

stop the violence on his side of the border. But we are naive to think it's not going to come to the United States because eventually it will. It is a national security issue, Madam Speaker.

Some say that Mexico will be a failed state because of the drug cartels' influence, and it's certainly a tough situation for Mexican nationals that live along the border. I've been on both sides of the border, and I've seen it's a tough situation for people who live there because they live in fear because the drug cartels are fearless and they would do anything to bring those drugs into the United States.

Our own State Department has issued a spring break advisory: Don't go to Mexico. It's not safe to go down there. There are beheadings of local and law enforcement officers. There are kidnappings of not only Mexican nationals but Americans that are being kidnapped now on our side of the border. It's a violent place, Madam Speaker. The United States now says that only Pakistan and Iran are more of a national security concern than Mexico. That's serious, and we should be concerned about it.

We now understand, of course, about the corruption in the Mexican Government. Even though President Calderon is trying to do what he can, you see, those drug cartels pay their criminals a whole lot more money than these federal peace officers get paid, and they switch sides and some of them even work for the federal government in Mexico. So he's put troops on the border. I'm talking about the President of the Mexico. He's put several thousands of troops on the border. Several thousand went into Juarez to try to stop the drug cartels from operating there.

More importantly, Madam Speaker, this is a national security issue for the United States. Both sides of the border are violent, and we need to do everything we can to deal with this problem.

The first thing we need to do is realize it's going on. In last year's election, neither person running for President ever mentioned the border problem. They didn't want to talk about that. It wasn't politically correct.

We have to deal with this issue. We have to help the Border Patrol. We need to change the rules of engagement. The Border Patrol, right now they can't shoot anybody unless they're shot at. They have got to take the first bullet; so they back off.

We need to help the sheriffs. One of the sheriffs down in Texas told me that the drug cartels outgun them, out-finance them and out-man them. They've got better equipment, more money, and more people. A deputy sheriff in South Texas makes about \$12,000 a year. A guy running drugs or guns across the border will make that much in 2 weeks. It's important that we help them.

And, of course, I think that we ought to put our troops on the border. If we put our troops, the National Guard, on the border, people will quit crossing.

Mexico is doing what it can with its military, but we won't do that because we might offend somebody.

Down the road the United States has to deal with the real problem, and that's the tremendous addiction Americans have for illicit drugs. We have to deal with that or this is all going to continue. But until we fix that problem, we need to stop the crime from coming into the United States.

It is time, Madam Speaker, that we realize the truth because the first duty of government is not building roads and bridges and sending money to museums and foreign aid. The first duty of government is to protect the people. That's the people of the United States. And our government needs to get with the program and send the National Guard to the border.

And that's just the way it is.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE SUPPORT FOR REDESIGNATING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY AS THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

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, the Navy and Marine Corps have operated as one entity for more than two centuries, and H.R. 24 would enable the name of their department to illustrate this fact.

For the past 7 years, the full House of Representatives has supported this change as part of the National Defense Authorization Act. This year I'm grateful to have the support of Senator PAT ROBERTS, a former Marine who recently introduced a companion bill in the Senate, S. 504. I hope that the Senate will support the House position and join in bringing proper respect to the fighting team of the Navy and Marine Corps. The Marines who are fighting today in Afghanistan and Iraq deserve this recognition.

Madam Speaker, last month I had the privilege of addressing more than 200 Marine Corps veterans and retirees at the Marine Corps League's mid-winter conference. The Marine Corps League has nearly 70,000 members nationwide, and their shared mission is preserving the traditions and promoting the interests of the United States Marine Corps.

As in years past, I spoke to their mid-winter conference about legislation introduced like H.R. 24 to designate the Department of the Navy as the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps. The Marine Corps League has proudly endorsed this legislation and has pledged to work with my office to secure its passage by the House and Senate. Over the years I have been encouraged by the overwhelming support I have received for this change from so many members and veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

I am honored to have the support of Michael Blum, the national executive

director of the Marine Corps League. He's a highly decorated combat marine, who served honorably off the coast of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. He also served his country in the Philippines, Korea, and Vietnam. It is because of great marines like Michael Blum that I continue to champion this cause for the United States Marine Corps.

Madam Speaker, I want to also thank Senator PAT ROBERTS for joining me on the Senate side in this effort to rename the Department of Navy to the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps.

And before I close, I would like to point out the importance of this. There are many important reasons why this should take place. The history of both the Navy and Marine Corps, the fact that they are one fighting team. But, Madam Speaker, with our Marines and Army and other personnel dying in Afghanistan and Iraq, I want to show you exactly why and how this would be important to a Marine family who lost a loved one fighting for this great Nation.

I have a poster that is actually a letter from the current Secretary of the Navy. It's a condolence letter. Certainly I took the family's name out and the deceased's name. And I will read just one sentence, Madam Speaker: From the Secretary of the Navy, November 18, 2008: "On behalf of the Department of the Navy, please accept my very sincere condolences on the loss of your son Captain Joseph A. Marine." Obviously we substituted that last name out of respect.

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Madam Speaker, if this should become the law of the land, and it is so, so justified that we would have the Department of Navy and Marine Corps as one, one fighting team, this is what the condolence letter would say, Madam Speaker. It would say the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps, Washington D.C., November 18 of 2008, and it would say, "Dear Marine Corps Family: On behalf of the Department of Navy and Marine Corps, please accept my very sincere condolences."

Madam Speaker, this is only right. I want to thank the House of Representatives, Congressman and former Chairman of the Armed Forces Committee, DUNCAN HUNTER, and present Chairman IKE SKELTON for always supporting this legislation, and my many colleagues who have done so. This year, with the help of Senator PAT ROBERTS, I think this can become a reality.

With that, Madam Speaker, I ask God to continue to bless our men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq, to bless their families, to bless the families who have given a loved one dying for freedom. And I ask God three times, please, God; please, God; please God, continue to bless America.

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