

sums up ROBERT BYRD's strong feelings for the Constitution and the Senate he loved so well.

On October 13, 1989, many of us gathered to hear ROBERT C. BYRD speak. This is what ROBERT C. BYRD said:

Mr. President, I close by saying, as I began, that human ingenuity can always find a way to circumvent a process. . . . But I have regained my faith. We are told in the Scriptures: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."

The Constitution is the old landmark which they have set. And if we do not rise to the call of the moment and take a stand, take a strong stand against our own personal interests or against party interests, and stand for the Constitution, then how might we face our children and grandchildren when they ask of us as Caesar did to the centurion, "How do we fare today?" And the centurion replied, "You will be victorious. As for myself, whether I live or die, tonight I shall have earned the praise of Caesar."

And ROBERT C. BYRD concluded:

As [Aaron] Burr bade goodbye to the Senate over which he has presided for 4 years, this is what he said. And I close with his words because I think they may well have been written for a moment like this. He said: "This House is a sanctuary; a citadel of law, of order, and of liberty, and it is here—it is here—in this exalted refuge—here, if anywhere, will resistance be made to the storms of political phrensy and the silent arts of corruption; and if the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the demagogue or the usurper, which God averts, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor."

So today, Mr. President, I will close my words for my friend, ROBERT C. BYRD, noting that in life he was victorious. As for myself, whether I succeed or not, whether I live or die, today I can count no greater praise than to say I served with ROBERT C. BYRD.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I think the remarks that were given by my colleague from Montana about Senator BYRD were certainly appropriate, and I know anytime we lose one of our Members who has been sitting with us for so long, there is a void to fill.

What I appreciated about Senator BYRD is how much he respected the Senate itself and protected the rights of the Senate against anyone who he believed overstepped the rights of the Senate and the decorum and protocol of the Senate. He was truly a defender of this body. He loved it, and I think we all respected him for that.

REMEMBERING SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to say a few words about our departed colleague.

This week the Senate lost its longest serving Member not only of the Senate but of the Congress. More than that, the Nation lost a true servant of the people.

From humble beginnings, Senator BYRD was, first and foremost, a champion for the people of West Virginia.

Throughout his many years of service, there has been no greater student, teacher, and protector of the Senate institution. Senator BYRD was not only a guardian of the Senate institution, he was a guardian of the rights our Nation holds dear, which is why his most constant companion was the Constitution of the United States in his pocket.

I had the opportunity, when I first arrived in the Senate in 1990, to work on the acid rain trading provisions in the Clean Air Act. It was known as the Byrd-Bond amendment. We called it the Bond-Byrd amendment back in Missouri. The acid rain trading system has worked because there was technology available. The cost enabled the equitable sharing of the major utilities which had to install expensive equipment that provided more benefit than they needed so they could sell off the other parts of their credits to smaller companies that could not afford to install expensive equipment. That was just a small success for Senator BYRD.

He was a true champion. He will be missed on the Senate floor. My thoughts and prayers are with Senator BYRD's family, his staff, and the people of West Virginia.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I stand today with my colleagues with a very heavy heart to express my condolences to the Byrd family and to the people of West Virginia for losing a great American patriot. It is a very sad day for America, for West Virginia, and for the Senate.

For all of us who knew Senator BYRD, we knew he had five great loves: this country, the Constitution, the Senate, the people of West Virginia, and his beloved wife Erma.

Senator BYRD was my mentor and my teacher. When I arrived in the Senate, I was the first Democratic woman elected to the Senate in her own right. He took me under his wing and taught me the rules of the Senate.

He said to me:

Senator Mikulski, he or she who knows the rules will rule. And you will know how to do it.

His advice to me—when I asked him how to be successful in the Senate—was this:

Senator Mikulski, stay loyal to the Constitution and stay loyal to your constituents and you will do okay.

From the very first day, he wanted me to succeed. He was so welcoming. He made sure I became a member of the Appropriations Committee, and he helped me learn how to use my position to meet the day-to-day needs of my constituents and the long-term needs of our Nation.

Senator BYRD's career was remarkable. We all know the facts: the longest serving Member of Congress in history, the majority leader in the Senate, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, President pro tempore of the Senate, elected nine times to the Senate. Yet he never, ever forgot where he came from. He represented the people of West Virginia.

Born in poverty in the coalfields of West Virginia, raised by an aunt and uncle, he was born with four great gifts: a deep faith, a love of learning, a strong work ethic, and always saluted the fact that he was born in the United States of America, where someone who was, by all intents and purposes, an orphan could become a U.S. Senator. He worked as a gas station attendant, as a meat butcher, and a welder—I might add, a welder in the Baltimore shipyards. He went to night school for college and law school while he was in the Senate.

Senator BYRD wrote and passed many laws, but most important to him was that he was an appropriator. He used his position to help the people of West Virginia, and he did not apologize for that. He brought jobs, roads, and opportunity to one of the poorest States in the Nation. He did not call it pork; he called it opportunity. And this Senator would certainly agree with him.

But Senator BYRD also voted his conscience and encouraged other Members to do the same. In his 18,000 votes, he was most proud of his vote against the Iraq war. He was one of 23 Senators, and I joined him in that vote. At that time, it was deeply unpopular. Those of us who voted against the war were vilified. But we did the right thing, though it was not easy.

If you love the Senate, you love BOB BYRD. He often reminded us that the legislative branch is a coequal part of the government. He fought hard against those who wanted to give up Senate prerogatives, such as the line-item veto. No one understood Senate procedure better and no one protected Senate traditions more than Senator BOB BYRD.

He wanted to pass it on. With the new Senators, he gave each one of us a lecture on the Constitution and gave us a copy of the Constitution. He wanted us to know it and to love it in the way he did. He also taught us the decorum of the Senate—yes, the decorum of the Senate—and how, through our processes and procedures, it was meant to promote civility among us.

To me, as I said, he was a wonderful teacher. I remember going to him when I was ready to offer my first amendment on the floor, and I asked for his advice on how I could present it and how I could not, quite frankly, be rolled. He gave me good, concrete advice. On the day I offered my first amendment, there was Senator BYRD in the background. He was always there. As I said, Senator BYRD always had my back. I was so grateful for having his advice and having his encouragement.

He lived an extraordinary life and left an extraordinary legacy. He stood for citizenship, not partisanship. And maybe that is what we should all do. Follow the Constitution. Stay loyal to our Constitution. Stay loyal to our Constitution and our constituents. Use the rules of the Senate to promote civility and good government. And also make sure that at the end of the day,

we respect the opportunity and greatness of the United States of America.

I mourn the passing of Senator BYRD, but his legacy will live on in the rules and the traditions and the many bills he sponsored.

The people of West Virginia have had great Senators. Senator ROCKEFELLER is a great Senator. And Senator BYRD will always be remembered, that he built a “bridge to somewhere” for all of the people of West Virginia.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I see the roses on the desk of our colleague from West Virginia, as I did in the Armed Services Committee meeting I left a few minutes ago and will return to shortly. It makes me think that what we do here on a day-to-day basis seems very small compared to the legacy Senator BYRD has left us over his many years as the longest serving Member of Congress. We will do our best in the time we have to honor his legacy and thank him today and every day going forward for what he has done for this institution. He kept the flame. He understood the importance of this body constitutionally, and he understood that the rules and procedures of this body were its lifeblood and really understood them and recognized them more than anyone else who has served in this Chamber and spent his life’s work protecting them and memorializing them. To him, we owe a great commendation.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Senator and a friend and mentor of mine, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. When I look at his desk, a place from which he spoke such powerful words so many times, it is hard to believe he will not be on the floor of the Senate speaking powerfully about what he believed in—the people of West Virginia and the great issues of our day. He will be sorely missed.

He was orphaned as a child and grew up poor. He often told us about his foster father, who was a coal miner, who had to work hard to scrape together food and shelter for their family. He always spoke of working men and women and those who were working hard and having a hard time making ends meet. I know his heart was always with them.

From a young age, Senator BYRD learned the importance of hard work, dedication, and perseverance—skills that would serve him well throughout his long and very distinguished life.

After graduating from high school at the top of his class in 1934, he married his high school sweetheart Erma. Many of us knew her, and those who didn’t knew of her because he would speak continually about the love of his life, his sweetheart Erma. After school, he went on to work at a number of odd jobs. He worked as a butcher during the Great Depression, earning less than \$15 a week. He worked as a gas station attendant. During World War II, he was a welder in a shipyard in Baltimore. But he never forgot his childhood and

where he came from. He knew how education had transformed his own life, and he never stopped trying to give every American that same opportunity.

After high school he couldn’t afford to go to college. But after he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1953, he put himself through law school—the only Member of Congress ever to do that while in office. He joked that Erma put three children through school, himself and their two daughters.

His wife was the most important person in the world to him, and I know he was deeply saddened when Erma died in 2006, as were all of us who served in the Senate with him at that time.

He was a great mentor, a great friend, a great advocate for working families of Michigan and of America. I was proud to join with him many times as we fought for American workers, whether they were mine workers in West Virginia or auto workers in Michigan.

He loved West Virginia, the people and the landscape. One of his favorite Bible verses was from the Psalms:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

In my office I proudly display a painting that Senator BYRD gave to me, which he painted himself while working in Baltimore so he could remember those hills and mountains of his childhood. Today, when I see that painting, I remember that Senator who gave so much for the people of West Virginia and the people of America. I was proud to stand with him as one of the 23—as he reminded me frequently—the 23 who opposed the original war in Iraq and stood up for our men and women who have bravely served us around the world as well.

Senator ROBERT C. BYRD—the Senate is a better place because of him and he will be sorely missed.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, 10 years ago I gave my maiden speech on the floor of the Senate. I was at a desk on the far side of the Chamber. In the course of that speech, I happened to mention that it was my maiden speech. I had been here about a month. I went on. I can even remember the subject. It was the deficit, since we were in a unique position that we actually had a surplus in the Federal Government and I did not want to see that surplus piddled away. I started talking about the budget and why it was necessary to keep the surplus, to utilize the surplus to pay down the national debt over a 10-year period.

Some minutes later, after I had said this was my maiden speech, all of a sudden the doors to the Chamber flung open and in came Senator ROBERT BYRD. As I was giving this first speech on the floor of the Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world, he went over to his desk—the one that is draped with black cloth, and upon it sits the vase of flowers to note his passing—he sat there and he looked at me and listened to the rest of that oration.

As I concluded, the Senator from West Virginia rose and said: Will the Senator from Florida yield?

And I said: Of course I yield.

He proceeded, off the top of his head, from that incredible, detailed memory, to lay out the history of maiden speeches on the floor of the Senate. He had been back in his office, and he had heard me, in the course of the audio from the television, say this was my maiden speech. He came up and went into this long discourse about the importance of maiden speeches and who were the ones who had given them and how long into their service as a new Senator they had waited to give them.

Later on, as we were debating that budget, the great orator from West Virginia took the floor and began talking about a tax cut the Senate was considering; a tax cut he voted against, and so did this Senator from Florida. The Senator from West Virginia talked about this tax cut that was going to be a staggering \$1.6 trillion. This is what the great senior Senator from West Virginia said. “That is \$1,600 for every minute since Jesus Christ was born,” Senator BYRD declared. He went on to say, “If we go for this big tax cut . . . that money . . . is gone.”

We all like tax cuts, but what we have to have is a balance of tax cuts and spending cuts, given the position then that we had a surplus, and how to responsibly use that surplus to pay down the national debt. What we have is a reversal of that. We, of course, have a huge deficit because the revenues are not coming in to match the expenditures and, thus, additional problems that have accrued from not listening to the Senator who sat in that black-draped desk. No one else spoke like Senator BYRD or was as original as he was.

As we mark the passing of our dear colleague who, it has been said many times, was the longest serving Federal lawmaker since the founding of the Republic, as we mourn his passing, many will remember the Senator from West Virginia by the numbers and by the records he set. He made history. He brought depth and grace to the Senate. He is forever enshrined as a major part of its history.

I can tell you that 10 years ago, we freshmen had the blessing of being tutored—no, more than tutored; we were students, we were pupils of the master teacher. He taught us the rules, so important to the conduct of business in this body. But he taught us something more. He taught us decorum. He taught us how to preside as the Presiding Officer. He taught us that it is respectful that when you are presiding, you absolutely listen to the speaker. He taught us so much.

He was elected to no fewer than nine terms. He served first in the House for 6 years. He had cast over 18,000 votes. He presided over both the longest session of the Senate and the shortest. We had no fewer than 12 Presidents since he first took office.

But the numbers do not tell the full story. ROBERT BYRD was one of the greatest advocates for just plain folks and especially if they came from West Virginia. He gave them his all, after his first and foremost love, his devotion to his wife Erma. In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, ROBERT BYRD always put public service ahead of personal fortune.

On my desk in my Senate office, as I would suspect on many other Senators' desks, are copies of Senator BYRD's addresses on the history of the Senate—more than 100 of those speeches delivered over a 10-year period. Those are the only books that are set on my personal desk with book ends of two American eagles. That study has been called the most ambitious study of the Senate ever undertaken. Every day, those books remind me of the living history of this institution and its vital role in our democracy.

Senator BYRD made rare and noble contributions to his family, his friends, his State, his country, and to this Senate. He was, in a living person, the walking history book of the Senate, which he could recite. Now, as he has gone on to the ages, he will be known as the historian of the Senate. And now forever for history, he will be one of the major parts of the Senate's history.

We mourn his passing, we miss him personally, we grieve for his family, and we are thankful there was a public servant who surely the Lord would say: Well done, thy good and faithful servant.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues as we mourn the death and celebrate the life of a man who touched all of ours; a man who loved his country, loved the Senate, and dedicated his life to preserving its traditions; a man who above all cherished his State and who every day considered it his highest honor to represent her people.

On Monday morning, Senator ROBERT BYRD took his rightful place in our history books as a titan of the Senate. On Thursday we will honor him as his body lies in state in this Chamber where he served longer than any other Senator in our history. Today, we grieve his loss with his family and with the entire country.

My family's history with Senator BYRD goes back many years. My father, before he became Secretary of the Interior, served with Senator BYRD, then Congressman BYRD, in the House of Representatives. A half century later, my father's honor became my own. I am proud to have had the privilege of serving in this Chamber with Senator BYRD, of experiencing firsthand his distinguished service and remarkable career.

Senator BYRD will be remembered for many things. He will be remembered for his historic length of service; for his rise from humble roots to the pinnacles of political power; for his encyclopedic knowledge of Senate rules and procedure; and for his love of his wife of 68 years, Erma.

What I will remember Senator BYRD for is his willingness to stand up and fight for what he believed in. Two of the most pressing issues of the past decade are perfect examples—the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. From the very beginning, Senator BYRD was a voice of opposition to the Iraq war. He delivered what will become one of his most memorable speeches in the days leading up to the Senate's vote to authorize its funding. He spoke out against a war at a time when any opposition to the President's path meant putting his own political future in jeopardy. But he did not waiver.

Here is part of what he said:

No one supports Saddam Hussein. If he were to disappear tomorrow, no one would shed a tear around the world. I would not. My handkerchief would remain dry. But the principle of one government deciding to eliminate another government, using force to do so, and taking that action in spite of world disapproval is a very disquieting thing. I am concerned that it has the effect of destabilizing the world community of nations. I am concerned that it fosters a climate of suspicion and mistrust in U.S. relations with other nations. The United States is not a rogue nation, given to unilateral action in the face of worldwide opprobrium.

Eight years and thousands of American lives lost later, his words read as prophetic.

But he didn't stop there. Last year—this time with his party holding the reins of power in both the White House and the Congress—he did the same thing. Seven years had passed, and Senator BYRD was older and more fragile than ever before. None of that stopped him from getting to the Senate floor that day. How did I know this? I had a front row seat as the presiding officer of the Senate that day.

This time, he questioned the proposed buildup of troops in Afghanistan—a proposal I myself had questioned many times as well. Here is what Senator BYRD said:

I have become deeply concerned that in the 8 years since the September 11 attacks, the reason for the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan has become lost, consumed in some broader scheme of nation-building which has clouded our purpose and obscured our reasoning.

He continued:

... President Obama and the Congress must reassess and refocus on our original and most important objective—namely emasculating a terrorist network that has proved its ability to inflict harm on the United States.

Time will tell if Senator BYRD's concerns about Afghanistan prove as prescient as those he expressed about Iraq almost a decade ago. Time also will tell if we heed those concerns.

What is clear is that Senator BYRD understood the importance of asking the tough questions, regardless of their impact on himself personally or professionally. In this regard, we could all learn a little bit from Senator BYRD.

I know my Senate colleagues will agree with me when I say this institution, this country, this democracy lost a powerful advocate this week, and all

of us in this Chamber lost a good friend.

Today I join with my colleagues in expressing my deepest sympathy to Senator BYRD's family for their loss and remembering a man whose legend and legacy will endure beyond us all.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I wish to spend a few minutes talking about a truly great Federal employee, and that is Senator ROBERT C. BYRD.

He personified all the things I try to talk about once a week, because ROBERT BYRD was a Federal employee. ROBERT BYRD was a creature of the U.S. Senate. ROBERT BYRD had his family, and he was a great family man, but the Senate was also his family, and he cared about everybody here.

I remember the first time I ever had contact with Senator BYRD was in 1972. On election day in 1972, JOE BIDEN, a 29-year-old candidate for the U.S. Senate, was elected to the Senate running against one of the most popular officials we ever had in the State of Delaware, a wonderful public servant and Federal employee, Caleb Boggs, who had been a Congressman and Governor before he became a Senator.

Just 6 weeks later, on December 18, when his wife and two sons and daughter were bringing their Christmas tree home, the car was hit by a tractor trailer and Senator BIDEN's wife and daughter were killed.

Shortly after that, my church, St. Mary Magdalen in Wilmington, DE, had a memorial service for his wife and daughter. I will never forget, it was a dark night. It was in December. It was just an ugly night out. The church was full, and it was a very moving ceremony. After it was over, I found out that Senator ROBERT BYRD had driven himself to Wilmington, DE, come into the church, stood in the back of the church for the entire service, and then turned around and drove home. And there are hundreds of stories like that where ROBERT BYRD demonstrated his great love for the Senate and for the people of the Senate.

There are traditions he instilled in the Senate and traditions he kept alive in the Senate. I remember when he was majority leader, I will tell you what, there were lots of things that just never happened because Senator BYRD was going to make sure we stuck to the traditions of the Senate. So I wish to recognize Senator ROBERT BYRD as a great, great Federal employee.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I join all Americans in mourning the passing of Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. For more than five decades, Senator ROBERT BYRD served his home State, his beloved West Virginia, with a dedication that is unsurpassed in our Nation's history.

Senator BYRD was legendary for that commitment to his State, for his outstanding service as both the Senate's majority and minority leader, and for his staunch defense of the U.S. Constitution throughout his many years of public service.

When I arrived in the Senate, Senator BYRD was in the midst of his sixth term, President pro tempore of the Senate, chairman of the Appropriations Committee and already a giant of the institution. It was an honor to work beside him in this body.

Senator BYRD was the longest serving Member of Congress in our Nation's history, elected to an unprecedented ninth term in the Senate in 2006. It was a long road from his humble beginnings in rural West Virginia to his long and distinguished service here. Along the way, Senator BYRD's life was characterized by hard work and a steely determination.

And of all the things he was determined to do, perhaps the most significant was his determination to get an education. Senator BYRD prized education, and fought to get one for himself despite difficult odds. That long effort culminated in Senator BYRD earning his law degree, after 10 years of night classes as he served in Congress by day. He was 46 years old when he graduated, and President John F. Kennedy presented him with the diploma.

He shared that love of learning as a champion of continuing education, and through the establishment of the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships to high school seniors who show promise of continued excellence in postsecondary education.

Senator BYRD was dedicated to the Senate and served an invaluable role as a historian of the institution. He wrote a distinguished multivolume history of the Senate, and also authored several other books. In fact when I drafted my proposed constitutional amendment on Senate vacancies, I consulted one of his volumes on Senate history. He had written a chapter on the 17th amendment to the Constitution that was very helpful in putting the issue of Senate vacancies in a historical context.

As a student of Senate history, both the U.S. Senate and the Roman Senate, he was also a passionate defender of the powers of the legislative branch. One would expect no less of a man so devoted to our Constitution. Senator BYRD was eloquent as he spoke about the need to stand up for our Constitution and its principles here in the Senate, and faithfully carried a copy of the Constitution with him every day. He was very proud of his efforts to encourage students to learn more about this document and our great democracy.

In Senator BYRD's lifetime of leadership, he worked on so many important issues. As the Senate's majority leader, he helped to lead the fight against the undue influence of money in politics in an effort with then-Senator David Boren of Oklahoma. Together they sponsored campaign finance legislation and worked to pass it in what has been described as "one of the most extraordinary exhibitions of perseverance on the Senate floor, as BYRD led the Senate through eight unsuccessful votes to end a filibuster." While that legisla-

tion stalled, it was one of the efforts that paved the way for later reforms, and I am grateful for his efforts.

I respected him for that, and for so many of the principled stands he took during our service together, including his opposition to the Iraq war. He brought tremendous wisdom and insight to our work here and I know how much those gifts will be missed.

ROBERT C. BYRD was a man who sought to learn every day of his life, and in turn taught all of us a great deal. He taught us about our nation's history, about the people he represented, and about the institution of the Senate he loved. While Senator BYRD's passing is a loss for the nation, his legacy of innumerable achievements will live on for many, many years to come. My thoughts are with his family and many friends today.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, on Monday, we lost a colleague and dear friend with the passing of Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. My deepest sympathy goes out to his family, friends, dedicated staff, and the people of West Virginia. Senator BYRD was truly a giant among Senators. His presence will be greatly missed.

Few have had the command of history that Senator BYRD possessed, and I suspect none have matched his knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and the Senate in which he served. Senator BYRD never passed up the opportunity to give a history lesson, delivering impassioned speeches peppered with poetry, lessons from ancient Rome, and his unique understanding of the workings of this Chamber. He also never forgot to remind us of the importance of Mother's Day, the beauty of the first day of spring, or how devoted he was to his beloved wife Erma.

Senator BYRD held fiercely to his beliefs. Yet, he had the humility and wisdom to change beliefs he realized were wrong. History will remember Senator BYRD, not only for his numerous records of service, but for his unwavering commitment to education, public infrastructure, and the State of West Virginia.

This year, 19 outstanding high school students from my home State of South Dakota joined the ranks of thousands of Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship recipients that are furthering their education, in part, because of Senator BYRD's belief in the value of higher education. He embodied that belief in his own life, earning a law degree while serving in Congress and striving to continue learning each day.

Senator BYRD also understood the value of investing in the small, sometimes overlooked communities of his State. Where others saw "pork," he saw jobs, opportunities, and hope for hard-working Americans. He understood—better than most—that without roads, clean water, and reliable utilities, rural communities will struggle to reach their full potential.

Though he would later "walk with Kings, meet Prime Ministers and de-

bate with Presidents," Senator BYRD never forgot his roots in the hills of West Virginia. West Virginia lost a true champion, but his mark on the State will last far longer than even his half century in Congress.

I am honored to have served with Senator BYRD. This institution is a better place for his time here.

PROTECTING AFGHAN CIVILIANS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as we take stock of the changes made last week by President Obama to the military command in Afghanistan, there is a related issue that has been discussed in the press that is of particular concern to me.

I believe the President's decision to replace General McChrystal was the right decision. The published comments of the general and his aides were unquestionably insubordinate. They portrayed extraordinarily poor judgment and disrespect, and a deterioration of discipline that was unacceptable.

But putting aside those matters, I believe General McChrystal's command was notable for his recognition, to an unprecedented extent, of the importance of protecting the lives of innocent Afghan civilians for the safety of U.S. troops and to improve the chances of success of the mission.

Before General McChrystal's tenure, the need to do more to reduce civilian casualties was discussed, particularly after each incident when civilians were inadvertently killed or injured. But far too little was done about it. The frequent reliance on air power in areas where civilians were present caused many innocent casualties. Whole villages were destroyed. Wedding parties were wiped out. Night raids also often caused civilian deaths or injuries, as well as widespread anger and resentment towards U.S. troops who were perceived as disrespectful of Afghan customs.

General McChrystal implemented stricter rules of engagement to reduce these tragic incidents. While in some cases these rules have limited our troops' actions, they do not prevent soldiers from acting in self-defense when there is a real or perceived threat. There is no basis, as far as I am aware, military or otherwise, to criticize these efforts to protect civilian lives. Indeed, I believe more can still be done, particularly to prevent such unfortunate incidents at roadblocks and checkpoints, where those killed have, with few exceptions, turned out to be unarmed civilians who posed no threat. Their deaths caused great suffering for their families, and incited support for the Taliban in their communities.

Reducing civilian casualties, and by doing so winning the support of the Afghan people, is essential. In late April, the people of the town of Gizab, north of Kandahar, took up arms and ousted the Taliban. This is encouraging, but it is unlikely to continue to occur if the