

criminals by doubling the fines and jail time for those convicted of scamming the Medicare system. It creates a new offense for illegally distributing a Medicare or Medicaid beneficiary ID and establishes a penalty of 3 years in prison and a fine equivalent to the dollar amount stolen from Medicare. The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill doubles the criminal penalty for making false statements and for violating the anti-kickback statute from 5 to 10 years in prison and from \$25,000 to a \$50,000 fine. The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill will also create a pilot program that will implement biometric technology to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries are physically present to receive those services. This bill mandates strict background checks for Medicare suppliers that would be carried out before they start cashing those taxpayer checks.

Since its inception in the year 2007, Miami-Dade County's interagency Medicare Strike Force has helped stem the tide of Medicare fraud in our South Florida community. It has gotten more than \$220 million in court-ordered restitution to Medicare from defendants in 87 separate cases. The task force has saved Medicare approximately \$1.75 billion in phony claim submissions. But, Madam Speaker, lamentably there is so much more that needs to be done.

The bill that RON KLEIN and I have filed today will help give law enforcement the tools necessary to make even more arrests and to crack down on fraud in a more efficient and effective manner. It will direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide real-time access to data regarding fraud that will then be given to local law enforcement officials. The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill also directs the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, to follow up with Medicare contractors and report back to us in Congress with recommendations to make this system work even better for seniors all across the country.

#### STOP THE FREELANCE SPYING AT THE PENTAGON

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, a war that is illegitimate with no continued justification inevitably will be managed irresponsibly. But sometimes the excesses and the incompetence continue to shock me.

The Pentagon is now investigating a rogue spy operation that allegedly used private contractors to carry out attacks on militants and paid them inappropriately using a legitimate information-gathering program as a cover. It seems a Pentagon official named Michael Furlong was hiring private firms to gather intelligence about the whereabouts of top insurgents with the goal of hunting them down and killing them.

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And the whole time he was claiming simply to be involved in an above-board project to give us a better understanding of Afghan society and culture.

The CIA, the United States Government's legitimate intelligence-gathering agency, felt that its work was undermined by Mr. Furlong's freelance shenanigans. And it was the CIA's complaints that finally shut Mr. Furlong down and prompted the investigation. You know you've gone off the deep end when the CIA thinks your covert operation is beyond the pale.

No one can say for sure who was supervising or approving Mr. Furlong's operation, and apparently some of the money he was given control over has gone missing.

Mr. Furlong was something of a cowboy, actually. According to news accounts, he liked to brag about having a notorious Iran Contra figure on the payroll, and he likened his contractors to fictional movie assassins.

But this isn't a movie, Madam Speaker. It's not like we can all go home with a clear conscience after the lights come up and the credits roll. There are grave life-and-death consequences to the decisions made inside the Pentagon. And while a movie costs us maybe \$12, this war in Afghanistan is costing us millions every single day.

It's bad enough that this Congress is repeatedly asked to sign another check to pay for a war that is bankrupting our country and failing to advance our national security interests. But then we learn that the money being authorized, which I have consistently voted against, is being used on secret and illegal operations for which there is no transparency or accountability. And this is just the latest example of private contractors being used to carry out questionable wartime activities to get around the rules governing military operations.

It's an encouraging sign, however, that the Pentagon has begun to look into Furlong's operation, and this episode has prompted Secretary Gates to order a review of all the military's information operations programs to make sure everything is on the up-and-up. I'm expecting the oversight committee of this body to ask some tough questions. I can't imagine how we can debate another supplemental unless we've demanded and received answers about Mr. Furlong's spy ring and other possible wrongdoing.

It has to stop, Madam Speaker. It's time to rein in the contractors, and it's time to bring our valiant troops home.

We know there is a better way to fight terrorism and rebuild Afghanistan. It's time to turn our approach to national security upside down. We need a smarter strategy. We need to show American compassion, not American aggression.

We need a humanitarian surge, not a military surge. Instead of troops, we need to send aid workers and other civilian experts. That is the best coun-

terterrorism approach of all. That is what will give Afghan people hope for a better life. That is what will build a durable peace.

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

#### THE THIRD FRONT—PAGE II

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, I bring you news from the third front, and that's the war for this Nation's national security on our southern border with Mexico.

We are engaged in three conflicts, three wars: the one in Afghanistan, the one in Iraq, and the border war on our southern border.

The \$40 billion a year illicit drug trade in Mexico has resulted in a vicious wave of violence in northern Mexico. Over 18,000 Mexican nationals have been killed in recent years by the criminal drug cartels, most of those, innocent civilians; but also many of them are the competition among the drug cartels. And they're fighting for control of the routes that lead into the United States where those drug cartels can sell their wares.

Just a few days ago there was a bombing at the United States Embassy in Nuevo Laredo, just on the border. Recently, a pregnant U.S. Embassy employee and her husband were murdered in Juarez, Mexico, right in front of their young daughter and other witnesses.

And in 2008 there were 1,500 murders in Juarez, Mexico alone; and this year, over 500 people have been killed. To put it in perspective, in 2008 there were only 300 murders in all of Houston, a city that dwarfs the size of Juarez, Mexico. And the violence is escalating.

Good people are abandoning the border cities in Mexico and fleeing further into the interior, and some are fleeing to the United States to stay with relatives, all because of the violence on the U.S.-Mexico border.

And people in this country who say that the violence on the border won't come into the United States live in blissful ignorance of reality. It's already here.

In the El Paso sector of the Border Patrol in Texas, our agents are being targeted by the Azteca hitmen for the Juarez drug cartel. The Azteca gang is a group of individuals who work for the drug cartel, the Juarez drug cartel, and their primary mission is to enforce the ability to bring drugs into the United States. And now we understand our Border Patrol agents in the El Paso sector are being targeted to be shot