

*As to fisheries, one of the great surprises to me both in the confirmation hearing and even more so now that I'm occupying this job has been the amount of congressional attention to fishing, especially to red snappers. I've spent so many months about the allocation of fishing capability between the commercial fishermen and the sport fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico that for a whole month I refused to eat any red snapper – I had more than had my fill of it every day. So fisheries are a very complicated area. Many, many, many species. Each one has a whole regulatory apparatus around it.*

*But I have one particular axe to grind, and that is more than 80% of our seafood consumed in the US is imported, and that seems a little bit silly to me given the coastlines we have and given everything else. So one of my objectives is to try to change that trade deficit into a trade surplus. It should be a thing that we're very good at, it is a thing we're very good at, and so we're going to try to fix that. So that's a very big preoccupation and I've been working a lot with the fisheries group and with the private sector on how to solve that problem.*

*A lot of the seafood being imported here is grown in aquaculture under conditions that would never be permitted for a US company. So it's a kind of subsidy of them. There are also some health issues with some of those imports so we're going to try to deal with that, and we're also going to try to deal with how do we get to the maximum sustainable harvest in our waters, and how do we bring in selected elements of aquaculture done properly on our own part. So fisheries is a very complicated question but a very, very important one.*

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