

debate on the bill that he was responsible for.

It has been a great pleasure. It gives me an added sentimental value to this occasion.

I think most of you know that I have a special relationship with the page program that stems from the fact that I started as a page. Albeit as some of you know it was over on that other side in that other body over there, but you will forgive me for that. At that time it was really run as one single program.

I have to say that the page experience, as you can probably tell from where I am standing today, is one of those things, those experiences that had a profound change on my life. But having started here as a page, I promised Peggy and Miss Ivester and the others that I would not tell you all the stories about the things that I did, that we did as a page. So I promised not to tell you the story about how we hauled the English teacher's Volkswagon bug up the steps of the Library of Congress and planted it in the middle of the platform up there. And I promised not to tell you about the story of how we faked the suicide of one of the pages jumping from the balcony and there was a page spread out down below.

Mr. SHIMKUS. If the gentleman would yield, you would not have survived my mentorship as the chairman of the page board.

Mr. KOLBE. There was no question that almost all of us in the page program would not have survived the mentorship.

I promised not to tell you those kinds of things. Fortunately, it is on your last day anyhow, so you are probably not going to find time to do too many of those things today.

The gentleman from Illinois was talking about the celebrity sightings. Some people would think there are celebrities enough here in the House of Representatives and in the Senate and with all the joint sessions that we have. But I remember not too long ago when I had that actor. What's his name? Oh, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie down in my office down below here on the first floor just below the Chamber here.

□ 1500

When I finished the meeting and came out, there were a bunch of secretaries and few pages there with their cameras, and I thought, wonderful, they want pictures of me. But no, none of them were interested at all in having a picture with me. It was this actor and actress that were there.

So I guess we know that really Members of Congress are pretty second-rate when it comes to celebrity sightings, and sometimes maybe we are just a little bit of chopped liver.

But I do want to say to you that this experience obviously is one that you may not realize it now, but you are going to carry away with you some very important things, some things

that will change your life in ways that you probably cannot even imagine right now.

It does not mean that all of you are going into politics, because probably only a handful of you might. As a matter of fact, in my graduating class at the page school, we went all the way through high school in those days. In my graduating class, I am the only one that ultimately stayed in elective politics.

But there, it does not matter. This experience will make a difference to you. It will make a difference not only in your school and make a difference not only in the way you look on things and events in the world, but hopefully will make you more of a citizen of the world and a citizen of the United States, and I think this is the important thing.

Many people ask us why do we continue this program. Let us face it. We could do this a lot easier with a lot less expense if we just contracted out and hired some people to serve as messengers, but year after year, the Congress of the United States supports this program for young men and women, and through the course of the more than 150, or really almost 200 years, several thousand young men and women like you have come through this program and had this experience because we think it makes a difference, and we think that your experience becomes the experience of the future leaders of the United States.

So I hope that whatever you do when you go back, you will think about this program, and, of course, you will think about your friends, the friendships you have made here and you will maintain those friendships and you will come back for your reunions. You always come back for the first year reunion, 5-year reunion, 10-year reunion. It is wonderful to have these friendships, but you will also remember what you learned here and you will incorporate into your daily lives and into the thinking of whatever you do, if you are in business, if you become a physician, if you become a lawyer, if you become a teacher. All of these things will be valuable to you.

So you have had a rare, rare experience, and I hope that you can appreciate that. But I want to say now in closing how much we appreciate what you do. You make our lives just a little bit easier every day. You are the grease that makes the wheel go round without squeaking quite so much, and sometimes we take it for granted and we do not realize how much of a difference that you make in our lives and the work of this body.

So it is my great privilege to be here to say thank you to you for the wonderful job that you have done for us, and I hope that I will see many of you in the years ahead, that we will stay in touch and I will follow your career, your successful careers in business, but most important, in your lives with your families and with the people that

you interact with. God bless you all and God bless America.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments, and every time JIM KOLBE speaks, as you have heard in the last comments at the end of the appropriation bill, the Foreign Ops bill in which Members from both sides, especially the Democrats, talked about his integrity, his commitment, his honesty, and those are comments from the heart, and you will get to hear him one more time at the graduation ceremony.

I bring you thanks from all the folks who you have worked with, the dorm staff, the school staff and of course, the floor staff here who are always well represented in keeping track of where you are.

Thank you for keeping track of each other during this time. Thank you for keeping each other safe and being friends to those who needed friends at that time, and thanks for keeping each other out of trouble. Those things that you have learned during this time, let us hope that you carry them on with you, that you will just make this world a better place.

So thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. We appreciate your service.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

#### HONORING CONSTABLE DALE GEDDIE

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today with a heavy heart. A constituent of mine, Smith County Constable Dale Geddie, was shot to death in Smith County and Deputy Daniel Leon was injured Wednesday morning as they responded to a domestic disturbance dispute call just outside Tyler, Texas.

Tyler deputies called for backup that morning, and Dale responded the same way he had his whole life, by getting to the scene as quickly as possible, without regard for his personal safety or what might be waiting for him at the scene.

Having known Constable Geddie well and understanding what a crucial role he played in his community, it is understandable, Mr. Speaker, that the

community, the county, the State and so many around the country, including law enforcement, have extended condolences to his family during this tragic time. It is, indeed, a sad day for East Texas and the United States.

Born in 1960, the son of a Smith County sheriff's deputy, Dale Geddie attended Rice Elementary School and Whitehouse Elementary School before his parents bought a ranch in Winona. Constable Geddie graduated from Winona High School in 1979 and began his law enforcement career as a jailer with the Smith County sheriff's office on August 23, 1985.

To further expand his expertise and intellect in the law enforcement arena, our fine constable attended the East Texas Police Academy at Kilgore College in 1986 and graduated at the top of his class.

Following graduation from the academy, Dale transferred to the criminal investigation division as a deputy investigator, and during his time as a detective, Dale also served for a time as an undercover narcotics officer.

Our friend Dale left the sheriff's department in 1996, and he spent some time as a freight driver and even as a farrier before opening Lovelady-Geddie Private Investigators and Polygraph Service.

Dale signed up to be a reserve deputy for the Smith County Sheriff's Department in July of 2004 as he was gearing up for his first political race. Many in the community encouraged Dale to run for constable, which he won, garnering around 58 percent of the vote.

Constable Dale Geddie's personal life, as well as his professional life, was shaped by his integrity. Many friends who knew him best cited his deep faith and his commitment to his family. Whether for family, friends, community or Nation, Dale truly did strive to serve and to protect.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me read a short quote that Mr. Geddie's neighbor, Justice Sam Griffith, gave when hearing of the constable's death: "When I heard he had been killed, I immediately thought of the scripture, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,'" Justice Griffith said.

Mr. Speaker, God be with the Geddie family, his loved ones, as well as the Daniel Leon family and Daniel Leon as well.

#### THE DEATH OF AL-ZARQAWI

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, Americans woke up yesterday morning to the news that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed in an air raid in Iraq. Even though he was a vicious man, who had contempt for every single thing America represents, I do not believe his death signals a particular turning point in the Iraq War.

There have been other supposed watershed moments that were loudly

trumpeted by enthusiasts for this war, but none of those turned out to have long-term significance, and I do not believe this to be any different. It will disrupt the operational capability of al-Zarqawi's organization, but most certainly will not end the civil strife that has engulfed Iraq.

Although Zarqawi was the leader of a group called al Qaeda in Iraq, it is important to note that he was not closely allied to Osama bin Laden. In fact, the two men had something of a long-standing rivalry. Zarqawi's death is not in any way a blow to bin Laden and the al Qaeda that is responsible for 9/11.

Mr. Speaker, the insurgency is a decentralized force that extends well beyond the influence of a single man. As foreign policy scholar Ivo Daalder points out, the anarchy that has taken hold in Iraq cannot be attributed to just one terrorist. Iraq has mushroomed into what Daalder calls a "large-scale sectarian conflict" and what I would call a full-blown civil war.

Dueling militias, fueled by ethnic hostilities that are centuries old, are fighting for control of the streets of Iraq and leaving a trail of carnage and bloodshed in their wake. It is difficult to see how the elimination of one man changes that tragic dynamic.

To the extent that Zarqawi's death has any impact, it will probably further animate the insurgency and lead to even more violence.

We can never forget what Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Wellman said last year about the insurgents, and I will quote him. He said, "We can't kill them all. When I kill one, I create three." So if killing one insurgent creates three more, what happens when you kill one of the most visible insurgent leaders?

And here is an interesting twist. If killing Zarqawi was a primary goal of the Bush administration, why did they not act when they had an opportunity 4 years ago? According to NBC News, on three separate occasions in 2002 and early 2004, Zarqawi was within our sights, but all three times, the plan for attack was vetoed at the White House and the National Security Council. Why the hesitation on the part of this famously trigger happy administration? According to NBC sources, it was all about selling the Iraq War.

At the time, the administration was furiously trying to build public support for the preemptive invasion of Iraq, resorting to all kinds of misinformation if necessary. And they did not want to lose the public relations value of keeping Zarqawi alive and dangerous, which just goes to show that this misadventure in Iraq seems to have always been more important to the administration than actually stopping terrorists.

Remember when the President made the reference to: "Wanted, Dead or Alive"? Maybe the real motto should have been: "Wanted, Dead or Alive, Unless You Might Be a Useful Propaganda Tool."

Mr. Speaker, conditions in Iraq are unspeakable. According to the BBC, the morgues in Baghdad alone have reported more than 6,000 violent deaths so far this year, an average of 40 a day in a single city.

The administration lit the match that ignited this inferno. The death of al-Zarqawi will not extinguish it. We must remove the one thing that gave rise to the violence in the first place, the very appearance of American occupation.

For the safety of our Nation and the long-term stability of Iraq, there is only one answer: Bring our troops home.

□ 1515

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

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

#### PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Colleagues, I have tremendous concern about the lack of preparedness in our Nation for the potential of a flu pandemic. Now, it is not certain that the current H5N1 bird flu is going to become a human-to-human type pandemic, but all the experts say we are overdue for a pandemic in the United States so it is prudent that we look at our preparedness or lack thereof.

Recently, in the Homeland Security Committee on which I serve, as does the gentleman in the chair, we held a hearing called "Are We Ready: Implementing The National Strategy For Pandemic Influenza." There were a number of disturbing things that came out during that hearing, and one in particular has been highlighted a number of times by GAO reports and recently by press reports. I asked some questions regarding that during the hearing, and that is the lack of ventilators in the United States.

Basically, experts say that medical professionals will be triaging ventilators because we have such a severe shortage of ventilators in this country. It is the one way to help take someone through an acute phase of the H5N1 virus. The very few survivors that are known have been on ventilators and received intensive antiviral drugs and others. So were this to be a pandemic, as opposed to a few isolated cases, we are woefully short.

In fact, the estimates are that we would be 637,500 ventilators short. That is, people would be dying unnecessarily because they wouldn't be able to get near a ventilator, and that number assumes that none of the existing ventilators are being used for any other purpose in the United States.