Mr. Speaker, too often we take a free press for granted. CPJ and this year's honoree's remind us that press freedoms are vital to the functioning of democratic government and that journalists often risk their lives to assure that the rest of us know the truth.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF CONGRESS FOR RECENT ELECTIONS IN REPUBLIC OF INDIA

SPEECH OF

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 211. First let me thank Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. HASTINGS for co-sponsoring this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the contrasting events in India and Pakistan over a single 24 hour period speak eloquently about the new challenges and opportunities that we face in South Asia. In India, we have seen hundreds of millions of voters enthusiastically exercise their votes in a free and fair election. In Pakistan, we witnessed a military coup.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, recognizes that the people of India have a deep and abiding commitment to democracy and it salutes them for the passion with which they choose their own destiny. No country reflects our own values more in that part of the world than does India.

It is high time we seriously begin to recognize this fact and graduate from mere platitudes to some tangible policy changes toward India.

I believe that it is time to re-examine our basic premise regarding U.S. policy in South Asia. We should abandon old paradigms and Cold War hangups and see that India, a democracy, is our natural ally in the region.

The best way to demonstrate our commitment to the people of India is by ensuring that the President travels to India as soon as possible, as the resolution urges him to do.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2116, VETERANS MILLENNIUM HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the final version of legislation that deals with a comprehensive and complex set of veterans' healthcare and benefits issues. Without question, this conference report on H.R. 2116, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, deals constructively with a significant portion of the substantive matters considered at length by the Veterans Affairs Committees in both the House and the Senate.

I want to recognize the efforts of Senator SPECTER, Senator ROCKEFELLER, Senator STUMP, and Ranking Member EVANS for their demonstrated leadership in crafting collaborative compromises in the most productive manner as the conference allowed.

This agreement makes significant steps forward in defining the VA's mission in a number of critical health care areas: Extended care, emergency services, mental health services, and chiropractic treatment to name a few. This agreement also moves in the right direction in terms of addressing the lingering need for additional national veterans cemeteries and long-term care facilities, as well as needed renovations at various VA medical centers.

This agreement also provides constructive direction in the areas of veterans' education and housing, in meeting the needs of homeless veterans, and improving the administrative structure of the court of appeals for veterans claims.

I am disappointed however, that many of the provisions that were originally included in the House version of the bill pertaining to employee and veterans organizations participation in various VA decision-making and planning practices were not made part of this final package. I also think that the conference could have produced a better work product in terms of providing strong language that speaks to the need for cost-benefit analysis, employee protections, stringent hospital closure guidelines, and heightened oversight measures throughout the entire VA network. Inclusion of such provisions would have greatly improved the agreement's overall intentions and would have made them less susceptible to inconsistent treatment system wide.

So in summary, while the conference agreement is not a perfect piece of legislation, it is nonetheless worthy of members' support. And as Representative EVANS pointed out earlier, the conference agreement in many ways represents the need to demonstrate our concerted interest in reaffirming our commitment to our nation's veterans. But as I have repeatedly stated, the most well intentioned efforts in terms of authorizing language are only as good as the amount of adequate funding that is appropriated. I have very serious concerns that next year we will find ourselves in the same vicious circle of logical debate. And the circle begins and ends with the need to have adequate resources to sufficiently support our responsibilities in meeting the needs of our veterans.

It is my hope that all members who cast their vote in support of the conference agreement will maintain their focus on veterans issues so that in the next fiscal year we can reverse the course we have been on for far too long and begin our work on matters concerning veterans with enhanced resources, not severe budgetary cuts.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL HARRY SUMMERS

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., United States Army, died this week. In his passing, the Army and the Nation have lost a soldier and scholar, who ranks among the preeminent military strategists and analysts of this century.

As an Army officer, who began his professional life as an enlisted soldier, and later as a military analyst, author and commentator, Colonel Summers knew personally the bayonet-point reality of war and thought and wrote widely about strategic issues. He was a decorated veteran of combat in Korea and Vietnam, awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star for Valor, and the legion of Merit; twice awarded the combat infantry badge; and twice awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in combat.

An infantry squad leader in the Korean conflict, he served as a battalion and corps operation officer during the Vietnam war, and later as a negotiator with the North Vietnamese in Saigon and in Hanoi. Instructor of strategy at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, he was a political-military action officer on the Army General Staff, a member of the then Army chief of staff Creighton Abrams' strategic assessment group, and served in the Office of the Army Chief of Staff from 1975 to 1980, before joining the faculty of the U.S. Army War College.

At the war college, Colonel Summers was at the heart of the rebirth of strategic studies in the professional military education of our Armed Forces in the early 1980's. His book On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context provided a critical strategic appraisal of American strategy in that war and a seminal American work in the relationship of military strategy to national policy. On Strategy has been characterized as being ''about'' the Vietnam war in much the same way that Clausewitz is ''about'' the Napoleonic wars or that Mahan is ''about'' 18th-century naval struggles between France and England. That is, Harry Summers used the Vietnam war as a vehicle for analysis and illustration of principles of war that apply universally.

After his retirement from active service, Harry Summers continued to contribute to the professional development of the officer corps and to the development of strategic thought and military strategy as a lecturer, visiting professor, columnist, editor, and commentator.

When Harry Summers testified before the House Armed Services Committee in December 1990 before Operation Desert Storm, he reemphasized the need for clarity of purpose and the relation of means to objective as this House wrestled with the decision to go to war against Iraq and commit U.S. military forces to protect the vital interests of the United States. He appeared before the committee again as we reviewed what happened to U.S. forces in Somalia in 1994 and provided valuable insights on the relation of military force and commitment to our national objectives and commitment in that country.

Harry Summers was justifiably proud of his sons and their service as Army officers and of his daughter-in-law who served as a warrant officer in the Persian Gulf War. In all this, he was supported by his wife, Eloise. My good friend, Floyd Spence, the chairman of the House Armed Services, joins me in sending our sympathies to them at this time.

Colonel Harry Summers made a tremendous contribution to the rebirth of the study of military strategy and to the professional military education of our armed forces, and that legacy lives on after him. His commitment to the Nation and the Army that he loved was unstinting. The Nation and the Army are poorer for his passing.