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HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED
CAREER OF REPRESENTATIVE
LOUIS W. STOKES

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a former Member of this body, Louis W. Stokes, for his contributions both in service to our Nation and to the State of Ohio. Representative Stokes has made significant strides in increasing benefits to veterans in the Cleveland area, and through his work on the Appropriations Committee, he brought significant increases in revenue to the Cleveland's East Side. He was recently inaugurated into the Karamu House Hall of Fame for his contributions to the continued legacy of Cleveland's black settlement house and theatre.

Louis Stokes was born in Cleveland and grew up in one of the Nation's first federally funded housing projects, the Outhwaite Homes. He served in the Army during World War II, attended Western Reserve University and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, and began practicing law in Cleveland in 1953. In 1968, Stokes argued the seminal "stop and frisk" Terry v. Ohio case in front of the United States Supreme Court. He was elected to the House in 1968, representing the 21st District and then the newly created 11th District, both on Cleveland's East Side. He was Chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, charged with investigating the murders of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. He also served on the House committee that investigated the Iran-Contra Affair and was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. By the time of his retirement in 1999, Stokes had represented the people of Cleveland for nearly 30 years. He was dean of the Ohio delegation and one of the most senior members of this body.

Madam Speaker, Louis Stokes' contributions to public life have been celebrated in many ways, not least of which is the Louis W. Stokes Health Policy Lecture at Meharry Medical College in Nashville. Today, October 17, 2007, Representative Stokes was honored at Meharry for his pioneering contributions to the field of health policy and law. And today I rise to extend my heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to Louis Stokes, to celebrate his long career of public service and to encourage my colleagues to join me in honoring him. May his words inspire new generations of leaders to follow in his footsteps and serve their country.

"THE WAR" AS OPINED BY WINSTON GROOM OF POINT CLEAR, ALABAMA

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, earlier this week one of my constituents—nationally-re-

nowned author and historian, Winston Groom—wrote an op-ed piece for the Mobile Press-Register offering at least one theory as to why the reviews of Ken Burns' recent documentary series, "The War," have been panned by several of America's leading and supposedly "most respected" national publications.

As you may know, "The War" recently aired throughout the Nation on PBS. While admitting that the "Second World War was fought in thousands of places, too many for any one accounting," Mr. Burns and his extraordinarily talented team tell the story of four American towns and how some of the citizens from those towns experienced and remember "The War."

The personal accounts of these men and women in their own unique dialects and accents tell an important and powerful story of World War II and the men and women that Tom Brokaw, among others, has deemed "The Greatest Generation."

This documentary shows the significant sacrifices made by the brave men and women of the American military, as well as the millions of American families whose loved ones were fighting the forces of evil during the Second World War.

As Mr. Groom so eloquently explains in his article, the underlying complaint of "The War," shared by many in the mainstream media who reviewed the film, is "grounded in the new liberal fad of 'moral relativism'" and self-hatred. Unbelievably, some of these critics appear to believe that Mr. Burns' documentary was simply too "pro-American" and not sympathetic enough to the Germans and the Japanese.

After watching this fascinating documentary with my wife and children, I, personally, could not be more proud to be an American. Moreover, I believe this film should be required watching in every school in America.

Today, Madam Speaker, I rise to ask that this op-ed piece be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in its entirety, for I believe Winston Groom may be to something:

HATCHET JOB ON "THE WAR"

(By Winston Groom)

Many of you who enjoyed Ken Burns' "The War" may or may not be surprised that much of the mainstream media trashed the series.

At the simplest level, their complaints illustrate the common literary fallacy in which the critic reviews not the film (or book) that was written, but the one that he wanted to see written. But this is merely one technique of doing a hatchet job.

The underlying complaint against Burns' film by such revered organs as "The New York Times", "The New Yorker", "Slate" magazine, etc., is grounded in the new liberal fad of "moral relativism" or "moral equivalency," a doctrine that seeks to have us believe that in the real world, there are in fact no "good guys" or "bad guys."

Instead, everything is "relative" (i.e. Oh, poor Adolf. He was simply misunderstood.)

Thus, Alessandra Stanley of the Times felt compelled to inform her readers that, "Examining a global war from the perspective of only one belligerent is rarely a good idea."

I myself had a similar run-in with that kind of thinking when the Times trashed my history "1942: the Year That Tried Men's Souls," so I know whereof I speak.

In that instance, the Times for some reason assigned the hatchet job to its theater editor, who carped that I was "cheerleading"

for America and "conducting a pep rally for the Allies." It made me wonder just who she wanted me to cheer for—Hitler? Tojo? Or were we all of us—Japan, Germany, America, England, Russia—equally at fault for the war?

In the online magazine "Slate", Beverly Gage was constrained to label "The War" "manipulative, nostalgic and nationalistic," and lamented that it offered "no commentary from the German or Japanese" side.

To be fair, she also complained that it offered no commentary from the British or Canadians, to which she might also have added that we didn't hear about the Norwegians or the Peruvians—or the Ugandans, for all it matters.

The point is, that was not what the film was about. It was about America and Americans in World War II, as was plainly stated at the beginning of each episode. To be fair again, Ms. Gage acknowledges this, or, in her words, "Burns admits this," but then she goes on to complain about it anyway.

Ms. Gage also spears the film for offering "fantastically sentimental stuff—Ken Burns at his most indulgent."

I, for one, didn't see anything particularly sentimental about pictures of dead American Marines floating face down on the beaches of Tarawa or being carted off the battlefield.

Ms. Gage also hints in her review that the story told by Mobile's Eugene Sledge about some Marines pulling gold teeth from dying Japanese soldiers smacks of American racism, since in the European Theater, the absence of that unpleasant custom presumably denied similarly situated Germans their experience of a lifetime.

In The New Yorker, Nancy Franklin's objection, rather than moral relativism, is that "The War" is just plain bad film-making.

"They've taken a subject that is inexhaustible and made it merely exhausting," she writes, before going on to complain about the sound track and narration and that a lot of the footage Burns selected had been used before—as if Burns, being unable to conjure up some stash of unused footage, was somehow obligated to use old bad footage instead.

She also found tedious Burns' style of using real participants in the war to describe their experiences rather than, one supposes, using analysts, historians and politicians. Myself, I rather enjoyed hearing from such contributors as Dwain Luce, Sid and Katherine Phillips, Maurice Bell, Willie Rushton and others who actually lived it.

As Ms. Stanley writes in her review, "'The War' gives generous voice to a wide variety of voices, but they are all American voices," which, she complains, "is the only tale Burns wants to tell."

The strange implication here is that surely Burns could have dug up a Hiroshima survivor or a fugitive Nazi SS man to tell his side of the story—or better yet, a Kamikaze pilot.

What really underlies this "moral relativism" is the fetish of self-hatred that has become so pervasive in the mainstream media and the halls of academia. Whatever the issue, "America is at least no better than the rest of them, and probably worse" is their mantra, and anything that smacks of patriotism is automatically suspect.

Heaven help us if this had been the bunch in Philadelphia on the Fourth of July, 1776, when they were trying to find people to sign the Declaration of Independence.