

BOARD OF VISITORS TO UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 9355(a), and the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following member to the Board of Visitors to the United States Air Force Academy:

Mr. Alfredo A. Sandoval, Indian Wells, California.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the honor to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I have long appreciated the honor to serve the people of western Iowa here in the United States Congress. Each one of us carries this duty with us in a heavy way and also sometimes in a jubilant way depending on the cycles of the day and the cycles of the elections.

I sat here on the floor tonight, and I listened to the presentation of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON). He talked about the situation on the border between Texas and Mexico, Arizona and Mexico, and perhaps also New Mexico versus Mexico, California, and Mexico. There are a whole lot of data points that he rolled out here. And I believe that there is a misunderstanding on the part of the American people of the magnitude of the border problem that we have.

I make a number of trips down to that border. I think it's my obligation to do that. I have served on the Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee now for 8 years. And if all goes well, I will be able to serve on the committee for another cycle. In that period of time, you pick up a significant amount of knowledge about the circumstances that have to do with immigration. And the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) talked about how illegal Mexican drug smuggler gangs are controlling vast areas of the border, some might argue a majority of the border or perhaps even all of the border, with the exception of some ports of entry, and controlling vast parts of the United States itself.

I have been down to visit Oregon Pipe Cactus National Monument. It is a national park right on the border. And a large percentage of Oregon Pipe Cactus has been set aside, and Americans have been locked out and kept out because the illegal border-crossers and the drug smugglers command some of that park. A large share of it, mile after mile of it, is under control of the Mexican drug smugglers and people smugglers.

And we think that a sovereign nation should have no border incursion. If we have a border incursion, and if it's

someone who is lined up next to someone else lined up next to someone else and they are carrying weapons and in uniforms, it is called an invasion. Whether they are wearing uniforms and carrying weapons or whether they are coming across in orderly ranks or whether they are coming across at a rate of perhaps as many as 11,000 a night—and that's some data that came before the House Immigration Subcommittee under sworn testimony—you take the annual illegal border crossings and you divide it by 365, and some of that data under oath calculates out to be 11,000 illegal border crossings in a 24-hour period. A lot of that takes place at night. Think of that: 11,000 a night.

And so I ask the question, what was the size of Santa Anna's army? About half that. That, Mr. Speaker, is the magnitude of the illegal border crossings that we are seeing.

And the price that we have to pay in the form of social services, law enforcement, education, and health services is in the billions of dollars in costs to the American taxpayer. And the price and loss because of the result of crimes that could otherwise have been prevented is awesome beyond our comprehension.

I do have some numbers on that. I'm hopeful that I will be able to produce a fresh report very soon that would better illustrate the numbers of Americans who have lost their lives at the hands of those who came into the United States illegally.

That is a real measure to American society. Every life is precious, every life is sacred, and every one that we can save should be saved. And you do so with an orderly society and the rule of law. You don't do so by allowing for vast areas of the 2,000-mile southern border to become lawless.

I recall approaching a port of entry, and it was in Sasabe, Arizona. As I approached the port of entry and introduced myself to the agents that were there, and leaving aside much of that narrative, I was informed that, yes, there's a legal crossing at Sasabe at that port of entry in a fairly remote location in Arizona. But on other side of the legal port of entry are the illegal crossing areas that are controlled by the drug-smuggling gangs, the cartels. And that means that there's lawlessness on both sides of the border. If there's an entity that controls an illegal border crossing then that means that our side of that border is not under control. Immediately, if they decide who crosses and who doesn't, they're also deciding to allow illegals to come into the United States and illegal contraband to come into the United States.

And I was in fact there on location when there was an illegal drug smuggler that was picked up. He had a white pickup with a false bed in the box. Nice piece of body work. You had to have a practiced eye to see it. But a false floor underneath there that was 7, perhaps 8

inches, and underneath that false floor it was packed full of marijuana. Some would call it bales. They were wrapped up in packages about the size of a cement package, although it's not as heavy, some placed over 200 pounds, some placed 250 pounds of marijuana, underneath the false bed in that pickup. And we took the jaws of life and cut it open and I personally unloaded over 200 pounds of marijuana out from underneath the false bed in that pickup.

Now, the circumstances at that time—and I suspect this individual was prosecuted, partly because I was there—but he appeared to be an MS-13 gang member. He had a 13 tattooed on his arm right here. Full of tattoos. Had all of the look that you would have of an MS-13 drug-smuggling gang member. And the practice down there has been—unwritten, but in practice—that if someone is caught with less than 250 pounds of marijuana, that they're not prosecuted by the Federal Government. And when the loads got higher and more frequent, then the number went up to 500 pounds as the threshold for prosecution.

Now, where I come from, if you have any illegal drugs in your possession, generally you're going to be prosecuted. There are law enforcement officers that may not, but it's not a practice. We think that the law is the law. Well, if the law is not enforced on the southern border for those that come across the border illegally with illegal drugs in their possession to the tune of hundreds of pounds and in fact thousands of pounds, then what do we have left of the law enforcement fabric on our southern border whatsoever? And how can this be a practice, let alone a policy?

I saw it with my own eyes on that day and handled with my own hands. And as I talked to Border Patrol officers and the other law enforcement officers along the border, they confirmed that in some sectors that's the practice. They set the threshold because they didn't have enough prosecutors, they didn't have enough judges, and they didn't have enough prison beds to prosecute all the drug smugglers that they're picking up across the border, let alone 11,000 a night on average, a lot of them some might say just illegal aliens, just people coming into the United States committing the crime of unlawful entry into the United States.

But among them are drug smugglers. And among the drug smugglers are violent criminals of other stripes. Part of that goes with the package. But to think that they could come into the United States illegally with a load of 235 pounds of marijuana and weigh it up and put it underneath the bed of the pickup and think, Well, fine, I'm not going to go to prison for this. If they catch me, they will just impound the pickup, which likely is stolen anyway, and impound the marijuana, which I saw warehouses full. And I say "warehouses." More than the size of garages,