

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, in the latter part of March, President Clinton is scheduled to travel to India. His trip will mark the first visit by an American President to the world's largest democracy since 1978. I would say that a visit to India by the leader of the free world is long overdue, and I want to express my appreciation to the President for making this historic trip.

Mr. Speaker, my purpose this evening is to suggest that the President devote significant time during the trip to developing closer bilateral cooperation on defense and security issues to respond to common threats and challenges. This is an area where the need for a U.S.-India partnership is growing increasingly urgent. For years we have seen how many of the same forces of international terrorism that threaten American interests also pose a direct threat to India's security.

Another common threat faced by India and the United States emanates from the People's Republic of China. In the last week, we have seen China threatening Taiwan with military force, belying Beijing's claims to favor peaceful reunification. This is, unfortunately, a familiar pattern. U.S. naval officials in the Pacific are currently trying to defuse the situation, and the administration is obviously concerned about the implications that Beijing's saber-rattling will have in a variety of areas. In this House just a few weeks ago, we passed the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, which I supported.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time for the United States to stop basing so much of our Asia policy on the hope of achieving a strategic partnership with China. Instead, I believe we should recognize the benefits of closer defense ties with India, a country which, unlike China, is a democracy and which, also in contrast to China, does not threaten its neighbors with the kinds of rhetoric and actions that Beijing has most recently demonstrated with regard to Taiwan.

Toward this end, President Clinton's upcoming trip to India offers an opportunity to embark upon a new direction in U.S. policy in Asia. It is an opportunity to confront the threat posed by China to regional and independent national security and to make responses to this threat a higher priority.

Mr. Speaker, India faces a very serious threat from China. The two countries share a border of approximately a thousand miles. In the 1960s, China initiated a border war against India and continues to occupy Indian territory. More recently, we have seen China providing missile development and nuclear technology assistance to Pakistan as well as other unstable regimes. Pakistan, a country currently ruled by military dictatorship, launched a border conflict against India last year in Kashmir and continues to threaten India in a number of ways, including by

providing support and a base for terrorist movements active in Kashmir. By aiding Pakistan, China is indirectly, but in a very real sense, threatening its neighbor India.

India, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, does not engage in proliferation activities. India has developed its own indigenous nuclear weapon and missile systems, but it does not share the sensitive technology with other nations, much less with unstable regimes that support international terrorism. India does not seek to promote tensions among neighboring countries, as China has cynically done in the India-Pakistan dispute.

Given Chinese behavior and the common threat it poses to the United States and India, I believe that President Clinton should use his trip to India as the occasion to launch a new Indo-U.S. defense partnership. I will be calling on the President to take this much-needed action.

While this is a bold new step, I believe we can lay the groundwork now for a far-reaching alliance between the United States and India, including greatly expanded International Military Education and Training, joint exercises and other military and political links that the U.S. currently maintains with our key democratic allies around the world. Such a partnership may take some time to fully develop, but now is the time for launching it and also pondering the details.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I maintain my view that the President should not go to Pakistan on his trip to South Asia. It is important that the administration continue to send the message to Islamabad that we are very concerned about Pakistan's role in promoting instability in Kashmir, about the links between Pakistan and terrorist organizations, and the crushing of civilian government by the military junta now in power.

Currently, Pakistan is not on the President's South Asia itinerary. Mr. Speaker, Pakistan has done nothing to deserve a visit by the President of the United States.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, Americans understand that, without campaign finance reform, attempts to restructure our healthcare system, create a prescription drug benefit, improve our communities, protect our environment will all be for naught. The big, important issues will remain trapped by the pressures of special interests and big-money politics.

The fight for campaign finance reform will not go away. I personally

pledge to continue to make campaign finance reform one of Congress's most urgent priorities. However, opponents of real reform continue to create a legislative logjam. Deadlines are set and ignored.

June will mark the fifth anniversary of President Clinton and then House Speaker Newt Gingrich shaking hands before a group of senior citizens and pledging to create a bipartisan campaign finance reform commission. As we all know, nothing ever came of it.

This last session, I was very encouraged when the Shays-Meehan bill passed the House by a large bipartisan vote. This important legislation, while not the ultimate solution, is a significant step forward. It would ban soft money contributions and deal with sham issue ads, which are so prevalent.

Despite the House's action, Shays-Meehan has met its death in the Senate. The other body was unable to terminate debate on this crucial issue. We lost the opportunity to make a real change.

I am fortunate to represent a very historic congressional district in northern New Mexico. During the winter recess, I traveled around my district and spoke to the people. In gathering after gathering, the issue of campaign finance reform kept coming up. I assured them that I would fight to put campaign finance reform on the front burner.

Voters in my State are so concerned that they are pushing for a publicly financed State system, which will be voted on in November. This constitutional amendment has solid grassroots support.

The State senator that introduced this constitutional amendment, Dede Feldman, and her colleagues in the State legislature should be applauded for having the courage to bring this issue to the forefront.

I had the opportunity today to proudly march with Granny D, the campaign finance reform champion who arrived in our Nation's capital. The determination of this 90-year-old woman and her crusade for reform is truly inspiring. I want to thank Granny D for her courageous efforts.

I honestly believe that, if our country's founders were here to witness today's campaigns, they would join us in this endeavor. Indeed, Alexander Hamilton wrote: "It will not be alleged that an election law could have been framed and inserted in the Constitution which would have been applicable to every probable change in the situation of the country; and it will not therefore not be denied that a discretionary power over elections ought to exist somewhere."

We have got to reform this system and preserve our precious democracy.