

Washington's experience and wisdom may serve us well as the true litmus test to apply to our prospective 44th President. Mr. President, I close with a poem by the author of *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Josiah Gilbert Holland (1819–1881) called "God, Give Us Men!" Penned before women had won the right to vote, it nonetheless resonates today and applies to anyone, man or woman, who would lead our Nation.

GOD, GIVE US MEN!

God, give us men! A time like this demands Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office can not buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking!
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty, and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land and waiting Justice sleeps.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I never cease to be amazed at our senior colleague, Senator BYRD of West Virginia, for the great oratorical skills he has, the vast memory store he carries, of which we have just had an example that from memory he can recite poems and he can recite historical dates. He is such an inspiration to the rest of the Senators, and he is, indeed, the pillar upon which this Senate rests. Once again, we have been treated to the oratory of the great Senator from the State of West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I am happy to yield to the distinguished Senator.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I deeply thank the able and distinguished Senator from the State of Florida in which I once lived. I thank him. I cherish his friendship. May he ever be one for whom the motto "E pluribus unum" will dwell in his heart.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, that is about the best admonition this Senator could have. E pluribus unum—out of many, one. I am grateful to the Senator from West Virginia for reminding not only me but the whole Senate of that duty, that responsibility, that obligation we all have.

FARC HOSTAGE TAKING

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, it has been 5 years since four Americans disappeared in the jungles of Colombia while helping that country's Government fight its war against narcoterrorism. Five years ago yesterday, a single-engine plane carrying these Americans lost engine power and crashed into the jungle. One of those Americans and a Colombian colleague

were brutally executed by the terrorist group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, commonly known as FARC. The remaining three—Keith Stansell, Thomas Howes, and Goncalves—were taken hostage by the FARC and have since languished in the Colombian jungle prison, where they are held despite repeated appeals for their freedom.

Fortunately, we think, through recent news crews, that those Americans are still alive. They are being held somewhere in an undisclosed location in the jungle along with untold numbers of other hostages. These men were involved in our decades-long struggle against drugs that are polluting our children's minds and the lawlessness in Colombia. Their sacrifice and those of their families—and most of those families live in Florida—is all too real. We can't forget them. That is why I am making these remarks after this 5-long-years' anniversary that occurred yesterday.

Last year, I introduced a resolution condemning the FARC for its use of hostage taking and drug cultivation to visit terror upon peaceful people. Our colleagues passed that resolution, which also called for the immediate release of all those FARC hostages, including the Americans I have mentioned.

I am here today, after 5 long years of these Americans' captivity, to again remind our colleagues of the plight of these men and their families and to ask for their support in doing everything possible, as we continue to try to secure their freedom.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague from Florida raising the issue of people whom we hope to get out alive and also appreciate the poetry of my colleague from West Virginia. I, too, am amazed and quite a bit envious that he has so many poems memorized and he can deliver them so well. It is a lost art, more of his generation than mine, but maybe it will come back in the next.

CRISIS IN CONGO

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to raise the awareness of my colleagues to an issue. I will be putting in a bill on it and hope to attract their attention.

I have worked on Africa for some period of time. A humanitarian crisis of incredible proportions is taking place in many places in Africa. We need to do more, and a lot more people are doing more.

I think we are at a moment where Africa is becoming a focus in both Europe and the United States, left and right; for economic reasons, the Chinese are going in very aggressively; for militant Islamic reasons, people are coming in trying to penetrate into the continent.

One of the first things we need to do to be able to grow the continent and

allow people there to develop some sort of standard of living, some sort of quality of life and to be able to live, is to get the conflict out. One of the key things we need to go at in reducing the conflict is getting the money out of the conflict. We have had some success about this in the past.

A decade ago, people were talking about blood diamonds in Western Africa and getting those out of the trafficked portion, out of the commodity business, and getting them into legitimate means of commerce. Out of that, we reduced the money into the conflict, and, as a result, had a substantial impact on the conflict and reducing the conflict in Western Africa.

I wish to show a picture to my colleagues, many of whom I think probably are not aware of what it is. This is coltan. It is a booming commodity that is in this item. I realize, and I hope my colleagues, particularly the Senator from West Virginia, will allow me to show this, what should not be on the Senate floor, but to show this for purposes of demonstration of what this is doing and why it is important.

This is a BlackBerry. Cell phones used to get hot when people would use them for a period of time. They tried to figure out what can we do to try to cool them down. They found a substance called coltan that they were able to transition into tantalum. It now carries the current in this electronic equipment. It doesn't get hot. Eighty percent of Africa's coltan comes out of Congo. Eighty percent of the world's coltan comes out of Africa, and most of this comes out of a conflict region in Eastern Congo.

I believe most of this is funding a good portion of the conflict in Eastern Congo, where 1,500 people a day are dying because they cannot get access to medical care, they cannot get access to water, they cannot get access to food—because of the conflict. And the conflict is funded by this stuff: It is funded by coltan.

There is a long history of what has been taking place in Congo. Many people remember reading such books as "The Heart of Darkness" and "King Leopold's Ghost" and about the raiding that has taken place in Congo for a century. Unfortunately, we are in the latest chapter of that conflict.

In Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," Conrad describes King Leopold's colonial project of the Democratic Republic of Congo, then known as Congo Free State, as "the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience." Solely for the purpose of extracting a very precious manufacturing resource of the day—and that resource was rubber—King Leopold seized Congo and exploited the local population by turning it into a slave colony. During his 24-year tyranny of Congo Free State, 13 million Congolese died. Leopold's legacy lives on in the coltan mining processes of today.

That is chapter one.

Chapter 2: In November of 1965, Lieutenant-General Mobutu seized power of Congo, then known as Zaire, in a bloodless coup. During his 32-year dictatorship, he consistently exploited the natural resources of then Zaire. He evaded international humanitarian human rights standards, and by the mid-1980s, Mobutu's personal fortune was estimated at 5 billion U.S. dollars.

The end of the Cold War brought internal and external pressure upon Mobutu for a democratic transition. In 1997, with the support of Burundi, Uganda, and the Rwandan Tutsi Government, Laurent Kabila and his forces pushed Mobutu out of Government in a full-scale rebellion.

A repetitive pattern of alliances made and broken began, and by 1998 Kabila's former allies in Uganda and Rwanda had turned against him. In 2001, Kabila was assassinated.

While he succeeded his father and took charge of the country in 2001, it was not until November 2006 Joseph Kabila was democratically elected as the Congolese President. However, his control of Congo is limited. Today in the mineral-rich eastern region of Congo, violent thugs from at least four factions wage near constant war for control.

Chapter 3: Sadly, 100 years later, Conrad's statement about the Congo was not only astute but prophetic. The corruption and exploitation of natural resources in the Congo has never stopped but has moved from hand to hand and moved from one resource to another; from rubber to diamonds, from diamonds to gold, from gold to coltan.

The issue of conflict coltan—so we are calling it “conflict coltan” and “conflict commodities”—is not new. The coltan rush hit in the late 1990s, as the consumer electronic industry figured out we have a problem, we have to solve this, and coltan arrived to the rescue. By December of 2000, a pound of coltan was worth as much as \$400.

In 2001, a panel of experts for the United Nations went to eastern Congo and wrote a report on their findings concerning the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth. The U.N. report documents the rebel groups' use of forced labor, illegal monopolies, and civilian murder in their high-stakes game to extract these valuable resources.

I wish to show you a picture.

This picture was taken in 2007 of some of the mining techniques of this coltan in the coltan rush. You can see a child here, in a very shallow mine, using a hammer and a pick to dig out coltan.

What is taking place is, many of these rebel groups will overrun a village, scatter the men, go directly to the coltan area, taking the women and children, and then start the extraction of coltan, to mine it and put it on the backs of people to carry it out at \$400 a pound.

The U.S. Geological Survey has identified that most of the coltan mining in

Congo is “artisan.” According to the U.N. report, most coltan mining is done by poor people, and many of them are children.

These novice miners, who are often held against their will, sift for coltan in riverbeds or dig it out of abandoned mines.

A report issued by the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, a review in 2002, found that the “supply chain” of coltan is extensive and distorted. The SAIS review report states that Rwanda and Uganda were directly or indirectly appointing local rebel faction leaders and field commanders to serve as conduits for illicit trade originating from the occupied territories of eastern Congo. The war appears now to be self-financing.

Rebel movements were motivated by economic incentives rather than the pursuit of political ideals.

Middlemen were then hired to form relationships with clients. They then facilitated transactions between those who controlled the resources and foreign corporations without the question of legitimacy.

At the time of the U.N. report of 2002, 34 foreign companies were identified in importing minerals from the Congo via Rwanda.

The war in Congo officially ended in 2003 with a signed peace agreement between the Congolese Government and the rebels.

Yet, at the same time, rebel factions still controlled the east, and there was no centrally elected government in Congo. Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers were still attacking territories in the provinces of Ituri and the Kivu across the border in eastern Congo.

With the election of President Kabila in 2006, it was reported that neighboring governments withdrew their troops from Congo.

But now chapter 4. The story continues. The U.N. and SAIS reports I have cited were published in 2001 and 2002 respectively. However, these pictures I am showing you were taken within the last 12 months.

The current fighting in eastern Congo—there was a peace agreement recently signed, and then it was broken 2 days ago—Involves renegade GEN Laurent Nkunda and his group, the National Congress for the Defense of the People, the Mai-Mai rebels, the Hutu extremists, and those loyal to the Congolese Government.

Now, if all these names can seem a bit blurring to people, at the bottom line, I hope you can remember two factors here: 1,500 people a day dying because of this; \$400 a pound for coltan, financing this death and destruction daily.

After the release of the U.N. report, we saw companies within the high-tech industry respond to the report by asking suppliers to certify that the tantalum—that is what coltan is processed into—tantalum they were purchasing did not originate from the eastern region of DRC.

These same companies stated that without certification they would not buy from the region of Central Africa. They were requesting that their tantalum be “conflict free” and from legit sources, and I applaud their efforts. Today, we know that most of the world's tantalum is supplied by Australia. That is the processed coltan. But now where does Australia get the coltan and these companies get the coltan?

Recent reports state that the channel in which coltan was once being smuggled out of Congo is still alive and active. And in this chain of supply and demand, one simple bad actor involves us all.

Recent reports state that Rwanda and others are using the war in Congo to continue the exploitation of coltan. Once it is extracted, we are told, it is then sent down to Australia, where it is mixed with Australian coltan—where 20 percent of the world's coltan comes from—before being processed into tantalum. Processed tantalum is then traded among countries and private companies on the international market.

But as some private companies and some foreign countries are not required to produce public records of their tantalum trade, tracking exact amounts is extremely difficult to obtain.

Australia, specifically, has a confidentiality clause for private companies that purchase their tantalum. So we do not know. From 2002 to 2005, Australia accounted for 54 percent of the world's tantalum. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say with any certainty that the tantalum supply coming out of Australia is conflict free.

While we know this exploitation continues today, as it did 10 years ago, and we see the immense difficulty in tracking it, we will not turn a blind eye to this.

I met with people from the consumer electronics industry today to tell them we are going to focus on this because if this can defund the conflict so people can live free and be able to survive—get some clean water, get some health care, get some food—then we need to go at this. We should not fund this conflict. We should not be buying the product if it is coming from conflict areas. We should be able to certify that is the case.

I commend to my colleagues a recent report from the International Rescue Committee entitled, “Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo, An Ongoing Crisis.” This was released on January 22 of this year, citing that 1,500 people a day are dying. In this report, we learn that since 1998, 5.4 million people have died in Congo—5.4 million. These deaths can be directly or indirectly attributed to the ongoing conflicts in the region, which can be attributed to the exploitation of natural resources, primarily coltan mining.

Death comes at the butt of a gun and with the bite of a mosquito. There casualties stem from the violence of this

brutal ongoing war, which has marred the country for the past 10 years, and from the resulting displacement of the Congolese. When you flee for your life in these areas of Congo, there often is no other town or village in which to take shelter.

When you ask a Congolese about becoming displaced, their response to you is: Which time? They flee into the bush for months at a time with only the clothes on their back and a child in their arms.

Senator DURBIN and I went to Congo together 2 years ago. We saw some of the impact.

Chapter 5. I want to show you a specific story here, a heartbreakin story of one young boy and his family.

This is a picture of a 3-year-old boy. He is one of the millions of victims of displacement and malnourishment. His family fled into the jungle from a rebel group that had burnt their village to the ground in the North Kivu Province in the eastern part of Congo. They lived in the jungle and had been constantly on the move. Food became scarce, and meals became as sporadic as two to three a week.

When his mother brought him and his younger brother to the local health clinic, they were immediately referred to an international humanitarian organization in the area. There, this young boy was diagnosed with malaria. They immediately began his treatments, which his small, frail body rejected.

His doctors then discovered he had been eating that which his mother could gather in the jungle and only once every 3 to 4 days. Due to lack of nutrition, he was anemic. As they started his anemia treatment, his body began to shut down; he rejected the oral and IV treatments.

This 3-year-old passed away within 8 hours of first being diagnosed—minutes after this photo was taken. He is one of the millions of victims from this ragging, complex conflict. As the IRC reports, the war is having direct and indirect impact on these deaths. While a small portion is dying directly from the conflict—bullets, bombs, and rifle butts—the majority are dying from malaria, malnourishment, diarrhea, and poor neonatal care.

While children under the age of 5 make up 19 percent of the population in the Congo, they comprise over 47 percent of the deaths in the recent mortality study. Nineteen percent of the population under the age of 5, 47 percent of the deaths in Congo.

The national rate of mortality is 60 percent higher in the Congo than the average mortality rate in sub-Saharan Africa. Sexual violence and rape is also on the rise in the Congo and has become a symptomatic tool of war there.

The U.N. reported 4,500 sexual violence cases had been reported in South Kivu the first half of 2007. Most of these cases reported have been committed by some of the 6,000 to 7,000 members of foreign armed groups operating in the eastern part of the Congo,

funded by coltan that we purchase to put in our Blackberries.

The U.N. reported that the Congolese national army, national police force, and increasing numbers of civilians were also brutalizing women, often during violent clashes with political rivals. Perpetrators are now making no distinctions between women and children. The local hospital in Goma, Congo, where Senator DURBIN and I both visited, a hospital named Heal Africa, tells a story of a 13-year-old girl who had been raped so viciously by her perpetrators that she couldn't walk for 2 weeks. She then walked approximately 7 miles to a facility for treatment. Her doctors reported her internal injuries were beyond their imagination.

A collapse in infrastructure such as the one we see in the Congo does not happen overnight. This is due to an ongoing 10-year conflict which has exploited that country, its people, its children. Coltan and other natural resources are at the root of that exploitation.

I want to show another display here. In spite of their sad history, the Congo is a beautiful country with resilient people. It is a country with so much potential for growth and development. Unfortunately, the Congo's story is one of devastation, forced labor, child soldiers, rape, curable illnesses left untreated, and deaths of 1,500 a day, as I have stated, and all because, all because of—and funded by this—a Blackberry that we buy.

My colleagues can see here in the pictures taken of a very rudimentary mine, but a mining operation of coltan in the Congo; rebel child soldiers—very common in this part of the world—well armed, deadly; a coltan battery, and cell phones.

Peace agreements call for implementation of a commission to oversee the conflict in this region. The Goma peace agreement was signed on January 22, 2008. I mentioned that previously, and that has recently been broken. The immediate cease-fire of the peace agreement was broken the first time within 5 days after it took place. While we must play our part, they must play their part as well, and I strongly urge all parties in that region to respect their commitments within this agreement.

The peace agreement calls for implementation of a commission to oversee disarmament of the Nkunda rebels and the extremist fighters. These fighters will either integrate into the Congolese national army or demobilize.

I strongly urge the implementation of these terms. This is another step in the right direction for the Congo and its people. However, I feel that as long as there is demand for valuable Congolese resources and thugs with the power to control these resources, this will not be the final chapter of this conflict. It has happened for too long.

The United States is completely dependent on foreign supplies of tan-

talum, and we admit to this. Both the "Minerals Yearbook," published by the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Department of Strategic and Critical Material Report to the Congress, coltan, also known as tantalum, is classed as a "critical" mineral.

We have come to a point where we cannot live without this mineral. However, neither can we ignore nor will we sit idly by while others suffer. We need to be responsible as a nation and as consumers. We must hold our suppliers accountable.

In the coming days I will be introducing legislation requiring certification of the origin of coltan for all U.S.-based companies that use tantalum in manufacturing. It will further require manufacturers who use tantalum to have a certificate of origin. All we want to do with this is make sure that the coltan, the tantalum we are using, comes from legitimate sources. That is all we are asking. As a supply chain, the Congolese government can set this up, saying that we register and license and saying this is the coltan that is coming out of here, coming from legitimate sources. I am fine with that. But we want that and we want to know where it is coming from and that is that it is not conflict coltan that is used to pay for the suffering of so many people.

We all must be good actors in this chain. With 1,500 people dying a day, there is no room for turning a blind eye on this matter.

American greatness has always been founded on our fundamental goodness. We need to be a nation where the strong protect the weak and people of privilege assist those in poverty. It says a lot about the kind of America we all should work for when we speak out against this type of tragedy and commit ourselves to those who are suffering there.

I will be sending around a "Dear Colleague" letter about this. I will be happy to supply more information. There are a number of reports from the United Nations and from Johns Hopkins that I have been citing, and others. We have some photographs of what is taking place presently, and I ask simply that if people are going to cause this suffering which we completely disagree with, they are not going to do it by us paying for it.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

COMMENDING SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUYE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, with great pleasure I extend my most heartfelt congratulations to our esteemed colleague, the senior Senator from Hawaii, DANIEL K. INOUYE, for casting his 15,000 vote in the Senate.

Many times on this floor I have referred to Senator INOUYE as my "No. 1 hero," and he is. Few have ever served our country more bravely and with more loyalty and determination than has Senator INOUYE.