

SILENT BACK DOOR OF ILLEGAL ENTRY—PUERTO RICO

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take Mr. OSBORNE'S time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, more news from the front: The border war continues. Our terrorist field hearings last week proved one thing: The vulnerabilities on our southern border are monumental. But it is not just our southern border coming under attack. It is Puerto Rico, that silent back door of illegal entry into America.

This is something that we should be concerned with. Border agents there report a staggering lack of security. In fact, you can count on one hand the number of field agents that they have in Puerto Rico on patrol at any given time. Only four active patrol agents patrol this island at once, and they only have 23 agents on the whole island assigned to patrol an island with 363 miles of coastline. These field agents find themselves isolated with these limited resources. Our government even cherry-picks border agents there to send them to other spots, like our southwestern border.

What could be more vulnerable than one agent patrolling 90 miles of coastline? Even the Blackhawk helicopters that they used to use are so broken down they don't even fly anymore.

While we watch the southern border, the human smugglers, narcotics traffickers; and terrorists are not only watching our southern border, they are watching Puerto Rico, knowing it is an easy, back door gateway to America.

With rumors of amnesty spreading throughout the world, especially Latin America and Asia, human smugglers are seizing the moment, causing crime and violence at the borders to skyrocket.

This year Federal immigration officials say the waters off of Puerto Rico are filled with more human cargo than they have ever seen before. The tiny island just off Puerto Rico's coast, Mona Island, is a jumping-off spot for people who wish to illegally enter America.

Last year, it was the site of more than 6,500 arrests of illegals traveling on rickety wooden boats called yolas. They storm Puerto Rico's beaches as if they were troops landing at Normandy or the Marines in World War II as they island-hopped in the Pacific.

Out of 10 illegals that are crammed on one of these boats, border agents say they are lucky if they are able to capture two of them. And the smugglers who arrange these deadly and illegal invasions into Puerto Rico have seen a spike in their business.

In 2001, for example, less than five Cubans were captured on Mona Island illegally entering the United States. But in the past 9 months, almost 600 have arrived; and they pay between \$1,500 and \$2,000 apiece to their human

smugglers, and the human smugglers have yet to be prosecuted. It is so lucrative smuggling humans in the United States that it pays even more than trafficking drugs.

But the most dangerous cargo are possible terrorists from Middle Eastern countries, China and Korea, that are easily masked by the thousands who rush the border monthly, thousands who rush the beaches; and Puerto Rico's leaders are worried that the island's drug traffickers could collaborate with terrorist organizations. Because, you see, once people get to Puerto Rico, they are home free to the rest of America if they do not stay in the Puerto Rico vicinity. They could stay there and destroy vital infrastructure that we have in Puerto Rico. For example, one of the two insulin plants that exist in the whole world is in Puerto Rico.

And, of course, Puerto Rico is unique because it has a cruise business. We don't have much of a cruise business down on the Texas-Mexico border with the Rio Grande River, but they certainly have a cruise business in Puerto Rico. It makes a unique security problem for the United States, so we certainly need to beef up border security in this area.

Once in Puerto Rico, illegal immigrants easily obtain false identification like birth certificates and driver's licenses. They fraudulently claim on these birth certificates and driver's licenses that they are U.S. citizens. So once they have convinced individuals at the border they are U.S. citizens, they easily assimilate into America. One official says getting a fake document in Puerto Rico is like getting a candy out of a candy jar.

And airport security is not an obstacle either. At the airport on the northwest portion of the island, the 4:00 a.m. flight to the mainland of the United States, it is always full of people, but the Border Patrol is never there because they don't have enough agents to cover that portion and time zone.

Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico is an important part of America. It enjoys a unique relationship with the continental United States. It is part of America's homeland, and it is worth protecting from the sea of invasion by illegals.

It is important that we have more border agents in Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rico needs the services of the U.S. Coast Guard. It cannot become the silent back door of illegal entry into the United States. It is a homeland security problem, it is a border security problem, and it is a national security problem.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

IRAQ OCCUPATION

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim Mr. BROWN'S time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the bodies of 20 kidnapped and murdered bus drivers were found in Iraq today. That occurred just before a suicide bomber walked into a Baghdad restaurant and blew himself up, killing seven people.

Then Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld arrived on an unannounced visit and said: "Each time I come to Iraq, I see progress." That is a direct quote from the UPI.

Iraq is convulsed by sectarian violence. It is a nation disintegrating into homicidal chaos. It is a killing zone where Iraqi citizens purchase fake documents in hopes of staying alive if confronted by militias. It is a place where the killing has moved from the streets to inside the homes of Iraqi citizens. It is a country whose leaders acknowledge it is on the brink of all-out civil war, and the President's secretary of war, the man controlling the fate of 129,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq stands up and flat out misleads the troops who don't get to go home to the United States at the end of the day like Mr. Rumsfeld does.

America's independent government watchdog agency, the Government Accountability Office, just released a report that confirmed what everyone except the President and his political appointees already know: There is no adequate plan to stabilize Iraq, and the occupation by U.S. forces is fueling the sectarian violence.

Rumsfeld can claim things are getting better to reporters while standing inside a fortified U.S. base, but that flies in the face of the facts. U.S. troop strength in Baghdad has been increased from 40,000 to 55,000 people. The Los Angeles Times reported on Sunday about rampant corruption inside the Iraqi security forces, including direct ties to the insurgents.

Our soldiers are becoming surrounded by a growing insurgency, and the civilian leader says things are getting better.

Secretary Rumsfeld was going to meet with Iraqi government leaders to tell them how to deal with the crisis. He told reporters he was going to tell the Iraqi leaders to do this: "They are going to have to persuade as many people as possible that it is in their interest to support the government and participate in the political process." He went on to say, "And anyone who doesn't want to, they're going to have to go find and do something about."

He neglected to say that plan was tried and failed last month. It was called Operation Forward Together, and it didn't work. How could it?

The presence of an occupying force is fueling the violence. And despite the