

security situation in Mexico. Violence has become so widespread and rampant that even the State Department is having difficulty papering over the problems with diplomatic language.

According to the travel warning, which was issued last month, a war between criminal organizations struggling for control of the lucrative narcotics trade continues along the U.S.-Mexico border. That's right, a war, and it's in our back yard. And the blood bath isn't only claiming Mexican casualties. According to the State Department, Americans have been among the victims of homicides and kidnappings in the border region. Dozens of U.S. citizens were kidnapped and/or murdered in Tijuana in 2007. There have been public shootouts during daylight hours near shopping areas.

And this conflict between drug cartels is not just a neighborhood turf war fought between dime store thugs with switchblades. According to the travel warning, the conflict between the Mexican Government and "heavily armed narcotics cartels has escalated to levels equivalent to military small-unit combat and have included use of machine guns and fragmentation grenades. Criminals are armed with a wide array of sophisticated weapons. In some cases, assailants have worn military uniforms and have used vehicles that resemble police vehicles."

And endemic corruption in Mexico's government is tipping the scales in favor of the cartels. Police and soldiers desert their posts to give traffickers inside knowledge about tactics and surveillance. And because of their history of corruption and abuse, the police and army are often less popular than the drug cartels who hand out cell phones and employ taxi drivers and youth as lookouts.

Several high-ranking police officials have been gunned down in Mexico this month. This includes Mexico's Acting Federal Police Chief, Edgar Millan Gomez, who was killed by the Sinaloa cartel. In another case, a Mexico City district police chief was the target of a bomb that exploded near the police headquarters. Saul Pena, who was to be named one of the five police chiefs in Ciudad Juarez on the border with Texas, was shot dead earlier this month, making him the 20th police official to be killed in Juarez this year.

Just yesterday, a new Juarez police chief quit his post after receiving death threats. And more than 100 of the city's 1,700-member police force have quit their jobs since January. Several Mexican police commanders have crossed into the United States and are seeking asylum, saying they are unprotected and fear for their lives. And who can blame them?

According to the Associated Press, "Police who take on the cartels feel isolated and vulnerable when they become targets, as did 22 commanders in Ciudad Juarez when drug traffickers named them on a handwritten death list. It was addressed to those who still

don't believe in the power of the cartels. Of the 22, seven have been killed, three wounded in assassination attempts. Of the others, all but one have quit, and city officials said they didn't want to be interviewed."

The Zetas, an infamous group of soldiers turned drug hit men are perhaps the most notorious of the drug enforcers. In Mexico, they hang banners above bridges offering jobs, good-paying family benefits to soldiers and police who desert their posts and join the narcotraffickers. The message the drug cartels are sending, Mr. Speaker, is clear: "Join us or die."

Many Americans might be shocked to learn that many of the Zetas receive their advance training courtesy of the American taxpayer. And the Bush administration is poised to make the problem worse by providing an additional \$1.4 billion in assistance for this purpose. With just \$1.4 billion in taxpayer aid, the argument goes, we can train Mexican police and military to better fight the armed elements of the drug cartels.

But we've been there before. Our border patrol agents in Texas and California have already seen U.S.-provided Humvees and other equipment being used by drug cartels and by rogue units of the Mexican military assisting the smugglers.

Mr. Speaker, handing out another \$1 billion in taxpayer money to a Mexican government so rife with corruption so we can watch the scenario repeat itself makes about as much sense as dropping cash out of helicopters. A better use of the \$1.4 billion, Mr. Speaker, would be to secure our own border before any more of this violence spills over to our country and across that dangerous frontier which is separating us from Mexico.

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

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

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4008. An act to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to make technical corrections to the definition of willful noncompliance with respect to violations involving the printing of an expiration date on certain credit and debit card receipts before the date of the enactment of this Act.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND KENNETH E. MARCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, let me first begin by paying just a few words to our beloved Senator EDWARD KENNEDY, who is at this very moment, as we know, fighting for his life.

Senator KENNEDY is beloved by all of us. He is truly the lion in the Senate. Our prayers are with him and his family at this great hour of need.

Madam Speaker, let me just say one word very quickly. This is Memorial Day, and all of us will be visiting our troops. I know I along with other Members of Congress and our entourage will be going over to Europe and into the Middle East to see firsthand about our troops, and I can't think of a better way to celebrate and commemorate Memorial Day than to be over with our troops as they are in harm's way.

Now, Madam Speaker, let me rise to give recognition to an extraordinary American and Georgian and a constituent in my district, in the 13th District of Georgia, and that is Pastor Kenneth E. Marcus, who is now celebrating his 20th anniversary as pastor of the Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta, Georgia, in Cobb County, in the heart of my district. Let me just say a few words about this outstanding individual.

Reverend Marcus was born in Trinidad in the West Indies. He came to this country in 1975. Then he went to Morris Brown College and got his bachelor's degree from Atlanta University. And, Madam Speaker, it was there as a college student that Reverend Marcus received the word and the call from God to preach. He then immediately went to Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where he received his master's degree in divinity. And he started off his career in Athens as his first assignment at the St. Luke/Nimno Circuit in Athens, Georgia. Then he moved on to the Greater Smith Chapel AME in Atlanta, Georgia. And then in 1988 this extraordinary Georgian Reverend Kenneth E. Marcus was appointed pastor of the Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta, Georgia.

And let me just say, Madam Speaker, to show you the significance of this individual, when he was appointed there at Turner Chapel in 1988, there were just 150 members of that church, and now today, just 20 years later, that church has a membership of over 6,000 people. That in and of itself is testimony to the great leadership and the contribution of this outstanding pastor. And this church that he started, he started in a high school gymnasium in Cobb County, and now today Turner Chapel is in an extraordinary cathedral, a modern edifice of extraordinary magnitude which now seats 3,000 members. This is just the testimony of this great, great pastor.

They have over 100 ministries that are serving us throughout Georgia and in some parts of this Nation. And we are so proud of Reverend Kenneth E.