

remember.” That is what made Del Reeves unique, he was such a multifaceted and talented person.

When asked how he would like to be remembered, he said, “I want to be remembered as a great showman and a nice guy . . . that’s all I could hope for.” That is exactly what Del got, as he certainly is remembered as a nice guy and a great showman.

One of his closest friends, J.D. Higgins, appropriately commented that on New Year’s Day country music lost a tremendous entertainer, and I will miss him greatly. He will be missed by country music fans all over the world. I know he will be missed by family, friends and his numerous admirers. Del was a true inspiration who made his hometown friends and North Carolina proud.

Del Reeves showed his large heart and love for his hometown community by creating a scholarship fund and always coming home to perform in Alleghany. Del’s contributions will serve as a lasting testimony of his tremendous talent, kindness, motivation and delightful personality. We will all miss Del Reeves but know that his timeless music will never be forgotten. He leaves quite a legacy for fans and future generations.

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

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

PAKISTAN REFUSING TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST TALIBAN

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to once again call upon Pakistani President Musharraf to take action against Taliban fighters in the western region of his country. President Musharraf continues to deny that Taliban leaders are hiding in Pakistan and that the Taliban are regrouping there, despite numerous international press accounts describing otherwise.

President Musharraf claims that securing the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not the sole responsibility of his country. He has admitted that border guards at the tactical level often, quote, turn a blind eye when insurgents cross the border into Pakistan. Yet he still shirks the responsibility his country must take in dealing with the situation.

In Musa Qala, a town in southern Afghanistan where a peace deal last year was signed by NATO-led troops and local elders, government officials confirmed that Taliban forces had taken

partial control of the town in the last few days. The Taliban’s movement into Musa Qala completely disregards the peace agreement and goes against the wishes of the Afghani citizens living in the town.

A similar deal was developed last year in North Waziristan, a region in western Pakistan. As was the case in Musa Qala, Taliban fighters disregarded this deal and have taken partial control of the region. Yet President Musharraf continues to defend this peace deal, despite the fact that the Taliban seemed to have created a stronghold in the region where they can likely plan future offensives against U.S. forces and the citizens of Afghanistan.

If the Pakistani President truly wishes to defend this peace deal, he must take the necessary steps towards eliminating Taliban forces, not only in North Waziristan, but throughout his country. President Musharraf has also scaled back plans to enforce and patrol the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. If Musharraf actually wishes to eliminate Taliban forces in Pakistan, he must work to control this border in a safe and diplomatic manner.

Madam Speaker, last week I came to the floor to highlight H.R. 1, a bill that implements the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. This is part of our first 100 hours. Included in H.R. 1 is language that would end U.S. military assistance and armed sales licensing to Pakistan unless it is certified that the Islamabad government is, I quote, making all possible efforts to end Taliban activities on Pakistani soil.

It is my hope that once this law is passed, the bill will finally force President Musharraf to crack down on Taliban training camps and leaders within his country. The Bush administration, however, has already signaled its opposition to this language in H.R. 1. Last week, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Gastright assured Musharraf’s government that the administration opposed any end to military assistance to Pakistan.

I believe it is absolutely unacceptable for President Bush to oppose these actions against the Pakistani government. The language in H.R. 1 places appropriate pressure on President Musharraf to finally take suitable action against the Taliban forces currently plotting within his country’s borders.

The Bush administration claims that it deals with President Musharraf regardless of his actions, because it believes the Pakistani President is better than the Islamic extremist and anti-Western alternatives in Pakistan.

However, there are Democratic alternatives in Pakistan. According to a recent poll by the International Republican Institute, the second most popular leader in Pakistan is former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Now, Mrs. Bhutto’s party, the Pakistani People’s Party, has joined with the Muslim

League Party to form the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy and hopes to restore democratic government to Pakistan in the near future.

Madam Speaker, it is essential for the United States to increase pressure on President Musharraf to step up his commitment to eliminate Taliban fighters in training hubs in his country. A significant step towards applying this pressure came with the language in H.R. 1, which we passed in the first 100 hours, ending military aid to Pakistan unless the Pakistani President takes steps towards this goal of routing out Taliban forces. It is imperative for President Bush to realize the importance of the language in this bill and support the provisions outlined in H.R. 1.

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.)

HONORING SARKIS ACOPIAN

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

Mr. DENT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of a national treasure, Sarkis Acopian. Mr. Acopian died on January 18, 2007, at his home in Palmer Township, Pennsylvania, which is located in my Congressional district near the City of Easton. He was 80 years old.

To say that Mr. Acopian lived a full life does not do justice to the legacy of this extraordinary man. His is, in part, the classic immigrant success story. He was born on December 8, 1926, in Tabriz, Iran, to Armenian parents. He came to this country in 1945 to study engineering at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. While here, Mr. Acopian was drafted into the United States Army. After completing his military service, Mr. Acopian returned to Lafayette, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in mechanical engineering in 1951.

Mr. Acopian used his prodigious intellectual gifts and business acumen to design and build things that helped to make people’s lives better. While working for the Weller Electric Corporation, he designed a power sander which became one of the company’s main products. After forming the Acopian Technical Company in 1957, he designed and manufactured the first ever solar radio. Mr. Acopian subsequently led his company into the power supply business, and the company, which is still operating today, became and remains quite successful in that enterprise.

But Sarkis Acopian was much, much more than just an outstanding entrepreneur. In that regard, he loved outdoor venture and throughout his life he

was an avid pilot, scuba diver and sky-diving enthusiast who made more than 200 jumps during the 1960s. But where he really made his presence known was in his philanthropic work.

Mr. Acopian was a self-effacing man who believed passionately in supporting the community quietly but with unmatched generosity. He was passionate about education. He made significant donations to Columbia University, to the Acopian Engineering Center at Lafayette College and to the Acopian Center for Ornithology at Muhlenberg College located in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

He was passionate about his faith, building the Saint Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, and giving generously to the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, as well as to local churches in Armenia.

He was passionate about nature, creating the Acopian Center for Conservation Learning at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the Acopian Bog Turtle Preserve, as well as endowing the environmental education program at the American University of Armenia and the Florida Institute of Technology.

He was passionate about the locality in which he lived, Easton, Easton, Pennsylvania. He gave generously to the Children's Home of Easton, a sanctuary for underprivileged youth. The State Theater of Easton and the Easton National Canal Museum. His contributions made children's lives better, raised appreciation for the arts in his community, and helped to preserve important local history.

As an immigrant to this country, Mr. Acopian was eternally grateful for the opportunities that had been afforded to him here. He showed that gratitude, in part, by providing \$1 million towards the construction of the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C., that is right, \$1 million to the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. His generous donation was the single largest contribution to that fundraising effort.

I must tell a story, former Senator Bob Dole came to the Easton area several years ago and said that one day in front of a few hundred people he received a check for \$1 million for the World War II Memorial. He picked up the phone and called this man, Mr. Acopian. He said, Mr. Acopian, this is very generous. Is there anything you would like because of this very generous gift? Mr. Acopian wanted anonymity. He said no, there is really nothing I want, Senator. After a few moments, he thought about it and said, Senator, there is actually one thing, Senator, I do want. He said, I would like to have a seat at the dedication. Bob Dole said, well, heck, yes, he can have mine. That is the way Sarkis Acopian was. He sought anonymity, but Bob Dole blew his cover.

His greatest passion, however, was for his lovely wife of 59 years, Mrs. Bobbye Seitze Mixon Acopian. To-

gether the couple had two sons, Gregory, who is married to Karen; and Jeffrey, who is married to Helen, both of whom still reside in Easton. He is survived also by six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

IRAQ AND THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2008 BUDGET REQUEST

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the devastating blast in the Baghdad market over the weekend was the worst suicide bombing since the American occupation began nearly 4 years ago, 121 killed and 226 wounded. The Iraqi Interior Ministry says approximately 1,000 people have been killed over the last week alone.

This so-called "surge" that the President is force feeding us is getting off to quite a start, isn't it? Indeed, The New York Times reported on Sunday that Iraqis are saying that the security situation has gotten worse, not better, with the escalation of American troops.

The National Intelligence Estimate released last week offers little hope that sectarian violence will abate or that Iraq can repair its political rifts between Sunni and Shi'a. Under these circumstances, with American soldiers thrown into this unwinnable occupation around, there is only one solution, bring our troops home.

I have introduced a bill, H.R. 508, with Congresswoman LEE and Congresswoman WATERS and 30 others, which will do just that. H.R. 508 will end the occupation within 6 months of enactment. H.R. 508 will prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. It will restore the sovereignty of the Iraqi people, even as we continue to provide nonmilitary assistance and to support a short-term international stabilization force will be available, if requested by the Iraqi government.

What a difference from the White House approach. Staring at the colossal, tragic failure of his Iraq policy, what did the President do today? He submitted a budget that asked Congress to sign off on \$145 billion to continue waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, he wants us to make his tax cuts permanent, and he says the budget will be balanced by 2012. So where is the money going to come from? Why, of course, it is going to come from the most vulnerable members of society, that is where.

Actually, over time, the very troops and their families, who are sacrificing life and limb in Iraq today, will be paying for this debt.

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The President's budget seeks deep Medicare and Medicaid cuts at just the moment when we need to be expanding

access to affordable health care. Actually, it is simple, Madam Speaker. The money is there for the folly of occupying Iraq. The money is there for wealthy people to get tax breaks; but when old and when poor people need nursing home care, or kids need immunizations, suddenly it is time to tighten the belt.

It is a disgrace, Madam Speaker, this ongoing occupation of Iraq. It is not only morally indefensible; it is fiscally irresponsible. So many of our own communities need investment. So many of our own poor and middle-class families are taking on more and more risk, struggling to get by, getting squeezed economically. But we are spending our grandchildren's money on a fantasy that is getting young soldiers killed, igniting a civil war, inciting jihadists, inspiring hatred of the United States around the world, harming national security and making Americans less safe.

There is a solution: One, end the occupation; two, return Iraq to the Iraqis; three, spend our foreign affairs budget on humanitarian endeavors, not on war and conquest. Spend it on economic development, on democracy promotion, on building schools and hospitals.

In addition, bring our troops home. Bring our soldiers home. Bring our tax dollars home where they can be put to work meeting the needs of Americans, strengthening American communities.

GLOBALIZATION

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, when we look at the issue of globalization, inevitably the question of wealth and equity comes up. We see reports of massive payouts for executives, and the natural inclination is to question the fairness of this.

But the acquisition of wealth, we need to remember, is not a zero-sum game. If one worker brings in a big new client and gets a bonus as a result of that, that does not mean that someone somewhere else has to take a pay cut. The question we must ask ourselves is not are some individuals getting wealthier at a faster rate than others. The question is whether everyone is becoming more prosperous; is everyone's standard of living going up. If all individuals who wish to climb the economic ladder have the opportunity to do so, we are then on the right track. And the economic data show that that is exactly, absolutely the case in America today. With a workforce of 146 million, there are more Americans working today than ever before.

Unemployment is at an incredibly low 4.6 percent. Two million new jobs were created in the last year alone. Average weekly earnings grew by 4.8 percent over the same time period. And as we had reported last week, gross domestic product growth grew at an