

for the four million descendants of Arabs, who fled Israel in 1948 to make way for advancing Arab armies, to resettle within Israel proper, despite the creation of a neighboring Palestinian homeland.) Given the fact that such a recognition would mean demographic suicide for Israel, as a Jewish state, the perpetual call for Israel to accede to such a recognition, is little more than a politically correct euphemism for the old refrain of "Death to Israel."

In the current environment, any further delay in recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the embassy would simply reward Arafat for his intransigence. If the U.S. allows Arafat to set the American timetable and agenda, America's esteem is greatly diminished and its strategic interests are harmed.

Secondly, many argue that the relocation should only occur upon reaching a final agreement in order to avoid offending Arab sentiment. It is true that the Palestinians and neighboring Arab states will likely respond negatively. Such is the natural consequence of having faulty expectations shattered. Given the fact that the far-reaching concessions asked of Israel, in the Clinton proposal, were viewed by the Arab world as decidedly pro-Israel, any action which the United States takes in furtherance of its strategic relationship with Israel will always be condemned by the Arab world. They simply have not accepted Israel's right to exist. Moving the embassy will demonstrate the U.S. determination to support Israel's existence in the face of regional hostility. Failure to relocate the embassy only perpetuates unachievable expectations that make violent conflict all the more likely.

The Presidential Study Group recently concluded that America's ties with Arab states should not be dependent on avoiding pro-Israel positions, but rather;

America is the country with which the large majority of regional states will still wish to have close political, economic, and military ties. Maintaining a strong alliance with Israel has not stopped Arab Gulf states from welcoming the United States as their defender against potential subregional hegemony. Similarly, it has not prevented every state on Israel's border, except Syria, from accepting America as a major, if not the principal source of military aid and material. Indeed, the very closeness and solidarity of U.S.-Arab ties is a reason why some Arab leaders and spokespersons can afford to use license in their rhetoric.

Finally, many of those who argue that a relocation of the embassy should not occur at this time subscribe to the notion that America should use its political capital with Israel to nurture Israel's willingness to engage in further negotiations and concessions. Not only does this directly contradict the approach suggested by the Presidential Study Group, but it also directly opposes President Bush's own statements that his support would not be conditional on the peace process.

CONCLUSION

We are at a critical time of transition for America, Israel, and the entire region. The Middle East, and perhaps the entire world, may be confronted with a situation with devastating potential. President Bush is just beginning his administration. He possesses the opportunity to make an eventful decision that will not only contribute to the advancement of his political agenda but will reinforce vital American interests in the region by contributing to stability through the promotion of more realistic Arab expectations.

The relocation of the embassy enjoys strong bi-partisan support. It will contribute to the unifying culture being promoted by the administration. It will finally bring the United States into compliance with its own law and fulfill the weighty moral obligations imposed by the sacred principles of democracy and freedom to our faithful ally which has been ignored for too long.

PROVIDING MEDICARE COVERAGE FOR FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETS

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill that would allow Filipino WWII Veterans to enroll in Medicare even if they do not meet the eligibility requirements.

The time is long overdue that we provide justice to the Filipino Veterans who fought side by side with the United States Army during World War II.

On July 26, 1941, the Philippine military was called on to join forces with the United States under an Executive Order by President Roosevelt. Their efforts were instrumental in the United States' successful final assault in the Pacific.

Despite their outstanding contributions, in 1946 Congress enacted the Rescission Act, which stripped members of the Philippine Commonwealth Army of being recognized as veterans of the United States. As a result, they were excluded from receiving full veterans benefits.

Last Congress, we provided disabled Filipino veterans living in the United States with the same payments for service-related disability compensation as other veterans receive.

Let's go one step further this year.

Under my bill, qualified WWII Filipino Veterans living in the United States would be entitled to Medicare Part A benefits and the option to enroll in Part B.

It is time to recognize the service of our friends and neighbors who fought so valiantly for freedom and democracy.

SECOND AMT BILL INTRODUCED

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, a week ago I introduced legislation to allow non-refundable personal credits, like the child credit and education credits, to be used against the alternative minimum tax. I have introduced this legislation in the past two Congresses, and it has been enacted into law twice on a temporary basis.

The legislation I introduce today corrects an additional critical problem with the AMT. In this case, the mere fact that a family has a large number of children forces them to become alternative minimum tax taxpayers, and they

lose some of the benefit of their personal exemptions.

For example, my office has been in touch with a family in North Carolina for over a year. This military family has ten children, are home schoolers, and began to pay the alternative minimum tax in 1998. An extension of the temporary law regarding nonrefundable personal credits will not help this family, and neither will President Bush's tax proposal help them out of the AMT or give them a rate reduction. While it may be true that this family will be "no worse off" than they are now, they will not be any better off either in terms of their current situation. I do not believe relief for this family from the alternative minimum tax should wait until it is more convenient, or until after this year is over.

Mr. Speaker, I think all the members of this body would agree that this family is not the type of family we meant to pay the minimum tax. They do not have large tax preferences with which they are sheltering income. Yet they are paying the minimum tax. Mr. Speaker, I hope all members will not just agree that we should provide families like this one relief, I hope they will act to provide that relief on the first tax bill on which Congress works.

INTRODUCTION OF FY 2001 DEFENSE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION

HON. NORMAN D. DICKS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce an emergency supplemental appropriations bill for the Department of Defense and to ask my colleagues here in the House to pass it expeditiously.

This legislation will provide \$6.7 billion in emergency funding for critical readiness needs of the armed forces, and it will cover the cost of shortfalls in the Defense Health Program as identified by the Chiefs of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

This amount is only what is required to cover unexpected cost increases for the most basic needs of our service members through the end of this fiscal year. This is an appropriate and an expected response to the kinds of unavoidable expenses—fuel, power increases, housing and other operations costs—that were not provided for in the regular appropriations bill for the Department of Defense. This is a routine and prudent exercise, Mr. Speaker, we must act expeditiously in order to avoid the cuts in each of the services that would be triggered soon—with nearly half the fiscal year over—if we were not to pass this bill.

There are many causes for this action that is now required. The basic cost of living for our armed forces is substantially higher than DOD's projections from last year. Congress approved the FY 2001 Defense Appropriations bill more than six months ago, and the budget Congress approved had been assembled well over a year ago. In the interim, energy costs have skyrocketed, housing costs have increased substantially because we've been