

many islanders, but most of all serving our country well and with distinction.

I am very pleased and proud to have my first vote recorded on this particular bill, H.R. 1699. I commend the authors, and I also commend the House for their support of the reauthorization and for supplementing the budget of the United States Coast Guard.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ON NORTH KOREA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, there was a range of interesting reactions to the Bush administration's statements last week that they were willing to resume talks with the government of North Korea, the DPRK, some suggesting this was a reversal of policy, perhaps a return to the North Korean foreign policy of the Clinton administration. Rather, the last 4- to 5-month period should be recognized as an appropriate pause in our intensive contacts with North Korea to reexamine the goals, tactics, achievements, and failures of American policy toward North Korea.

During the last few years, there have been substantial and growing congressional concerns, especially among Republicans, over the Clinton administration's North Korea policy. North Korea is arguably the most dangerous and erratic nation in Asia, perhaps the world, with a ruling clique that is intent on surviving even at any cost to its people. Indeed, their policies have killed huge numbers of their people through starvation. I believe it remains the place where there is the greatest chance of U.S. troops becoming militarily engaged in a terrible conflict. The DPRK continues to forward-deploy a 1.2 million-man army.

While finally agreeing to an indefinitely defined moratorium on missile flight tests, North Korea continues to develop and produce ballistic missiles, some of which are now capable of reaching the United States. In addition, there are certain indications that the DPRK may be maintaining a covert nuclear program.

Economically and socially, the "Hermit Kingdom" has come to the crossroads and must decide whether it continues on its path towards oblivion or whether it wants to dramatically reform its conduct and join the community of responsible nations. Logically, the United States should be in a position to significantly influence the DPRK's behavior. Instead, however, we find ourselves in a position where over the last few years North Korea has consistently been rewarded for outrageous behavior or for threatening such conduct.

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North Korean behavior resembles that of the 18th century Barbary pirates, demanding ever-increasing levels of tribute from America, and some of its neighbors, in return for marginally tolerable behavior.

Overall, the preceding administration seemed too willing to tolerate North Korean misbehavior and demands for tribute. The United States has provided heavy fuel oil and humanitarian food aid in increasing quantities. Quietly, escaping the notice of the American people, North Korea became the largest recipient of foreign aid in Asia, although humanitarian aid was given through indirect means. Despite that level of assistance, we are prevented now from adequately monitoring the distribution of that assistance, even though there is a very high probability of aid diversions to the North Korean military.

Mr. Speaker, as the Bush administration stands poised and ready to reengage North Korea in discussions, if there is any sign such talks would be productive, it needs to be mindful of the need to let the North Koreans know in no uncertain terms that the cycle of extortion for their good behavior is over. Pay tribute or extortion is an outrageous violation of the American heritage, and we will not continue it. We will not pay, directly or indirectly, for what the North Koreans should do to improve their own plight: live on the Korean Peninsula peacefully with their neighbors to the south; end its tactics of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and blackmail; sign a peace treaty to finally end the Korean War; and give evidence that it wants to build a positive relationship with the United States and the international community.

Finally, Bush administration contacts with North Korea should be much more careful than the Clinton administration to closely involve the South Koreans, the Republic of Korea, in those talks directly or as closely as possible. We must not succumb to the old North Korean strategy to drive a wedge between the United States and South Korea or to denigrate the legitimacy of the government of South Korea.

Mr. Speaker, that is my advice, gratuitous though it is, to the Bush administration. We need to change our policy.

HOUSE NEEDS A TRUTH METER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, over the last several weeks this Chamber, and, in fact, the President of the United States, has been under withering criticism from the Democratic Party over a

few issues that are important to me and to our Nation.

They have launched attacks first on oil drilling off the coast of Florida, a proposal that they say is the hallmark of the President's oil strategy. They have also taken great pains to describe the Kyoto Treaty as a very important tool in helping the issue of global warming, and they have criticized the President of the United States for his reluctance to agree to this treaty. Let me take up the first issue.

Recently in Florida, the President came to the Florida Everglades, a very important national park, a very important part of Florida, one we in the Florida delegation are proud of and have been aggressively working to support. Two of our Senators arrived with the President on this very ambitious occasion of announcing his commitment to the Everglades.

Their immediate attack after the press conference on the positive nature of the Everglades was to single the President out with withering criticism of his decision, they say, to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico, potentially destroying thousands of miles of pristine shoreline. Now interestingly enough, when I woke up this morning to The Palm Beach Post, my hometown newspaper, the headlines read, "Democratic Control of Senate May Not Help Stop Florida Drilling. Democratic control of the U.S. Senate has turned out to be no windfall for Florida politicians trying to block oil and natural gas drilling off the State's shores."

"The change from Republican control made a drilling advocate, Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senator BINGAMAN is sponsoring a broad energy bill that would permit leasing 5.9 million acres for drilling in the Gulf of Mexico about 100 miles south of the Florida Panhandle."

Well, let me suggest to the Democrats, since they seem to be preoccupied with blaming us, that they ought to look to the new chairman of their own committee for advocating this very same policy. We in Florida, in the congressional delegation, the Governor of our State, Jeb Bush, strongly oppose oil drilling off our coast; and we remain steadfast in opposition.

But for the Democrats to attack the President as the only one advocating this position is wrong; it is false; and it should cease. Certainly they want to take advantage of a political opportunity to cast this President as an anti-environmentalist. And I say shame on you for that attack when one of your own members is the prime sponsor moving to, in fact, drill off the coast of Florida.

Before you launch these attacks and these negative air attacks on TV buys and radio buys, look first in the mirror before aspersions are cast. The new Senate chairman, evidenced by his own