

I would like to share an excerpt from the article: “Ten days since Gabe was killed, Bob and Donna Conde were sitting on a couch in their basement surrounded by relatives, close friends, and 16 of the soldiers who fought alongside their son in Afghanistan.

“The soldiers had been back in the United States for just a few days—exhausted from their 9-month deployment and relieved to be home. They had come to this small farming town an hour’s drive from Denver to help bury Spec. Gabriel Conde. . . .

“By the time Gabe deployed in September, the war had fallen so far out of the headlines that Bob found it hard to figure out why the U.S. military was still in Afghanistan. He tried to read up on the war, but the news accounts of suicide bombings, civilian deaths, and political infighting never really made sense. They didn’t explain what Gabe was fighting for.”

Mr. Speaker, that is why so many of us in the United States House of Representatives are disappointed, frustrated. We have written numerous letters from Members of both parties asking for a debate, and to this day, Mr. RYAN, the Speaker, has not allowed the House to meet its constitutional responsibility to debate and vote on a 17-year-old war.

And as the Washington Post article notes, that is why the Conde family is so hurt. U.S. military members and their families deserve a debate on the future involvement in Afghanistan and committing our troops to other countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to share with this body that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the 31st Commandant, is a friend of mine, Chuck Krulak. He and I have communicated for 5 years on Afghanistan. He agrees with me there is nothing we are going to do to change it.

And he said to me one time in an email:

Let me say, no one has ever conquered Afghanistan, and many have tried. We will join the list of nations that have tried and failed.

Again, this is the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, Chuck Krulak, who is now retired.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense that our men and women in uniform have been there for 17 years. The Afghan Government will never change. History has proven that Afghanistan is a graveyard of empires, and yet we in Congress who take an oath of office, and that oath says that we are responsible for voting to go to war, we can’t even get a debate.

Speaker RYAN, I know you have a lot to do, but for goodness’ sake, before you leave in January, let us have a debate on the future of Afghanistan. Let Members vote “yea” or “nay,” but at least give us a debate.

It is very disappointing, Mr. Speaker, that you will not allow us to meet our constitutional responsibility.

WE NEED TO COME TOGETHER TODAY ON IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I stand to address this Chamber at the start of this legislative week in a slightly different mode of thinking than I usually do, because as we have become aware in the last couple of days, this country is in the midst of a moral and ethical emergency.

Mr. Speaker, we debate lots of things on this floor, and that is a good thing. We argue about taxes. We argue about our budget. We argue about the best way to take care of our children, regulations, all sorts of things where the debate in this Chamber is constructive, sometimes to a good solution.

What we have become aware of on our southern border is not a debatable thing. It transcends ideology. It transcends political party. It gets to the very moral core of all of us as individuals and at the very thing that makes this country truly exceptional.

We are exceptional for a bunch of reasons. We are a very powerful country. We are a very wealthy country. But there are other powerful and wealthy countries.

What makes this country exceptional is that we stand up for values and morals and ethics. And there is no ethical or moral way to look at an agent of the United States Government removing a small child from the arms of his or her mother and to in any way say that that is a moral act consistent with the values that make this country exceptional.

There is no debate. There is no ideology. There is no deterrent effect that would make that okay.

Since our President is uninterested in doing what we all know he could do, which is to stop this immoral action right now, it is time for the Congress of the United States, the Representatives of the people of the United States, of the good people of the United States, to stand up today and say: That act will not be done in my name.

We should have debates about immigration. We should solve the immigration challenges that face us. But never ever, ever should we go to where we are today where the lives of young children are being used for a deterrent, are being used as legislative leverage.

My colleagues, we have been here before. We interned American citizens of Japanese descent, because at the time in World War II, we thought that they might be a threat.

The President promulgates the notion that immigrants are a threat. To him, immigrants are MS-13. We are all immigrants. This country is great because we are a Nation of immigrants.

So it is time for us to set aside whatever calculations, whatever ideology, whatever arguments might be made around the vexing problem of immigration, and to stop the separation of babies from their parents in our Nation today.

If we don’t do that today, we will be complicit. The Representatives of the people will be complicit in a moral act that resonates with the internment of American citizens of Japanese descent. And I don’t think any Democrat or Republican in this Chamber wants their legacy to be that act.

The President could fix this problem right now. It will take us a little longer, but because it will take us a little longer and because I do believe for all the arguments and dysfunction in this Chamber that we are fundamentally a moral group of people, reflective of the ethical aspect of our constituents and of our country, that this afternoon is the time to come together to stop babies being taken from the arms of their parents in our country and in our name.

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100 YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR I

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago this month, American marines forged their legend as the world’s most effective fighting force as they halted the German advance in France at the Battle of Belleau Wood. Less than 6 months later, World War I came to an end, and this year we mark the centennial anniversary of the conclusion of the planet’s first global conflict.

There was nothing like it before its time. It was the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month that all of the guns fell silent. After 4 years of war, 18 million people laid dead, 23 million others were wounded, and many of the old empires of Europe crumbled.

Often called the War to End All Wars or the Great War, the First World War left a long shadow over history which we can still feel today. But none experienced the horror of this war more than the 4 million Americans sent to fight over there in Europe and the families they left behind. Their lives were immediately changed forever.

The United States came late to the war, but when we arrived and restored hope to our European allies, we reached a defining moment in our history and world history. Until that time, America was not a great power as we are today, but with the arrival of our doughboys, they ushered in a new era of freedom in Europe. This was the beginning of the American century, the New World superpower, the United States.

Our military saw that it was their duty as champions of liberty to help our allies in need and to make the world safe for democracy. They went to liberate, not to conquer. Our enemy was shocked. Our allies were stunned by the tenacious doughboys. The American doughboys changed the course of the war forever.

Here in this photograph, we have Americans going over the top, as they

say, over the top of the trench, charging into the guns of the Germans.

When the Americans arrived, the Axis powers were slowly gaining power. With Russia's premature exit from the war, German troops from the Eastern Front were able to be redeployed to the Western Front.

In the Spring Offensive of 1918, the Germans threw everything they had at our British and French allies, hoping to end the war before the Americans entered that war. But they were too late. The U.S. troops rushed to the front, relieving their battle-weary comrades and stunning the Germans with the American fighting spirit.

World War I is often considered the first modern war. Military technology made rapid advances, making the battlefield more dangerous than ever in history. The trench warfare was horrifying and brutal.

Despite the dangers, our boys were eager to get into the fight. In June of 1918, the feared German Army was approaching Paris, France, but then they met the United States Marines at Belleau Wood.

Mr. Speaker, when the Americans, the Marines, arrived on the battlefield, they encountered retreating French troops. A French colonel ordered the Marines to retreat as well, but the American captain commanding the 51st Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment made it clear they weren't there to experience defeat. He responded: "Retreat, hell. We just got here."

The battle was costly for our Marines, but it broke the German Army's advance and its will to fight. From then on, the Germans only lost. The Allies quickly mounted a successful counteroffensive to push the Germans back into Germany, and the war was over, 100 years ago this year.

We must not forget those who sacrificed so much to make the world a better place. During the war, 116,516 Americans were killed. Another 200,000 were wounded. Thousands more died when they returned to the United States with the Spanish flu that they contracted when they were over there.

While none of the 4 million courageous Americans who answered the call are with us today, their legacy lives on. I am pleased that last year we finally—finally, after 100 years—broke ground on a new memorial here in the Nation's Capital to honor all of those who served in the great World War I.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the World War I Centennial Commission on which I once served for their highlighting of our World War I troops. Now, after 100 years, the memorial will be built in D.C. for those who served, those who returned, those who returned with the wounds of war, and those who did not return. We are giving these great Americans the honor they rightfully deserve here in Washington, D.C.

There are no more of the battlefield-weary troops that served in the great World War I. The last one was Frank

Buckles, who died at 110, a friend of mine, and it was his desire to see a memorial built here in Washington for all of those friends of his who served in World War I.

So, finally, we are doing that, and the sacrifice of those Americans for this Nation will be preserved in bronze and stone in the heart of this city; for the worst casualty of war, Mr. Speaker, is to be forgotten.

And that is just the way it is.

CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, as part of the Immigration Act of 1990, the diversity visa lottery was established as a way to diversify the United States. Over the past 28 years, the visa lottery has helped to fortify the image of our country and enlarge the greatness of America through the immigrant population. The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program awards up to 50,000 visas each year that presents permanent residency in the U.S. and serves as a pathway to citizenship.

The lottery has been imperative in creating new opportunities for African and Caribbean individuals seeking citizenship in the U.S. The proposed immigration bills today that will be coming to the floor aim to limit refugee admissions, eliminate the diversity lottery, and reduce the number of employment-based visas distributed each year.

As Americans begin many of the pastimes of summer that are quintessentially American—baseball, backyard barbecues, and family road trips—Caribbean Americans reflect on our contributions and the melded culture in the United States through Caribbean American Heritage Month. Ironically, the bills that are coming on the floor this same month will end the Diversity Visa Lottery Program, which has allowed many Caribbean people to come and be part of the American experience.

In a month of polarized politics and the Trump administration's assault on increasing diversity in this Nation, Caribbean American Heritage Month serves as a perfect counterpoint example to support the doctrine of Americanism.

Congress and President George W. Bush adopted Caribbean American Heritage Month in 2006. While the act establishing Caribbean American Heritage Month emphasized the present influence of Caribbean Americans, American history would not be complete without the integration and support of the Caribbean people.

From America's founding to the present, Caribbean people have supported and assisted in the creation of a collective American identity: the articulation of this Nation's rightful place in the world, its traditions, its language, and its cultural style.

From Alexander Hamilton, to American Revolution Haitian gens de couleur libre—free men of color—fighting troops, to slave revolt leader Denmark Vessey, to Colin Powell's shock and awe doctrine, the Caribbean emphasis on revolutionary and righteous ideals enforced through martial action have supported American ideals both at home and abroad.

In today's culture, many are surprised by the placement of Americans of Caribbean descent. They include former Attorney General Eric Holder to iconic personalities like Lenny Kravitz and Beyonce; economic minds such as Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta President Raphael Bostic; to actors Kerry Washington and Jada Pinkett Smith; to athletes Tim Duncan, Mariano Rivera, and Carmelo Anthony; to journalist Joy Reid and U.S. Senator KAMALA HARRIS.

These scions of the Caribbean region are completely American, yet, in many ways, their Caribbean heritage informs and accounts for the attributes which have assisted them in their advancement and supported American greatness.

That philosophy is borne out with recent immigrants and naturalized Caribbean people. According to the Migration Policy Institute, Latin American and Caribbean people account for the largest percent of foreign-born military personnel, and that group constitutes 38 percent of all foreign born that are in the Armed Forces.

Additionally, according to the 2014 U.S. Census Bureau Report, about 66 percent of Caribbean immigrants and immigrants overall were in the civilian labor force, compared to 62 percent of the native born.

According to the Caribbean Policy Institute, Caribbean Blacks have labor force participation rates that exceed the averages for U.S. natives and all immigrants combined. The study from this institute has shown that, collectively, Caribbean people have higher median income earnings than all the immigrants in the U.S.

The proposed zero-tolerance immigration policy has resulted, as we have seen, in thousands of children being torn apart from their families. Children are being held in prolonged family detention centers, and this bill eliminates protections that are in place to ensure safe and basic living needs.

It is our duty to stop the separation of children. It is our duty to see that America remains great through the diversity that it entails. We cannot allow this bill to go forward, which would eliminate the diversity lottery that has created the diverse American culture that we have.

Through service, through ideals, and even through protests, immigrants have made this a great nation.

President Trump issued a proclamation on May 31, 2018, which stated that Caribbean American Heritage Month is a time in which America will honor America's long-shared history with our