

We have the first front in the war in Afghanistan, the second front is the war in Iraq, and the third front is the border with our neighbors to the south—Mexico. We are finally beginning to learn that there is concrete evidence of a new border plan by this administration. The administration's new plan is this. And let me show you. The plan is to put up warning signs—signs like this one right here. And I happen to have a photograph of one of these signs. It's on Interstate 8 in Arizona.

The Bureau of Land Management began posting these signs recently in locations along Interstate 8 between Casa Grande and Gila Bend in Arizona. It's an east-west stretch of highway about 60 miles long. Phoenix is 30 miles to the north. The border with Mexico is 80 to 100 miles to the south. About a dozen of these signs have been posted.

You probably can't see this, Madam Speaker, so let's go through it. Of course, at the top it's in red: Danger: Public Warning—Travel Not Recommended. The Federal Government, the administration, and its new border security plan is to tell us, Don't travel this highway. It's not recommended by the Federal Government. The administration has issued travel warnings to citizens to not travel in parts of America. It's just too dangerous for Americans to go through America.

The sign goes on and says some more. Right here, the first bullet point: Active Drug and Human Smuggling Area. So now we know why we're not to be in that part of Arizona—because it's not safe. There's an active area of drug smuggling and human trafficking. And so the remedy of the Federal Government is warning Americans to stay away.

Further, the sign says: Visitors May Encounter Armed Criminals and Smuggling Vehicles Traveling at High Rates of Speed. Another reason why Americans are encouraged not to go through America. It's just not safe.

Now, would those visitors be American? It must be because the sign is actually written in English, supposedly for Americans traveling this interstate highway across America.

The sign further gives some more warning comments: Stay Away from Trash, Clothing, Backpacks, and Abandoned Vehicles. We're not supposed to get near those items when we travel Interstate 8. You see, it continues to say: If You See Suspicious Activity—and this must be important because it is underlined—Do Not Confront. Move Away. Call 911.

Now let's go over this warning on this interstate highway sign telling Americans not to travel through America because it's just too dangerous because of the illegal activity in the area. It says, If you see something that you think is suspicious, don't confront those people. Move away and call 911.

Now let's go through this a little bit. Call 911. You pick up the phone, you call 911. Normally, when you call 911, you get local law enforcement to an-

swer the phone. You don't get the Federal Government because they don't answer 911 calls.

So our government is suing Arizona and doesn't want Arizona local law enforcement to enforce immigration laws and border security, but local security—police officers—will answer 911. They will probably say, Well, we're not supposed to be enforcing immigration laws so we're going to turn you over to ICE. They connect you to ICE—Immigration and Customs Enforcement. And what are they going to say? If we actually get to the Federal Government, what will they say? They will probably say, Well, read the rest of the sign and move away, because we have really not tried to enforce the law along Interstate 8 in Arizona. Seems to be a little nonsense to me.

Here's my favorite one down here at the bottom. The last one says, The BLM—that's the Bureau of Land Management. They manage Federal lands in the United States to take care of us all. It says: The Bureau of Land Management Encourages Visitors to Use Public Lands North of Interstate 8. In other words, don't go south of Interstate 8, that 80 miles to 90 miles to Mexico. Go north of Interstate 8. Phoenix is only 30 miles from here, by the way.

So, are we ceding as a country land south of Interstate 8 to Mexico, the drug cartels, to the human smugglers, to the drug traffickers? Are we just giving that land back because our Federal Government says, Sorry, we're not protecting that part of America. We're not going to keep that safe.

That is unfortunate, giving this land over to the crime cartels. And so ceding the land to Mexico is not a border security plan at all. Our government's plan seems to be simple—erect a few signs, tell Americans to run and hide in their own country, and then sue the State of Arizona for trying to protect its citizens. That's not a plan. That's nonsense. The Federal Government is missing in action. We need to send the National Guard to the border and protect Americans.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRATULATING OCEAN WATCH AND ITS CREW

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the crew of the sailing ship Ocean Watch, a 60-foot sailboat, which just completed a 28,000-mile journey around the Americas. It's been a little more than a year ago that Mark Schrader, Herb McCormick, David Thoreson, and David Logan left Seattle and sailed north. They sailed around Alaska and then through the treacherous Northwest Passage, an area that's usually too full of ice to pass but is now navigable because of the rapidly warming Arctic.

After about a hundred days, the crew arrived safely in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. From there, the Ocean Watch sailed south along the Atlantic coast of both continents to the challenging route around Cape Horn, where they once again met the waters of the Pacific. After traveling over a year and completing more than 28,000 nautical miles, they finished their expedition and returned home to Seattle. They set sail with the mission of inspiring, educating, and engaging the citizens throughout the Americas to protect our fragile oceans.

This amazing journey was envisioned by David Rockefeller, Jr., and Captain Mark Schrader of Stanwood, Washington. To implement their shared vision, Mr. Rockefeller enlisted the assistance of a nonprofit organization he helped to found, Sailors for the Sea, that encourages sailors to become more active stewards of the world's oceans. Over the course of their journey, the crew that included experienced sailors, photographers, journalists, educators, and scientists, visited 13 countries at 45 ports of call. In Alaska, they visited with the Namgis Indians of British Columbia and were themselves educated on the destruction of the local habitat by industrial logging and over-fishing. They docked in New York City for a presentation at the New York Yacht Club, where they shared their experience and mission to a standing-room only crowd.

At each stop, the crew shared their experiences and raised awareness of important ocean health issues like polar ice melt, ocean pollution, collapsing fisheries, acidification, and coastal erosion due to sea level rise. To aid in their mission, the Ocean Watch carried with it various instruments and cameras, coordinated data collection with various NASA and NOAA satellites, and took advantage of the unique opportunity to track and monitor global data from a single platform. In the true spirit of conservation and education, these measurements will be shared and used to complement other oceanographic, atmospheric, and climate research programs, the majority of which originated from the Applied Physics Lab and the Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Oceans at the University of Washington. To help in accomplishing the educational goals of this project, they used a set of curricula and educational resources developed by Seattle's Pacific Science Center, and brought with them trained, bilingual educators who shared lessons linked to the onboard scientific research with the communities that they visited.

The completion of Ocean Watch's extraordinary voyage cannot come at a more critical time in our Nation's ecological history. As we watch helplessly as the oil gushes into the Gulf of Mexico and it devastates the region's ecosystem with the far-reaching potential of consequences that extend well into the Gulf, we need more advocates who

understand the importance of protecting our fragile oceans.

While the crew of the Ocean Watch successfully completed their voyage, their work has only just begun. After both the Exxon Valdez and the disaster in the Gulf, I'm not sure how many more wake-up calls we need, but I do know that we're going to need people like Mark Schrader and his crew to help educate us on what is happening to our oceans. I commend the crew of the Ocean Watch for moving us forward on this difficult path.

I recently read a quote by a British man named Thomas Fuller in 1732. He said, "We never know the worth of water until the well is dry." I sincerely hope that with advocates like the crew of the Ocean Watch, we will prove Mr. Fuller wrong.

□ 1620

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces that the correct tally on roll call vote No. 440 was 303 yeas and 119 nays.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

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. Madam Speaker, when we were debating the issue of Afghanistan a couple of weeks ago, during the 3 minutes of time that I had, I brought up the issue of rules of engagement. These are the rules that our men and women in uniform in Afghanistan and Iraq have to follow if they're going to be confronted by the enemy.

Well, I have been very disappointed that we've put so many restrictions on our men and women in uniform that I, along with two other Members of the House—JEFF MILLER, a Congressman from California and DOUG LAMBORN, a Congressman from Colorado—wrote to Chairman IKE SKELTON and Ranking Member BUCK McKEON, and we asked for a classified hearing on this issue of the rules of engagement.

And, Madam Speaker, in the letter that we wrote to the chairman and ranking member, we cited in there an article from The Washington Post that was entitled, "This is not how you fight a war." One example, one of the United States Army officers serving in southern Afghanistan quoted in this article, "Minimizing civilian casualties is a fine goal, but should it be the be-all and end-all of the policy? If we allow soldiers to die in Afghanistan at the hands of a leader who says, 'We're going to protect civilians rather than soldiers,' what's going to happen on the ground? The soldiers are not going to execute the mission to the best of their ability. They won't put their hearts into the mission. That's the kind of atmosphere we're building" in Afghanistan.

Another soldier in the same article was quoted as saying, "This is not how you fight a war, at least not in Kandahar! We've been handcuffed by our chained chain of command."

Madam Speaker, also from that article, I would like to read another paragraph: "For troops on the ground, the directive has lowered their morale and limited their ability to pursue insurgents. They note that Taliban fighters seem to understand the new rules and have taken to sniping at troops from inside homes or retreating inside houses after staging attacks."

This is an ongoing issue and problem for our military. In fact, in a June article, there was a syndicated column by George Will, and I will read just one paragraph. In "a recent email from a noncommissioned officer serving in Afghanistan" . . . "he explains why the rules of engagement for U.S. troops are too prohibitive for coalition forces to achieve sustained tactical successes."

And, Madam Speaker, also during that debate a couple of weeks ago, I held up these two articles from Marine Times, "left to die. They call for help. Negligent Army leadership refuse and abandon them on the battlefield. Four marines and one Army killed" because they did not get the support that they needed because of rules of engagement.

I also have spoken to a father from Maine who was quoted in another Marine Times article, "Caution killed my son. Marine families blast suicidal tactics in Afghanistan." The father said to me—he, himself, a retired marine—that my son and the platoon, if they had gotten the cover that they needed the day before when they saw Taliban soldiers going into a cave—they called for air support. The helo came over the gunship but did not fire into the cave because the pilot said, "We cannot see the enemy," yet the young lieutenant had just reported to them, "We saw the Taliban soldiers go into the cave."

Madam Speaker, it is time to get out of Afghanistan. We have put our troops over there in harm's way, and we're not letting them fight as they should be able to fight.

Before I close, in a poll from CBS just 2 days ago, "Should U.S. Set a Timetable for Withdrawing Troops from Afghanistan?" 54 percent said "yes," 41 percent said "no," and 5 percent were undecided.

Madam Speaker, I want to close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. God, in Your loving arms, hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I will ask God to please bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. And I will ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to the President of the United States that he will do what is right in the eyes of God. And three times—God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

FISCAL DISCIPLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FUDGE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Madam Speaker, on Sunday, two leading voices from both sides of the aisle outlined as clearly as ever the consequences of Washington's unrestrained spending. The cochairs of the nonpartisan Debt and Deficit Commission, former Republican Senator Alan Simpson and former Clinton administration Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles said that if the government stays on its current path, our crushing Federal debt will "destroy the country from within." Bowles went on to describe it as a "cancer" on our Nation.

These are just the latest warnings of the disaster we face if Congress does not begin making the tough choices to restore fiscal discipline. Washington politicians have heard it from policy experts, from public servants, and, above all, from the people. When will they start to listen? How much plainer can we make the stakes? What more will it take to get the message through?

I was proud to fight for the strongest possible debt commission, and I will push Congress for an up-or-down vote on each of their recommendations. But the cochairs have already laid out what needs to be done to get our fiscal house in order, and this House must not waste any opportunity to take action.

As Members put together the appropriation bills for the next fiscal year, they should work creatively and aggressively to cut spending levels and do more with less. As I have proposed, they should start by reducing congressional pay by 5 percent. Congress needs to lead by example. Before they ask the rest of the Federal Government to make cuts, they must go on to find big and small ways to save billions of taxpayer dollars.

Paying down the debt and balancing the budget will not be easy. There will be politically unpopular decisions to be made. But as Senator Simpson and Mr. Bowles reminded us, leaving the hard calls for another day is no longer an option.

THE MIAMI VA'S CONTINUED PROBLEMS WITH COLONOSCOPIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, over a year ago, more than 3,000 veterans in the Miami Veterans Affairs Medical Center were notified that they could have been exposed to life-threatening diseases like HIV and hepatitis because the Miami VA was not properly sterilizing its equipment for colonoscopies. These are veterans who went in for routine screenings, who put