

According to news reports, these plant plantations are in California, Arizona, Hawaii, West Virginia, Oregon, Tennessee and Kentucky, and account for 80 to 90 percent of all marijuana plantation production in the United States.

Law enforcement officials say that the drug cartels employ heavily armed bandits to guard these fields and they have superior fire power and surveillance equipment over American law enforcement agents.

The drug thugs destroy native vegetation and kill off all of the wildlife on the land so they can plant their marijuana crops. The cartels also use dangerous pesticides and fertilizers on the land that destroy the environment. Insultingly, all of this is occurring on American Federal lands.

There is more. The Washington Times reports today that "campers, fishermen, hikers and forest and park officials are being intimidated, threatened or assaulted when they come near Mexican-run marijuana" plantations on American soil, and that "all this plant growing produces a street value of \$6.7 billion."

The Union newspaper from Nevada states, "These American marijuana gardens are guarded by Mexican nationals, and the traffickers use the profits from pot sales to finance large methamphetamine labs in Mexico and the United States."

Mr. Speaker, it seems that no public land is safe. Even California's Sequoia National Forest has been attacked by these drug cartels. The Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, John Walters, said, "Mexican drug cartels are turning our national parks into centers of international drug production and trafficking. Public lands are being held hostage by illegal drug traffickers."

Mr. Speaker, numerous law enforcement personnel, State, local and Federal, are attempting to retake our Federal and public lands from these drug cartel invaders. Some progress is reported, but the battle for our land goes forward.

We cannot allow these land grabbing, environmentally hazardous drug terrorists to seize America's national forests and national parks. These outlaws cannot be allowed to camp in our parks and swim in the profits from marijuana plantations. They should be tracked down, arrested, prosecuted, and put in jail.

We need to seize all their money from whatever financial institutions they try to hide it in and use the money to restore our national parks, the way they were before the drug invaders arrived.

We need to make it more difficult for them to operate here by actually securing the southern border, something that Homeland Security has yet to accomplish. Right now, security along our southern border is a glittering illusion.

Our national parks and forests are worth fighting for, and rather than

journalists, campers, fishermen, hunters, and park rangers being afraid of these drug cartels like the Zetas, these outlaw drug gangs should be afraid of our relentless determination to take our land back.

And that's just the way it is.

ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TWA FLIGHT 800 DISASTER

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the solemn occasion of the 11th anniversary of the crash of TWA Flight 800. Many Americans remember where they were when they heard the shocking and tragic news about Flight 800 when it crashed off the southern shore of Long Island 11 years ago tomorrow, on the evening of July 17, 1996, claiming the lives of all 230 passengers and crew on board.

The event remains one of the worst air disasters in history and led to one of the most costly and extended investigations to date. Today, that loss is still felt by hundreds of families whose loved ones perished but are remembered by the breathtaking monument to their lives that extends along the grounds of East Moriches, Long Island, overlooking the waters of the Atlantic Ocean where the plane fell.

Tomorrow, we honor the memory of those who perished, just moments after taking off from JFK International Airport bound for Paris. Some of the victims were on their way home; many were high school students on the first leg of an international field trip; and some were on the way to visit loved ones.

Just as the families who lost their loved ones to the crash deserve to be remembered, so do each of Long Island's emergency personnel, volunteers and neighbors who selflessly responded to the crash and who worked tirelessly over the next several days and weeks following the disaster to assist with the search and recovery efforts.

Like other challenging times our Nation has faced, the reaction to the Flight 800 catastrophe brought out the best, not only among my constituents, but in so many other areas in the surrounding towns, counties and States across the Northeast who joined in helping my community recover from its most horrific tragedy.

Throughout their grief and despite the unimaginable shock, the families of the victims worked tirelessly to build a permanent memorial with the help of Navy Seabees and thousands of dedicated local and building trade union members. The solemn monument serves as a constant reminder of our tremendous loss 11 years ago tomorrow.

Last year, it was my honor and privilege to attend the dedication of the memorial completed at Smith Point County Park just before the 10th anniversary of the crash.

The centerpiece of this breathtaking and poignant memorial is a black granite sculpture called "The Light." It was designed by Henry Seaman, whose cousin died in the crash. The monument offers some measure of closure to everyone who was affected by this terrible tragedy.

The memory of the passengers of Flight 800 lives on because of the continued work of people like Henry's brother, John Seaman, who is President of the Families of Flight 800 Association and among the memorial's most passionate and hardworking advocates.

In the 11 years since Flight 800, hundreds of thousands of people have visited the park in an acknowledgment of a shared sorrow for those who died. The monument ensures that future generations can do the same.

As we recognize the 11th anniversary of the Flight 800 disaster, it is important for us to take stock in the progress achieved since 1996 to prevent air disasters. We have made some great strides in aviation safety, particularly with design upgrades for passenger and cargo aircraft planes.

In particular, ongoing research and development of "inerting" technology will help to mitigate the vulnerability of aircraft fuel tanks to flammability, the underlying cause of the Flight 800 crash.

In fact, the crash was likely caused by a spark from a short-circuit in the Boeing 747's wiring that ignited the tank's volatile vapors. Although this was determined years ago and we know how to prevent similar disasters, we still have not required technology upgrades to protect passengers against another tragedy like the one witnessed 10 years ago.

To date, however, the Federal Aviation Administration has delayed taking on this challenge and has declined to work with the industry to implement a final FAA directive that would protect every air traveler with existing technology.

We still don't have the mandate for change. That is why I introduced the Transport Aircraft Fuel Tank Safety Act, which requires the FAA to retrofit all planes with new technology and to increase safety. I am pleased to report that the pending FAA reauthorization bill, which was recently passed by the House Transportation Committee, of which I am a member, includes a similar provision.

Senator SCHUMER is sponsoring a companion measure and is working with his colleagues on the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee to move this legislation.

I am hopeful that my colleagues here in the Congress will work with me to bring an end to this delay. We have taken significant steps towards maintaining the memory of Flight 800, but we should also ensure that we don't allow this disaster to repeat itself.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again offer my deepest condolences to

the surviving families and friends of the victims of Flight 800 and encourage my colleagues to join me in commending each of them for the grace and dignity with which they have handled unspeakable pain.

INVESTIGATING THE PROSECUTION OF FORMER BORDER PATROL AGENTS RAMOS AND COMPEAN

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today is day 181st day of incarceration for two U.S. Border Patrol agents.

Agents Ramos and Compean were convicted last spring for shooting a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our border into Texas. For almost a year, thousands of American citizens and dozens of Members of Congress have asked President Bush to pardon these agents. Many Americans are outraged by the President's decision to commute the sentence of White House aid Scooter Libby, while at the same time he refuses to pardon Border Patrol Agents Ramos and Compean.

Scooter Libby, an attorney who understands the laws of this country and should know right from wrong was convicted of perjury, obstruction of justice and lying to investigators. Mr. Libby, who should have served his sentence, did not spend one day in prison.

Yet two Border Patrol agents with exemplary records who were doing their duty to protect the American people from an illegal alien drug smuggler are serving 11 and 12 years, respectively, in prison. By attempting to apprehend an illegal alien drug smuggler, these agents were enforcing our laws, not breaking the laws. There are legitimate legal questions about how this prosecution was initiated and how the U.S. Attorney's Office proceeded in this case.

I am extremely pleased that Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN will be presiding over a full committee hearing tomorrow to examine the details of this case. This hearing will provide U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton an opportunity to explain to the Senate Judiciary Committee and to the American people why this U.S. Attorney's Office in western Texas chose to go after law enforcement officers while protecting illegal aliens who committed crimes and gave the illegal alien immunity to testify against the border agents.

I want to thank Senator FEINSTEIN for her interest in this case and for her leadership in holding hearings to look into this injustice.

I am also grateful to Chairman JOHN CONYERS, who I hope will hold a similar hearing on the House side sometime this fall.

Before I close, I want to say to the families of Border Patrol Agents

Compean and Ramos that we, the American people, will not forget your husbands, your fathers, your brothers, and we will do everything we can to see that justice will prevail over an injustice.

NO MORE "STAY THE COURSE"

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, the President continues to ask this Congress and the American people to "stay the course" in Iraq. Well, Mr. President, today the American people and the Congress have said "no more."

Today I add my voice once again to the growing number of retired military generals, the Iraq Study Group, and untold thousands of rank and file on the front lines who were calling for a new direction in Iraq. The success of our military depends on a sound strategy. Yet instead of fighting the terrorists in the mountains of Afghanistan, our armed forces are overextended after 4 years of refereeing a civil war in the sands of Iraq.

The President's escalation of this war, his so-called surge, is not working. That much is clear. Since the escalation of this war 6 months ago, more than 25,000 troops have been sent to Iraq, 600 more U.S. soldiers have died, and more than 3,000 troops have been wounded. Countless thousands of Iraqis are dead, and today the violence in Iraq is at an all-time high. Those are facts that no one can deny.

Our troops have performed heroically in Iraq, but the Iraqi Government has failed to meet any, any of the benchmarks endorsed by the President in January. Political reconciliation within Iraq is nonexistent. A change of course is long overdue.

The time has come for the United States to responsibly redeploy our troops from Iraq and to refocus our efforts on protecting Americans from terrorism. The time has come for Iraqis to take primary responsibility for their country and for their security.

Let me be clear on one additional point. Democrats support the troops.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I personally have consistently voted to fund our troops and to provide our soldiers in the line of fire with the resources that they need. I do this because our brave servicemen and women are not risking their lives each and every day for one political party over another. They are risking their lives for America.

Our Nation owes our troops a strategy that is worthy of their sacrifice. But "stay the course" is not that strategy. It is a slogan that continues to fail them.

No, Mr. Speaker, if we really want to support our troops, it is time to get them out of Iraq and redeploy them to other areas where they can fight the

terrorists who have attacked and who continue to threaten our Nation. That's where the war on terror should be waged.

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

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

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

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

SCHIP REAUTHORIZATION AND HEALTH DISPARITIES

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the reauthorization and expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program or SCHIP, our Nation's health care safety net for low-income, uninsured children.

We are at a critical juncture in our Nation's health care crisis. An estimated 46 million Americans are uninsured. Approximately 18,000 people die each year in this country as a direct consequence of being uninsured. Sadly, many of the victims are innocent children. No fewer than 9 million American children are without health insurance, and they are suffering as a result.

Uninsured children, like uninsured adults, are less likely to have access to early and preventive care, setting them up for a lifetime of health problems that may have been avoided if caught today. Far too many of our children are going to the emergency room because we have failed to let them into the doctor's office.

This is immoral, but it is also uneconomical. Preventive health care services are cheaper than disease management and trauma care. By denying our citizenry the former, we are paying a premium for the latter.

The President has ignored the potential cost savings, arguing, instead, that an expanded SCHIP program would move children off of private insurance, but that is simply not the case. The vast majority of children who would be covered by this bill come from families with less than \$33,200 for a family of three. These families do not have the luxury of choosing private insurance over the public benefit. For them, it is public coverage or nothing.

We have a moral obligation to ensure that our children have access to health care. Our health care system produces infant mortality rates and incidences