

The continuing resolution vote gives us the first real opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to cutting spending. The debt limit will be another opportunity for this Congress to cut spending. And as I think the gentleman knows, I have said repeatedly that we will not accept an increase in the debt limit without serious spending cuts and reforms, and I look forward to joining with the gentleman debate on this House floor. Hopefully we can have the Senate join us, as well as the President, towards that end.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

It's my understanding, from the gentleman's response, that if in the eyes of you or Mr. BOEHNER or your side of the aisle serious spending cuts have not been effected, that you would oppose the extension of the debt limit.

Is that what I hear you saying?

Mr. CANTOR. I would say to the gentleman this: We have been charged with an obligation by the people of this country to get our fiscal house in order. We intend to be very deliberate and focused on cutting spending while making sure we are doing all we can to grow the economy and the private-sector jobs. It is our intent to prove that this House and this Congress—hopefully Leader REID will follow suit—will deliver on that commitment.

The public, as the gentleman knows all too well, is tired of business as usual. They don't want to see this country continue to incur debt as it has in the past without some indication that things are changing, without some indication that serious spending cuts have been implemented and reforms effected, and that will be our intent.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that response. And I hate to keep pressing him, but if his hopes are not realized—and I don't know the answer as to whether they will be, but at some point in time we will be confronted with an alternative of whatever the facts may be with respect to what we are able to pass through this House, the Senate, and get signed by the President, we will be confronted with the consequences of our past behavior, and I underline “our,” o-u-r, spending that we have incurred. And I don't want to go through the entire debate that you and I always go through, so I won't do it, but we will be confronted with, as the Speaker says, an adult moment as to whether or not we will, in light of the consequences of past behavior, take actions necessary to preclude America from defaulting on its debts. And I simply ask the gentleman, will we have the opportunity to have an up-or-down vote on that issue under the circumstances where we have reached, as the gentleman points out—we don't know the exact date—the extent of present authority?

Mr. CANTOR. I would say to the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that the vote on the debt limit comes within the context of our demonstrating a commitment to cut spending, to effect re-

forms. And the President as well as the gentleman's side here in this House have said both that they would like to see and join us in cutting spending. This debt-limit vote comes in the context of all that we are going to be able to do over the next several months. And we've got to be demonstrating that or frankly the public will not want us to accept any notion that we're going to continue business as usual unless we've demonstrated that things are changing. That's why I continue to say to the gentleman that we will not accept an increase in the debt limit without serious spending cuts and reforms.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

□ 1140

HOUR OF MEETING ON MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2011

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday next for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 10

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FAREWELL TO THE PAGES

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, today we will be saying farewell to the pages who have served this House so well. They are standing in the back of the Chamber here now. We wish to thank you for your service.

I've been on the Page Board for about 30 years. Speaker Tip O'Neill appointed me to that board, and this has been a tremendous group of pages. You've worked hard, you've worked well, and you've worked honorably.

You've seen history. You've seen a change of party control of this House.

You've seen our joys and our sorrows. You witnessed the sorrow we all experienced and you experienced when a Member of this House was attacked back in her district.

There is a program called Close Up where people come to Washington, people your age, to observe the Congress, and they learn a lot. It's a great program. But no one sees the Congress as close up as you do. And we appreciate the fact that you recognize that as a great responsibility and a great honor, and you will go back home and tell others about this Congress.

I think you can tell them that everyone who serves in this Congress, even though we may have differences—sometimes very sharp differences—the one thing that does bind us together is that everyone here in this Congress loves this country.

Go back and tell them that we are imperfect people trying to make a more perfect Republic.

I yield, Mr. Speaker, to my colleague on the Page Board, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Thank you, Mr. KILDEE. I appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, the young men and women who are standing behind the bar and at the back of our Chamber here today are great young men and women who have served us well over this past semester. We appreciate you. Both Ms. Keating and Ms. Sampson have said this is probably the best behaved group of pages we've ever had. I don't know if you want to take it further than that, but you have done a great job and we appreciate you.

Mr. KILDEE. I want to thank Mr. BISHOP and Ms. FOXX, who also served on this committee. We have enjoyed our work, and you've made our work very enjoyable.

DEPARTURE CEREMONY PAGE NAMES FALL CLASS OF 2010

Haley Alderete
Carissa A. Almendarez
Alexandra Baker
Shraddha Batra
Bethany Blakeman
Christopher Michael Tydingco Borja
Derek Kristopher Bowdle
Taylor Brooks
Hunter Layne Chapman
Fernando Chavez, Jr.
Josilyn Chowen
Joseph Cortes
Nicholas Dellasanta
Hannah Elizabeth Dillman
Dominé Ezechukwu
Melissa Lynn Finno
Megan Fleming
Gerardo Flores
Ashley Nicole Flowers
Hector Javier Garcia
Derek Gartee
Megan Greeley
Kallie A. Hargrove
Kaitlin Elaine Hinojosa
Kathryn Elizabeth Hopper
Peter Alex Kanjorski
John D. Kohler
Ra'Nisa Kyles
Olga Lefebvre
Josiah Lippincott
Schaeffer Mallory
Gomez J. Martin

Jacqueline McGrath
 Hannah Mery
 Meghan Myhill
 Diona Okunbo
 Rachel Olivares
 Tyler Olkowski
 Cemal Ozgur
 Joshua L. Perry
 Tyler Jacob Petersen
 Brendan J. Pfaller
 Levi Andrew Phillips
 Alexis Robbins
 William Douglas Rodenberg
 Caroline Saca
 Nicole Marie Santeiro
 Kameron Simmons
 Everett Sotelo
 Camden Scott Wiggins

COLOMBIA FLOODING DISASTER

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my thoughts and prayers to the people of Colombia in light of the devastating flooding, heavy rain, and destructive landslides that, even as I speak, continue to ravage that country.

This natural disaster, ongoing for several months now, has taken more than 300 lives and damaged or destroyed more than 2,000 homes. In total, more than 2 million victims have been affected by the flooding, and some reports are calling this the worst natural disaster in Colombia's history.

My district in northern Rhode Island is home to many wonderful Colombian families. In fact, Colombians make up the fourth largest Latino group in Rhode Island, most of whom have loved ones in the affected areas of their native country.

So on behalf of the people of the First District of Rhode Island, I would like to express my sympathies to all of those who have been affected by this devastating flooding. We remember those who have died and express our sympathies to those who have lost loved ones, been injured, or lost their homes as a result of this destruction.

I express my wishes for a rapid reconstruction of the damaged areas and return to safety for the families affected by this tragic natural disaster.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BENISHEK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

PERPETUAL WAR IS EXPENSIVE

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, perpetual war is expensive. We have been militarily involved in the Persian Gulf re-

gion now for 20 years. Experts have predicted that the cost of this continuous and expanding war will reach \$6 trillion.

The hostilities and our overt involvement in Iraq can be dated back to January 16, 1991, when the defensive Operation Desert Shield became the offensive Operation Desert Storm. Though the end of the Persian Gulf war was declared on April 6, 1991, with a U.S. military victory, the 20-year war was just beginning.

The U.S. and Britain have had an intense interest in controlling the oil of the Middle East dating back to the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. This interest expanded during World War II with FDR's promise to protect the puppet governments in the Persian Gulf region, especially Saudi Arabia.

Though this arrangement never sat well with the citizens in the region, a fairly decent relationship remained between the Arab people and the American public. But animosity continued to build with our ever-present military involvement in Iraq.

□ 1150

Our military assistance to the Mujahedeen in the 1980s, now the Taliban, helped the Muslim defenders, one of whom was Osama bin Laden, oust the Soviets from Afghanistan. At that time we were still not seen as occupiers, and the radical Muslims, encouraged by the U.S., were expected to direct all their efforts toward the Communist threat. That all changed with the breakup of the Soviet system and the end of the Cold War when, as the lone superpower left standing, we named ourselves the world's policeman. It was then that the resentment by Arabs and Muslims became directed toward the United States, now seen as an invader and occupier.

Continuous bombing and crippling sanctions against Iraq during the 1990s, the appearance that the U.S. did not care about the plight of the Palestinians, and our military bases in Saudi Arabia led to attention-getting attacks against the United States. The 1998 embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania and the attack on the USS *Cole* in the year 2000 were warnings that the war was far from over. The horrible tragedy of 9/11 shouldn't have been a surprise, and many believe it was preventable.

Currently, the war has morphed into a huge battle for control of the Persian Gulf region and central Asia. This involves Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Iran. Foolish policies lead to foolhardy conflicts. Foolhardy conflicts lead to unsustainable costs and a multitude of unintended consequences. To name a few, we have spent trillions of dollars based on the false pretense of defending freedom and our Constitution. The notion has been further solidified that war no longer needs to be declared by Congress and can be pursued as a prerogative of the President. We are now

seen by the world not as a peacemaker, but rather a troublemaker and aggressor.

Thousands of American servicemembers have been killed and tens of thousands wounded, with a sharp increase in service-connected suicides. Over 500,000 veterans are seeking medical treatment and disability benefits. Millions of citizens have been killed, wounded, and displaced in the countries on the receiving end of our bombs, drones, sanctions, and occupation. The region has suffered huge environmental damage as a consequence of our military occupation.

Christians from Iraq have suffered the worst rout in the history of Christendom. Iran and Iraq are now better allies than ever, with strong anti-American sentiment. Iraqi political stability is a joke. Ending hostilities in Afghanistan is a dream. China and Iran have been drawn into a closer alliance against the United States. America's uncontrolled deficits are senselessly fueled by needless militarism. We are now much poorer and less safe. There was no al Qaeda in Iraq before we invaded in 2003. Today there is. No weapons of mass destruction were ever found in Iraq.

War always leads to government growth and the sacrifice of civil liberties. In the past 10 years, this has been particularly costly to us, with the acceptance of military tribunals, torture, assassinations, abuse of habeas corpus, and PATRIOT Act-type legislation. Senseless war and senseless destruction and death should not be rationalized as providing a great service in protecting our freedoms, our Constitution, or maintaining peace. The only value that can come of this is to recognize that our policies are flawed and they need to be changed. Without this, history will record that the sacrifices were all in vain.

A policy of peace, friendship, and trade is far superior to one of occupation, entangling alliances, and sanctions which guarantee war. We should pursue such a policy for moral reasons. But if we don't, we will nevertheless be forced to change our ways for economic reasons. It's time to bring our troops home.

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

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

HONORING SARGENT SHRIVER

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a great American, my friend Sargent Shriver, a son of Maryland, who passed away this week at the age of 95. He was a public servant who lived a full life dedicated to promoting justice and