

79 of the constitution of that country. Her crime, she was arrested while taking photographs during a protest against Chinese encroachment of the Paracel and Spratly Islands.

Ho Duc Hoa, a community organizer and a contributing journalist for Vietnam Redemptorists' News, is currently serving a 13-year prison sentence for defending human rights and promoting democracy. He has been charged with "attempting to overthrow the government." He is currently suffering from harsh treatment in prison, including torture and denial to medical care, water, or adequate food.

Dang Xuan Dieu, another activist, is currently serving a 13-year sentence under article 79 in response to advocating for education—imagine this—for education for children living in poverty, for aid to people with disabilities, and for religious freedom in Vietnam. Mr. Dieu is also a victim of mistreatment and torture in the prison system.

Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, a human rights activist and entrepreneur, was also arrested for writing blogs that called for political reform and improved human rights in Vietnam. He only peacefully exercised his rights to freedom of expression; yet Thuc was charged of attempting to overthrow the government under article 79. He was sentenced to 16 years in prison and 5 years of house arrest.

These are just four of the so many people in prison in Vietnam.

The government of Vietnam continues to deny its citizens their rights to freedom of speech, to freedom of assembly, to freedom of the press, to freedom of religion. Although Vietnam strives to further its relations with the U.S., it does not grant human rights to its people.

I understand that President Obama has agreed to visit Vietnam in the near future, and I strongly urge that not only the President and the administration work on the issues of human rights with respect to the Vietnamese people, but that we in the Congress continue to push because, as we know, as Americans, people around the world look to us as the shining light of upholding democracy and human rights and freedom and liberty and freedom of the press and freedom of assembly.

IRAN NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, we are quickly approaching one of the most important deadlines in the recent history of the national security of the United States, the often postponed end of negotiations to halt Iran's nuclear weapons program.

I support the goal of stopping Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions forever, and I have grave fears that the United States is headed down a very dangerous path of concession and surrender to a

terrorist regime that has had American blood on its hands since 1979, military and civilian.

Each and every day, we read new reports that Iranian leaders are systematically "moving the goalposts" on these important negotiations.

Let me cite just a few examples. First, any prudent agreement would allow "no notice" inspections of suspected—not just declared—Iranian nuclear weapon sites; yet the Iranian parliament has passed legislation banning inspections of their military installations.

Senior Iranian officials have also taken it further, declaring: "Not only will we not grant foreigners the permission to inspect our military sites, we will not even give them permission to think about such a subject."

This attitude would make any agreement totally unverifiable.

Secondly, any worthwhile agreement would phase in sanctions relief as the regime proves, over time, that it is complying with all provisions; yet President Rouhani has declared: "We will not sign any deal unless sanctions are lifted on the same day."

Why would we allow Iran to boost its staggering economy by providing an immediate capital infusion with which to support their relentless military, intelligence, and political efforts across the globe?

President Obama's explanations have been nothing short of baffling. He told National Public Radio: "How, if at all, can you prevent Iran from using its new wealth over the next several years to support Bashar al-Assad of Syria, to support Hezbollah, adventures in Yemen, or elsewhere? I mean, there's been no lessening of their support of Hezbollah or Assad during the course of the last 4 or 5 years, at a time when their economy has been doing terribly."

Well, that is the point, Mr. President. The United States should not throw up its hands and actually allow the Iranian economy to be stimulated so they have even more money to solidify their place as the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Immediate sanctions relief will only provide more resources for them to use their elite Quds Force and their proxy militias in Iraq; dominate that country; and advance their goals in Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere.

Of course, they will have more motivation to do so. The tentative agreement announced in April and everything we have heard and read since then seems to reinforce the lesson this administration is willing to give away much more in return for nothing in the way of changing their behavior. Once again, we must never forget that Iran has had American blood on its hands since 1979.

Iran has cheated before and is likely to cheat again; yet the administration makes concession after concession to Tehran, even as Iran spreads violence in Yemen, Syria, Iraq; threatens the

safety of our troops in the Middle East; and develops new ICBMs that will put America in its "crosshairs."

My colleagues, Iran's nuclear weapons quest must be blocked indefinitely, including the verifiable dismantlement of its weapons infrastructure. They cannot be allowed to remain a "threshold nuclear weapons state," only to join the "nuclear club" the moment the agreement lapses.

From where I stand and from what we know today, we must oppose this agreement. In fact, no deal is better than a bad deal.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

ENHANCEMENT OF UNITY IN AMERICA

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey for his kindness.

Might I rise, really, to follow up to ask America to be unified and to be able to have a debate on the floor of the House on a resolution that I offered, H. Res. 342. To the gentleman from New Jersey, it says "the enhancement of unity in America."

What it speaks to is for this body to go on the record for saying that divisive emblems and symbols—swastikas or a rebel flag, a fighting flag—does not even represent the flag that most people think it is—the Confederate flag, this is the rebel flag—to put all those away; to be able to educate our children about the excitement of how diverse we are; to be reminded of the history of Reconstruction—African Americans who are Senators and Congresspersons; to look at schools who now carry names of people who really might be considered traitors; to be able to stand on the floor today or next week, as those in South Carolina did, in a civil way, so that our children will know that these symbols that divide are not history; and to be able to stand together and support the diversity of America.

That is what I stand for, and I stand with Houston, who is reconsidering many school names at this time.

TAKE DOWN THE CONFEDERATE FLAG

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, overnight, House Republicans have dramatically and inexplicably reversed their position on taking down this terribly divisive symbol, the Confederate battle flag.

While they initially allowed House Democrats' amendments to remove this symbol from our national parks, late last night, they allowed an amendment on voice, which was challenged. I will be on the floor for a rollcall later today to keep—believe it or not—keep the Confederate flag as a symbol for sale and for display in America's national parks.

Of course, this morning's headlines, the scathing headlines, tell it all:

“House GOP takes step back on Confederate flags.”

Unbelievable—it is a shame. It is really a shame that House Republicans last night, very late last night, without warning, attempted to turn back important progress on taking down this terrible and divisive symbol.

This, of course, happens just weeks—days, literally—after nine Americans were slain in an historic Black church in Charleston, South Carolina. A terrible and tragic massacre committed by an evil individual, who wrapped himself in that very symbol, and celebrated the hate that it stood for.

I attended the funeral of Reverend Clementa Pinckney and, with other Members of Congress, grieved with that community in their pain. I saw that community asking themselves a question: Why, why does that hateful symbol, that flag, continue to fly over their State capitol?

On the same day that the South Carolina Legislature expressed the will of its people and the American people and voted overwhelmingly to take down this horrible symbol, on the same day that South Carolina voted to take down that hateful symbol, a Member of this House of Representatives came to this floor and offered an amendment to preserve that symbol in America's national parks—what a shame.

Amazon, Walmart, and Sears all have taken that symbol out of their stores and no longer sell it; but the Republican leadership allowed and would have allowed on voice vote an amendment to stand that would preserve the right to have that symbol sold in our national parks—what a shame.

I hope the American people are watching and paying attention to this because it is a moment of truth, I think, for this Congress. I hope and I pray that Democrats and Republicans—I know the feelings of the Democratic Caucus; we spoke about it this morning—but I hope will be joined by Republicans on the other side in turning back this awful amendment that would say horrible things about the progress that we hope that we had made just in the last few weeks.

I ask Americans to join us. Use social media, #takeitdown. Express yourself. Join with us in rejecting this horrible symbol of hate. Let's take it down.

THE CONFEDERATE FLAG, A SYMBOL OF PRIDE

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives and being recognized.

I have been listening to this debate over the last week or so, and it has troubled me considerably to watch divisions being driven between the American people over symbolism that has now been redefined by a lot of Members of the opposite party.

I regret, like all of us do in this country, the tragic and brutal and evil murders of the nine people in Charleston, South Carolina. I pray for them and their families. They stood up and showed us an example of faith that I think surpasses any that I have seen in my lifetime by forgiving the killer.

I am not to that point in my faith, Mr. Speaker, the least that I can tell, but that was very moving. They didn't want to see a division created, they wanted to heal, and they wanted to see Christ's love come out of Charleston.

Charleston is a wonderful and beautiful city, and I don't know where I would go to find nicer people if I couldn't go actually home, Mr. Speaker, so I couldn't say enough good about that.

I have listened to this rhetoric that has poured forth over these days. It appears to me that it is now being turned into something that is division, rather than unifying.

We unified in our grief with the people of South Carolina, the people of Charleston. Now, we are seeing the Confederate battle flag be put up as a symbol to be redefined as something different than is understood by the majority of the American people.

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I grew up in the North, Mr. Speaker, and the Confederate flag always was a symbol of the pride of the South from where I grew up. My family and my predecessors and my ancestors were abolitionists, and they went to war to put an end to slavery.

Mr. Speaker, I have now in my hand a leather-bound New Testament Bible that was carried in the shirt pocket of my great uncle, John Richardson, and it is written inside here. It was presented to him on the eve of his departure for the war in July of 1862.

He walked home 3 years to the day with this Bible in his shirt pocket, it having protected him. It has fly specks on it from laying open by the campfire. It has verses that are written in it. I have found his picture, his musket, his bayonet, his belt buckle, and his ink file.

That is what is left of this man who committed himself to putting an end to slavery. Yet, his cousin, my five times great-grandfather, was killed in that effort. Many gave their lives to put an end to slavery.

I was standing before the Lincoln Memorial, reading his second Inaugural Address, and I will read that into the RECORD, Mr. Speaker. This component is from Lincoln's second Inaugural Address of March 4, 1865, when he said:

Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said: “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

Mr. Speaker, these are not disputed numbers. The numbers of Americans

who were killed putting an end to slavery and saving the Union: 600,000.

Another number not disputed is the number of Black Africans who were brought to what is now the United States to be slaves: 600,000. I take you back to the words “until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword . . . “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

A huge price has been paid. It has been paid primarily by Caucasian Christians. There are many who stepped up because they profoundly believed that they needed to put an end to slavery.

This country has put this behind us. It has been through this brutal and bloody battle. We have come back together for the Reconstruction, and we have healed this country together. I regret deeply that we are watching this country be divided again over a symbol of a free country.

When I go to Germany and see that they have outlawed the swastika, I look at them and I think: We have a First Amendment. That can't happen here in the United States because we are open enough. We have to tolerate the desecration of Old Glory, the American flag.

Yet, we have people here on the floor who say they are offended by a symbol. They are the ones who are putting it up for all to see, and then they are saying that we should outlaw that so the American people don't have a chance to see our heritage.

Everything about America's history is not glorious. Everything about our history is not right in our judgment, looking back in hindsight, but none of us know what it was like for the people who lived during that time, in that era.

We can accept our history. We can be proud of our history. We can unify our country. We can grieve for those who were murdered, and we can preserve our First Amendment rights.

SEMINAL MOMENTS IN TIME

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are seminal moments in time.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor was a seminal moment in time that will live in infamy. The crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge was a seminal moment in time that will live in history. It was a turning point in the civil rights/human rights movement.

There are seminal moments in time.

The House of Representatives confronts a seminal moment in time. Will we allow the healing to continue or will we try to roll back the clock?

There are seminal moments in time.

If we take this vote—and I hope that we will not, and there is an indication that we may not—the taking of the vote, in and of itself, can be a seminal moment in time.

A vote to legitimize the Confederate flag—the battle flag—would be a seminal moment in time for the United