

THE KILLER OF BORDER AGENT LUIS AGUILAR IS RELEASED

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, in January, Border Patrol Agent Luis Aguilar was tracking drug smugglers on the Mexican-U.S. border. A Hummer apparently carrying drugs crossed into the United States and tried to flee back to Mexico when Aguilar and other Border Patrol agents gave pursuit. Aguilar got in front of the Hummer at some distance and he put spikes in the road of retreat, but the Hummer, rather than go over the spikes, drove off the road, ran over and killed Aguilar, and fled back to Mexico.

The driver was Jesus Navarro Montes. And he fled to Mexico, ditched the Hummer with some friends, but was arrested by Mexican authorities 3 days later and charged with certain offenses.

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Now, Mr. Speaker, the facts get a little messy. Montes is the only suspect in the murder of Aguilar, but he has recently been released from jail in Mexico. Some Mexican authorities say he was not in jail for the murder but unrelated smuggling charges. Even so, he was not tried for those charges even though he waited in jail for 6 months.

Mexico also says that the United States has failed to file extradition papers from the United States to Mexico requesting the extradition of this individual Montes. Extradition papers are a legal requirement between countries to bring criminals from one country to another. It's been 6 months, Mr. Speaker, and certainly those papers should have been filed some time ago.

Our Justice Department, however, refuses to comment on whether extradition was requested or the papers were filed. This is a bit odd and curious why our government won't say whether or not they even filed the appropriate paperwork and what the problem is. Did our government fail to file this simple paperwork? And if so, people in our government ought to be fired. This is inexcusable. And if Mexican authorities released prematurely, Mexico has some explaining to do as well. There is obviously incompetence in somebody's government regarding the release of this individual.

Meanwhile Navarro Montes is running loose somewhere in Mexico, laughing at both governments and probably still smuggling drugs into the United States. The Aguilar family still weeps, and they are waiting for justice for the death and murder of their loved one.

Mr. Speaker, this ought not to be. Our government should be as concerned about prosecuting drug smugglers that murder American Border Patrol protectors as they are about relentless prosecuting border agents like Ramos and Compean that were doing their job when charged with violating the civil

rights of a drug smuggler on the border. We need some answers, Mr. Speaker, and not blissful silence and excuses from our government. Navarro Montes needs a trial so that justice can prevail because justice is what we do in this country.

And that's just the way it is.

THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO ADVANCE U.S. IN- TERESTS

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a fundamental problem affecting the national security of the United States which has not received the notice and consideration it deserves.

The United States suffers from the complete absence of a comprehensive strategy for advancing U.S. interests. This strategic void detracts from almost every policy effort advanced by the United States Government. As a result, major policies are inconsistent and contradictory in different areas of the world and across different policy realms. We find ourselves unable to agree upon and set national priorities for addressing the major challenges of our time. We suffer from a splintering of national power and an inability to coherently address threats and reassure and cooperate with allies.

What do I mean by a comprehensive national strategy? The word "strategy" has military roots, coming from the Greek word for "generalship," but the concept of a strategy extends well beyond just the military context. In the context of this speech, and others that I intend to deliver on this topic, it means a commonly agreed-upon description of critical U.S. interests and how to advance them using all elements of national power: economic, diplomatic, and military.

The next President will have a unique opportunity to develop a successful strategy for the Nation. When President Dwight D. Eisenhower took office, he commissioned the Solarium Project to review strategies for dealing with the Soviet Union. After a competitive process in which three teams of advisers promoted the merits of three strategies, President Eisenhower decided to continue the policy of containment developed by President Truman, and did so with a largely unified administration.

Over the course of our history, the U.S. has had numerous successful strategies. During the Cold War, both major political parties supported a strategy of containment for confronting the Soviet Union. During World War II, the United States had a widely-supported strategy of focusing first on the war in Europe and deferring some effort from the war in the Pacific until the Nazi threat was contained. At other times in our Nation's

history, we have pursued less successful strategies, such as a strategy of isolationism during the period between World Wars I and II.

The next President would be well advised to engage in and personally lead a Solarium-type approach to determining a strategy for today's rapidly changing world. To ensure that a new strategy for America can truly develop support across the political spectrum, Congress should be involved in the process, and to ensure that a new strategy is one that the American people can support, the general outline of the debate should be shared with and involve the American people.

This speech is the first in a series. In the future I will discuss the objectives and challenges that a new U.S. strategy will need to contend with; some of the means by which the U.S. will likely need to pursue its objectives and their ramifications for the national security apparatus of the United States Government; and some of the options that a Solarium-type review of a strategy by the next President would need to consider.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in urging the next President to address this problem and join with me in a conversation, both in Congress and with the American people, about what today's strategy should be.

THE PRESIDENTIAL SIGNING STATEMENTS ACT

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, on May 8, 2008, I introduced H.R. 5993, the Presidential Signing Statements Act. This bill would promote congressional and public awareness and understanding of presidential signing statements.

The history of presidential signing statements dates back to the 19th century; however, a September 17, 2007, Congressional Research Service report noted that U.S. Presidents have increasingly employed the statements to assert constitutional and legal objections to congressional enactments. In doing so, a President sometimes communicates their intent to disregard certain provisions of bills that have been signed into law.

It is for this reason that I have introduced the Presidential Signing Statements Act. Just as the American people have access to the text of bills that are signed into law, they should have easy and prompt access to the content of presidential signing statements that may affect how those laws will be executed. To enable a more complete public understanding of our Nation's laws, the Congress should also be able to call for the executive explanation and justification for a presidential signing statement.

According to CRS, President Clinton issued 381 signing statements while in

office; 70 of these statements raised legal or constitutional objections. President George W. Bush has issued 157 signing statements; 122 of these statements have contained some type of constitutional challenge or objection. Because it's reasonable to assume that future Presidents will continue this practice, Congress should act now to pass legislation to ensure proper understanding and disclosure of these signing statements.

The American Bar Association recently examined the issue of presidential signing statements and appointed the Task Force on Presidential Signing Statements and the Separation of Powers Doctrine. That task force issued a report urging Congress to "enact legislation requiring the President to promptly submit to Congress an official copy of all signing statements he issues . . . to submit to Congress a report setting forth in full the reasons and legal basis for the statement." The ABA also recommended that "such submissions be available in a publicly accessible database."

Mr. Speaker, the bill that I have introduced would require the President to transmit copies of the signing statements to congressional leadership within 3 days of issuance; require signing statements to be published in the Federal Register; third, require executive staff to testify on the meaning and justification for presidential signing statements at the request of the House or the Senate Judiciary Committee; and, fourth, provide that no moneys may be authorized or expended to implement any law accompanied by a signing statement if any provision of the law is violated.

Mr. Speaker, because it's important that we preserve the provision of power in our government and public understanding of our Nation's laws, I hope many of my colleagues will consider cosponsoring this legislation, H.R. 5993.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask God to continue to bless our men and women in uniform and ask God to continue to bless the families, and may God continue to bless America.

CONGRESSIONAL WAR POWERS

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Warren Christopher and James Baker released a groundbreaking report on the powers of the Congress and the White House about declaring war.

The Constitution is clear that only Congress has the right to declare war. Not only that, but Congress is granted the power of the purse. We in the Congress decide when it's appropriate to enter into armed conflict and then fulfill our commitment by fully funding and protecting our troops.

The publication may sound like dry stuff, another commission with another report. But that's not the case.

The fact that this report even needed to be written is noteworthy, however. It's noteworthy on its very own. Who would have thought that Members of Congress would need to be reminded of our constitutional duties? But the Baker-Christopher report is absolutely necessary, particularly now, as the administration's drumbeat for war with Iran builds.

We have seen over the past years how some have exploited the so-called war on terror to mean war with anyone who does not agree with America. We have heard it before: "If you're not with us, you're against us." Some even question the patriotism of those of us who have spoken up in opposition to some of the misguided policies of the White House, policies over the Iraq occupation, the loss of civil rights and liberties in the name of security, just as an example.

Recently, the New Yorker Magazine revealed that the administration sought up to \$400 million to fund a major escalation of covert operations against Iran, described in a presidential finding—my colleague was just talking about those—signed by President Bush and designed to destabilize the country's religious leadership.

Mr. Speaker, you don't need a secret decoder ring to know what that means. How often does a country spend hundreds of millions of dollars to declare peace with another nation?

Congress must assert itself. We can't just be waiting around to be "consulted." Consulting, not an open hearing or floor debate, is exactly what got us where we are today. I just don't think that we can sit back and wait for the executive branch to come down here to us and ask our permission.

This Congress, and the American people, will not stand for another war. We must strengthen our diplomatic efforts and work at it 24 hours a day. This is not something we can wait until the next administration takes over or until the current one forces our hand.

Negotiating with Iran's leaders may not be the ideal situation for some, but for others and most of us know it is the best opportunity that we have. Wouldn't it be nice if we could only talk to our friends? Well, that's not the way it is. We don't need to talk to our friends. We have to talk to those with whom we have differences. We have to talk to our enemies. That's the only way we are going to bring about any kind of disarmament and any kind of nonproliferation because talking to friends won't bring about human rights. It certainly won't bring about regional stability. We must have dialogue with Iran and we must do it now.

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ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on both sides of the aisle, Demo-

crats and Republicans, we realize that we need to start looking at every source of energy that we can come up with; solar, wind. Every kind. We need to move toward new forms of transportation; hybrid cars and other vehicles, maybe hydrogen-powered cars.

But in addition to that, while this transition from fossil fuels is taking place to these new technologies, we need to drill for oil. We need to be energy independent. We need to use such things as coal shale and offshore drilling, and drilling in Alaska, the ANWR, in order to get the oil that is necessary for us to move and become energy independent, and we can do that. But this Congress and the Senate, this House and the Senate, really needs to get together and come up with a plan that covers all of these things. If we don't start drilling for oil and using fossil fuel more efficiently in this country, we are going to have a severe problem.

The Iranians just fired some test missiles the other day. They did that in response to the Israelis flying about a hundred war planes down the Mediterranean for a distance that was pretty close to Tehran's distance from Israel. I think they are both sending signals. The head of the air force for the Iranians said that if there was any kind of an act of war toward them, they would sink ships in the Persian Gulf.

Twenty percent of the world oil goes through the Persian Gulf. You sink two ships in the Gulf of Hormuz and you're going to have chaos. We get as much as 40 percent of our oil from that region. If anything like that occurs, and as long as Iran keeps working toward their nuclear goals of building a nuclear weapon, the threat of war is definitely there.

Israel has been threatened with extinction by the Iranian leaders, Ahmadinejad, the President, and so the threat of a conflict is definitely there. The United States economically would be devastated if we weren't prepared for that eventuality because we don't have the energy here necessary to keep this economy moving.

The best way to make sure that doesn't happen is to use every source of energy we can come up with. While we are transitioning to these other forms of energy like air, wind, like solar, like hybrid cars, like coal shale, like hydrogen-powered cars, all those things, while we are moving toward those, which is going to take probably at least 10 years, or longer, some people say as many as 20, we need to have the energy to keep this country afloat without depending on Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, Venezuela and the Communist leader down there, Mr. Chavez. We need to move toward energy independence. The American people are paying between \$4 and \$5 a gallon for oil.

The Fourth of July parades just took place and I know that all of my colleagues heard from their constituents: Do something about the price of gasoline. The best thing we can do is start