

and, of course, spending time with her three grandchildren. And when most of us are content cruising through life with our careers and family, Donna's love of learning and public policy motivated her to get her legal degree from UCLA in 1996.

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Before I came to Congress, Donna served as my chief of staff in my final two terms as a member of the California State Assembly. Any chief of staff who oversees a district and legislative office knows that job has its rewards, but also many challenges. As I transitioned to Congress, Donna came east to Washington to fulfill a long-time goal of developing public policy, a job she is well suited for. She has an ability to put her arms around an issue and see all sides of it. Instead of sound bites, Donna is always able to see the whole picture.

She has been so much more than a trusted adviser on the issues. She has been a partner in crafting legislation on teacher quality, improving curriculum, promoting renewable energy, protecting open spaces in San Diego, and negotiating the complex issues of the 2000 electricity crisis in San Diego.

In the midst of immersing herself in politics and policy, Donna has also immersed herself in the cultural and artistic endeavors that Washington has to offer, as she did in San Diego.

She is not only a multitasker, but a multi-talented renaissance woman. From playing her cello, to singing in the choir at the National Cathedral, to traveling to such exotic locales as Egypt, New Zealand and India, it can certainly be said that Donna has not let life pass her by.

Many of us in Congress know that a good staff is the key component to our ability to create public policy, and Donna has been such a vital asset to my office and to my successes as a public servant. Donna has been more than an invaluable member of the staff; she has been a good and loyal friend.

She not only will be missed in our office. I am sure she will go on and be envied by all of us. As we are all heading off to work next week, Donna will continue to travel, to sing, to play and taste the flavors life has to offer. And in the middle of all that, she will find and give great joy as the consummate grandparent. And knowing Donna, she will be an active player in making our country and the world a better place to live.

I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the years of hard work and public service that Donna Smith has provided to San Diego, to California, to the Congress, and to our Nation.

Thank you, Donna.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONDEMNING REMARKS OF WILLIAM J. BENNETT

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise before this House condemning the words spoken yesterday by former Secretary of Education William Bennett. It is truly reprehensible that as we try to heal the wounds that were laid bare following the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, that powerful elements in the Republican Party still insist on espousing racial rhetoric while trying to divide Americans based on the color of their skin.

I was shocked, I was appalled that the former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, a prominent member of the Republican Party, would go on public radio and say, "But I do know that it is true that if you wanted to reduce crime, you could, if that were your sole purpose, you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down."

Mr. Speaker, as a proud black American who was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army, I know that this is precisely the kind of insensitive, hurtful, and ignorant rhetoric that Americans have grown tired of.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bennett still has power and influence within this Republican administration; and he is representative of the ignorant, inconsiderate politics that have been displayed in this government today. And I am calling on my friends, the responsible Republicans, to rebuke Mr. Bennett for his damaging statement.

Where is the indignation from the GOP, as one of their prominent members talks about aborting an entire race of Americans as a way of ridding this country of crime? How ridiculous. How asinine. How insane can one be?

Mr. Bennett's remarks were thoughtless, mean-spirited, and well, well off the mark. We all know that aborting black babies would not decrease or erase the crime rates in this country. Abortions the Republican policies which have hurt the disadvantaged, the poor, and average Americans for the benefit of large corporations would be a much more sane and reasonable way to address crime and poverty in this Nation.

Americans are sick of the poisonous, divisive atmosphere that is prevalent in this Republican era. Americans want reform. Americans want change. Amer-

icans want an end to the culture of corruption and bitterness that the Republican Party and this House have come to embody.

It is ironic that the same people who promised America that they would clean up the system 11 years ago, have used their power and influence to benefit their own agenda and defile the

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

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

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

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

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

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

THANKING THE PEOPLE OF KAZAKHSTAN FOR THEIR AS- SISTANCE TO AMERICA AND THE WORLD

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

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina has caused not only colossal damage to the economy of Louisiana and the entire gulf coast but she has also taken away hundreds of innocent lives and left thousands homeless. As the Representative of the Third Congressional District of Louisiana, half of which was leveled by this disaster, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who have responded to this American calamity. I would especially like to thank the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan and their president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, for the condolences and readiness to render financial assistance to Katrina's victims.

No one can have too many friends, and that applies to both countries and individuals. The history of the United States and Kazakhstan's cooperation is a vivid example of a partnership between true friends and allies with shared values.

Kazakhstan inherited the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal from the Soviet Union but choose not to keep that lethal legacy, which could have automatically placed Kazakhstan among the world's nuclear superpowers. Instead, the people of

Kazakhstan, led by their president, chose the path of peaceful development and, together with the United States, dismantled these weapons of mass destruction. That was a worthy move of a strategic partner.

After the tragic events of September 11, Kazakhstan unhesitatingly and unconditionally supported the United States and declared its full assistance in the war on terrorism. That was a demonstration of sincerity and steadfastness of the people of Kazakhstan.

As the only country from Central Asia to send its military contingent to Iraq, Kazakhstan, despite some wavering among other coalition members, has repeatedly stated that it remains committed to its obligations and it will keep its military engineers in this unstable country as long as it takes. That was a courageous act of a genuine ally.

As we face this colossal tragedy, the Government of Kazakhstan has announced its readiness to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and this is a noble gesture of a true friend.

Mr. Speaker, the Republic of Kazakhstan is one of our most reliable and strongest allies and a true partner. After only 13 years of its existence as an independent state, Kazakhstan has achieved tremendous success and economic development in the building of a true democracy.

President Nazarbayev in his address to Parliament earlier this month outlined a very impressive profile of his country's future development. He listed concrete goals and objectives on further improvement for the social and economic well-being for all Kazakh citizens, as well as moves to deepen political and democratic reforms. He proposed expanding the role of Parliament, introducing local elections, enhancing the role of political parties, introducing jury trials, expanding the role of nongovernmental organizations, and strengthening and developing a free news media.

I support the determination of Kazakhstan's leader to develop small and medium enterprises and agree with him that the success of political and economic programs depends on the creation of a class of private property owners who will make up a newly formed middle class.

As the President has stated, the main goal is to stay the course and sustain the pace of transformation. I believe the United States' response should be our readiness to assist this process.

I urge my colleagues and the administration to devote more attention to our strategic partnership with Kazakhstan.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to agree with President Nazarbayev that we are deeply optimistic about the future of Kazakhstan and the future of the United States and Kazakhstan partnership.

FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF CHAIRMAN AIR FORCE GENERAL RICHARD B. MYERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I take this time to talk a little bit about a great American leader who is winding up his tenure as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States of America, and that is, of course, General Richard Myers.

General Myers had his last appearance before the Committee on Armed Services today, and I was reminded of all the many wonderful appearances that he has made in advising not only the President and the Secretary of Defense but also the membership of both of the Houses of Congress with respect to the United States and our military requirements.

I was looking over the statements that were made by the President and others in 2001, really just a few days after 9/11, when General Myers was nominated for this position by the President of the United States, and I thought I would read that statement that the President made. I am quoting the President, George W. Bush, who said then in 2001: "Today I name a new chairman of the Joint Chiefs, one of the most important appointments a President can make.

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"This appointment is especially so because it comes at a time when we need great leadership. Secretary Rumsfeld and I thought long and hard about this important choice, and we enthusiastically agree that the right man to preserve the best traditions of our Armed Forces, while challenging them to innovate, to meet the threats of the future, is General Richard B. Myers."

The President went on to say, "General Myers is a man of steady resolve and determined leadership. He is a skilled and steady hand. He is someone who understands that the strengths of America's Armed Forces are our people and our technological superiority, and we must invest in both."

Now, later, after the President had made that nomination, a number of people weighed in on this, commentators in the main weighed in on this nomination by the President and one, in one of the discussions, General Richard Hawley, retired, was asked about General Myers. He was asked to give his take on this particular appointment by the President. He said, "Well, Dick Myers has wonderful credentials at the tactical, operational, and the strategic level. He has had diplomatic assignments. I think perhaps as an example when he was at U.S. Space Command, he really helped our combatant commanders understand how to fully integrate our space capabilities into

their operations. And he also helped particularly those of us in the Air Force, but also I think others who work in defense issues understand what the potential is of our space forces to contribute in the future of our operational success."

Now, of course, after that initial nomination and confirmation by the Senate, General Myers was thrust into this role, this very demanding role at a time in which we were engaged in a shooting war in Afghanistan on the heels of 9/11 and, shortly thereafter, combat operations in Iraq which have been ongoing. Through all of that, General Dick Myers has truly been a steady hand. He has been thoughtful, he has been able to handle the exigencies, the emergencies of the moment and, at the same time, look over the horizon to the problems that may face us 5 or 10 or 15 years down the line.

All the while he was operating or maintaining this understanding of our operational requirements in a combat sense, General Myers has been there when we have had national emergencies. I remember the hail of firestorms that we had in California. We had massive parts of our State literally on fire, and we desperately needed help. I remember the bureaucracy that we had in California in those days, and the fact that the State of California had not requested that our military capabilities, our military aircraft, that have a tremendous capability to put out forest fires, they had not requested that those be brought in because, in their words, they wanted to use all the contractors that they could before they went to the military. While that was happening, much of California was burning up.

I remember the decision that General Myers made to not wait on the bureaucrats in California, but to send these units, these emergency units out to California, and his reasoning was, by the time the planes got there, California would understand that they, in fact, needed some help in putting those fires out. Sure enough, before that first unit landed at Point Mago, the State of California had, in fact, decided that they were not going to be able to put this one out in an expeditious fashion, and they requested the aircraft that General Myers had already sent.

So it was an example of a leader who understood how important it was to act quickly. Now, he has acted quickly as an adviser to the President and the Secretary of Defense. He is not in the chain of command. The combatant commanders go directly up to Secretary Rumsfeld and the President when they are receiving their orders for the prosecution of a war. But General Myers' advice on operations, on moving troops, on putting together a plan to handle the challenges of things like these improvised explosive devices, to handle rotations, this tremendous stress on our forces as we move forces in and out of theater, and as we bring the Guard and Reserve in and we