major categories of recommendations, each of which is critical in supporting the transition towards an ecosystem-based management approach and vital to restoring and maintaining ocean and coastal health.

First, we need to create a new national ocean policy framework to streamline and improve how the government makes and implements decisions. And I'll talk a little bit more about that in a minute.

We also need to strengthen science and generate high-quality, credible, accessible information. When we mention data and databases, it's a very boring thing, and people's eyes roll back in their head. A virtual common database, with thousands of disparately prepared and poorly integrated data systems, maybe NOAA has eight systems alone, but other nations in the world and our own private sector has databases, these can be integrated—disparate databases can be brought together. We have the capability of doing that today. We know even the place to do it. It's a virtual thing. It doesn't mean that we have one center in the world. It merely means we can pull it together.

And why is data so important? Because from that data useful product can be delivered, products that the Southeast, and the Northeast, and the Northwest, and the Southwest, and the South can all grab on to, internationally they can grab on to it. So we need to build that database that is accessible, that's open and that's fully integrated, and that can be a tremendous help. It can be the glue almost that binds this ecosystem approach together.

We need to greatly enhance ocean education and inspire future leaders and instill citizens with a strong stewardship effort. We have a strong section on education. It's a topic that gets a lot of rhetoric, but very little substance under it. There are 70 recommendations to bring our society up in its scientific understanding of the world around us. We don't want to make them scientists. We just want them to understand how to make good decisions based on the best information available.

So let me take a few minutes to expand on the Commission's governance recommendations, since the reform of ocean and coastal management at the federal level is of utmost importance. And you heard Curt Weldon talk about this.

If you did all of the governance things alone, would the world be a lot better in the future? Probably not. So I don't want to overstate the importance of governance, but unless you have a governance structure that understands ecosystems and an approach which the federal government is not qualified to execute today, then I think you'll begin to understand how important governance is. So it's a package deal. All of the other things to go forward need to be done under a new structure.

So we've said there should be a National Ocean Council, an Assistant to the President for National Ocean Policy. We said there should be a Presidential Council of Advisers on Ocean Policy. That is a nonfederal group fed by the governors, the local people, the NGOs and the others who ought to play in the game up front in the planning process not after the fact by a top-down directive. That's the complaint we heard across the nation, uniformly—get us in the planning. We have to carry out the work.

Regional organization is important. The regions themselves have to come alive and start talking with each other and so do our federal labs that are in those regions. They don't talk to each other either. So the President, by Executive Order, can bring them together. And we're asking the governors to say pull these various disparate groups together. This is just up in the Northeast alone. These are the groups that we would say form a regional organization on this and get a common ground—Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System, a terrific program, Northeast Fisheries Management Council, the Regional Response Team, the Intergovernmental HAZMAT Response Team, Coastal America, Northeast Regional Implementation Team, New England Regional Water Quality Program, New England Regional Monitoring Collaborative, New England Interstate Regulatory Cooperation Project, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission.

Every region has all of these kinds of entities out there that need to be pulled together so that, if we're going to take any consistent-based approach, they can bring their pleas to Washington through the Advisory Council to the President and get on with it.

We also have said you need to strengthen the federal agencies. NOAA, in particular, has to be strengthened along ecosystem-based lines, and that's underway. That's underway in the Congress of the United States. They are serious about it. It's a bipartisan effort, and they're going to do that, and that's absolutely vital.

If that's done, then a phased approach—we call it Phase 2—would be to begin to consolidate from other federal agencies those functions that clearly ought to be in NOAA, EPA, Interior. Because right now it's a hodgepodge. And so we're saying, if you do all of that, then you're probably leading in five to ten years to something like a Department of

Natural Resources, which many nations in the world have already adopted. And that's where the ecosystem really is brought together in a real way.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the international leadership. We have strongly proposed, and we started this on the first day of our meeting to agree to the Convention of the Law of the Sea and do it now. It's urgent. We should be at the table of a whole host of environmental issues. We should be at the table when the Russians claim extension of their continental shelf into the oil and gas regions of the Arctic. They just happened to extend themselves out a little bit.

We ought to be at the table arguing those things. The long-liners in the Pacific, we deny fishing because of bycatch or sea turtle, China is not exempt from that, Japan, Korea.

So what are we talking about here? We're talking about something of vital interest to the United States, and it's been agreed to by three consecutive presidents. Once we ironed out the deep seabed mining aspects of it, which were confusing, in the early part of the '80s, it's all over. Can we get it to the floor of the Senate? No. Two people have a hold on it. Now, I don't understand how that set of rules can sustain itself.

John McCain said in a hearing that I was a participant in, a witness in on the oceans after the preliminary report came out, told me in that exchange we had on this very issue that if they put that on the Senate floor today, it would pass 95 to 5. Now, how can somebody hold up something like that, that's pushed by the President and everybody else? So we ought to accede to that Law of the Sea Convention at the earliest opportunity next year because things are happening there. Amendments to change the Law of the Sea Convention are there, and we should be at the table. We should not only be at the table, we should take a lead at the table.

So I focused my comments primarily on governance today, but I want to make it clear that an effective, coordinated and comprehensive ocean policy will require action in each of the three cross-cutting areas I highlighted earlier. I don't want to put them on any scale that this is more important than this. They are all important because you can't do it unless you govern properly.

By rising to the challenge and addressing the many activities that are degrading the continent at its edges, America can protect the environment of the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes—notice I say "oceans, coasts and Great Lakes." Our first attempt talked about the ocean. The coastal people went bananas. You've got to bring in coast because we don't think your talk about the oceans is other than the blue ocean, and we have a coastal problem, and we agreed with that. So, now, it was oceans and coasts. Well, after the hearings on the Great Lakes, you can imagine the angst that pertained at the time, and we now say "oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. Oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. Oceans, coasts and Great Lakes."

[Laughter.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: Isn't that right, Leon? And it is important. In fact, we decided not to hold the Great Lakes portion of our hearing in the Northeast. We said, no, we're going to hold it separately. That was very important. They are really fired up about this up there.

They know they have a connection with the oceans of the United States, and they are very important—the largest body of fresh water in the world, and we need to understand all that. They have the invasive species problems as well as everybody else does. They also know that that whole section of the world is feeding nutrients into the Mississippi, giving rise to the dead zone. So they are well aware of that. But the jurisdictional problems associated with managing that is what we are saying needs to be changed to an ecosystem-based approach. You can't do it by piecemealing the way we do today.

If we do this, then, and protect the environment of the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes, create jobs, increase federal revenues, enhance security, expand trade and ensure ample supplies of energy, minerals, food and lifesaving drugs will emerge from that. Wise action today, based on the best-available science, can restore what has been lost and create even greater benefits, but the clock is ticking and a positive and comprehensive response from the administration and the Congress is a vital first step toward badly needed change.

It's time to take a hard look at our 212 recommendations and those of the Pew Commission and formulate a coherent, comprehensive, and effective national ocean policy before it's too late. The oceans are among nature's greatest gifts to us. And if the President and the Congress follow the Commission's lead, we can reclaim and renew that gift for ourselves and for our children, and if we do the job right, for those whose footprints will mark the sands of beaches from Maine to Michigan to Hawaii long after ours are washed away.

So my challenge to those of you from Brookings here today is simply this; that through this highly prestigious and respected institution, you monitor responses from the White House, the Congress, the governors and other entities to which we assign specific responsibility.

And by the way, we've assigned every single recommendation a cost, and we said who ought to carry it out. That's all summarized in our report, and we did that to get around the issue of, yeah, but, Watkins, you don't have enough money to do these things. Yeah, well, you're really—who's going to do it? Who's going to really pick up the baton and run with it?

Well, we're saying who picks up the baton and runs with it, and how much you pay, and it doesn't cost an arm and a leg. One quarter of a farm subsidy we're willing to throw out there to get elected, and we're not willing to put a billion and a half, as we say we should do, as a start-up to double the research base and to do other things? And much of that money goes back to the states as well because they are a partner in this and have to be in it. So we've put all of that in there, specifically, because we were challenged by a lot of people that you haven't put the costs in sufficient detail for the Congress to act. Oh, yes, we have now. They've got it all, and I think that it has been well received up there.

We also need to inspire business and industry leaders and other influential stakeholders to effect the changes proposed in the Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century. Brookings can also play a substantive role here as well, for broad and active support across the full spectrum of public and private stakeholders and the support of influential organizations such as Brookings is essential to generate the public and political will to meet our common responsibility to treat the ecological crisis facing our oceans and coasts as a critically important moral issue.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. SANDALOW: Thank you for those wonderful and thoughtful remarks and for all your work.

Another man who needs no introduction is Leon Panetta, a member of Congress for 16 years. He rose to many leadership positions, including Chair of the House Budget Committee, he was Chair of the Office of Management and Budget, White House Chief of Staff. I remember, Leon, sitting in your office in the West Wing as a new White House staffer, something that was much more memorable for me than it was for you, I'm sure.

He has served with remarkable dedication and distinction as Chair of the Pew Oceans Commission and is Director of the Leon and Sylvia Panetta Institute for Public Policy in Monterey Bay.

Leon Panetta.

[Applause.]

MR. PANETTA: Thank you very much, David, for the kind introduction, and, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for inviting me here to participate in this session on the oceans. I'm honored for several reasons:

One, Brookings has given me the opportunity to come back to Washington. And while coming back to Washington is not as pleasant an experience as it used to be—

[Laughter.]

MR. PANETTA: —I do have the comfort of knowing that I can get back on a plane and go back to California. But I thank you for that opportunity.

I am honored because of Brookings. This is an Institute that I've had the opportunity to work with a number of people that have been involved with Brookings. Brookings was a think tank before everybody thought about establishing think tanks, and now you've got think tanks on the left and think tanks on the right, but Brookings has always been there, hopefully, being the kind of objective institute for knowledge and information that it's always been. And so I pay tribute to all of you, particularly those involved with policy side of Brookings, for the great work that you do and the great contributions you make to try to improve policy in this country.

I'm also honored to share this platform with Admiral Watkins. He is a distinguished public servant, someone who's given his life to public service in this country in many different aspects, and he's always done a remarkable job in providing the kind of leadership that is so important to trying to find solutions to the problems that confront us. I want to pay tribute to him for the great work he did on the U.S. Commission and also for working with our commission, on a very cooperative basis, to try to establish a common set of recommendations here that both commissions arrived at.

He is a good steward of our oceans, he's a good steward of our democracy, and all of us are focusing today on the need to be good stewards of this great, wonderful resource that is such an important treasure to the world, its beauty, wildlife that is part of the oceans, the wonderful and beautiful scenery that is attached to our oceans, the economics, the resources that are part of it, and most of all the fact that it relates to life itself.

It is very much a part of the cycle of life. Almost everything that we looked at reminds us of how important the oceans are to everything that is living—to our health, to our nutrition, to air we breathe, to the climate that surrounds, us to our economy. We're looking at a resource that is about \$117 billion that comes to our economy by virtue of ocean resources—two million jobs associated with our oceans, important to our recreation, and indeed important to our very soul. John Kennedy said it is the salt in our veins, and it's true.

Seventy-one percent of our service is our oceans, so large that, in fact, it creates a sense that somehow the ocean can heal itself. For that reason, we've often taken our oceans for granted because our oceans are so large that no matter what the problems are we always have a sense that they can cure themselves, but they can only heal themselves if we heal ourselves and the way we behave with regards to our oceans.

There is a fragile relationship here between life in the sea and life on earth, and we have to understand that fragile relationship, and we have to understand the fact that it

demands that we take action to protect our oceans because, indeed, it does relate to life not only in the ocean, but life on earth itself.

We now have, it seems to me, two national commissions that have very much arrived at the same conclusions with regards to our oceans; that this great resource that I talked about, that this important relationship between life in the sea and life on land is threatened, and that our oceans are, indeed, in crisis as we speak today. Significant policy changes have to be made if we are going to protect, and restore and renew that resource for future generations.

These are the facts. And to a large extent, the role of the two commissions, through the science that both commissions implemented and looked at, arrived at the same scientific conclusions. These are two very different commissions. The Pew Oceans Commission had a broad cross-section of members from the political arena, from science, fishermen, people from the conservation community. It was a broad cross-section, as was the U.S. Commission, two very independent commissions.

I don't think neither Admiral Watkins or myself on our own could have in any way determined how these commissions were going to arrive at a conclusion because we were dealing with very independent people, and that's okay. Everyone had to work their way to the final conclusions that we presented. But we both came the same conclusion, which is that our oceans are in crisis.

What are the findings, the key findings? Our commission pretty much focused on the wildlife along our oceans, in our territorial waters, but the fact is that what we discovered is pretty much the case across the world.

We are losing our fisheries. The figure that is most astounding is the fact that 90 percent of the big fish in the ocean are gone. Fisheries now are at historic lows. Whether you're talking about cod or haddock, flounder or whether you're looking at other species, we are now seeing fisheries at historic lows in terms of the abundance that was once there.

Pollution is increasing along our coastlines. We are losing two-thirds of our coastal waters. Two-thirds of our coastal waters have been degraded by virtue of pollution and this increase in nutrients that flow into our coastal waters and create this process that eventually results in these dead zones that we're seeing—huge dead zones, obviously, in the Gulf that have been confirmed time and time again, and we're now seeing dead zones appearing, in addition, on both the West Coast and the East Coast, the result of pollution; 18,000 beaches have been closed temporarily, some for even longer periods because of pollution; and the Academy of Sciences said that 10.9 million gallons of oil, which is the equivalent of the Exxon Valdez spill, flow into our coastal waters every eight months as a result of runoff.

So, clearly, we are seeing an increased threat from pollution. We have taken steps to deal with direct sources of pollution, but in many instances we fail to deal with the indirect sources that are continuing to flow into our coastal waters and, as I said, destroying these important nurseries for our fisheries.

Coastal development is something that obviously those of us who live along the coast experience every day. We're looking at 54 percent of our population that lives on 17 percent of the land. And we're looking at something like 25, 27 million more people that are going to move to our coastlines over these next 20 years. So we're going to increase the population growth along our coastlines, and that means that ultimately we're going to pave over more and more of the area that adjoins our coasts. We've lost 20,000 acres of wetlands. We lose 20,000 acres of wetlands each year. Ninety percent of our historic wetlands are virtually gone because of coastal development. So the very areas that are the important breeding grounds for our fisheries are largely being destroyed.

And as Admiral Watkins has said, when you look at the governance side of our oceans, it is chaos, it is conflict. We are looking at 60 committees in the Congress, 140 laws, multiple jurisdictions that not only involve the federal government, but the state government and local government, oftentimes in conflict, oftentimes providing disparate advice as to how you deal with the oceans and usually winding up in a federal court in which a judge has to make a decision as to what ocean policy ought to be. That is not an effective way to govern our oceans.

And so when you look at all of the, combined with the additional threats that we see from problems like cruise ship discharges, aquacultural discharges and aquaculture is becoming a huge industry not only here, but in the rest of the world, when we see the problems involved with climate change adding to those issues as well, then there is no question but that we are looking at oceans that are in crisis.

The recommendations of both commissions make one thing very clear. It is not too late to deal with this problem. While these are serious issues and they are serious problems, and these problems continue to grow every day, it is not too late if we act now. If we're willing to take action now, we can prevent the permanent damage that can happen to this great, wonderful resource.

What are the key recommendations? Admiral Watkins touched on these. And as I said, I think one of the sources of great pride for both of us is how these two commissions very much came to the same conclusions as to what needed to be done here.

The first is the need for a National Ocean Policy Act. The reason that's important is this country has really not in law made a commitment to protecting our oceans. There is no law on the books that says it is the responsibility of the United States, as a public trust, to protect our oceans. We've done that with Clean Air, we've done that with Clean Water. We have not done that with our oceans.

And all of the other recommendations that are important that both commissions have presented, I don't think we're going to be able to achieve any of that unless there is that fundamental commitment in this country that our oceans have to be protected. The only way that's going to take place is with the passage of an Ocean Policy Act that commits the country to protecting our oceans.

As the Admiral has pointed out, both of us are concerned about the problem of better coordinating policy in Washington because there are so many different agencies, so many different departments that are involved with the oceans, all pretty much doing their own thing. So there has to be some ability to coordinate that. A council at the White House is certainly one way to approach this. I have seen that happen effectively. If there's presidential leadership, it can happen effectively. If the presidential leadership is not there, then obviously a council isn't going to make that much difference.

So the important thing is to try to bring these departments and agencies into the same room to at least talk about the kind of common problems and common policies that have to be implemented.

We recommended establishing NOAA as a separate agency. We're willing to try to give NOAA the kind of responsibility that it has to have to bring together some of these programs that are out there in Interior, Agriculture and some of the other agencies, bring those together so that there is one agency that is responsible for ocean policy at the federal level.

Regional Ecosystem Councils. We recommended that and, again, the Admiral has commented on that. You need to bring together the federal, state and local agencies that deal with the oceans so they can sit at the same table, develop a common plan to what needs to be done to protect our oceans and implement that common plan at the federal, state and local level. If they aren't sitting in the same room, if they aren't talking about the same problems, then we will continue to have conflicting guidance with regards to governing our oceans. So we recommended the establishment of these Ecosystem Councils in the key areas along our coastline as a way to bring together those agencies to do that.

We need a sustainable fisheries policy. We need to get away from single species management. Single species management is basically a crisis approach to dealing with our fisheries. When fisheries get in trouble, then we respond, and we try to deal with that problem, it creates problems for other fisheries. Then, when that happens, we respond to that crisis. So it's very much a crisis-oriented approach to dealing with our fisheries that doesn't work.

And so our recommendation is that we really try to deal with our fisheries in a sustainable way that looks at all fisheries and that implement science as a way to identify the concerns involving our issues and separate science from the allocation process of

deciding how you go after these fisheries and that there be the important tools used to restore fisheries, tools like the use of sanctuaries and reserves as a way to implement areas where these fisheries can restore themselves;

Obviously, strengthen pollution laws, develop some common standards here. Some of the states have already implemented laws with regards to cruise ships. Very frankly, the federal government needs to apply a national standard when it comes to cruise ship discharges. The same thing is true for ballast discharges. The same thing is true for runoff. The same thing is true with regards to aquaculture.

And, again, I join the Admiral in emphasizing the importance of investing in education, research and science. We need the information that is so important to making the decisions here. The United States has 4.5 million square miles of ocean under our jurisdiction. It is an area of jurisdiction 20-percent larger than our land area that are part of our oceans. And yet we spend about \$755 million—\$755 million—it's less than 4 percent of the basic research budget that goes to our oceans. It is a disgrace. It is a disgrace.

And so we, too, recommend doubling that investment, at least to try to get it up. For goodness sakes, if we're willing to spend billions of dollars in search of life in other worlds, we ought to be willing to spend a few billion more to try to preserve life on this planet.

The bills have been introduced in the House, as Curt Weldon pointed out, and we think that's a very important step that they've introduced Oceans 21. We know there's an Ocean Caucus that really is concerned about this issue. It is very important, in the end, that the President respond to the recommendations of the National Commission and hopefully provide the important leadership to implement some of these recommendations.

I would also urge that, at the same time, the states, frankly, should not wait for action at the federal level. The states ought to begin to implement their own approaches. California has already done this. Governor Schwarzenegger has indicated that the state is committed to protecting its ocean. Seven bills passed in the legislature that dealt with things like cruise ship discharges, controlling trawling off of the California coast, establishing the ocean as a trust at the state level.

States need to streamline and consolidate their oversight. They need to promote ecosystem planning. And, again, I stress that the best example we saw of that was in the Chesapeake Bay, where some six states, plus the District of Columbia, came together to develop a common set of goals that I think have ultimately helped improve the Chesapeake Bay. We need to replicate that in other areas as well, science-based decisionmaking and obviously developing, at the same time, some reliable source of funding for all of this.

The global issue is equally important. The United States has to show leadership that we can deal with our oceans so that we can sit at the table and convince the rest of the world about the important steps that need to be taken. And, clearly, the first step to doing that is to establish some credibility by passing the Law of the Seas. It is, again, incredible that a country like ours, in which there is a great deal of support, is not willing to bring that issue to a vote in the Senate for whatever reasons. We have to take that step if we're going to have any credibility sitting at the table with the rest of the world.

The last point I would make is that, for all of the groups that are associated with the oceans, they simply have to unify their effort with regard to these issues. I know that the different groups that are involved with the oceans all kind of figure that if they focus on their particular niche issue as a way to try to increase their membership, that ultimately that's the way to basically not only increase their membership, but to emphasize their particular issue.

But I have to tell you, if everybody just emphasizes their particular issue and doesn't come together in some kind of unified approach to protect our oceans, then we are going to be fighting each other in this process for a long time. The worst thing that could happen here is to have a number of organizations all fighting for different pieces here without coming together for the common effort to establish and pass an Ocean Policy Act.

I have often said—and I think the Admiral agrees with this—that we govern in our democracy through leadership of crisis. If leadership is there, we can avoid crisis, but make no mistake about it, if leadership is not there and willing to take the risks of leadership, then crisis will dominate what happens. I think too much of what we do in this country is to govern by crisis. Whether it's energy policy or health care policy or budget policy, we largely tend to allow crisis to drive issues there. And as a result, I think it undermines trust in the basic institutions of government itself.

I was born in Monterey, California. When I was a kid, Monterey was the sardine industry, a sardine center. And as a young boy, I can remember walking on Cannery Row, and that whole community was devoted to that industry. In the late '40s and '50s, the sardines were virtually wiped out, and that entire industry collapsed. And families that were dependent on that, businesses that were dependent on that were destroyed.

I don't want to see that happen in other communities around the world. And for that reason, I think it is very important, then, that we address these issues, this crisis.

One hundred years ago, Teddy Roosevelt recognized the importance of protecting our land and said that it is a national trust to set aside those areas of our land for future generations. One hundred years later, we have a responsibility to establish the same kind of trust when it comes to our oceans.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. SANDALOW: Thank you, folks, for your wonderful comments. We have both of you gentlemen until about 11:15. They have generously agreed to stay a little bit longer to take some questions. And I'm going to take the moderator's prerogative to open with one question for each and then throw it open to the floor and start with Admiral Watkins.

I would just ask you to expand on your thoughts on governance, Admiral, and, in particular, to put yourself in the seat of a skeptic or to respond to a skeptic and somebody who might say to you the President already has a coordinator for oceans, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality. To the extent that these are economic issues, there is a National Economic Council. To the extent that we are trying to deal with NOAA, the congressional jurisdictional issues are just too hard to take on.

What, both from a substantive standpoint and from a political standpoint, for decisionmakers who will be grappling with these issues in the next several weeks and beyond, how would you respond to that skeptic?

ADMIRAL WATKINS: Well, first, I want to say that if we were doing such a wonderful job, and if our current system works so well, why are we in this crisis? Why do we have this emerging? Why do we have this commission? Why do we have two commissions coming in? And it's not a factor of this administration. It's everything that's happened since the Stratton Commission. It's allowed to atrophy, as I said.

So we're in a situation where will the status quo work? And our commission feels it will not and cannot work. The CEQ was established, this is the Council on Environmental Quality in the White House, under the National Environmental Protection Act, under NEPA. Does it have the broad mandate that you need in that office to do the job? No. Is that Assistant to the President the right one? How about Domestic Policy Council Assistant? We don't know which, and we didn't say. We just said an assistant to the President.

And why is that important? It's important because if the President wants to do this, frankly, no other structural change is probably necessary, other than getting Congress to pass some kind of comprehensive legislation. The President only has to say, "I want to do it," and tell his OMB Director, "Get \$700 million next year and ramp up the way the Commission has recommended to \$3.5 billion over current appropriations over the next five years." That's not a big deal. If he wants to do it, he can do it.

President Bush told me, after a lot of exchange between ourselves and the Department of Defense, he said, "I want to clean up the mess of the 50 years of bomb building in the United States. I want to clean up the environmental mess."

I said, "Okay. It's going to take \$6 billion—today, we're only spending \$800 million—over the next five years to build up."

He said, "Do it." The Secretary of Defense was very upset by it because it came out of his account. Well, that's the breaks.

[Laughter.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: So it takes the President to say, "I want to do this." That's all he has to say. He doesn't have to get into the detail. We don't have to all agree to do everything the way we recommended. We can do it in a number of ways. The Senate has already looked at a bill that is the Hollings-McCain bill which is excellent. It has some great ideas in there. Is it broad enough in itself? I don't think so. But it's broad within the jurisdiction of the that particular committee, yes.

So these are the kinds of things that are so important, and I just have to say that I believe that unless we put some real legal underpinnings into what we're doing to manage this in a new way, that it will not sustain itself over time. It will drift from administration to administration, and I believe it needs to be locked in right now. So that's why I say it's important, and it can be done in a number of ways. Yes, the criticism has been there. We don't need another bureaucracy, we don't need another this, that, and the other thing. Okay. Fine. What do you recommend then? You can't be down on everything? How about being up on something? We're up on it.

MR. SANDALOW: Thank you.

Leon, any words you have on that, and then I wondered if you'd just share a few thoughts on the State of California, which you mentioned briefly in your talk, but there have been some exciting developments there. To what extent are California activities at this point a model for the rest of the nation?

MR. PANETTA: Well, obviously, with regards to the reorganizations that we have recommended, I know the turf wars on Capitol Hill and the fact that everybody is extremely protective of their jurisdiction, they're extremely protective of the programs that they're involved with, and nobody likes to give up any jurisdiction.

If you had asked me a few years ago whether we would have a Homeland Security Agency that would be developed, I would have said there's absolutely no chance that you're going to be able to combine those agencies, particularly the Coast Guard, et cetera, into a Homeland Security Agency because of the turf wars that are involved with

Capitol Hill. But a crisis happened, obviously. And because of September 11th, combined with presidential leadership, ultimately, it conveyed a sense that we had to do something so that we didn't repeat the mistakes of the past.

It is happening right now with the 9/11 Commission in the recommendations they're making with regard to our intelligence structure, and the basic argument is, if you want to stick to the status quo and gamble with the status quo, don't make any changes. And so I guess I would say the same thing with regards to the oceans. If you basically don't want to make any changes in what happens with the ocean, just do what you're doing now.

We have a crisis, we documented the crisis that's taking place, if you're going to wait for a September 11th to happen with regards to our oceans, the fact is it is happening. It's happening with destroyed fisheries. It's happening with pollution. It's happening with the loss of wildlife that's taking place. We just need to get that message across.

I think, ultimately, look, in the end, it comes down to one of two things. As I said, we can operate by crisis or you can operate by leadership. If we wait for the crisis, if we wait for the next Exxon Valdez, if we wait for the next kind of horrible incident to take place with regards to our oceans, that's one way to govern.

The better way to govern is by leadership, and so it really does demand, it seems to me, that if the President recognizes, and I think this is a win-win for the administration when it comes to our oceans, Curt Weldon is right. This is one issue, when it comes to our oceans, where you really do have a great deal of bipartisanship. It doesn't involve the kind of divisions that have taken place in other parts of the environmental arena. And so this is a great opportunity to kind of build national unit with regards to protecting a resource that I think is in everybody's interests.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: David, can I follow up on California?

MR. SANDALOW: Of course.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: I have to say even more about the positive response out in California.

If you'll grab a hold of a copy of the latest Coastal States Organization's comment on our final draft, look at their California input. This was signed by the Secretary for Environmental Protection, as well as the Secretary for Natural Resources, two powerful, fine people, supported by a governor. I could not have written a better response than that from the governor. And they're all good responses. This whole thing here is very positive. That's what 37 governors say. It's in crisis. We need to change the way we're managing, but all we wanted to do with you, Mr. Government, is help us do this. Don't give us an

unfunded mandate. Let's get serious about it. Let's get us involved in the process, and that's what we're trying to do. So we're getting very good response from the states— Governor Romney, Massachusetts, terrific input; Governor Bush, very important. I think you can probably understand why Florida is important.

[Laughter.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: And so they have given us very positive responses, and that needs to be taken into account here not something that's just an ideological position inside this Beltway. This is a national issue that has to be addressed.

MR. PANETTA: Mentioning California's situation, I think that's probably a good reflection of what can happen if the governor takes an interest in an issue and conveys that message to the legislator. We went up and testified. The governor actually had a conference on the oceans. We testified at it. Other groups testified about the steps that needed to be taken. We urged that the state adopt an ocean policy approach. The individuals in the Cabinet that the admiral mentioned were willing to put that effort together. People in the legislature were willing to put that effort together.

And because of that common support, this was really very much a bipartisan issue, supported in a bipartisan way in the legislature, supported by the governor, and ultimately, as I said, seven bills passed that the governor signed all dealing with the oceans, the most important of which is that it establishes the ocean as a trust that the state is out to protect.

So all of those steps were taken. Why? Not because they waited for the crisis to happen, but because they were willing to exercise bipartisan leadership.

MR. SANDALOW: Thanks.

Any questions, and please give your name and affiliation.

Jerry?

QUESTIONER: Jerry Leap with the National Environmental Trust.

I wanted to take a moment to thank both you, Admiral Watkins, and you, Congressman Panetta, for your critical leadership on these panels to bring these issues to the forefront. A lot of us in this room owe a lot to you and your efforts for bringing forth these reports.

I also appreciate your specific advocacy for Law of the Sea. It's an issue that a lot of us in this room feel very strongly about and thought you were all right on point.

While Congressman Weldon did point out that in the long term, yes, we do need to build the oceans base, we are faced with the real short-term issue here which is every indication we hear from the administration in advance of the December 20th announcement, is we're going to see a lot of repackaging of current efforts, little new initiatives.

And I was wondering, Admiral Watkins, and to the extent you can comment on this Congressman Panetta, do you have any suggestions on what we, in this room, could do over the next few weeks to try and get more substantive announcement out of the White House? Because we view this as a real critical moment on this issue, and we also look forward to working with both of you as we work to achieve enactment of these recommendations in the years ahead.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: The real pro to answer that was the former Chief of Staff in the White House. I refer to Leon.

[Laughter.]

MR. PANETTA: Why do I feel I've been set up?

[Laughter.]

MR. PANETTA: Look, I think the most important thing that you could do is to, as with regards to everything, it comes down to the political pressure that's brought to bear in the White House that this is an important issue and needs to be addressed.

And as you can imagine, there are a lot of issues that are big issues right now that involve war, that involve the economy, that involve a lot of the problems that the administration is now trying to deal with in terms of who replaces who in the Cabinet. All of those are probably taking center stage with regards to the White House. And this becomes kind of an issue that is a back-burner issue that simply is one that has to be responded to because of the war, but not one that I think is probably at the top of the list in terms of the response of the White House. So I think that's kind of just the pragmatic view of what's probably going on in the White House right now.

The only way that issue emerges to a much more important status is if someone with political clout goes directly into the White House and says, "This is an important issue, and it does need to be addressed." Whether that is Ted Stevens or whether that is someone who is a big contributor to the campaign, whether that is someone who is a distinguished individual in the business community, who's been a supporter of the administration, it's going to take a voice like that to kind of crack through the White House bureaucracy, and the White House is just as much a bureaucracy as any other department or agency. If you don't crack through it, if you don't take that issue and take it directly into the Oval Office, then it will be handled by the numbers.

So it would seem to me that if there are those kinds of individuals that can have access directly to the President, that would be most important. The other approach is, obviously, for groups and others to bring as much pressure on the White House as possible through communications, through the calls you can make to individuals in the White House to try to urge them to use this issue. It's an important statement to the country that this is an administration that doesn't say to hell with all environmental issues, but is willing to deal with this.

I think it's an important opportunity. If the President cares about his legacy in the second four years, then, clearly, he needs to do a hell of a lot more with regards to his environmental legacy than he did in the first four years. That is the kind of political approach that I would use with the White House.

MR. SANDALOW: Other questions? Mark?

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Mark Spalding, again, from the Alaska Conservation Foundation and Alaska Oceans Program.

I want to echo Jerry's comments thanking both of you for your leadership on this and, in particular, on behalf of Alaska, thanking both of you for bringing your commissions to Alaska and meeting with the conservation groups, including our grantees, fishermen and other leaders in the state. As you probably have heard, these Commission reports have created fear in commercial industry realms. They even funded an attack on Governor Knowles' Senate campaign for his participation in the commission.

What do you have to say directly to the commercial fishing industry regarding these reports and the changes that are necessary that is not about shutting them down, that is about the future of our oceans.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: Well, I'll just talk about Alaska, since you bring it up. If you read our report carefully, you'll see that we use Alaska as somewhat of a role model in two areas: fisheries management, as well as in the cruise ship legislation, which only affects Alaska today and should be replicated across the country.

We have worked very closely with Alaska because they do manage their fisheries well. The other fisheries councils will say, yes, but they're the big fisheries, and they have the flexibility to do these. Yes, but there are common threads of management that are very important that the others do not follow that Alaska does.

So I believe we've treated the fisheries situation in our report very fairly. We have not received the hue and cry from the fishermen on what we proposed. The trouble is the fear and apprehension on their part of legislation that would put burdens on them is what they're upset about, not what we say in our report. It's the apprehension of going through a process.

We could end up with a botched-up mess out of legislation. I can't deal with that at this point. All I can do is say this is the logical recommendation coming out of three years of in-depth research with the best people we've had in the world, including the fishermen. Some of our best testimony came out of Alaska fishermen, Hawaiian fishermen in the Northeast on the whole fisheries issue. It's probably the most complicated issue in our entire report.

I don't know much about the fisheries or I didn't until I started this. And let me tell you it's one of the most important political issues in the United States, and that's why it needs strengthening and needs underpinning, and that puts a cover on the part of politicians who otherwise are not going to want to do things that on the surface seem to be curtailing their fishermen's well-being because of some environmental considerations which are valid.

So those are the kind of things they're worried about, and they've seen in the past this fear and apprehension come true. And so we're saying let's keep them in the process that Leon was outlining earlier, keep them in the game, keep them up front in the process so that doesn't happen. And that's what we tell them. That's what our report says.

MR. PANETTA: I think I know the fishermen's mind-set because my grandfather was a fisherman. And having been raised in Monterey, I've dealt with fishermen all the time. Fishermen are a lot like farmers. They basically like to do their own thing. They're independent. They're hardworking, they like to develop what they can. They don't like to play politics a lot. They don't like to have a lot of people interfering with what they do. They are very much independent, and I respect that. They're a great, hardy breed that oftentimes goes up against great odds.

The problem is that it's what happened in Monterey. There are great fishermen there, but the very resource that they depended on was wiped out.

The same thing happened with cod. The same thing happens with shrimp in the Gulf Coast. The same thing happens with salmon. Everywhere we went, I was amazed at the number of fishermen and fishing families that came and testified about their concern about the loss of the fisheries, and what was going to happen to them, what was going to happen to their children.

So, ultimately, A, they've got to be convinced that if they don't participate in an effort here, they're going to lose the very thing they depend on, and that's happening. We've already seen that. I don't think they need to learn that lesson all over again because it's happened in too many places.

Secondly, they need to unify as a group in support of common policy. Again, these are people that don't like to do that. They basically operate independently. But the lobstermen off Maine basically came together in a very effective way to oversee their

fishery. And because they have implemented their own approach to dealing with that, they have restored that fishery, and it's a fishery that continues to produce for them and for their future families, so they were willing to do that. So unifying is extremely important in that industry as well.

And, thirdly, it just seems to me that the most important thing they need to know, whether it's the U.S. Commission or the Pew Commission, is that they need to be at the table. We're not saying they shouldn't be at the table. They should be at the table. They should be part of these ecosystem councils. They should be part of these efforts because their input is extremely important, but they need to know that it's also important for them to sit there with the scientists, with the environmentalists, with the conservationists, with the business community and be able to work out this policy together. They've got to play their role. They can't just bitch about it. They've got to be there contributing to how we establish better policy.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: One thing that Leon triggered off in my mind was what we recommended on the Fisheries Council. We said we must strengthen the Fisheries Council, and we gave very specific recommendations to do that. And Alaska was one of the role models because they pay attention to their Scientific Statistical Committee. They pay real attention to it. The scientists set certain levels, and that's it. You can do a lot of things inside all of those boundaries, but they set the criteria, and they are very well set-up to do that. Some of the other Fishery Councils are not. They don't pay attention to the FSC information as much. The makeup of the councils themselves have to be broad, have to cover all of the people to make sure. The Magnuson-Stevens Act needs to be modified to include those new provisions. Whether you get a well-selected, broad-based group in there, properly trained, we don't want to get the used-car salesman from Cucamonga being on the California Commission, unless he goes through the training program—in that case, maybe two years.

So those are the kinds of things that we recommend on the Commission. Strengthen the councils, strengthen the way they work, listen to them. They provide the base, the nucleus of what we called our Regional Councils. We don't want to change the council. We didn't say that. The councils were role models in many ways, but they're not role models in terms of their make-up and the way they treat the science and technology.

And the fishermen tell us this, too. We want better science. We also want to listen to the fishermen who are out there observing the fish and match it up with the NOAA database, for example, which we don't do today. We've got to listen to the fishermen. And overfishing is not their problem, it's our problem. It's the politicians' problem. That's where I come from on this.

We had tremendous testimony from the fishermen, and they're worried to death we're going to follow it up, and I understand that. But we've set out a blueprint here that makes some sense for better fisheries management in the future, integrated with all of the

other ecosystem issues such as point source pollution, nonpoint source pollution, reef bleaching and all of the other things that go with it.

MR. SANDALOW: Yes, ma'am?

QUESTIONER: [Off microphone.] Peggy Tomlinson. I'm the former Chairman of the Committee on Law of the Sea of the American Bar Association.

You both mentioned the importance of ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention. As you all know, it was reported out unanimously last spring. It had the support of a Chairman of four important Senate Committees. Despite that, Senator Frist, the majority leader, declined to put it on the calendar for a vote, for various specious reasons probably having to do with the black helicopter set. And now we have a new Congress. We're four steps backward.

And my question is do we have any idea, do you have any sense of what's going to happen? Do you have any advice, for those of us who have been working on this for so many years, could help to get there from here?

MR. PANETTA: Well, I mean, I think the effort has to, again, continue and be broad based to try to push the Senate to bring this to a vote. I think the fact that the Defense Department supports the Law of the Sea, the State Department supports the Law of the Sea, that needs to be re-emphasized, but it has to be re-emphasized in a way in which the White House itself gets directly involved again itself. In other words, the White House and the Legislative Director or the Chief of Staff has to make a call to Bill Frist and, basically, say, "This is important to us." That's really what's needed here.

Because I think Frist, in the end, knew that he could basically delay this because the White House wasn't going to come down on him. He's getting pressure from a few conservatives that are there that are probably leftovers from the Jesse Helms' era, and that continues to, he's kind of the same box that the Speaker is in, in terms of dealing with his Republican side.

But I really think that the best way to get this done is, frankly, if the White House calls Bill Frist and says, "This is important to us to get this done." And if they do that, I think Frist will put it on. He may lose maybe a few that will vote against it, but I think John McCain is absolutely right. This thing would pass by 95 votes or more in the end. So I think that's where the pressure is.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: I can't add anything to that except to support what Leon has just said. That's what it's going to take, and it seems to me that it's incredible that we can have a hold kept on that particular piece of legislation that needs to be passed up there when we have this unanimous vote out of the Foreign Relations Committee, and we

have a 95 to 5 expectation of passage. How can two hold it up, stop it? And the President has said we support—

[Tape change: T-1B to T-2A.]

ADMIRAL WATKINS: —but it takes that call, simple call, "Do it." If we do it early in the next session of this Congress, you will see the biggest boost to the momentum on the oceans that we've seen yet. It will be a great move and a precursor to all of the other actions we're taking, not that they're directly correlated in every respect, but it's again a punch in the right direction, and we need to do it. So anything you can do to bring to bear pressure to do exactly what Leon said is critical.

MR. SANDALOW: We have time for a few more questions. Sir?

QUESTIONER: Hi. I'm Tony McDonald, with the Coastal States Organization. Thank you. It's good to see you all again.

My question goes to this third leg of the leadership issue, which is the external community and the public request for that. Although you all have done extraordinarily as Chairmen of your various groups, you have a broad diversity of interests, as was indicated in your groups, and I think that you reflect a broader array of interests than usually come to these fora.

So I'd be interested in the extent to which you all and your commissioners, in addition to your individual efforts, will stay engaged in trying to urge support for this from less traditional groups, bankers, businessmen, shipping interests. I mean, there's a lot of interests that were on your committees, and I think it's going to take some of that and some continued push by the Commission members as a group and individually. So I'd be interested in your thoughts on how we can continue to rely on that support as we move forward.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: Interesting you asked that question. Leon and I had breakfast a few weeks ago on that very issue. Where the goal is now, I mean, 95 percent of the effort is in carrying this out, 5 percent is in building the policy which we both constructed. So it's going to take a real effort and how best to do that. And we both decided that the best approach here is to see what the President has to say, and that will tell us what kind of strategic approach we should take to stay engaged. And I don't mean just the two of us. I mean, with a larger group, a more diverse group of individual leaders in the country that can keep this pressure on, on Capitol Hill and in the White House. So I'm not sure what that is yet. But we take aboard your question and, in fact, we'll probably talk about it here for a few minutes after this is over this morning and then more in the future. There a number of initiatives and people that are very concerned about the very fact you raise. So I think you'll see something come out of this, and I don't know what it's going to be yet.

If it's a very positive response out of the White House, it'll be a different kind of get-together because we'll go down and carry the banner for the President. If it's not, then it's going to be a tougher row to hoe, and we're going to have bring in the very best minds we can to keep that pressure on.

MR. PANETTA: I think Jim said it best of all. We've talked about this. I think both of us are interested in making sure that obviously these recommendations move forward. If the White House blesses what happened here and provides that leadership, it certainly helps our load in terms of having to fight it. But if, for whatever reason, that is not as enthusiastic as we want it to be, we feel that we've got to put together that kind of continuing effort to try to see if we can't do everything possible to unify the effort, to move these recommendations forward.

MR. SANDALOW: One or two more.

Gary?

QUESTIONER: Gary Mitchell, from the Mitchell Report. I think this really builds on the last question.

I'd be interested to know, both from Admiral Watkins and Congressman Panetta, whether during the course of your hearings and consideration of this issue you gave consideration to the need for and the role of public communications on this issue, both short-term, around what happens on December 20th, but even more importantly what happens after that. Because one of the questions that I have in my mind is whether we think of ourselves as being an ocean nation, and despite the fact that Congressman Weldon said there's lots of support for this and the Caucus is big and getting bigger, I really wonder whether one of the significant challenges here is to get more Americans to think of themselves as living in an ocean nation and what's the role of public communications and ultimately education, which I know you've talked about also, in making that happen?

MR. PANETTA: Well, look, there's no question that there has to be a huge education effort with the American people about this issue, that while the coastal communities and those that deal with the oceans every day are aware of the problems, recognize the importance of the ocean to their livelihood, to their whole lifestyle, that many throughout the country don't have that constant relationship.

And so it is important to bring that issue to them. And I'm confident that that can be done. Why? Because I think most people understand that it's important to have the Yellowstone National Park, that it's important to have a Yosemite, that it's important to protect these areas even though they may not live there, even though it may not be something that's near them; that for their family, for their children, for the heritage that's important for the future, that it is important to protect those vital resources, but I think we

need to do a better job at conveying that to the public. And I think the opportunity to do this, obviously, using mass media, television, the kind of shows that present this kind of issue, I mean the Cousteau kind of approach to presenting what our oceans are all about is extremely important to making the public aware of what that relationship is between life in the sea and life on land.

Education, I mean, we did the same thing I'm sure that Jim did. There are these programs that we saw in Hawaii, in Florida and elsewhere, where they'd bring children into aquariums, and they teach them about sharks and different wildlife that is below the ocean. There is nothing more important than building that kind of information base among children, so that they appreciate that. We have the aquarium in Monterey, and they bring up literally thousands upon thousands of children through that operation. They let them touch the animals. They take them through education courses, and these kids understand why it's important to protect our oceans.

We need to have that kind of broad-based curriculum take place in the education arena as well. Clearly, we need to put more money into the research effort and the education effort to do this. Hollywood, obviously, Ted Danson is involved with ocean issues. He's doing some things that help on that, but it just needs to be much more broad-based if we're really going to develop the kind of impact that we need to have here. Otherwise, as I said, I mean, crisis is always a wonderful way to kind of make people aware of the problem, but it's a lousy way to govern.

ADMIRAL WATKINS: I would say that there's an additional approach that we should be taking, and both Leon and I would be willing to participate in that. There's a forthcoming meeting, as I understand it, of the National Governors Association perhaps in February. Have we ever been asked to come before them, maybe their Subcommittee on National Resources or whatever? No. Will we be? Probably not.

Why? Because they are the ones that have been put in this big tome, and they ought to say, yeah, we want to hear more about it and how we can participate and put the pressure on the system to keep this thing going and why. But they get it out there, as far as I'm concerned. We went around and had hearings in every one of the states, and they were very much on it.

Also, I want to say that, when we were told to go to six regions of the country, we said, no, we're going to go to nine. Why? Because we wanted the Great Lakes, as a centroid sort of the Middle West, to understand that they were part of the oceans, the coasts and the oceans.

The nutrients flowing down there from the farmlands, the cattle feedstock operations and so forth, they're all part of it. And if they're told to double the corn crop to get ethanol, that's wonderful. We just doubled the nutrients going into the Mississippi

River. There's 41 states and 2 Canadian provinces polluting the Gulf of Mexico. So they are very much involved in the ocean issue.

And if we can bring the governors together to say, "All right. We get it. We've got to come together and solve some of these problems, Iowa, Kansas, and the others that are sitting there feeding estuaries and rivers into the Mississippi, we can do these kinds of things."

It's the same thing with the Chesapeake Bay. We've seen the reports out of the Foundation there that says we've just maintained status quo. We haven't really done the kinds of things we ought to do. Well, that's going to take pressure from the outside, from the American public, and they're going to have to come forward. And I think the governors can inspire that. I don't think it's going to happen inside the Beltway.

The Hill, I'll have to say, has been very responsive so far—bipartisan on the Hill to do something, but they are going to need help, too, and it has to come, that kind of outreach or that kind of communication is critically important at the front end, as well as the basic education of our kids who, in turn, have parents who then become better educated about the environment.

MR. SANDALOW: Congressman Weldon said that 2005 would be the Year of the Oceans. That is true, in no small measure, I believe because of the people in the room here today and, in particular, because of these two distinguished public servants.

Here at Brookings, this is going to be an important part of our work in 2005. Thank you very much for being here today.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, the proceedings were adjourned.]

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