

I am pleased that citizens in my State of Arizona have found ways to honor Dr. King and ensure that the lessons of his legacy continue to resound among future generations. This past weekend the Senate Chaplain, Dr. Black, joined me in Phoenix for a number of events relating the King commemoration. Dr. Black preached two sermons and later delivered the keynote address at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth Scholarship service, a candlelight ceremony at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church.

It is very fitting that these events took place in churches. Dr. King, after all, was a minister, and his speeches and writings invoked biblical themes and were delivered with the zeal of a fiery evangelist. Moreover, by recognizing Dr. King in a place of worship, we are reminded of the important role that religion plays in the public square.

Indeed, the events like those I attended in Phoenix highlight the importance that religious institutions play in civic life, and I believe they embody an important part of Dr. King's legacy.

Alexis de Tocqueville observed long ago that "Freedom sees religion as the companion of its struggles and triumphs, the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its rights. Religion is considered as the guardian of mores, and mores are regarded as the guarantee of the laws and pledge for the maintenance of freedom itself."

Religion is an essential underpinning to a well-ordered society and a functioning democratic republic. The Founders of our country understood that, and Dr. King did too.

In his famous "I have a dream" speech, Dr. King invoked the words of the Declaration of Independence. On August 28, 1963, he told the throngs who had gathered on The Mall, "I have a dream that one day this Nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'"

King believed, as the Founders wrote in the Declaration, that we are created equal and endowed with the right to life and liberty by our Creator. King's speech could have very well been delivered to a congregation at a church instead of before thousands at the Lincoln Memorial.

In his message at the King celebration in Phoenix, Dr. Black urged the congregation to remember some will seek to destroy the dream and dreamer, but God will frustrate their plans.

These words echo what King said at the Lincoln Memorial almost 40 years ago, "With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."

Mr. President, it is imperative that we as Americans understand the bond between religion and freedom, and I was pleased to attend the King celebra-

tion services this past weekend that testified to this bond.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR ANDREW OLMSTED

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on January 3, 2008, MAJ Andrew Olmsted of Northborough, MA, was killed in Iraq. He was the first American servicemember to die in Iraq this year. During his service there, he wrote a number of essays about his service that he posted on the Internet. His final essay, written in anticipation of his possible death, is an eloquent farewell that I believe will be of interest to all of us in Congress, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

FINAL POST

(January 4, 2008)

"I am leaving this message for you because it appears I must leave sooner than I intended. I would have preferred to say this in person, but since I cannot, let me say it here."

—G'Kar, *Babylon 5*.

"Only the dead have seen the end of war."

—Plato.

This is an entry I would have preferred not to have published, but there are limits to what we can control in life, and apparently I have passed one of those limits. And so, like G'Kar, I must say here what I would much prefer to say in person. I want to thank Hilzoy for putting it up for me. It's not easy asking anyone to do something for you in the event of your death, and it is a testament to her quality that she didn't hesitate to accept the charge. As with many bloggers, I have a disgustingly large ego, and so I just couldn't bear the thought of not being able to have the last word if the need arose. Perhaps I take that further than most, I don't know. I hope so. It's frightening to think there are many people as neurotic as I am in the world. In any case, since I won't get another chance to say what I think, I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity. Such as it is.

"When some people die, it's time to be sad. But when other people die, like really evil people, or the Irish, it's time to celebrate."

—Jimmy Bender, "Greg the Bunny."

"And maybe now it's your turn to die kicking some ass."

—*Freedom Isn't Free, Team America*.

What I don't want this to be is a chance for me, or anyone else, to be maudlin. I'm dead. That sucks, at least for me and my family and friends. But all the tears in the world aren't going to bring me back, so I would prefer that people remember the good things about me rather than mourning my loss. (If it turns out a specific number of tears will, in fact, bring me back to life, then by all means, break out the onions.) I had a pretty good life, as I noted above. Sure, all things being equal I would have preferred to have more time, but I have no business complaining with all the good fortune I've enjoyed in my life. So if you're up for that, put on a little 80s music (preferably vintage 1980-1984), grab a Coke and have a drink with me. If you have it, throw 'Freedom Isn't Free' from the Team America soundtrack in; if

you can't laugh at that song, I think you need to lighten up a little. I'm dead, but if you're reading this, you're not, so take a moment to enjoy that happy fact.

"Our thoughts form the universe. They always matter."

—Citizen G'Kar, *Babylon 5*.

Believe it or not, one of the things I will miss most is not being able to blog any longer. The ability to put my thoughts on (virtual) paper and put them where people can read and respond to them has been marvelous, even if most people who have read my writings haven't agreed with them. If there is any hope for the long term success of democracy, it will be if people agree to listen to and try to understand their political opponents rather than simply seeking to crush them. While the blogosphere has its share of partisans, there are some awfully smart people making excellent arguments out there as well, and I know I have learned quite a bit since I began blogging. I flatter myself I may have made a good argument or two as well; if I didn't, please don't tell me. It has been a great five-plus years. I got to meet a lot of people who are way smarter than me, including such luminaries as Virginia Postrel and her husband Stephen (speaking strictly from an 'improving the species' perspective, it's tragic those two don't have kids, because they're both scary smart.), the estimable Hilzoy and Sebastian of Obsidian Wings, Jeff Goldstein and Stephen Green, the men who consistently frustrated me with their mix of wit and wisdom I could never match, and I've no doubt left out a number of people to whom I apologize. Bottom line: if I got the chance to meet you through blogging, I enjoyed it. I'm only sorry I couldn't meet more of you. In particular I'd like to thank Jim Henley, who while we've never met has been a true comrade, whose words have taught me and whose support has been of great personal value to me. I would very much have enjoyed meeting Jim.

Blogging put me in touch with an inordinate number of smart people, an exhilarating if humbling experience. When I was young, I was smart, but the older I got, the more I realized just how dumb I was in comparison to truly smart people. But, to my credit, I think, I was at least smart enough to pay attention to the people with real brains and even occasionally learn something from them. It has been joy and a pleasure having the opportunity to do this.

"It's not fair."

"No. It's not. Death never is."

—Captain John Sheridan and Dr. Stephen Franklin, *Babylon 5*.

"They didn't even dig him a decent grave."

"Well, it's not how you're buried. It's how you're remembered."

—Cimarron and Wil Andersen, *The Cowboys*.

I suppose I should speak to the circumstances of my death. It would be nice to believe that I died leading men in battle, preferably saving their lives at the cost of my own. More likely I was caught by a marksman or an IED. But if there is an afterlife, I'm telling anyone who asks that I went down surrounded by hundreds of insurgents defending a village composed solely of innocent women and children. It'll be our little secret, ok?

I do ask (not that I'm in a position to enforce this) that no one try to use my death to further their political purposes. I went to Iraq and did what I did for my reasons, not yours. My life isn't a chit to be used to bludgeon people to silence on either side. If you think the U.S. should stay in Iraq, don't drag me into it by claiming that somehow

my death demands us staying in Iraq. If you think the U.S. ought to get out tomorrow, don't cite my name as an example of someone's life who was wasted by our mission in Iraq. I have my own opinions about what we should do about Iraq, but since I'm not around to expound on them I'd prefer others not try and use me as some kind of moral capital to support a position I probably didn't support. Further, this is tough enough on my family without their having to see my picture being used in some rally or my name being cited for some political purpose. You can fight political battles without hurting my family, and I'd prefer that you did so.

On a similar note, while you're free to think whatever you like about my life and death, if you think I wasted my life, I'll tell you you're wrong. We're all going to die of something. I died doing a job I loved. When your time comes, I hope you are as fortunate as I was.

"What an idiot! What a loser!"

—Chaz Reingold, *Wedding Crashers*.

"Oh and I don't want to die for you, but if dying's asked of me;

I'll bear that cross with honor, 'cause freedom don't come free."

—American Soldier, *Toby Keith*.

Those who know me through my writings on the Internet over the past five-plus years probably have wondered at times about my chosen profession. While I am not a Libertarian, I certainly hold strongly individualistic beliefs. Yet I have spent my life in a profession that is not generally known for rugged individualism. Worse, I volunteered to return to active duty knowing that the choice would almost certainly lead me to Iraq. The simple explanation might be that I was simply stupid, and certainly I make no bones about having done some dumb things in my life, but I don't think this can be chalked up to stupidity. Maybe I was inconsistent in my beliefs; there are few people who adhere religiously to the doctrines of their chosen philosophy, whatever that may be. But I don't think that was the case in this instance either.

As passionate as I am about personal freedom, I don't buy the claims of anarchists that humanity would be just fine without any government at all. There are too many people in the world who believe that they know best how people should live their lives, and many of them are more than willing to use force to impose those beliefs on others. A world without government simply wouldn't last very long; as soon as it was established, strongmen would immediately spring up to establish their fiefdoms. So there is a need for government to protect the people's rights. And one of the fundamental tools to do that is an army that can prevent outside agencies from imposing their rules on a society. A lot of people will protest that argument by noting that the people we are fighting in Iraq are unlikely to threaten the rights of the average American. That's certainly true; while our enemies would certainly like to wreak great levels of havoc on our society, the fact is they're not likely to succeed. But that doesn't mean there isn't still a need for an army (setting aside debates regarding whether ours is the right size at the moment). Americans are fortunate that we don't have to worry too much about people coming to try and overthrow us, but part of the reason we don't have to worry about that is because we have an army that is stopping anyone who would try.

Soldiers cannot have the option of opting out of missions because they don't agree with them: that violates the social contract. The duly-elected American government decided to go to war in Iraq. (Even if you main-

tain President Bush was not properly elected, Congress voted for war as well.) As a soldier, I have a duty to obey the orders of the President of the United States as long as they are Constitutional. I can no more opt out of missions I disagree with than I can ignore laws I think are improper. I do not consider it a violation of my individual rights to have gone to Iraq on orders because I raised my right hand and volunteered to join the army. Whether or not this mission was a good one, my participation in it was an affirmation of something I consider quite necessary to society. So if nothing else, I gave my life for a pretty important principle; I can (if you'll pardon the pun) live with that.

"It's all so brief, isn't it? A typical human lifespan is almost a hundred years. But it's barely a second compared to what's out there. It wouldn't be so bad if life didn't take so long to figure out. Seems you just start to get it right, and then . . . it's over."

—Dr. Stephen Franklin, *Babylon 5*.

I wish I could say I'd at least started to get it right. Although, in my defense, I think I batted a solid .250 or so. Not a superstar, but at least able to play in the big leagues. I'm afraid I can't really offer any deep secrets or wisdom. I lived my life better than some, worse than others, and I like to think that the world was a little better off for my having been here. Not very much, but then, few of us are destined to make more than a tiny dent in history's Green Monster. I would be lying if I didn't admit I would have liked to have done more, but it's a bit too late for that now, eh? The bottom line, for me, is that I think I can look back at my life and at least see a few areas where I may have made a tiny difference, and massive ego aside, that's probably not too bad.

"The flame also reminds us that life is precious. As each flame is unique; when it goes out, it's gone forever. There will never be another quite like it."

—Ambassador Delenn, *Babylon 5*.

I write this in part, admittedly, because I would like to think that there's at least a little something out there to remember me by. Granted, this site will eventually vanish, being ephemeral in a very real sense of the word, but at least for a time it can serve as a tiny record of my contributions to the world. But on a larger scale, for those who knew me well enough to be saddened by my death, especially for those who haven't known anyone else lost to this war, perhaps my death can serve as a small reminder of the costs of war. Regardless of the merits of this war, or of any war, I think that many of us in America have forgotten that war means death and suffering in wholesale lots. A decision that for most of us in America was academic, whether or not to go to war in Iraq, had very real consequences for hundreds of thousands of people. Yet I was as guilty as anyone of minimizing those very real consequences in lieu of a cold discussion of theoretical merits of war and peace. Now I'm facing some very real consequences of that decision; who says life doesn't have a sense of humor?

But for those who knew me and feel this pain, I think it's a good thing to realize that this pain has been felt by thousands and thousands (probably millions, actually) of other people all over the world. That is part of the cost of war, any war, no matter how justified. If everyone who feels this pain keeps that in mind the next time we have to decide whether or not war is a good idea, perhaps it will help us to make a more informed decision. Because it is pretty clear that the average American would not have supported the Iraq War had they known the costs going in. I am far too cynical to believe that any

future debate over war will be any less vitriolic or emotional, but perhaps a few more people will realize just what those costs can be the next time.

This may be a contradiction of my above call to keep politics out of my death, but I hope not. Sometimes going to war is the right idea. I think we've drawn that line too far in the direction of war rather than peace, but I'm a soldier and I know that sometimes you have to fight if you're to hold onto what you hold dear. But in making that decision, I believe we understate the costs of war; when we make the decision to fight, we make the decision to kill, and that means lives and families destroyed. Mine now falls into that category; the next time the question of war or peace comes up, if you knew me at least you can understand a bit more just what it is you're deciding to do, and whether or not those costs are worth it.

"This is true love. You think this happens every day?"

—Westley, *The Princess Bride*.

"Good night, my love, the brightest star in my sky."

—John Sheridan, *Babylon 5*.

This is the hardest part. While I certainly have no desire to die, at this point I no longer have any worries. That is not true of the woman who made my life something to enjoy rather than something merely to survive. She put up with all of my faults, and they are myriad, she endured separations again and again . . . I cannot imagine being more fortunate in love than I have been with Amanda. Now she has to go on without me, and while a cynic might observe she's better off, I know that this is a terrible burden I have placed on her, and I would give almost anything if she would not have to bear it. It seems that is not an option. I cannot imagine anything more painful than that, and if there is an afterlife, this is a pain I'll bear forever.

I wasn't the greatest husband. I could have done so much more, a realization that, as it so often does, comes too late to matter. But I cherished every day I was married to Amanda. When everything else in my life seemed dark, she was always there to light the darkness. It is difficult to imagine my life being worth living without her having been in it. I hope and pray that she goes on without me and enjoys her life as much as she deserves. I can think of no one more deserving of happiness than her.

"I will see you again, in the place where no shadows fall."

—Ambassador Delenn, *Babylon 5*.

I don't know if there is an afterlife; I tend to doubt it, to be perfectly honest. But if there is any way possible, Amanda, then I will live up to Delenn's words, somehow, some way. I love you.

FURTHER CHANGES TO S. CON. RES. 21

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, pursuant to section 301 of S. Con. Res. 21, I previously filed revisions to S. Con. Res. 21, the 2008 budget resolution. Those revisions were made for legislation reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP.

Congress cleared H.R. 3963, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007, on November 1, 2007. The President vetoed that legislation on December 12, 2007. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives