

first-quarter figure marked a decline of 2.6 percent, or \$1.33 trillion, from the final quarter of 2008.

Net worth represents total assets such as homes and checking accounts, minus liabilities like mortgages and credit card debt.

The damage to wealth in the first quarter came from the sinking stock market. The value of Americans' stock holdings dropped 5.8 percent from the final quarter of last year.

The stock market began to rally from 12-year lows in early March after Citigroup Inc. reported it was profitable in the first two months of the year. Since peaking in October 2007, it had been the worst bear market since the aftermath of the crash of 1929.

Another hit came from falling house prices. The value of household real-estate holdings fell 2.4 percent, according to the Fed report.

Collectively, homeowners had only 41.4 percent equity in their homes in the first quarter. That was down from 42.9 percent in the fourth quarter and was the lowest on records dating to 1945.

The Case-Shiller national home price index, a closely watched barometer, last month estimated that house prices dropped 7.5 percent during the first quarter. Prices have fallen 32.2 percent since peaking in the second quarter of 2006.

The latest snapshot of Americans' balance sheets was contained in the Fed's quarterly report called the flow of funds.

Despite the drop, the speed at which net worth shrunk slowed at the start of the year. During the recession's deepest point in the October-December period, Americans' net worth fell a record 8.6 percent, according to revised figures. That was the largest drop on records dating to 1951.

With wealth declining and unemployment rising, there are questions about how consumers—the lifeblood of the economy—will behave in the coming months.

If they continue to spend, even at a subdued pace, the recession likely will end this year as predicted by Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and other economists. However, if consumers hunker down and cut spending again, that could delay any recovery. In the final quarter of last year, Americans slashed spending at an annualized rate of 4.3 percent, the most in 28 years.

Still, there was some encouraging news on consumer spending Thursday.

Retail sales rose 0.5 percent in May, following two straight monthly declines, the Commerce Department reported. Meanwhile, the number of newly laid-off workers filing for unemployment benefits fell last week by 24,000 to 601,000, the lowest level since late January.

#### DON'T GIVE TERRORISTS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, "You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney present during questioning. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you."

American citizens are read these rights when they are taken into police custody. But the Obama administration has decided to give these rights to suspected terrorists overseas.

Why would the Obama administration give terrorists the same rights as American citizens? Members of al Qaeda and the other terrorist groups should be treated as what they are, America's enemies engaged in a war against the United States.

Giving terrorists constitutional rights is like giving a burglar the key to your house.

#### CONCERNS WITH A GOVERNMENT- RUN HEALTH CARE PLAN

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Republicans are committed to health care reform, and we have and will continue to offer positive solutions to achieve accessible, affordable health care for all Americans. Unfortunately, as Democrats sat behind closed doors to develop their plan, it appears they have failed to answer some troubling concerns about what seems quite likely to be an unwarranted government takeover of the health care system.

So in the spirit of honest debate, I ask my Democrat colleagues how they expect to pay for a government insurance plan without raising taxes or driving up the national debt. How will a government-run health plan not lead to the same rationing of care that we have seen in other countries? How will a government-run health plan protect the doctor-patient relationship, when Washington will now be empowered to pick and choose what procedures and treatments are, in their opinion, cost beneficial?

Before we turn congressional offices into waiting rooms, I hope my Democrat colleagues will answer these questions.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th and the Global War on Terrorism.

#### NO NEW TAXES, NO NEW SPENDING, NO NEW DEBT

(Mr. CULBERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, I just finished speaking to the Bunker Hill and Wilchester Elementary School students, and I want to bring to the attention of the people here in the audience and out there the cover of the new Economist magazine which expresses beautifully the terrible, terrible burden that this Congress, this liberal majority, is passing on to our kids.

Now, there was debt run up under the previous administration. I as a member of the fiscally conservative minority voted against \$2.3 trillion worth of new spending under the previous administration. I already voted against \$1.6 trillion in this administration. And no matter who you are, fiscal conservative

or liberal, each one of us needs to remember as parents, as husbands, as responsible citizens, that we cannot pass on a burden of debt to our kids.

On every vote on every issue, we need to remember that our children are inheriting the biggest debt and the biggest deficit in our Nation's history. As bad as the deficit was under Mr. Bush, the Economist points out it will quadruple this year and stay over \$1 trillion a year out into the future.

Madam Speaker, on every vote on every issue, this Congress needs to cut spending. No new taxes, no new spending, and no new debt.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

#### THE WAR FOR THE BORDER CONTINUES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the out-of-control violence along our border is made up of more complex elements than most people realize. The criminal cartels controlling our southern border are a lot more powerful than we are led to believe. They are international organized crime cartels that make money off the weaknesses of others. They traffic drugs, money, weapons and human beings across our southern border. They leave death, doom, and destruction in their wake.

Make no mistake about it, there is corruption on both sides of the border that facilitates the lawlessness that is taking place there. Just last month the former sheriff of Starr County, Texas, Rey Guerra, pled guilty to Federal narcotics charges. He admitted to facilitating intelligence that helped Mexican drug traffickers invade the United States and evade counternarcotics efforts. That included trying to find out the identity of confidential informants.

Madam Speaker, he needs to be locked up forever for his betrayal of this country and law enforcement. But he is just one of a growing number of recruits from both sides of the border that are facilitating this avalanche of corruption and anarchy along the southern frontier.

The Mexican criminal cartels have added a layer of intelligence that better resembles foreign recruitment of spies during the Cold War than a traditional criminal enterprise. The huge

amounts of money paid to these officials allow these criminals to traffic people and drugs into our land.

There is a huge difference in the size and scope of these international criminal activities and the typical domestic law enforcement agencies and their duties. As more and more of the violence spills over into Texas and other border States, there is an urgent need to get this lawlessness under control.

The cost of this culture of crime is hammering border States. The FBI is stretched too thin, they don't have the manpower to address this cross-border corruption, and they are fighting domestic Federal crime and jihadists.

Right now we are asking local sheriffs in border States to do double duty, as if they are agents of Interpol. Our domestic police forces should be freed up to do what they do best, fight crime in their counties and their communities.

Our Drug Enforcement Agency is doing a noble effort to control these international criminal cartels that more and more resemble an army at the border than the Cosa Nostra, but the FBI has not been given enough American resources. The Border Patrol is overrun, outmanned, and outgunned.

Our government has limited their rules of engagement. Their standard operating procedure is nonconfrontational. Heavily armed bad guys come through with their contraband of drugs and humans, and yet little is done when they confront our Border Patrol. These cartels are made up of a hybrid of many of the worst elements of organized crime. They include terrorist cells, international espionage agencies, and a foreign military.

But why are we acting as if we can no longer defend our borders and citizens from this lawlessness? It is the philosophy of some that we should wave the white flag of surrender and lessen, not strengthen, our border security. This is absolute nonsense. The Mexican organized criminal cartels are sophisticated, and they are deadly. Maybe it is time to put the United States military on the border. There is no higher duty for the American military than to protect the borders of its own Nation from international criminal invasion.

It is interesting, Madam Speaker. We use our military thousands of miles away to fight the drug war in Afghanistan, but we won't use them at home. Why not? There is no answer from the administration.

We should rotate deployments of our military to the southern border. Our brave men and women are routinely deployed for desert training. Why not concentrate these deployments on the border? This frees up our domestic law enforcement to do the job they should be doing, which is rooting out corruption on our side of the border.

Madam Speaker, I have flown with the National Guard along the Texas-Mexico border. They do a tremendous job working with the Border Patrol and the DEA. But a handful of helicopters

is not enough to secure the border. The Air National Guard needs more equipment, more money and more troops to capture the outlaw cartel gangs. The U.S. gave Mexico \$1.5 billion to fight the cartels. That money should have been given to our border protectors, not the culture of corruption on the Mexican side of the border.

A lot of attention has been rightly focused on our southern border over the past few years. We have increased the boots on the ground, installed some cameras and erected some barriers and fences and sensors. The efforts have not sealed the border, however.

As the violence gets worse in Mexico, we must get a border strategy in place now before it erupts into a level of widespread violence and more corruption that engulfs our own citizens.

It is not going away, Madam Speaker. The drug cartels are in it for the long haul because of their lust for money. There is a war against drugs going on on the border, even though we are told now that we should not, because of political correctness, use that term.

The first duty of government is to protect the people. The government needs to focus on border protection. Meanwhile, the border war continues.

And that's just the way it is.

#### ENDING MILITARY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the supplemental appropriations bill to continue our military operations in Iraq and in Afghanistan will soon return to the House for another vote. I voted against it in the first place, and I am going to vote against it again. I cannot support it because it will prolong our military involvement in Iraq and it will increase our military buildup in Afghanistan.

I would gladly vote to fund the safe withdrawal of our troops and contractors out of Iraq. But the supplemental gives me a feeling of *deja vu*. Haven't we been there before, voting to include billions of dollars for the occupation of Iraq?

Congress has voted to increase funding for Iraq many times, even though the American people want the occupation to end, and it seems the Iraqi people want us out of their country as well.

The supplemental also calls for sending more troops to a foreign land, this time Afghanistan, with no exit strategy. Talk about repeating past mistakes. Talk about *deja vu*. Afghanistan feels exactly the same as Iraq did to me.

President Obama has said that a campaign against extremism will not succeed with bullets and bombs alone. He is absolutely correct about that. But the money in the supplemental is

overwhelmingly devoted to military operations. It includes very little for the economic development, humanitarian aid, and diplomatic efforts that we really need to stop extremists in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

The ratio is 90-10, 90 percent to the Department of Defense, 10 percent to the smart alternatives. I believe the supplemental also violates the spirit of President Obama's historic speech in Cairo where he offered the Muslim world the hand of friendship. In that speech he said that we must leave Iraq to the Iraqis. But the supplemental will only delay the return of sovereignty to the Iraqi people.

And then there is the little matter of the recession, Madam Speaker. When the American people are feeling such great pain and need so much help right here at home, we can't afford to squander another \$100 billion on foreign military adventures that will not make our country safe.

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Instead of approving the supplemental bill, the House should be urging the administration to fundamentally change our mission in Iraq, and our mission in Afghanistan. We can do this in several ways.

First, we should support the bill offered by JIM MCGOVERN of Massachusetts, which calls upon the administration to submit an exit strategy for Afghanistan.

Second, I urge my colleagues to consider the plan that I have offered in House Resolution 363. It's called the Smart Security Platform For the 21st Century. Smart Security attacks the root causes of violence by fighting poverty and giving people hope for a better future. It controls the spread of nuclear and conventional weapons of mass destruction, and it strengthens our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

And finally, we should insist that at least 80 percent of all future funding for Afghanistan be devoted to the Smart Security I just described. Right now, the supplemental, as I told you, devotes more than 90 percent of its dollars to purely military efforts, efforts that are getting us nowhere.

Madam Speaker, we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. We've got to stop writing more blank checks for open-ended occupations. This is what the American people want, and Congress must listen.

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