

starts the economy and gives assistance to those who truly need it.

And if the Senate includes funding for these critical programs, I strongly urge all my colleagues to support it, and I urge President Bush to then sign it into law. It is the right thing to do for our economy, and it is the right thing to do for the millions of low-income Americans who will not benefit from this stimulus package as it is currently written.

SUNSET MEMORIAL

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

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, because the end of the hour grows close, I would now come before this body with a sunset memorial. We intend to repeat this from time to time to chronicle the loss of life by abortion on demand in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is January 29, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun sets today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand just today.

Exactly 35 years today, the tragic judicial fiat called *Roe v. Wade* was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million children. Mr. Speaker, that is more than 16,000 times the number of innocent lives lost on September 11.

Each of the 4,000 children that we lost today had at least four things in common. They were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. And each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Mr. Speaker, those noble heroes lying in frozen silence out in Arlington National Cemetery did not die so America could shred her own Constitution, as well as her own children, by the millions. It seems that we are never quite so eloquent as when we decry the genocidal crimes of past generations, those who allowed their courts to strip the black man and the Jew of their constitutional personhood, and then proceeded to murderously desecrate millions of these, God's own children.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to blindness and invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government."

Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath. The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says: "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is the Declaration, not the casual notion, but the Declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet today, Mr. Speaker, in this body we fail to honor that commitment. We fail our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 innocent American babies who died without the protection we should have been given them.

And so for them in this moment, Mr. Speaker, without yielding my time, I would invite anyone inclined to join me for a moment of silence on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this discussion tonight presents this Congress and the American people with two destiny questions.

The first that all of us must ask ourselves is very simple: Does abortion really kill a baby? If the answer to that question is "yes," there is a second destiny question that inevitably follows. And it is this, Mr. Speaker: Will we allow ourselves to be dragged by those who have lost their way into a darkness where the light of human compassion has gone out and the predatory survival of the fittest prevails over humanity? Or will America embrace her destiny to lead the world to cherish and honor the God-given miracle of each human life?

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that every baby comes with a message, that God has not yet despaired of mankind. And I mourn that those 4,000 messages sent to us today will never be heard. Mr. Speaker, I also have not yet despaired. Because tonight maybe someone new, maybe even someone in this Congress, who heard this sunset memorial will finally realize that abortion really does kill a baby, that it hurts mothers more than anyone else, and that nearly 50 million dead children in America is enough. And that America is great enough to find a better way than abortion on demand.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, may we each remind ourselves that our own days in this sunshine of life are numbered and that all too soon each of us will walk from these Chambers for the very last time.

And if it should be that this Congress is allowed to convene on another day yet to come, may that be the day that we hear the cries of the unborn at last. May that be the day we find the humanity, the courage, and the will to embrace together our human and our constitutional duty to protect the least of these, our tiny American brothers and sisters, from this murderous scourge upon our Nation called abortion on demand.

This is a sunset memorial, Mr. Speaker. It is January 29, 2008, in the land of free and the home of the brave.

ALL IS NOT QUIET ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Iran, Somalia, Syria, Colombia, Afghanistan, and Iraq

have something in common. These are six nations, among several others, where the State Department recommends that Americans don't travel.

But today there was another advisory issued, but this one was not by the State Department but by the State of Texas through the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read just a portion of this into the RECORD. Here is what it says. Texas Department of Public Safety dated today: "Due to the increased rising level of violence in Mexico—which is attributed to drug cartels, violent criminal organizations, and increased presence of military personnel in some Mexican border communities—it is recommended that persons be discouraged from traveling to Mexican border towns, particularly those that have recently been scenes of gang-related violent activity. These communities include Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Reynosa, Rio Bravo, Miguel Aleman, and Ciudad Juarez."

Mr. Speaker, you see, the Texas Department of Public Safety has issued an advisory for Americans: don't go to these border towns because of the violence. And the reason the violence has increased specifically has to do with what happened in Rio Bravo which is across the Rio Grande River from Texas. The Rio Bravo mayor last month was gunned down while leaving a restaurant, along with two other politicians. The Mexican Government sent in troops to help quell the violence. But 5 days ago, local police in several Mexican border towns, specifically Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, and Reynosa, were relieved of their duties by the federal Government because of their alleged links to drug cartels, specifically the gulf drug cartel.

What that means, Mr. Speaker, now on the Mexican border, bordering Texas, there are 6,000 Mexican troops stationed there. They are stationed from Matamoros to Miguel Aleman. Now, Matamoros is the border town across from Brownsville, Texas. Brownsville is on the furthest eastern tip of Texas. Brownsville is a big community, and across the river is Matamoros. And Miguel Aleman is 100 miles upriver across the river from Roma, Texas. There is violence in these border towns.

Many people don't understand what a border town is. A border town is a town on the American border and has another town very similar to it on the Mexican border. And both of these towns, being border towns, border each other separated only by the border between Mexico and the United States.

The State Department has already issued a travel alert for Mexico because of the violence that occurs there. But now the State of Texas finds a need to warn all citizens, especially law enforcement officials, of the problems.

Mr. Speaker, the open-border crowd denies this violence occurs on our southern front. I have been down to the Texas-Mexico border now 13 times, and I have talked to the local people who

live there, and I have also talked to the chamber of commerce types who say, Oh, there is no problem here in our border towns. There is no violence or drugs. We don't have a problem with infiltration from drug cartels and criminals coming into our cities. Of course they say those things, in my opinion, because they want that open border for that travel back and forth between Mexico and the United States because of money, because of commerce, because of that greed that so many people have; and they deny the fact that the border needs to be secure.

We live in denial sometimes that there is a border war that is existing. It is a violent border war. It is a border war between drug cartels and criminals, and many of those people don't just stay on the Mexican side.

When Sheriff Rick Flores was here in Congress and testified before Congress, he is the sheriff in Webb County, Texas, he said we are naive to believe that the border problem only will be on the Mexican side. He is the sheriff in Laredo. Across the river is Nuevo Laredo. That is basically a ghost town now controlled by the drug cartels; and those criminals, they will come to the American side as well.

Sigi Gonzales, the sheriff in Zapata County, he told me that the drug cartels and the criminals, they have better equipment, they have more equipment, they have better money, and they have more people involved in doing what they want to do than we have in protecting the dignity of the United States.

And to illustrate how violent it is on the border, Mr. Speaker, I want to read you one more portion of this report: There currently exists a U.S. Department of State travel alert for Mexico. Fort Bliss officials announced Saturday that travel to Juarez has been declared off limits for U.S. military.

In other words, Fort Bliss, the United States Army, they can go to Iraq, they can go to Afghanistan, but they can't go to Juarez right across the river because it is too dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, there is a border war taking place on the southern border. All is not quiet on the southern border, and we need to understand that this is a tremendous problem and our government needs to get into action and protect Americans from this invasion.

And that's just the way it is.

BORDER TRAVEL ADVISORY

SUMMARY

Due to the rising level of violence in Mexico—which is attributed to drug cartels, violent criminal organizations, and increased presence of military personnel in some Mexican border communities—it is recommended that persons be discouraged from traveling to Mexican border towns, particularly those that have recently been scenes of gang-related violent activity. These communities include Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Reynosa, Rio Bravo, Miguel Aleman, and Ciudad Juárez. The increased levels of violence in recent weeks and potential for additional violence suggest that an advisory against traveling to these communities is warranted.

DETAILS

On November 30, 2007, gunmen opened fire on the former mayor of Rio Bravo—who was a two-term representative and one-time senator—and his entourage as they left a restaurant in Rio Bravo. The former mayor was killed along with two other politicians and two federal agents. The Los Zetas, an organized cell of the Gulf Cartel, had previously threatened the former mayor's life and attempted a prior assassination, prompting the government to assign bodyguards. In response to the assassination, the Mexican government immediately mobilized approximately 500 soldiers, federal police, and support personnel in order to conduct counterdrug operations in the state of Tamaulipas. The focus of the operation was on the cities of Matamoros, Rio Bravo, and Miguel Aleman, just south of Roma, Texas, and Reynosa, Mexico.

On Monday, January 7, 2008, members of the Mexico Federal Preventive Police (PFP) were patrolling Colonia Cuauhtémoc in Rio Bravo when they observed a 2005 Chevrolet Suburban occupied by heavily armed men. The officers attempted a traffic stop that resulted in shots being fired at the officers from the Suburban. A gun battle ensued, and additional officers and a contingent of the Mexican army responded. Three gunmen were killed and ten others were arrested, including three U.S. citizens, one of whom was from Texas.

On January 23, 2008, local police in the border cities of Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, and Reynosa, Mexico, were relieved of their duties as army troops disarmed the officers and searched for evidence that might show links to drug traffickers. Eleven men were arrested by federal police in Nuevo Laredo, including four police officers, who were said to be operatives for the Gulf Cartel.

President Calderon has sent approximately 6,000 military troops and federal police to areas that extend from Matamoros—which is across the border from Brownsville, Texas—westward to Miguel Aleman, which is across the border from Roma, Texas. Mexican military and federal police personnel have also been sent to the city of Juárez. A similar operation was conducted last year in Tijuana when violence erupted there, with more than 3,500 soldiers and federal officers sent to the city.

Over the past weekend, a total of five people were either shot or beaten to death in separate incidents in Juárez. This comes on the heels of approximately 30 persons in Juárez being murdered since the beginning of the year, including 17 law enforcement personnel, as well as the recent attempted assassination of a Chihuahua State Police Commander Fernando Lozano Sandoval. Commander Sandoval is currently hospitalized in El Paso's Thomason Hospital under tight security. An alleged "hit list" of Mexican law enforcement was also discovered near Chihuahua state offices over the weekend.

There currently exists a U.S. Department of State travel alert for Mexico with a date to expire of April 15, 2008. Fort Bliss officials also announced Saturday that travel to Juárez has been declared off-limits for U.S. military personnel.

In addition to the travel advisory, law enforcement officials should be aware of the possibility that violent criminals and cartel members may seek to enter Texas in an attempt to escape Mexican military and law enforcement operations. As some persons seek refuge in Texas, their enemies may plan to conduct raids or hits on them here. The most significant violent criminals in the region are members of the Gulf Cartel or their violent enforcers, Los Zetas.

ANALYST'S COMMENTS

With the increased military and police presence in Mexican border towns, and the recent violence associated with shootouts between Mexican military and drug cartels, it is advised that Texas residents avoid traveling to Mexican border communities, particularly those that have recently been scenes of violent gang-related activity. In addition, there exists a possibility that Los Zetas and Cartel members may cross the border into Texas. Tactical operations, such as increased police patrols, should be initiated in high-profile and high-visibility areas—such as points of entry and between points of entry—to discourage cross-border incursions. If any contact is made with suspected Los Zetas or cartel members, an INT-7 form should be completed and forwarded to the Texas Intelligence Center.

Law enforcement officials are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious incidents to the Texas Intelligence Center.

WHERE'S W?

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last night this House was host to the President for his final State of the Union address. Like all past Presidential speeches in this Chamber, it was historic. But this time it may have been historic because of what it did not achieve and what it left unfinished.

Forget all of the unfulfilled commitments on education, health care, environmental conservation, employment, energy efficiency, worker protections and immigration. Let's just look at the record on foreign policy. The state of that union? Dismal.

Upon taking office in 2001, this administration promised a new kind of international engagement, one based on partnerships and regional alliances.

We didn't exactly get what we bargained for, unfortunately. And the recent administration tour through the Middle East just about summed it up.

Remember those children's books, "Where's Waldo?" We had a case of "Where's W?" Let's start our tour in Israel and the Palestinian-controlled lands.

After nearly two terms of ignoring the real crisis in the region, the administration tried to make a last-ditch effort at a peace agreement: first by hosting a summit, one that wasn't expected to achieve anything, and then by a visit to the region. No ideals were outlined, no real road map was sketched out. To be generous, it was a half-hearted effort. It greatly saddens me, Mr. Speaker, that such an important opportunity was squandered. The Israeli and Palestinian people deserve more. They deserve a chance to at least hope for peace.

Next stop on the Where's W? trip, Kuwait and Bahrain. In Bahrain, the political opposition faces arrest, torturers are granted immunity, and a woman must go before family, not civil courts, family to fight back against violence and abuse.