

CONGRESS NEEDS TO ARM
TAIWAN

HON. BOB BARR

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the record the attached editorial written by Phil Kent and published in The Augusta Chronicle.

[From the Augusta Chronicle, June 12, 2000]

CONGRESS NEEDS TO ARM TAIWAN

(By Phil Kent)

The story broke in the Taiwan press on May 25: The Communist Chinese military started live-fire artillery exercises for six days near the closest output maintained by the free Chinese, who recently inaugurated a new president who adheres to pro-free enterprise, anti-Communist policies.

What does the Clinton administration do? Next to nothing.

That same week, an unnamed top Clinton official with the National Security Council even said it was a mistake for the United States to issue a visa to new President Chen Chui-bian's predecessor so he could attend a reunion at his U.S. alma mater. Just before that insulting declaration, the Clinton administration decided against selling four Aegis destroyers to Taiwan. (It did, however, approve the sale of long-ranger radar designed to detect missile launches.)

Yet if the anti-Communist island can't defend itself, radar doesn't do much except perhaps tell them to duck. What Taiwan's tough-but-small military needs are missiles of their own to scare off the mainland from any attack.

According to a recent classified Pentagon report leaked to the Washington Post, Taiwan is far more vulnerable to invasion from the Communist Beijing government than was previously known. The island's military technology has fallen behind Beijing's, particularly in the area of defending itself from air and missile attack.

Since the May 20 inauguration of Chen, and his appointment of a hard-line anti-Communist from the previous ruling party as defense minister, the Red Chinese military has been rattling its saber even more frequently. Yet President Clinton is still reluctant to sell military equipment to the island.

This reluctance, and the administration's pro-Beijing slant, is thankfully drawing the attention of Congress, which is naturally concerned that the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act is being ignored. That legislation requires that all arms-sale decisions must be based solely on Taiwan's defense needs.

In light of the Pentagon report and current Chinese military provocations, those defense needs have never been greater.

A bipartisan block in Congress has drawn up new legislation, the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. Among other things, this legislation would order the executive branch to explain whenever it rejects, postpones or changes a military request from Taiwan.

This bill was introduced because key lawmakers of both parties value the island as a loyal ally and key trading partner. Taiwan deserves entry into the World Trade Organization, as does Mainland China, especially since Taiwan is free, open, and democratic.

How can Americans who live in a country that is the self-proclaimed "leader of the free world" ever abandon a free country to dictatorship? At the very least, the people's

representatives in the legislative branch of our government can hold the executive branch to account when it comes to defensive armaments in Taiwan.

SENATOR PAT THOMAS—DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN LEGISLATOR, GREAT FLORIDIAN, AND GREAT AMERICAN

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, today I pay tribute to Florida State Senator Pat Thomas. Pat was a genial, small-town, citizen legislator with a big heart and a folksy touch, who served in the Florida Legislature for nearly 30 years. Sen. Thomas passed away yesterday, after a bout with cancer. He was 66.

Senator Thomas leaves a legacy of integrity, loyalty, and good cheer. He was emblematic of an era when big-hearted, back-slapping country politicians were the rule rather than the exception.

He was remembered by his colleague State Representative Al Lawson as an "uncommon man who had the common touch. As a hero to his community, because he grew up there poor and knew what it was to have opportunity through education."

Pat began his political career as a teenager in the Future Farmers of America and was active in student politics at the University of Florida. Thomas became a power in the Florida Democratic Party during the heyday of the "Pork Chop Gang" of the early 1960s, and served as Party Chair from 1966-70. When I served in the Florida Senate from 1982-1992, he was still a powerful force to be reckoned with. He served as Senate President in 1992 and again in 1994.

Senator Thomas was equally at home in the tobacco barns of his native Gadsden County and fish fries of the campaign trail as he was in the back rooms and power suites of the Florida Capitol.

But that is only part of Pat Thomas' legacy. He genuinely loved people and delivered the kinds of basic services that they needed—roads, sewers, and education. He kept a black and white photograph in his office showing two small children in his district getting water from a creek. He once used that photo during debate to persuade the Legislature to extend water service to parts of Gadsden County that had not been served. That's the kind of person he was, always looking out for the "little people."

History books will likely remember him for his major legislative accomplishments, what some derisively refer to as "turkeys or pork." But, his major strength as a legislator was finessing a good deal, so it's no surprise that he himself considered local projects such as water towers and schools to be among his top achievements.

Pat Thomas worked with great diligence in serving the best interests of his constituents and the people of Florida. But, above all, he was a fine gentleman whose good nature and

passion for life and public service endeared him to so many.

Mr. Speaker, few have achieved the success that Senator Pat Thomas has known in his profession. Few have achieved such universal respect and love. He was a compassionate giant who did common things, uncommonly well.

Mary McLeod Bethune was fond of saying, "service is the price that we pay for the space that God lets us occupy." Mr. Speaker, we have lost not only a great public servant, but a great Floridian and, indeed, a great American.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAINES FALLS FREE LIBRARY

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate a small group of citizens dedicated to the maintenance of an important public institution in the Twenty-Second Congressional District of New York. One hundred years ago, a small group of residents from Haines Falls and Twilight Park began an effort to establish a small public library to serve their residents. Their mission was simple: "to maintain a circulating library and reading room for public use of residents of Haines Falls and vicinity."

Much has changed since this original mission statement was written. The library has seen significant growth over the years. The original gift to two hundred books, by Stephen P. Sturges in 1900, has grown to include over 10,000. A book mobile has come and gone and the library is now filling the growing demand for new technology by offering fax and internet capability.

The Haines Falls Free Library is truly a treasure. It offers a unique collection of out-of-print books, photographs and slides of the area. The numerous local family genealogies alone are priceless.

Mr. Speaker, while change is inevitable in today's fast paced society, one thing has remained exactly the same as it was one-hundred years ago—the local commitment to the Haines Falls Free Library. The dedication of Haines Falls residents to maintaining and expanding a fully functional library is extraordinary.

Indeed Mr. Speaker, the commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Haines Falls Library is truly a cause for celebration. From its inception, this endeavor to provide a public service available to all citizens, symbolizes the altruistic spirit that has built our great nation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating this very special occasion. May the next hundred years allow the residents of Haines Falls and Twilight Park to continue the friendly and specialized services that the Haines Falls Free Library has offered for the last century.