

nation the size of the United States can find no one else to maintain diplomatic contacts with Palestinians.”

This statement, if quoted correctly, is deeply offensive on two counts. First, it is patently anti-semitic, or more properly, anti-Jewish. Its conspiratorial overtones reflect the worst traditions of hate-mongering that characterizes classical anti-semitism.

Second, it is a thinly veiled attempt to manipulate our sovereign right as a country to choose whoever we wish to represent us diplomatically. It also evinces complete ignorance of the American system.

I am confident that the individuals to whom Mr. Medein refers were not chosen for their religious beliefs, but rather on the strength of their qualifications for the jobs for which they were selected. Anyone who thinks otherwise has great deal to learn about this country.

If Mr. Medein or anyone else in the Palestinian Authority has difficulty meeting with American representatives who happen to profess a particular religious faith, then that is their problem, not ours.

I would submit, Mr. President, that we have the right to choose a person of any faith, any gender, and any race to represent us in any place. Should we choose an American who happens to be a Muslim to represent us in Israel, a Hindu to represent us in Pakistan, a Jew in Syria, a Roman Catholic in Yugoslavia, a Greek Orthodox in Turkey, or a Buddhist in China, then that is our sovereign right as a nation. The only criterion should be that the person be qualified for the job for which he or she is selected. Religious affiliation should have absolutely nothing to do with it. Zero. Zilch.

That is what distinguishes us from the rest of the world. For unfortunately, Mr. Medein's views are not isolated ones. They reflect an all-to-common obsession with race, religion, and ethnicity that plagues much of the world.

We may not be perfect, but our guiding ideals are unassailable. And we have successfully put those ideals into practice, with the result that many others seek to emulate us.

Mr. President, the day we pause even for a fraction of a second to contemplate the possible validity of remarks such as Mr. Medein's is the day that we abandon our most fundamental beliefs.

Bigotry must be denounced, whether it is at home or abroad. American representatives who are the object of bigoted attacks deserve to know that their country stands four-square behind them.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, May 19, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,344,451,048,224.65. (Five trillion, three hundred forty-four billion, four hun-

dred fifty-one million, forty-eight thousand, two hundred twenty-four dollars and sixty-five cents)

Five years ago, May 19, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,920,456,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred twenty billion, four hundred fifty-six million)

Ten years ago, May 19, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,291,418,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred ninety-one billion, four hundred eighteen million)

Fifteen years ago, May 19, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,066,133,000,000. (One trillion, sixty-six billion, one hundred thirty-three million)

Twenty-five years ago, May 19, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$428,331,000,000 (Four hundred twenty-eight billion, three hundred thirty-one million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,916,120,048,224.65 (Four trillion, nine hundred sixteen billion, one hundred twenty million, forty-eight thousand, two hundred twenty-four dollars and sixty-five cents) during the past 25 years.

TRIBUTE TO COL. ROBERT LEARY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is a privilege to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Col. Robert Francis Leary, who died on April 27 at his home in Concord, MA.

Colonel Leary served in the U.S. Army for 34 years, retiring in 1987. His tours of duty included positions as executive officer of the 373rd General Hospital, and chief of staff of the 804th Medical Brigade, coordinating the medical readiness of Army Medical Units in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. He also served as commandant at Fort Devens, MA, successfully conducting this course the first time it was exported outside of Fort Sam Houston, TX. Colonel Leary was the recipient of numerous military awards for distinguished service, including Meritorious Service Medals, the U.S. Army Commendation Medal, and the Legion of Merit.

Colonel Leary also had a distinguished civilian career. He was employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Bedford, MA as coordinator and supervisor in the Social Work Service Department. Most recently, he was program manager of the Veterans Homestead transitional housing program in Leominster, MA. In addition, he served as an equal employment opportunity Officer at Veteran Affairs Central Office in Washington, DC, and in several capacities in private practice as a licensed independent clinical social worker.

Colonel Leary shared his many wide-ranging interests with his family and friends including politics, travel, golf, hockey, baseball, and soccer. He was constantly involved in youth sport activities and was his children's most avid fan. To all who knew him, he was a model citizen and family member. His patriotism and commitment to service are an example to us all, and I am honored to pay tribute to him today.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER PROHIBITING NEW INVESTMENT IN BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 38

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 570(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208) (the "Act"), I hereby report to the Congress that I have determined and certified that the Government of Burma has, after September 30, 1996, committed large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma. Further, pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(b)) (IEEPA) and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1631), I hereby report that I have exercised my statutory authority to declare a national emergency to respond to the actions and policies of the Government of Burma and have issued an Executive order prohibiting United States persons from new investment in Burma.

The order prohibits United States persons from engaging in any of the following activities after its issuance:

- entering a contract that includes the economic development of resources located in Burma;
- entering a contract providing for the general supervision and guarantee of another person's performance of a contract that includes the economic development of resources located in Burma;
- purchasing a share of ownership, including an equity interest, in the economic development of resources located in Burma;
- entering into a contract providing for the participation in royalties, earnings, or profits in the economic development of resources located in Burma, without regard to the form of the participation;
- facilitating transactions of foreign persons that would violate any of the foregoing prohibitions if engaged in by a United States person; and