

All during our son's deployments, I had been haunted by a specter of Marines in Dress Blue uniforms, walking to our door, bearing terrible news . . . and that specter was rooted in my past.

You see, in 1966, I too was a 1st Lieutenant, then serving a short tour at The Marine Corps District Headquarters in Garden City. One of my duties was casualty calls. That meant when a Marine was wounded or killed, I had to personally notify his next of kin. "I'll only be here 3 months," I thought, "I should be O.K."

The next week, my Colonel grimly dropped a Teletype on my desk. "KIA," it started. "Lt., will you handle this?" he said. My stomach rolled. My duty that day was to break a mother's heart. I gathered two NCOs, got a priest, and drove to the Marine's home. His mother was getting out of her car . . . she had just returned from the beach . . . she looked at us . . . and dropped like a stone. We took her inside, neighbors came, someone called her husband, "Come home right now, was all he was told."

When he arrived he told me that he had immediately punched the wall at work, and would have punched me, had he been at home. "I just would not have wanted to hear what I knew you were going to say," he said.

I told my Colonel we had a dangerous situation, and that someone would eventually get hurt. We had no standing operating procedure for these casualty calls . . . no S.O.P. "Write one, Lieutenant," he said, and I did. I specified NCOs for wounds . . . but always an NCO and an officer for a death. I put my heart and soul into it, trying to devise something, which would give aid and comfort to the bereaved, and protection to our Marines. Years later, I encountered marines from that same office, and we discussed casualty calls by then quite numerous. "It's no fun," they said, "but at least we have a really good S.O.P." "I know," I said, "I wrote it."

On August 31, Matt returned with his buddies for a third tour, and, on October 31, he was killed by a roadside bomb. That same day, my wife Angela and I, still unaware, drove to the beach, to walk the boardwalk. It was a gorgeous day, and we spoke of how fortunate we were to have such fine sons, and how proud we were of our two Marines. We passed the beach where Matt worked, and again spoke of him, and then we returned home. I parked the car, we entered our house . . . just as that mother had done almost 40 years ago . . . the day I broke her heart. The door was ajar, and as I heard Angela exclaim, "Oh No!" . . . I turned to see two Marines in dress blue uniforms, grimly walking towards us. One an NCO, the other an officer. Each wore the same stony mask I had worn years ago, and in an instant I knew our Matt was gone . . . you see, I'd written that S.O.P.

How ironic that the pain I'd delivered so long ago to someone else; was now visited on my doorstep; and stranger still, that the procedure I'd then written to console others, was now applied to us. The next day, Angela and I took our shattered hearts to this church. It was All Souls Day, and the Gospel that day . . . was according to St. Matthew. "Wire to wire," I thought, "Saint Matthew."

Matt, our beloved gift of God died trying to free a people from a vicious enemy, whose unspeakable acts of barbarism, even against their own people, while done in the name of God, reveal them to be Godless; and such evil must be opposed. We revere Matt's service, and while we are saddened, we are not angry. Not at our government, not at our President, and certainly not at the United States Marine Corps, that fine fighting force our Matt was so proud to serve.

The days ahead will be difficult for us. When the last of you have gone, and our door has closed, our ordeal will begin. A bright

light has left our home, never to return, and all the sand in Iraq cannot fill the hole in our hearts. But recently, I've noted a sign, although in the strangest place, which suggests reassurance. Now, you may think this forced, contrived, or fabricated for this moment; perhaps the ranting of one whose heart, buffeted too hard by this tragedy, is trying too hard to see, but you are wrong, because I saw this sign long before Matt's death.

Some months ago, I looked down upon a floor tile in our home, and saw clearly what could easily be an artist's rendition of the face of Christ. It stared directly at me. Curious. For weeks, I looked at that visage every day. What to make of it? Eventually, my eyes began to scan around the visage, and recently, I also clearly saw, sheltered in the corner, and under the right shoulder of that visage . . . the perceptible head and face of a very small child. Each had slowly been revealed to me, and until lately I have not known what to make of this; but clearly, the events of this last week suggest to me that Matt, and formerly our little Gift of God, has, as was his custom, made one final return to family and is now, the visage assures me, sheltered, and safely home, and this gives me great comfort.

It is time to close, and I must do this in two ways:

To the heavens I say:

"Lord this is our son Matthew, in whom we are well pleased. He was your precious gift to us, and we return him to you now. Please grant Matt a place of favor, where he may rest comfortably until those of us who have loved him so can join him."

And finally, to our son Matt, I say those words every Marine longs to hear;

"Well done Marine . . . and Semper Fi!"

CHANGING NATURE OF U.S.- CARIBBEAN RELATIONSHIP

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, the United States-Caribbean relationship has long been characterized as one of dependency. More specifically, the Caribbean has historically been portrayed as overly reliant on the United States, while having minimal significance to our country beyond general geopolitical concerns. Indeed, the widespread damage wrought by the recent Caribbean hurricanes has necessitated assistance from the U.S. However, a broader look at the current reality points to a highly reciprocal relationship, with the Caribbean proving to be an increasingly important component of the economic and commercial interests of the United States.

A telling indicator of the evolving U.S.-Caribbean relationship is in the area of trade. The Caribbean is now the 13th largest importer to the United States and the 8th largest destination for American exports. U.S. exports to the Caribbean have helped to sustain nearly 500,000 U.S. jobs. While the magnitude of Caribbean trade with the U.S. is changing, so too is the nature of that trade. The Caribbean is not simply a supplier of agricultural products, or an American tourist destination. It is now becoming a significant source of U.S. energy imports. An October 7th story in the New York Times examined this recent ascendancy, with a focus on the island nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the last few years, the Caribbean, led by Trinidad and Tobago, has positioned itself as significant player in energy trade with the U.S. Already an important regional exporter of crude oil, Trinidad is now the leading exporter of Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) in the Western Hemisphere. After 9-11, the U.S. sought to find energy sources beyond the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Additionally, rising gas prices, and increasing domestic shortages increased U.S. demand for LNG. Trinidad has impressively stepped in to fill that demand. Since 2001, it has been the leading exporter of Liquid Natural Gas to the United States, accounting for 75 percent of all LNG exports. These exports are projected to further increase over the next decade. Additionally, a planned LNG pipeline from Trinidad to surrounding Caribbean islands will increase the refining capacity of the surrounding region, as well as spur the region's ability to engage in related manufacturing.

Besides Trinidad, other countries in the region have plans to increase their energy market presence. At an October 11th address, Jamaican Commerce, Science and Technology Minister, Phillip Paulwell, stated that three oil and gas systems have been identified in Jamaica for the first time. One of the systems has possible reserves of 2.8 billion barrels of oil (BBO) and 10.6 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of natural gas. With its close proximity to the United States, development of Jamaican energy resources would be a very beneficial endeavor for both nations.

As can be seen, the importance of the Caribbean to the United States has radically evolved over the last several years. This evolution will only be strengthened as we move towards greater regional integration through agreements like the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Future U.S.-Caribbean policy must take into account this new and mutually beneficial dynamic.

A SMALL ISLAND, A BIG EXPORTER OF ENERGY
TRINIDAD IS SUPPLYING MOST U.S. IMPORTS OF
LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

(By Simon Romero)

PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD, Oct. 7—Cranes are active here again, working around the clock to erect some of the Caribbean's tallest skyscrapers against a backdrop of colonial-era buildings. Traffic snarls throughout this small island country, with imported luxury cars rubbing up against 70's-era gas guzzlers left from the last time energy prices soared.

But it is not only the rising price of crude oil that has produced such excitement and activity in Trinidad, the Caribbean's largest petroleum producer and one of the few islands that is thriving these days. Instead, what is transforming the situation here is another fossil fuel: natural gas.

Amid a scramble to meet growing international energy demands and to satisfy an American market where the price of gas has risen to about \$7 for each thousand cubic feet from just \$2 in 1999, Trinidad has emerged as the Western Hemisphere's leading supplier of liquefied natural gas. It has stealthily outpaced rivals, this year accounting for nearly 80 percent of shipments to the United States, up from virtually nothing five years ago.

Trinidad's leap to the forefront in liquid natural gas—a fast-growing area of the energy industry where companies invest billions to chill the fuel to temperatures around 150 degrees below zero and ship it across the seas in supertankers—has ignited rapid growth here. Economic activity increased 13 percent in 2003 and could grow as

much again this year. The economy has expanded for 10 consecutive years on Trinidad and Tobago, a twin-island nation of 1.3 million with an area nearly the size of Delaware.

Trinidad's gas resources has fueled a web of chemical factories, including nine ammonia plants, and iron and steel complex, and two of the largest methanol plants in the world. The conglomeration of factories, largely in Point Lisas, an industrial site and port south of the capital, Port of Spain, exports most of its production to the United States.

"We've become a highly industrialized nation, something that was a pipe dream a few years ago," said Anthony Bryan, former director of the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies on Trinidad.

But some experts here worry that the natural gas boom is taking on the same character as the oil-fueled growth burst of the 1970's, which was followed by a ruinous decade-long bust culminating in a violent coup attempt in 1990 by Muslim militants.

"There's the 'here-we-go-again' phenomenon," said Ronald Ramkissoon, chief economist at Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, the country's largest financial institution. "If we're not wise enough to hive away some of the excess money we're getting from this boom, then we stand the risk of getting hit again."

Weighing over everything are fears about what will happen when the energy bounty runs out. Although Trinidad is envied by other energy producers, it has just 0.5 percent of the world's proven gas reserves, far less than big producers like Qatar and Russia. Unless big new discoveries are made, the Inter-American Development Bank says, Trinidad's existing reserves guarantee only 20 years of gas and oil production at current extraction rates.

For now, though, economic opportunities in Trinidad are luring people and money from elsewhere in the hemisphere. A growing number of Spanish-speaking immigrants from Venezuela and Colombia have moved here recently to fill service jobs in restaurants and other work shunned by Trinidadians. Continental Airlines began flying this summer to Port of Spain directly from Houston, ferrying energy executives eager to cash in on the bonanza.

Trinidad owes much of its current good fortune to a plan conceived a decade ago by BP and BG, two of Britain's largest energy companies, together with Repsol of Spain and the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, to build the first of four large liquid natural gas plants. That strategy transformed BG, formerly British Gas, into the largest corporate supplier of L.N.G. to the United States. By 1999, the venture was, ready to start exporting gas.

Trinidad quickly leapt ahead of Venezuela, where domestic political quarreling stalled ambitions to exploit ample natural gas reserves.

"I'm reluctant to talk about Venezuela because they're the sleeping giant next door," said Frank Look Kin, president of the state-controlled National Gas Company. "You could say we're doing O.K. with what we've got."

The importance of natural gas in Trinidad's economy eclipsed that of oil in recent years, with gas output now worth about \$4.8 billion a year compared with \$1.4 billion for oil, according to the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Bush administration has responded by showering attention on Trinidad, amid concern over a prospective shortage of the fuel, which is used to generate electricity, run industrial processes and heat homes and offices.

President Bush surprised Prime Minister Patrick Manning last December when he came to Washington to meet Condoleezza Rice, Mr. Bush's national security adviser. Instead of limiting the visit to her, the White House granted Mr. Manning an impromptu meeting with Mr. Bush to discuss ways of increasing Trinidad's role in resolving problems in other Caribbean countries like Haiti.

Seeking to further strengthen ties, Spencer Abraham, the energy secretary, declared in a visit here in April that Trinidad was "a very effective example of how a country with natural gas resources can enter the international marketplace."

Much noticed here as well was a meeting over the summer between Mr. Manning and Henry A. Kissinger, the former secretary of state. Mr. Kissinger's visit to Trinidad aroused speculation that he might have lobbied the government on behalf of Freeport McMoRan Energy, a New Orleans company that allied itself this year with Trinidad to build a terminal for receiving L.N.G. off Louisiana's coast. Mr. Kissinger is a director emeritus of a mining concern controlled by Freeport McMoRan Energy's parent company.

In responding to questions from local reporters, Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Manning denied that the purpose of their meeting was related to negotiations with the Louisiana company.

Trinidad's aim to cement its position as the leading supplier to the United States fits into its ambition to help guide the policies of large gas-exporting nations. It has held talks with Algeria and Indonesia to interest them in joining the Louisiana terminal venture. And next year, Trinidad is seeking a more active role in the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, a group of more than a dozen nations that also includes Qatar, Iran and Nigeria.

Trinidad, a former British colony that gained independence in 1962, views trade as another priority, with Port of Spain competing against several American cities, including Miami and Atlanta, to be selected as administrative headquarters for the planned Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The government, meanwhile, intends to invest about \$700 million to build a pipeline that would transport gas to seven islands in the eastern Caribbean, including Barbados and Martinique. Trinidadian officials hope to persuade Venezuela to prepare its own gas for export to the United States from Trinidad plants.

Despite all the activity concern persists over the energy industry's influence as memories linger of the painful adjustment Trinidad faced in the 1980's after oil prices plummeted. But that has not prevented natural gas from ascending to the heights of the economy after oil production reached a peak in 1978.

As in many developing countries that are rich in resources, there is a perception that the wealth generated from Trinidad's oil and gas is not widely shared, creating big problems for a nation whose population is largely divided between people of African and Indian descent.

Unemployment remains stubbornly high, at around 10 percent. Crime is also a prominent concern, underlined by a spate of kidnappings of wealthy Trinidadians in the last two years. A pressing issue Trinidad faces is how to wriggle more royalties out of the multinational energy producers active in its territory.

"The issue of who gets what and how from our gas and oil needs to be revisited," said Winston Dookeran, a member of Parliament and former central bank president.

[In the budget released on Oct. 8, the government laid out a plan to channel substan-

tial energy revenue to social programs and public security. Included are an increase in old age pensions of more than 10 percent, lower taxes on brown sugar and funds to hire 744 police officers.]

Despite a gross domestic product of about \$8,000 a person, about a fifth of the population still lives in poverty. On average, Trinidadians are richer than most Caribbean islanders though still poorer than people in nearby Barbados and the Bahamas, where tourism revenue has improved living standards.

Translating its gas reserves into lasting wealth, of course, depends largely on the growth of the liquid natural gas industry in the United States, where more than 30 projects are in planning phases to import the fuel from countries around the world.

"The boom," Mr. Dookeran, the former, central banker, said, "is aligning our interests with those of the U.S. like never before."

THE EXCELLENT WORK OF THE NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the second anniversary of a very important organization dedicated to fighting prejudice in the United States in a very constructive manner. The National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, founded in November 2002 by Justin Nelson and Chance Mitchell is, to quote from the statement which the NGLCC submitted to our Financial Services Committee hearing on diversity, "the only national not-for profit advocacy organization specifically dedicated to the economic advancements and opportunities of the American LGBT business community."

The NGLCC carries on this work by its formation of a "broad-based coalition, representative of the various interests of American LGBT owned and friendly businesses, professionals, and students of business to increase economic opportunities among membership, corporate interests and federal, state and local governments."

We hear a great deal in our public debate these days about the importance of people working together, being constructive, avoiding divisiveness etc. This can be overdone—democracy requires the honest airing of differences. But it is also important that these differences take place within a context of recognition of shared values, and the NGLCC plays an extremely important role in this. This organization demonstrates that combating prejudice based on sexual orientation and gender identity is not only not inconsistent with an effort to work for greater unity in our country, but is in fact an essential part of that effort, properly understood.

Justin Nelson and Chance Mitchell through their own commitment to advancing our capitalist system, while simultaneously fighting the prejudice which deprives some people of the full chance to participate in that system, play a very important role. To quote further from the statement which they submitted to our Financial Services Committee, "It is the unfortunate experience of millions of LGBT Americans that homophobia and ignorance has