

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 Magoo, 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

match them up with the active duty forces and have them in the present combat situation in Iraq and in Afghanistan, have the Reserve and Guard forces working side-by-side with the active duty forces to the point in which they cannot be distinguished, one from the other is, to a large degree, a function of General Myers' leadership.

So he leaves us with his last appearance before the House Committee on Armed Services today, and he is going to enjoy hopefully a little free time with his wonderful wife, Mary Jo. I know that we will be calling on him to give us his great judgment in the future, because he is a great American with lots of integrity, lots of respect from all sides of the aisle on Capitol Hill in both bodies, and also a great deal of respect from those people that work and serve this country every day, wearing the uniform of the United States. We are going to call on General Richard B. Myers many times. A wonderful, wonderful American.

Now, I would also like to talk very briefly about another great American, and an American family. I was reminded about this family when General John Kelly came in and we discussed some of the challenges that we are facing in Iraq. He is the liaison for the United States Marine Corps on Capitol Hill.

I thought about that family, that Kelly family as he walked out the door, and about the fact that while General Kelly was the Deputy Commander of the First Marine Division, and a very tough conflict and contest in Fallujah, in the western area of operations in Iraq, one of the most volatile and one which is very, very dangerous. While he was the Deputy Commander of the First Marine Division, his son John was a communications officer, also a United States marine in country, and his other son Robert was a rifleman, a member of a marine fire team, an enlisted marine who was, in fact, on the ground floor going house-to-house, street-to-street, and carrying out the mandates of the leadership of the First Marine Division in which his dad was the Deputy Division Commander. What a great American family. What a tradition this Kelly family has manifested. Of course, General Kelly has a wonderful daughter, Kathleen Kelly, who has spent a lot of time in places like Bethesda Hospital, comforting wounded marines and letting them know that Americans care about them.

That is the tradition of this country, and it is one that the Kelly family has done a lot to promote and to extend, and our great thanks to them for what they have done.

Also, Mr. Speaker, today I wanted to mention two wonderful leaders in my community who have passed on very recently. I have discussed before Jim Kuhn, who is a great, wonderful guy from the Imperial Valley, the guy who started the Salton Sea International Bird Festival. We are down there in Imperial Valley, we are very close to, and

in fact, touch the Mexican border; we have an immense inland sea that is full of salt water, the Salton Sea. Jim Kuhn was a farmer who was a stand-out citizen who started in football and wrestling and went to Stanford, but came back to his beloved Imperial Valley and became one of the leading farmers, one of the leading innovators, a guy who was very creative in his area of agriculture, but also a guy with a great heart for the community. He founded this International Bird Festival which has brought people from all over the world to the banks of the Salton Sea there in Imperial Valley, California.

Jim died, as I noted earlier, very tragically in an automobile accident. He leaves a wonderful wife Heidi and the children, Vienna and Fritz, to carry on his legacy, and I know that they will.

Another dear friend and a great leader in California passed away, and we had services for him yesterday, and that was Corky McMillan. Corky McMillan was a guy who started his business with a pickup truck and a few carpenter's tools and rose from that and I might say is a guy who built much of San Diego, built a career and built a community in San Diego from those humble beginnings to become San Diego's finest homebuilder, one of the finest homebuilders in the Nation, and a person who literally built communities, not only in San Diego, but also in other parts of California and in other States.

Corky McMillan was a guy with a great heart. He was a guy who did lots of stuff for the community and was centered on his family. His family, Scott and Mark and Lauri and, of course, his beloved wife Bonnie were everything to Corky.

He became one of the great off-road racers in southern California. Those are the people that go down into Baja, California, with machines that go over holes in the ground that are 2 and 3 feet deep over ravines, literally taking those vehicles, those desert vehicles over them in a surreal manner, sometimes at speeds far exceeding 100 miles an hour, and manage to survive all of that. It is a rare breed of people. It started out with guys like Parnelli Jones, and has become a very high-tech sport, and it is one in which Corky McMillan and his sons Scott and Mark excelled and elevated to a level in which it is appreciated by people throughout the world.

Corky McMillan was a wonderful guy who gave a lot to his community and a lot to his country and a lot to the sport of racing, and we are going to miss Corky McMillan.

So I thank my colleagues for letting me reflect on some transitions today and talk about some Americans who truly deserve to be well remembered.

DISCUSSING THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address my colleagues tonight and address this House of Representatives. As I sat and listened to the Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), I cannot resist the sense of duty and obligation to weigh in on some of his remarks that he made with regard to General Myers as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Of course, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) has worked very closely with General Myers and he knows him far better than I do. My work in relationship there has been not as deep, but I have been as impressed as the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) has been with Richard Myers, the chairman of our Joint Chiefs, and with his vision and his ability to see beyond the horizon, as the gentleman said.

I also had the privilege of meeting General John Kelly over in Iraq before the operation that ended the battle of Fallujah, and I was impressed with his dedication and his vision and his understanding of who our enemy was and what needed to be done, and I was pleased to sit here tonight and hear the remarks made by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), honoring the family, the family commitment to the military and to the defense of this fine Nation that was made by General John Kelly and his children.

Mr. Speaker, let me shift to the subject matter that I asked to speak about tonight and that is the subject matter that I have come to call "Katritia." We have been here on this floor a couple of hours in the past 2 weeks, and I have spoken at great length about Katrina and, in these past few days, we have seen the aftermath now of Hurricane Rita. I just merge them together, because essentially they did merge together, Mr. Speaker, as Katrina hit New Orleans and points on the east and Rita hit points to the west of New Orleans on over into the bay and into Texas, so they have crossed those lines and the damage of the two hurricanes have overlapped on each other.

When I take Katrina on the one side and Rita on the other side and merge them together I get Katritia. It is the largest natural disaster I believe that this Nation has ever seen. We are fortunate that it has not been the largest loss of life, although we mourn those who we have lost, and we are still in the process of recovery. But this financial loss and the term of time that will be required for reconstruction I think is the most devastating that America has seen. We are going to need to pull together on this.

I am well aware that there are Members of Congress who have districts