

whether they did or didn't, but just reading what he said—rather, seeing for what he is: representative of the hundreds of people—hundreds of people—he says have contacted him about this whole rules of engagement. I want to quote, and this will be the close: “You can't turn this into one lone idiot in the backwoods of Maine mourning his son,” he said. “This is bigger than that.”

So, Madam Speaker, I intend to ask the Armed Services Committee, which is chaired by a wonderful man from Missouri, and the ranking member from California, we need to have this debate on behalf of the families as well as the Marines and the Army. What are the rules of engagement? What can they do and cannot do? When I read these articles about the number that have died just because we could not give them cover in certain situations, if that's the way we're supposed to fight a war, then that's a poor way to fight the war.

Madam Speaker, with that, I'm going to close as I always do. I know the gentleman from Texas has a tribute to pay to a former Member who I happened to serve one term with and thought the world of him. My daddy knew him and thought Charlie Wilson was a great guy. Let me get that on the RECORD.

My close is this: I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless this country and bless the President, that he will do what is right for this country. And I ask God to please bless America.

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

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE WILSON

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. I'm proud to follow my colleague from North Carolina. We share his support and his prayers for our men and women serving this country. That's why it's so important tonight to be here to honor the late Member of Congress, Charlie Wilson, from east Texas.

I first met Charlie Wilson in 1972, as a young State representative. He had just been elected to Congress. It was a fundraiser for him at the Intercontinental Airport, The Marriott, in Houston. I was 25-years-old and went out there, and the State senator who was just elected to Congress, and heard Charlie tell the folks stories. And this is 1972—long before Afghanistan, long before Charlie Wilson became known as “good-time Charlie.” In fact, in Texas,

as a State senator he's known as “Timber Charlie” because he represented the timber trees of east Texas. But a great Member. He was elected in 1972, like I said, to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Second District. He was elected 11 times. He did not run for reelection in 1996. In fact, he resigned in October of 1996.

Charles Nesbitt Wilson was born in Trinity, Texas, where his father was an accountant for a lumber company, on June 1, 1933, in the depths of the Depression. He attended the Naval Academy in Annapolis and graduated in 1956. He served 4 years in the Navy, from 1956 to 1960, and came back to Texas, where he was elected to the State house and the State senate.

Charlie Wilson died on February 10, 2010, at Lufkin Memorial Hospital in Lufkin, Texas, where he had been taken after collapsing earlier in the day and suffered from a cardiopulmonary arrest. He was pronounced dead at 12:16 p.m. Central Time. Congressman Wilson received a graveside service with full military honors at the Arlington National Cemetery on February 23, 2010.

Now for some of the stories about Charlie Wilson as a friend. I'm glad my colleague from Texas, JOE BARTON, is here, and Congressman CHET EDWARDS and AL GREEN and SHEILA JACKSON LEE, because Charlie had some stories that we couldn't tell on the floor of the House. But I'm going to tell you some of the good ones.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, the former Barbara Alberstadt, and his sister, Sharon Allison. Charlie told me many times, like he told other Members, that he credited his wife Barbara with saving his life because it got him off a lot of things that he shouldn't have been on to begin with. In having seen him many times after he left Congress, Charlie was still Charlie.

Charlie entered politics as a teenager. He began by running a campaign against his next-door neighbor, a city council member in Trinity, Texas. When Charlie was 13, his dog entered that neighbor's yard—a city council member—and he retaliated by mixing glass in the dog's food and causing fatal internal bleeding. Being a farmer's son, Charlie was able to get a driver's permit at age 13. And so he was going to pay that council member back. So he drove 96 people to the polls on the next election at age 13—it was mainly black citizens, African American citizens from the poor side of town—to make sure they knew what happened to his dog. That incumbent lost by 16 votes. So Charlie Wilson entered politics at 13 years of age by defeating a city council member in his neighborhood.

Charlie had so many things I could tell you; wrapping his arm around us and giving us that counsel. But I think he's best known outside of Texas for being the leader in Congress during the 1980s and known for supporting Operation Cyclone, the largest-ever Central

Intelligence Agency covert operation, under President Reagan's administration, by supplying military equipment, including anti-aircraft weapons such as Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and paramilitary officers from their Special Activities Division to the Afghan Mujahideen during the Soviet war in Afghanistan. From a few million dollars in the 1980s, his support for the resistance grew to \$750 million a year by the end of the decade.

I remember Charlie Wilson telling us in 1996, when he was leaving, and earlier, that we made a mistake by abandoning Afghanistan. And literally after 9/11, he came and talked to the delegation and said we made a mistake, and we're paying the price for it right now because we left Afghanistan in turmoil and ended up with the Taliban. We don't need to make that mistake again. That's why tonight I'm proud to honor Charlie Wilson in his service to our country.

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

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

IN HONOR OF CHARLIE WILSON

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

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I rise in support and honor of the late Congressman Charlie Wilson of the Second Congressional District of Texas. I didn't know Congressman Wilson in his salad days. I didn't get elected until 1984. By that time, he had calmed down, apparently quite a bit. But I can now state it, since the statute of limitations has expired, I voted for Congressman Wilson six times. I lived in east Texas, in Crockett, Texas, in Houston County, in the Second Congressional District, and we didn't have a Republican primary, and I don't recall that we had a Republican opponent against Congressman Wilson in the time that I lived in Crockett. And so my choice was to vote for him or not vote at all. I chose to vote for him.

I never went to one of his town hall meetings down at the courthouse on the square because I felt like he was doing a very good job for those constituents in east Texas, including myself. He was a strong defender of the military, very strong on what we call Texas values. He worked quite a bit on the Big Thicket in east Texas. He was an environmentalist ahead of his time.

When I got elected in 1984, I made it a point to get to know Congressman Wilson, or Charlie Wilson, because I had been his constituent and I knew of his reputation. I just felt like he would be a good guy to get to know. And he was. He was a really, really good person. When his mother died, I felt as a

courtesy that I should attend the funeral so that there would be some Texas Congressmen at his mother's funeral in Trinity, Texas. As it turned out, I was the only Congressman that attended. I went up to him. And we didn't really know each other that well, but I said, Charlie, I'm here if you need me to do anything. I didn't really know your mother very well, but I know she must have been a good woman if you were her son. And he never forgot that. From then on, anything I needed from Congressman Wilson, if he could do it, he did it. But he also asked you things.

I will never forget out on the steps of the Capitol one time he came up to me and he said, JOE I need a favor. I said, What is it, Charlie? He said, Well, I need a Republican sponsor for an amendment in the Appropriations Committee. I said, Okay. What is it? He said, I can't tell you. I said, Well, how much money is it? He said, I can't tell you. I said, Well, how many years is it? He said, I can't tell you. I said, Well what can you tell me? He said, If you do this for me, I will do almost anything you want in the Appropriations Committee for you. So I didn't know. To this day, I don't know what that amendment was. But after reading some of the history of that time and that era, my assumption is that I was the Republican sponsor of an amendment that got funding for the black box programs in Afghanistan for Stinger missiles. Now I don't know that, Madam Speaker, but that's kind of the way he operated.

Another story I can tell you is that I was standing here back behind the rail one afternoon and we had a series of votes going on, and Charlie came up to me and he said, What are you doing in a month or so? I said, I don't know. He said, Well, I'm going to take a little trip. I said, Where are you going? He said, We'll go anywhere you want to go. I said, Where do you want to go? He said, Well, I have to go to Afghanistan, and I have to go to Morocco. And if you'll come with me, after that we'll go anywhere you want to go. I said, Well, I'll think about it. Well, I asked my chief of staff and she said no. I asked my wife, and she said no. So then I had to tell Congressman Wilson that I couldn't go. That's the trip that he took the Miss World on where he ended up going to Afghanistan.

Another story that I can tell you is that a couple of us Congressmen were walking down the street one day, and we saw Congressman Wilson walking over to the Capitol, and he had this very strikingly beautiful young woman that he was walking with. Congressman DAN BURTON said, Charlie, that woman is as pretty as Miss Universe. And he says, It is Miss Universe. And it was.

He also loved cats—I mean the four-legged cats. They ran all over his office and all over the Rayburn building on the floor. As far as I know, House Administration never chastised him.

When you walked into his office, right after Afghanistan, he had a live Stinger missile. He was very proud of that.

I see that my time is about to expire. So for all of his family members and constituents, there were a lot of Republicans that loved Charlie Wilson. He will be missed. He was a great patriot, a great son of Texas, and somebody that those who knew him, he was very, very loyal to. So God bless Charlie Wilson and his family.

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

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

REMEMBERING REPRESENTATIVE CHARLIE WILSON

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

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay respects to my former colleague and friend, Texas Congressman Charlie Wilson. Charlie Wilson was bigger than life, and he was as real as the Texas day is long. I considered it a privilege and a joy to know him as a colleague and as a friend. Most Americans will forever know Charlie Wilson from the movie "Charlie Wilson's War." I have been asked by people who knew that I knew and served with Charlie whether he was really as colorful as he was portrayed to be in that movie. My answer is that that movie was the only time ever that Hollywood had to tone down reality in order to make it believable.

I have no idea whether Charlie ever read Shakespeare, but whether he did or not, the truth is, he personified Polonius' wise observation in Hamlet: "This above all: To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." It makes me wonder if somehow Polonius didn't know Charlie Wilson.

Charlie Wilson was not false to any man, any person or any constituent, not ever. He was the real thing, and I think in this sometimes cynical world, that is what all of us blessed to know him as a friend found so very endearing about him. In fact, Mr. Speaker, a number of Charlie's former colleagues who had served with him, members of the Texas delegation, have asked that we include their remarks with respect to Charlie, his life and his spirit.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD the remarks of Ralph Hall who also served many years with Charlie, and I would only just summarize one statement made by Ralph about his good friend Charlie. He said, He was a courageous and kind man with a strong sense of justice that

compelled him to work for the good of others.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's request will be covered under general leave.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Thank you.

While he was known as Good Time Charlie—and yes, he did enjoy life—the truth is that Charlie Wilson spent his entire adult life in the serious business of public service to our Nation. He graduated from the Naval Academy and then served our Nation as a lieutenant and as a naval intelligence officer. At the age of 27, he was elected to the Texas legislature where he was known as the liberal from Lufkin, supporting such progressive causes as the minimum wage, Medicaid, and the Equal Rights Amendment.

In 1972, he was elected to Congress where he became known as a champion of a strong national defense, a friend of average working families, and yes, someone who played a key role in bringing down the Communist Soviet Union. Who would have ever guessed, my friends and colleagues from Texas, that Charles Hazard of Trinity, Texas, many years ago, killing his 13-year-old neighbor's dog, would lead to the mighty Soviet Union falling someday. History is an interesting thing, and Charlie Wilson certainly will always be a part of it, as playing a key role in one of the most monumental achievements in our Nation's history.

Charlie Wilson did what every one of us, Republican or Democrat, would dream to do and would dream that it be said about us at the end of our public service careers: Charlie Wilson made a difference. He made a difference for his State of Texas, for his beloved constituents in east Texas. He made a difference for America, and, yes, he made a difference for the world.

To his widow, Barbara, and to his sister, my dear friend Sharon Allison in my hometown of Waco, Texas, I hope they know that our thoughts and prayers are with them. I thank you and your family for sharing with us and for sharing with the world this great treasure that God brought into this world. His spirit will be with us always. May God bless Charlie Wilson and the great land that he loved.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few minutes to remember a patriot, a great Texan, and a great friend, Charlie Wilson. I had the pleasure of serving with Charlie in the Texas State Senate and then in the House for another 17 years, and though we didn't see eye to eye on every issue, it was not often we disagreed.

Charlie was a courageous and kind man with a strong sense of justice that compelled him to work for the good of others. I think that, more than anything else, will be the enduring part of his legacy. He decided to commit his energy, and the efforts of this country, to helping the Afghani people against the Soviets, not just because it was the Cold War and it was us versus them, but because he saw the atrocities committed against the Afghani people and he knew that the United States could