

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO  
CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-  
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, of the following Members of the House to the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. DREIER, California  
Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN, California  
Mrs. MILLER, Michigan  
Mr. SMITH, Nebraska  
Mr. HUIZENGA, Michigan  
Mr. HIGGINS, New York  
Mr. MEEKS, New York  
Ms. SLAUGHTER, New York  
Mr. WELCH, Vermont  
Mr. LARSEN, Washington

HONORING THE SERVICE OF HIS  
EXCELLENCY YASHAR ALIYEV,  
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED  
STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHUSTER. I thank the Speaker. Today, I rise to honor the distinguished service of my good friend, His Excellency Yashar Aliyev, who in October 2006 was appointed by President Ilham Aliyev as Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United States of America.

I am proud to serve as the cochairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus.

Azerbaijan is an important strategic partner of the United States. Located in a geopolitically dynamic region between Europe and Asia and sandwiched between Russia and Iran, Azerbaijan is a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population that has also been home for more than a millennia to vibrant Christian and Jewish communities. Azerbaijan has opened Caspian energy resources to development by U.S. companies and has emerged as a key player for global energy security.

On the security front, immediately after 9/11, Azerbaijan was among the first to offer strong support and assistance to the United States. Azerbaijan participated in operations in Kosova and Iraq and is actively engaged in Afghanistan, having recently doubled its military presence there.

Ambassador Aliyev has made an indelible mark on deepening U.S. and Azerbaijan relations.

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Bilateral trade is expanding as Azerbaijan diversifies its economy, enabling it to increasingly contribute to the economic growth of the United States.

Baku and Washington cooperate on counterterrorism and nonproliferation

of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, this continued development of Azerbaijan's natural resources contributes greatly to the energy security of the United States and Europe. Working with Ambassador Aliyev, we have more than doubled the size of the Azerbaijan Caucus in Congress and continue to bring attention to this vital strategic partner.

Prior to his appointment as Ambassador, Aliyev served as Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations from 2002 to 2006. During this period he was chairman of the Fourth Committee of Special Political and Decolonization of the 60th U.N. General Assembly, vice president of the 59th General Assembly, vice president of the Economic and Social Council from 2004 to 2005, and vice president of the U.N. Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001.

Ambassador Aliyev began his diplomatic career at the United Nations in 1992, serving as political affairs counselor and charge d'affaires of Azerbaijan's permanent mission. He was also Azerbaijan's first delegate to the First and Fourth Committees at the 47th through 56th sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

Having joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Azerbaijan in 1989, Ambassador Aliyev held the posts of political officer, first secretary and deputy director in the Ministry's Department of Information and Political Analysis, as well as director of the Department of International Organizations.

Ambassador Aliyev took up oriental studies at Azerbaijan State University in 1972 and received the school's highest degree in 1977. He pursued postgraduate research at the Oriental Studies Institute of Russia's Academy of Sciences in Moscow from 1980 to 1982. In the early 1990s, he also studied for a year at the Diplomatic Academy of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is fluent in English, Arabic, Russian, and Turkish.

On a personal note, I will miss Ambassador Aliyev, and I extend to him my highest regards and well wishes, to him and to his family in all their future endeavors. In our years working together, the Ambassador has become a truly valued friend.

It has been my pleasure to visit Azerbaijan twice with him and also to host him in my district in Pennsylvania on two occasions, including sharing a recent birthday celebration together.

Ambassador Aliyev, best wishes in all your future endeavors. I look forward to building on our future partnership with Azerbaijan and continuing our friendship in years to come.

I yield back the balance of my time.

STATE OF OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 55 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the honor to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives for the minutes allocated, and I have enjoyed this privilege many times over the years. I think this is the greatest deliberative body in the world, and sometimes we can do a little better than we actually do, but in the end, the voice of the American people does come here.

I look back on the intense debates that we had when we went through the throes of a national debate. Over one summer, it was cap-and-trade, or we called it cap-and-tax, the idea that we would limit American industry, chase American industry over to places like China and India where they would pump smoke up into the atmosphere and send us back goods that were built more cheaply than we would build them under American regulations here. That legislation did pass this House. It was killed in the Senate, but that consumed a summer.

The next summer, we had the debate of ObamaCare. I could go into that quite deeply, Mr. Speaker, but I will say that it was an intense debate that took place on the floor of the House of Representatives, on the floor of the Senate, and on the floor of almost every home in the United States of America, in the streets of America and on the grounds surrounding the Capitol and then, of course, in all the office buildings around the Capitol.

For the first time that I know of in history, a Member of Congress called people from all 50 States to come here to petition the government for redress of grievances, peacefully petition the government for redress of grievances. That was the plea of the American people; 40,000 to 60,000 people surrounded this Capitol in November, on a Thursday in November, November 5 of that year. Later on in the spring, they came back again and again and again.

For the first time in history, the entire Capitol grounds were surrounded by people, not just a human chain touching their fingertips or holding hands all the way around, but a human doughnut six and eight deep everywhere, with thousands of people standing in the curves and the corners. They came here to say to the people that were duly elected representatives of the American people here in this Congress, Keep your hands off of my health care; we don't want Obama administration care. That message echoed in this building.

On that night that ObamaCare was poised for passage, the people doing business up here in the Rules Committee couldn't do business for a time because the echo in the windows from the people outside was so great that they couldn't have a conversation to be able to actually conduct the business of passing a rule that brought ObamaCare here to the floor.

And there was hokum involved in the process even down to the point of circumventing the filibuster in the Senate