

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

their trust in the medical professionals at the VA, and could have been possibly infected with any number of viruses. Our veterans who sacrificed so much for our country deserve better than this.

When this matter first came to light last year, immediate hearings into the matter were called. My colleagues and I were told multiple times that every veteran who underwent a colonoscopy during the risk period would be contacted and would be tested. During followup site visits at the Miami VA, I was again personally assured that the VA had informed every impacted veteran. Most importantly, both local and national VA officials were certain that real positive changes had been made to restore accountability and trust. Now, Madam Speaker, 1 year later, we find out that an additional 79 veterans might have been exposed to these life-threatening viruses but were, in fact, never notified of their risk.

Now, we are blessed to have excellent doctors, excellent nurses, excellent health care professionals working at the Miami VA, and I'm sure that they are saddened by this repeated problem. I thank this dedicated group of health care professionals for caring so deeply about our veterans. They should not be faulted for the problems of a few.

This most recent mistake was only discovered by the Miami VA when one of the veterans, himself, came forward. He wondered why the hospital had not contacted him about his colonoscopy which was performed during the risk period. Without his coming forward, these 79 potentially impacted patients could have easily gone completely unnoticed.

HIV and hepatitis are much more easily treated, and survivability is greatly enhanced, obviously, if the diseases are caught early. The failure of some in the Miami VA to identify those veterans is near unfathomable when considering the supposed microscope that the VA had promised they would be held under.

□ 1630

Yet 79 of the veterans still fell through the cracks. Nationally, the VA has promised to deliver on its pledge of greater management accountability and trust. The VA must follow basic procedures to protect its patients and implement a process for examining its faults and resolving them.

The Miami VA is again contacting every single patient who may have been exposed so that he can be tested and, if need be, treated. The VA must make sure that this tragedy is never repeated and that accountability and oversight are restored.

Our country is deeply indebted to the sacrifices made by our courageous men and woman who have served in our Armed Forces. We owe it to them to make sure that they are taken care of upon their return home.

This terrible mistake that led our veterans to being potentially impacted

with life-threatening diseases cannot be repeated. To restore that lost credibility, the VA must enact new procedures to ensure that similar problems never occur in the future and make sure that there are proper mechanisms in place to resolve any issues that do arise.

I know that the Miami VA health care professionals have a lot of work ahead of them to rebuild the trust, and they will do so. They will re-establish that bond between each veteran and the most excellent Miami VA center.

Our veterans know that they deserve to know what went wrong and, more importantly, that it will never happen to a fellow veteran from here on out.

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PASSPORTS FOR THE IROQUOIS LACROSSE TEAM

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

Mr. MAFFEI. Madam Speaker, I rise to give the House an update on the situation concerning the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team trying to travel to the 2010 World Lacrosse Championship in Great Britain.

Madam Speaker, I rose this morning to talk about how this team is trying to travel to this. They are traveling on their own passports as an indigenous people, and they were not allowed to board the plane multiple times.

Since I last reported to the House, the State Department, because of the direct intervention of the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has become involved; and they have issued an assurance to the British Government that indeed this team, who have already subjected themselves to all the security considerations, including a full bio-scan, fingerprints and other background checks, that this team would be allowed back in the United States and was, indeed, a legitimate team.

However, Madam Speaker, the British have not yet decided whether or not to let the team into this international competition.

Madam Speaker, the 2010 World Lacrosse Championships are being hosted in Great Britain. This team, the Iroquois Nationals, that represent the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, or as they call it, the Hodnashone People, this team was invited, not to compete for the United States or Canada or any other country other than the Iroquois Country. They were invited because of their own national identity. And so it seems particularly odd and contradictory that the British Government would require them to have passports

of a country that they don't feel that they're representing.

Now, we do have many examples of times in our history when we've had people who've stood up to principle and have not been able to compete. In 1924, a Scottish Olympic star named Eric Liddell did not want to compete on the Sabbath. He was told that he would not be able to participate in the 1924 Olympics because of that.

In the movie "Chariots of Fire," which was an Academy Award-winning movie in 1981, this was chronicled; and he was called in that movie a true man of principle, a true athlete. His speed is a mere extension of his life, it's force; and we sought to sever his running from himself.

Madam Speaker, if the British, or any national entity, seek to sever this Iroquois National team from their own national identity, then they are asking them to not be the athletes that they are.

I urge the British Government to do everything in their power to make sure that once safety considerations are considered, that this team be allowed to go to travel to Great Britain and to be allowed to compete. These Iroquois, or Hodnashone, were the inventors of the game of lacrosse. It would be an international embarrassment if they're not allowed to compete. And they have been allowed to compete in other countries such as Australia and Japan.

We cannot lose the forest for the trees. We cannot look at some bureaucratic excuse, particularly for the country that's allegedly hosting the Olympics in 2012 in London. If they're going to host an international game, they have to be ready to welcome an international team.

RECOGNIZING AND CONSTITUTING AMERICA'S "WE THE PEOPLE 9/17 CONTEST"

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. It was John Adams who once wrote, "Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge of the people." And when I first came to Congress, I resolved that promoting knowledge of the U.S. Constitution would be one of my primary responsibilities and priorities. And to that end, I founded and continue to this day to chair the Congressional Constitution Caucus.

I come here to the floor tonight just to say that I'm not alone in this effort in working to preserve our freedoms through education and specifically of the U.S. Constitution. And so tonight I would just like to recognize a group whose mission is to inform America's youth and her citizens about the importance of the U.S. Constitution and the foundation it sets forth regarding our freedoms and rights.

The name of this group is Constituting America. And I commend the efforts of the two founders, and that is