

Mr. Speaker, an ominous threat looms over the security of America today, and I stand in this well to ask responsiveness from this body to the situation at our borders, which today still remain unsecured. My home State of Arizona has become a gateway to the Nation for drugs, syndicated crime, and arms and sex trafficking; and they are intrinsically related to illegal immigration.

In 2004 in Cochise County, Arizona alone, over 235,000 people were apprehended by the border patrol after they crossed the border illegally. The border patrol estimates that three to four people cross the border undetected for every person that they apprehend.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to do the math. By conservative estimates, over 700,000 people crossed into this country illegally last year who were not apprehended. This is through Cochise County, Arizona alone, one county in Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, our first priority related to our borders should be first to protect them against terrorists with chemical, biological, or even nuclear materials. We do not know who the thousands of people are that stream across our unsecured borders every day. We do not know what they are bringing into this country with them. We do know that members of the MS-13 gang have been apprehended entering this country illegally.

The MS-13 gang, Mr. Speaker, from South America are professed friends of al Qaeda. And for these reasons alone, we cannot allow our borders to remain unsecured. This is an unacceptable level of national security risk in a post-9/11 world.

Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of the Federal Government to protect our borders; and, sir, we are failing that duty.

In response to government ineffectiveness, individuals have organized themselves into citizen watch and border patrol groups, and this is at great sacrifice to themselves. There is something seriously wrong in this country when America's grandmothers feel compelled to sit at the border with binoculars to report illegal activity to authorities.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a significant day in which we live. It is a dangerous world in which we live. And an unsecured American border risks a disaster of catastrophic scope. We are jeopardizing everything we hold in our hearts dear: our families, our friends, and the American way of life itself. We must take action to secure our borders now before this Nation again finds itself heart broken by tragedy and those of us in this body are left trying to explain to the American people why we did not do all that could have been done to prevent it.