

of the vote election after election, and to walk toward an organization considered by some to be in disarray and perhaps by some to be in disrepair.

Because I have an excitement inside of me that speaks of a new vision, a new vision of hope and possibility, I believe in the aspect of coalition. I know what it will take in this country for us to be a better Nation. I want to be a part of the process. I agonize, like many of my colleagues going home at night, in the comfort of my own surroundings, and knowing that violence still plagues our Nation, that hatred and racial polarization have not gone away, that many people who look like you and look like me, regardless of their station in their life, still have a dose of despair in their eyes, that are young and have given up on themselves, and they plan now for their funerals because they do not expect to reach the age of 25, that drug abuse and spousal abuse and child abuse run rampant in a Nation that ought have been beyond that and ought to have found lessons to have gotten there.

All of those things are also part of the America that we love, but they beckon me in a different way tonight, and they call me in such a way that I cannot say no.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MFUME. I would be more than happy to yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. First of all, there will be a lot of the conservatives that will miss the gentleman. Your willingness, I know on the civil rights bill, and other issues that were very complicated, it does not mean we do not disagree on certain models, but the gentleman will leave this House with integrity, value and substance, Mr. MFUME. And I want to let the gentleman know that of a lot of the Members on that side, the gentleman has been someone that I have been able to sit down with, even with differing issues. The gentleman has been very amendable, very supportive, and I want to thank him.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those kind and heartfelt words.

There is an aspect of service in this America that I talked about, even fraught with all those problems and difficulties, that I also need to say before I yield back any time I have remaining, and that is the relationships, the personal relationships that we develop in here and the desire to always want to believe in the best of other people.

I looked at the gentleman from Missouri, HAROLD VOLKMER, go through the agony of watching his wife, die of cancer over a sustained period of time. I have talked to Members on both sides of the aisle about the birth of a child, or a wedding, or the ability to get a child through college, or the need just

to find a way to get away from the day-to-day agonies of the job and to be people again. I would hope that as we all come to grips with what we do in this institution, that we recognize that as individuals and as Americans, aside from party affiliation, it really is what we do between that birth date and that death date that will determine our worth as human beings.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MFUME. I would be more than happy to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, just to add my comments to our friend and colleague from California. I came to the session of the Congress that the gentleman came to and have had the highest respect for him in the 9 years I have known him.

The gentleman will leave this body and will leave a great loss to us because he has been a key leader and someone that all of us respect on both sides of the aisle. But he certainly is the gain for the NAACP and those issues which he will lead this country forward on.

We look forward to working with the gentleman in his new capacity and pledge the gentleman our full cooperation. He has been a real inspiration to Members on both sides of the aisle. We will miss him, but we look forward to his leadership on an even greater height for all of America.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. I know I am out of time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JONES). The time of the gentleman from Maryland has expired, but we would like to give 3 or 4 additional minutes to the fine gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. MFUME. I thank the Chair for his generosity, and I promise I will not use all of that, because despite the best wishes of some, I am still going to be around here for a few more weeks raising you know what.

I do want to say, before sitting down that I believe that we have a golden opportunity, and certainly I do, heading up the NAACP, America's oldest and largest civil rights organization, to bring a sense of balance, to add to the dialog, to seek coalition, to give hope to our young people, to defy the odds, to put in place an apparatus for economic empowerment, to do away with some of the disparities in our society, to emphasize against educational excellence and individual responsibility, and to really provide a clear and consistent path that might be visible to other people.

So I welcome that task and I thank all of my colleagues who I have served with, for their friendship over the years, for their counsel, for their ability to engage in debate on those principal issues that they believed in, but most of all for being a part of what I

consider to be the greatest institution of American Government, and that is the House of the people.

VOTE ON BOSNIA IS ESSENTIAL BEFORE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss today why it is absolutely essential that we have a vote on Bosnia before Thursday. The President will initial and actually sign the peace agreement on Thursday, and I believe it is absolutely vital that we go through this one more time so that we are certain we have done everything that we can to be sure about such things as what is the vital U.S. interest. The President's discussion of that in his speech was absolutely inadequate. It would apply to any trouble spot in the world.

I said during the campaign, and I would say now, I would only support U.S. ground troops anywhere in the world if clearly defined and easily understood vital U.S. issues are clearly threatened. In addition, the President promised specific detailed information on the mission, the objective, and the objective to be achieved so that we can leave in 1 year. Specific detailed information. I have not seen that. It may have been given, but I have not seen it.

Mr. Speaker, sad experiences have taught us it is very easy to move troops in; it is very difficult to accomplish the objective once they are there, and extremely more difficult to get out in a timely and honorable way.

I believe we must do everything we can to prevent funding, to in every way tell the President this is not a good idea and that the American people are not thrilled about this Bosnia adventure. I think we must do this before the signing, before the decision is irrevocable.

We know and the people know, Mr. Speaker, that the Bosnia adventure is folly. The President is ignoring the public, as he ignored the 315 Members of this House that voted asking the President not to make our troops in Bosnia a part of the peace agreement. He went and did it anyway. I think ignoring the people and the Congress is a shocking thing, and I think that we do have to have the vote to either endorse the President's action, which may happen, or tell him clearly that it is not in the public interest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]