

where the northern and southern armies met by chance during 3 days in July 1863 and engaged in the largest military battle in the Western Hemisphere. When the armies marched away, they left behind more than 51,000 dead, wounded, or missing soldiers in a battle that many historians believed determined the fate of the Nation. These were men who in President Lincoln's words gave their last full measure of devotion so this Nation might endure.

I wanted to especially thank National Park Service employee Eric Campbell for his terrific guided tour of the battlefield. In fact, he described in vivid detail the battle over Little Round Top, which many military historians felt was the crucial ingredient to the outcome of the battle. During that battle there was a lieutenant by the name of Joshua Campbell, who was trying to hold the high ground for the Northern army, the strategic high ground. And when his men ran out of ammunition, they had two options that they faced: Either retreat and give up the high ground, and perhaps forfeit the strategic battleground and possibly the entire military conflict; or to charge ahead. And they opted to lead a bayonet charge down the hill, which swept off the Confederate forces and saved the day for the Union Army there.

When we think about the sacrifices that the men gave on that battlefield, what they gave for their country, and then to ask the House to, in a more civil way, conduct this Nation's business, I do not think that is a lot to ask from us as representatives of the country.

Perhaps that is why the institution has become more uncivil recently. We forget this is not about us as Members or as individuals. It is really about the country, about all of us in this Nation, those who came before us, those who will come after us, our children and our children's children.

It is perhaps when we start thinking of it in personal terms that we begin acting aggressive, defensive and rude, all those things that everybody does when we feel threatened. This is not about us as individual Members, it is rather about this great country, everybody, who have come together to fight for the principles this country was founded on.

All of us, I think, crave to be part of something larger than ourselves, which is probably why most of us ran for the House of Representatives to begin with. That is why we have families, why we participate in church, join organizations, just to be a part of something significant, noble, decent, and right.

There is no simple cure for the incivility we see too often in American society, just as there is no simple cure for the rancor and mistrust in the House at times.

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Last weekend's retreat is no panacea but it is a start. As Members of Con-

gress, we have an enormous responsibility to the Nation. Our country deserves better from all of us, but we look upon our leaders to set the standard, as we should, and with some luck and good will, what has begun last weekend will help us better meet that great responsibility to the Nation.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HELMS-BURTON LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, a plea has gone out by the President of the National Commission, Jose Marti, the National Commission on Human Rights in Cuba, Professor Amador Blanco Hernandez, for three political prisoners who are in a very, very difficult situation right now. They have been on a hunger strike since February 20 because of the brutal, inconceivably inhumane conditions that they have been facing. One of them, and I will read their names, Juan Bruno Lopez Vazquez, Herminio Gonzalez Torna, and one of them, Levin Cordova Garcia, is near death.

Now, Professor Blanco Hernandez is seeking some signs of solidarity and outrage in the international community. I today remember and my thoughts go out to all the Cuban political prisoners, but especially to these three, such dignified representatives of the Cuban people who are facing that extraordinarily difficult situation, and have had to embark on hunger strikes to try to get some attention of the world community so that their conditions will be looked at and pressure will be put on the Cuban dictatorship so that their conditions can improve.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since President Clinton signed the Helms-Burton law, March 12, 1996. Sometimes it seems difficult to believe that it has been only a year, considering all that has happened since. Not just Castro but all those who seek to take advantage of the degradation and exploitation imposed by the dictator on the Cuban people received a blow by the adoption of Helms-Burton. With urgency, those who have invested or who are thinking of doing so in Castro's feudal, antiworker, slave economy have had to reconsider their actions or their intentions in light of the risk of being physically excluded from the world's largest market, the United States.

That is why the European Union, in an act that classifies it as an unscrupulous merchandiser, has taken its complaint against U.S. sanctions to the World Trade Organization.

The strongest blow in Helms-Burton against those who seek the definitive consolidation of the degradation of the Cuban people, of the oppression and the humiliation that they have to bear at the hands of the Castro brothers and the handful of their minions who also

live the "dolce vita," however, is not what is most discussed and debated about Helms-Burton. It has nothing to do with the exclusion of foreigners from the United States who knowingly traffic in properties stolen from Americans, nor with lawsuits against those traffickers.

What is most painful for those who seek the permanence of the oppression of the Cuban people is that the United States sanctions against the dictatorship can no longer be lifted by the President until there is a genuine Democratic transition on the island.

Castro's defenders and the unscrupulous merchandisers had great hopes for President Clinton. They saw how he, in coordination with some large business interests, lifted the embargo on Vietnam and reestablished diplomatic relations with that country. With normalization of relations, a wide gamut of credits and other financing possibilities are opened to those who seek to do business with a recently legitimized regime.

They sought the same for Cuba. It does not matter that Castro has no money to buy anything from the unscrupulous merchandisers. The financing mechanisms would take care of that. That is what they are there for. That is why those financing mechanisms have money from the United States taxpayer.

Ever since Helms-Burton, the dreams that some had of being able to obtain massive financing for lucrative business deals with the Cuban dictator have gone down the drain. Congress has made absolutely clear that the President cannot lift the embargo and facilitate credits for those who seek to profit from deals in Cuba, nor authorize massive United States tourism to Cuba, until there is a government in Cuba that respects the Cuban people, a government that liberates all political prisoners, that legalizes all political activity and that agrees to hold free and fair elections. That requirement in Helms-Burton, known as the codification of the embargo, is definitive and will be decisive in Cuba's salvation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. MANZULLO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MANZULLO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]