

corruption, we are seeing for the first time sectarian divisions such have never existed before. Economic tensions and rivalry over land used for grazing versus planting have always existed, but these have given way to butchery based on religious and ethnic affiliation.

This is happening at a time when we mark the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. When that country was being turned into a massive killing field, the world stood idly by. Both President Clinton and then-U.N. Peacekeeping Chief Kofi Annan had actionable intelligence information that could have prevented or at least mitigated the Rwandan genocide but chose callous indifference that enabled slaughter of unprecedented proportions. When the blood stopped flowing, the world looked at the corpses piled high and was shocked, “never again” was the phrase that was on everyone’s lips.

It is happening again. The question before us is whether the phrase “never again” is one that we simply use to pay lip service while doing nothing, or whether we are going to act.

We had two witnesses from the U.S. Government at the hearing, as I mentioned, Acting Assistant Secretary Jackson, and also Anne Richard, Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration. While the State Department sending two people to testify is encouraging, as it shows a heightened commitment to the issue, the questions I asked them to answer were not only about “what are we doing,” but also whether or not “we are doing enough?”

In 2012, the Obama administration, to much fanfare, created an Atrocities Prevention Board, following a Presidential Study directive which stated that “Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States.” The APB is supposed to provide early warning of mass atrocities, and mobilize interagency resources to stop such atrocities.

But where has this Board been? Did we take our eyes off the ball in the CAR, perhaps because we are confronted by so many other crises?

While we have taken some steps, including authorizing \$170 million in humanitarian and peacekeeping aid—are such resources adequate given the magnitude of the problem?

We have a situation where in a country with a population of roughly 5.2 million people, 1.3 million are in risk of starvation, while 2.5 million in total are estimated to need some form of humanitarian assistance. That is nearly half the country.

We are seeing ethnic cleansing, whereby whole villages are being emptied and the countryside laid waste. There are more than 600,000 internally displaced persons in the CAR, plus more than 320,000 others who are refugees in neighboring countries. Illustrative of how the situation has worsened, the total number of those displaced has doubled since the time we held our hearing last November.

We are told that an estimated 2,000 people have been killed since December, but I believe that number is a conservative estimate.

What reports we do receive, however, are bloodcurdling. Human Rights Watch reported on an attack on a Muslim neighborhood in the town of Guen in the early morning hours of February 1 by so-called anti-Balaka forces. A father recounted how as the family was fleeing he saw his ten-year-old boy shot in the leg

and fall down. The child was set upon by men with machetes, who hacked at him until he was dead. Four days later, in what was reminiscent of the massacre in the former Yugoslavia, anti-Balaka forces came upon a group of Muslims who were hiding. They separated the men from the women and small children, and executed the men: 45 of them, using machetes and then shooting those who lay wounded.

Though for decades the CAR has been beset by violence and misrule, such religious based violence is something that is a new phenomenon.

But how did the country get to this point?

What began as a political coup d’etat in March 2013 against former President François Bozizé by Michel Djotodia quickly took on religious and ethnic overtones.

As was detailed in our November hearing, Djotodia—who, thankfully, has now been replaced by interim President Catherine Samba-Panza—came to power with the military backing of Seleka, a militia of about 25,000 men, up to 90 percent of which come from Chad and Sudan and therefore constituted a foreign invasion force in the eyes of many. They did not speak the local language, and are Muslim in a nation that is over 80 percent Christian or otherwise non-Muslim. They destroyed churches, executed priests and stirred up sectarian hatreds where little to none had existed previously.

What we began to see happening last November in response to Seleka was a reactionary backlash by anti-Balaka, self-defense gangs. Since then, retaliatory outrages committed by anti-Balaka forces have escalated, and Muslim civilians who had nothing to do with Seleka became targets. As in the case of Guen, whole neighborhoods in the capital city of Bangui, and whole villages, have been cleansed of their Muslim populations.

As we heard from our witnesses, there are numerous causes contributing to grievances, including a fight for control over conflict minerals. Guen, for example, is in a mining area, and thus there are economic motives at work as well.

Insofar as the conflict can be described as religious on one level, it is also true religious fervor and dedication that provides the greatest hope for peace in the Central African Republic.

Some of you will recall how a few months ago three great religious leaders came to Washington and New York to meet with Congressional and U.S. Government leaders, as well as United Nations officials. One was a Muslim imam, another an evangelical Christian leader, and a third the Catholic Archbishop of Bangui—Imam Omar Kobine Layama, Archbishop Dieudonné Nzapalainga, and the Rev. Nicolas Guérékoyame-Gbangou. The three of them spoke with one voice about their efforts to preach reconciliation in their country and to end the violence. They also asked for our help before it became too late.

Finally, I want to relate to you a story about another man of God, someone whom those of you who attended our November hearing, will remember. Two weeks ago was Holy Week, and on Holy Thursday, Bishop Désiré Nongo of the Diocese of Bossangoa and one of the witnesses at our last hearing, was visiting an outlying parish along with three of his priests.

The car he was traveling in was stopped on the road by Seleka gunmen whose leader had

for a period occupied Bossangoa. He accused Bishop Nongo of having thwarted his plans and working with international peacekeepers. He then sentenced him and the other three priests to death. The gunmen removed his Episcopal ring and the large pectoral cross which you might remember Bishop Nongo wore. The four men were placed in a truck and were to be driven north to the border with Chad for the order to be carried out.

On the way to the gallows, their truck was stopped yet again by Seleka gunmen, this time commanded by another warlord who also knew Bishop Nongo and his good work in Bossangoa, where the Bishop provides care for over 35,000 people displaced by the violence. He ordered the Bishop and his priests freed and, through the efforts of international aid organizations and the peacekeepers, they were helicoptered back to Bossangoa in time for Good Friday.

This story really hit home with me. Here is someone who shared coffee with me in my office, who sat in that witness chair over there and gave a powerful defense of the weakest and most vulnerable, someone I especially know and deeply admire and respect, who just two weeks ago today was about to be killed until Providence intervened.

But be it a bishop or a farmer, every precious life has value. Far too many have died, and, unless we act, far too many more will likely die.

Recall the words of the Presidential Directive I cited earlier: “Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States.” I believe this is true, but such sentiments are empty if they are not backed up by action.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF EU-
LESS MAYOR PRO TEM LEON
HOGG

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 2, 2014

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the Honorable Leon Hogg who is retiring from his position on the Euleus City Council after 18 years of service.

Mayor Pro Tem Leon Hogg has served on the City Council since 1996. His dedication to the City of Euleus, Texas, has ensured happier and healthier lives for its citizens, and his commitment to enhancing the infrastructure of the city has been vital to the area’s prosperity and growth.

Mayor Pro Tem Hogg has a long-standing history of serving in leadership roles. He currently presides on the Animal Shelter Advisory Board and the Crime Control and Prevention District Board. Prior to his existing leadership positions, he served as the Council representative to the HEB Economic Development Foundation and as a member of the Half-Cent Sales Tax Education Committee. For 12 years, he served on the Parks and Leisure Services Board; furthermore, for eight of those years he presided as the chairman.

Mayor Pro Tem Hogg is involved in various community and civic groups. He graduated from the inaugural class of the Euleus Citizens Fire Academy, and he is a graduate of the

12th class of the Eules Citizens Police Academy. Additionally, he is a charter member of the Eules Citizens Fire Alumni Association. He has represented the City of Eules in the National League of Cities where he served on the Program Committee in 2005 and the Community Development Policy and Advocacy Committee in 2006. He has also represented the City of Eules in the Texas Municipal League, serving on the Resolutions Committee in 2004 and 2005, and the Legislative Policy Committee on General Government in 2006.

In 2003, Mayor Pro Tem Hogg was inducted into the Hurst-Eules-Bedford ISD Sports Hall of Fame. The recognition was in honor of his positive impact on the community and HEB ISD students.

Mayor Pro Tem Leon Hogg is a retired businessman who has owned several businesses over his lifetime. He and his wife, Jan, have been married for over 55 years. They have 3 children, 8 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in thanking the Honorable Leon Hogg for his years of service on the Eules City Council.

INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 2, 2014

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today we find ourselves five decades since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as well as the onset of the War on Poverty and still, race and economic empowerment remain entangled in stark and distinctive ways throughout the nation. Not only has income inequality persisted over the years, but perhaps even more daunting is the wide and growing gulf in wealth inequity between Black and White America. Wealth, that is what one owns minus what one owes, anchors families. It provides a layer of stability in times of economic distress, and serves as an intergenerational stepping stone to prosperity. It is wealth that families often rely on to provide a critical means of support for higher education, downpayments for home purchases, capital for starting a business, or direct wealth transfers to heirs via cash inheritances. So while income is vital for meeting daily needs, wealth moves families beyond survival mode and opens up critical doors of opportunity that are necessary to thrive economically over the long haul.

Historically, discriminatory practices have played a significant hand in manifesting wealth differentials within Black and White communities. Everything from housing policies and practices that made it more difficult for communities of color and particularly African Americans to gain access to homeownership as early as their White peers, to tax policy which overwhelmingly favor affluent households, much of the gap in wealth acquisition that we've witnessed over the long haul is not reflective of a natural order of responsible and irresponsible money management, but instead, is the result of centuries of policy actions that have advantaged some, while simultaneously

disadvantaging others. The fallout from these practices remain, providing perpetual advantages and disadvantages relating to wealth acquisition, transfer, and growth.

In recent years, however, the Great Recession took a heavy toll on most. But while few families escaped the sting of wealth loss following this world-wide economic disruption, even fewer were more strikingly impacted than African Americans. In fact, according to the Pew Research Center, over half of the wealth amassed among African Americans was lost in just four years as a direct result of this historic recession. After which, the already tremendous racial wealth gap actually widened. In fact, as it stands today, for every dollar in wealth held by Whites, Blacks hold a shockingly meager 5 cents.

Recent research has examined the reasons behind the widening of the racial wealth gap. After tracing the same households over 25 years, including the most recent period in which we've witnessed the widening of this gap, it was determined that primarily five factors are at play: (1) Years of homeownership; (2) Household Income; (3) Exposure to Unemployment; (4) Higher Education Acquisition; and (5) Inheritances or other sources of financial support from family or friends.

In briefly examining each of these issues we know that historical residential segregation starkly limited opportunity for home equity acquisition among African Americans. We know too, that Whites are more likely than Blacks to receive inheritances or receive large financial gifts from family members that can then be used for home downpayments, and thus, create a situation where Whites are perpetually better positioned to transition into homeownership. And finally, we know that Blacks were disproportionately impacted by subprime mortgage vehicles during the run up to the housing crisis, thus increasing their risk of foreclosure, and limiting their equity acquisition potential.

Further Blacks have historically and continue to suffer wage gaps as compared to Whites across both genders and every level of education. Blacks are also more likely to experience unemployment at some time during their working lives and when unemployed, are more likely to experience longer bouts of joblessness than their White counterparts. As a result, Blacks are more apt to tap into any available wealth reserves they may have at their disposal in order to meet survival needs during disruptions in their income stream.

While home ownership, income and unemployment greatly influenced the wealth differentials, so too did access to higher education. As we all know, post-secondary education provides a pathway to higher income, and ultimately more substantial wealth portfolios. According to this research, just as impactful as higher education is access to inheritance. Together, these five factors alone accounted for fully $\frac{2}{3}$ of the wealth gap increase we've seen between these two populations in recent years.

In correcting this unfortunate trend, it then becomes clear, that strong policy action is needed in order to address the wide and growing wealth gap that continues to disadvantage the Black community. Moving forward, there must be a concerted emphasis on expanding access to homeownership within the Black community. While the nation and the world was rocked by the mortgage crisis that intricately interconnected with the Great Re-

cession, few were impacted more profoundly than the Black community. Moving forward we know that home ownership is still a key conduit to wealth acquisition for most Americans. As such, special efforts need to be put in place to ensure more Black families have access to this key wealth building tool.

Additionally, policies which expand employment opportunities for jobs that pay good wages are especially important to the Black community. Such a focus can help to alleviate both the persistent wage disadvantage experienced by this community as well as the lingering problem of elevated unemployment rates. Finally, making college affordable and improving elementary and secondary education so that Black children are both prepared for college and can afford to stay there through degree completion is key for providing a foundation for success that could later result in greater access to wealth building vehicles.

Beyond these measures, protecting and strengthening Social Security remains a key need for the Black community as this program is especially important to a population that is disadvantaged when it comes to access to employer provided retirement plans and is less likely than Whites to hold other assets from which they can draw upon to meet their needs in their retirement years.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, the persistent economic wealth disadvantage that continues to plague the Black community did not come about as mere accident of circumstance or broad scale pathologies as it relates to financial mismanagement. Instead, these differences came about from centuries of policy action that served in the interest of some and to the disadvantage of others. Despite this nation's bold attempt to correct this injustice decades before, the lingering effects of these policies remain. Moving forward, it is our responsibility to fulfill the promise of the historic Acts, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act, put in place fifty years prior by taking bold and substantive action today to finally make real the promise of an America that truly provides equal opportunity for all.

HONORING JUDY CREMER'S 50
YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 2, 2014

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Judy Cremer, Livingston County Circuit Clerk, and to recognize her many years of devoted service to the citizens of Livingston County and the State of Illinois.

Mrs. Cremer has worked in Livingston County government for 50 years. Judy started her service in the State Attorney's office in 1964 and later moved over to the Circuit Clerk's office where she has been a dutiful employee since 1980. She has been a constant presence in Livingston County and helped make countless improvements in the Circuit Clerk's office throughout her years of service.

I would like to thank Judy for all she has done for the residents of Livingston County. She has been a leader and an integral part of Livingston County government these past 50