

may have been motivated in part by a desire to leave a historic legacy, but as one of the shrewdest politicians ever to occupy the Oval Office he long ago figured out there were far better ways to do that than by plunging into the Middle East morass.

Look instead to his relationship with the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who brought the completed Oslo agreement to Clinton with an appeal for help in implementing it. Clinton promised to minimize the risks for Israel and help smooth out the rough decisions. After Rabin's assassination, Clinton's commitment became a mission.

He can be faulted for pushing too long and too hard, especially after it should have been clear that he wanted peace more than the parties themselves, particularly Yasser Arafat.

He wrongly relied on Ehud Barak's faulty political instincts and novice politician's enthusiasm. The President ignored the advice of his own advisors, the Palestinians and some Israelis when he bowed to Barak's desire to convene last summer's abortive Camp David summit.

More recently, he has been trying to salvage a last minute agreement before leaving office—failing or refusing to hear the window of opportunity slam shut.

Clinton consistently overestimated his ability to affect Arafat's behavior, and he may have badly miscalculated the level of the Palestinian leader's commitment to a genuine peace.

Clinton has succeeded on so many fronts by dint of charm and personality, and he thought he could do it with Arafat as well. No other foreign leader has been to the White House as often, and Clinton's mistaken failure to demand Arafat pay more for that access only encouraged the Palestinian leader's obstinacy.

"He played Clinton Masterfully," said a former White House official. "Clinton felt he was giving peace every chance, but, like Rabin, Peres and Barak, he failed to hold Arafat's feet to the fire."

Clinton admonished Arafat in his speech earlier this month to Jewish leaders for fostering "the culture of violence and the culture of incitement." But his persistent reluctance to deal with Palestinian incitement was interpreted as a sign of weakness and may have fueled the current crisis.

Echoing a hopeful Israeli leadership, he wrongly expected Israel's surprisingly forthcoming offers would elicit positive responses. But his blindness to Arafat's faults and deceptions may have encouraged the semi-retired terrorist to cling more tightly to his maximalist demands and let the Israelis negotiate with each other and with the Americans.

American and Israeli insiders say Clinton never pushed Israel without being encouraged by leaders there to give them a nudge and some political cover for tough decisions. But at the same time, Clinton mistakenly listened too much to some of his left-leaning Jewish friends who gave him bad advice on such things as his wife's meeting with Mrs. Arafat and his counter-productive confrontations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

If Clinton was too intensely involved in the nitty gritty of the peace process, there is a greater risk that his successor will be too disengaged.

Whatever his shortcomings, there can be no questioning Clinton's commitment to Israel and its search for peace. He brought an unprecedented warmth and understanding, even as he demonstrated a genuine empathy for the Palestinians that won their trust.

A key to Clinton's winning the confidence of the Israelis and the vast majority of Jewish voters was his high comfort level with

the Jewish community at home. It is unmatched by any president, as is the affection and support he got in return.

That backing was bolstered by domestic policies that were in sync with most Jewish voters, particularly on issues such as church-state separation, civil liberties, reproductive rights, the environment, education and social welfare.

Jewish voters rewarded him and his vice president with nearly 80% of their votes in three national elections.

There were more Jewish officials at all levels of the Clinton administration than in any prior government; at one time there were six in Cabinet level posts, compared to none so far in the incoming Bush administration.

American Jews never felt on the outside during the Clinton years' that was particularly important since he followed a president who publicly questioned their patriotism.

He deserves enormous credit for his historic contribution to the struggle to bring a measure of justice to the survivors of the Holocaust after decades of frustration and inaction. His personal commitment and the intense involvement of his administration, particularly through the outstanding work of Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat, helped end half a century of Swiss denial and stone-walling.

That personal involvement produced progress in such areas as the restitution of stolen property in other nations, compensation for slave and forced laborers, the settlement of insurance claims, the return of cultural artifacts and aid for the neediest of Hitler's remaining victims.

Credit is shared with an unlikely partner, former Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY). Although as chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, D'Amato was leading an investigation of the Clintons' Whitewater investments, both men rose above their political differences to cooperate fully in the Swiss investigations, realizing success beyond anyone's expectations.

Both the Administration and the Congress worked closely with the World Jewish Restitution Organization, representing both Israel and the diaspora, to bring about historic results.

I will leave it to others to chronicle Clinton's many shortcomings. I expect history will judge this flawed president more kindly than his contemporaries. He alone robbed his presidency of greatness as he demonstrated that in Washington most of the slings and arrows politicians suffer are self-inflicted.

But the Jewish community should be very grateful for his stewardship, for his dedication to assisting Israel in its search for peace, for his contribution to the survivors of the Holocaust and for his undeniable friendship.

HEALTH PREMIUMS AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS SHOULD BE TAX DEDUCTIBLE ITEMS

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2001

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today, I will reintroduce legislation to allow health insurance premiums and unreimbursed prescription drug expenses to be tax deductible. Last year's bill number was H.R. 4472.

Under current law, employers can write off the cost of health care coverage purchased for their employees. Why can't individuals also be afforded the same opportunity to write off their

premiums and unreimbursed prescription drug expenses? The current tax code sets the threshold at 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income before an individual can write off their medical expenses. That doesn't seem right to me.

Currently, in order to claim health care expenses an individual must file an itemized tax return. I believe that all taxpayers should be allowed to deduct these out-of-pocket costs and that we need to include a place where this deduction could be taken on the short form such as the 1040 EZ and 1040A.

My bill also applies to the self-employed because individuals who are self-employed will not be eligible for a 100 percent write off until 2003.

This type of relief is long overdue. Allowing individuals to write off certain costly health care expenses they may incur would be a tremendous benefit that may not be available under the current system.

The National Taxpayers Union (NTU) endorsed my bill in the last congress.

LET'S NOT FORGET OUR FRIENDS ON TAIWAN

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2001

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, as a new administration takes office, we wish to remind them and our colleagues in Congress that we must not forget our friends in the Republic of China on Taiwan. Let's not forget Taiwan has a democratically-elected president and a parliament that is fully committed to the free enterprise system, democracy, and human rights. Let us not forget that we need to give the Republic of China on Taiwan all the support she richly deserves.

As many of us know, Mr. Chen Shui-gian was elected president of the Republic of China last March and was inaugurated as President on May 20. He chose Dr. Hung-mao Tien as his Foreign Minister. Since assuming office in May, under the direction of President Chen Shui-bian, Foreign Minister Tien has clearly articulated Republic of China's foreign policy thrusts. Regarding the People's Republic of China, Minister Tien has made clear that peace and non-aggression are essential to ensure that the two entities engage in reasonable and responsible discussions. At the same time, President Chen has made a number of conciliatory gestures towards the mainland. Taiwan does not seek confrontation, but a friendly dialogue with mainland China leading to future talks on all issues, including eventual reunification.

In terms of solidifying friendship and ties with ROC's allies, President Chen and Minister Tien have traveled far and wide. Last year they completed a grueling 2-week journey of friendship to ROC's allies in Central America and Africa. Minister Tien also traveled to Europe to strengthen Taiwan's ties with friendly nations.

It is our understanding that to seek greater international recognition, Taiwan will continue to seek a return to the United Nations and other international organizations. It is our view that a worthy nation like Taiwan must be given its proper recognition in the community of nations.

Taiwan considers its relations with the United States a matter of utmost importance. We are delighted that Taiwan is ably represented by Ambassador C.J. Chen in Washington. Ambassador Chen was Republic of China's former Foreign Minister and served in Taiwan's Washington office as Deputy Representative in the 80's. He knows Washington well and we are very pleased that he has briefed us from time to time and we are impressed with his energy and enthusiasm as he strengthens the ever growing bonds between Taiwan and the United States.

Even though Taiwan is isolated diplomatically, Taiwan has a strong foreign policy team, headed by President Chen Shui-bian whose policies are ably executed by his foreign minister, Dr. Hung-mao Tien, and his Washington representative, Cambridge-educated C.J. Chen.

It is our hope that the new administration and Congress will always remember our traditional friendship with Taiwan and its people. Let's not sacrifice Taiwan's interests as we seek better relations with the People's Republic of China in the months ahead. Taiwan and the United States have always stood together shoulder to shoulder and will always remain strong partners in maintaining peace and stability.

VIGILANCE IS NEEDED TO PROTECT AGAINST MAD COW DISEASE

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2001

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commands to his colleagues the following editorial from the January 23, 2001, Lincoln Journal Star. The editorial emphasizes the need to maintain strict standards and take aggressive actions in the United States so that our country does not have to confront the serious effects associated with mad cow disease.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, Jan. 23, 2001]

GET TOUGHER ON MAD COW DISEASE RULES

Much has been done in the United States to protect against bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease.

But not enough.

More needs to be done. One major need is for a strict prohibition against production of animal feed made from the parts of dead animals.

More than 80 people in Britain have already died from mad cow disease. The degenerative brain disease has been detected in one European country after another. France, Germany and Spain have all reported mad cow disease. Earlier this month Italy was added to the list.

Needless to say, the effects have been drastic. More than 2 million British cattle were killed in order to stop the spread of the disease. In Germany beef sales have dropped by more than 40 percent. The European Commission estimates that beef consumption among its members dropped by 27 percent between October and December, before the revelation the disease had been detected in Italy.

The costs of coping with the new disease are immense. The European Union has set aside almost \$1 billion to help its member nations establish new measures to prevent the disease from spreading.

Experts believe that bovine spongiform encephalopathy is caused by a twisted protein. The disease destroys brain cells, eventually leaving the brain riddled with spongy holes.

The disease is spread when cattle consume feed that includes protein rendered from slaughtered cattle. Since 1997 it has been illegal under Food and Drug Administration regulations to feed mammal proteins to cattle.

It is still legal, however, to feed mammal proteins to pigs and poultry. The FDA announced earlier this month that some feed producers frequently fail to use proper warning labels and that some producers have no system to avoid commingling protein from rendered cattle with other products. In other words, the system is flawed.

A total ban against using rendered cattle for animal feed admittedly would hurt the rendering industry and perhaps contribute to a rise in the price of feed.

But those negative effects should be measured against the need to protect consumers from the human variant to mad cow disease and the economic devastation that would quickly follow discovery of the disease in the United States.

In Nebraska, the cattle industry contributes more than \$4 billion a year to the state's economy.

With mad cow disease continuing to spread in Europe, aggressive measures should be used to keep the disease outside U.S. borders. Legislative has been introduced in North Dakota to prohibit production and use of feed containing animal parts. Nebraska should consider the same approach. Even better would be a ban that is nationwide.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF MR. PAUL FARMER FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2001

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an individual who has served his country during a time of war and within the Department of Veterans Affairs during a time of peace. After entering the military at the age of 17, Mr. Paul G. Farmer of Spray, North Carolina served the majority of his military career in Europe before serving in Viet Nam in 1967 and 1968. He retired after 21 years of service to be with his wife shortly after she was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Yet, Mr. Farmer did not let his retirement from the military end his service to his country.

Paul Farmer began a long and successful career with the Department of Veterans' Affairs on December 5, 1989, but it was not until 1995 that Paul arrived in my district of El Paso, Texas with a new and inventive assignment. Paul was to implement a joint initiative between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans' Affairs that was designed to evaluate medical disabilities for active duty personnel prior to their discharge or retirement from service, a program that became very successful. Anyone who had the pleasure to work with Paul knew that he maintained an open door policy in his office to all area veterans. Paul initiated several community outreach programs and worked to achieve compensation and medical benefits for numer-

ous veterans in the El Paso and Southern New Mexico area.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Farmer has dedicated his career to the safety and security of his country and has further dedicated his professional life to ensure that United States Armed Service veterans are given the utmost respect and service a grateful nation should, by honor, bestow upon them. I ask that we recognize this individual, thank him for his years of dedicated service, and wish him Godspeed in his retirement.

IN TRIBUTE TO UNDERSECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, CAROL DIBATTISTE

HON. LINDSEY O. GRAHAM

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2001

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of this body the fact, in January, a distinguished leader of the Air Force left office to begin a new chapter in her life. Carol DiBattiste, Under Secretary of the Air Force, has recently resigned from her position, and I want to join her many friends and colleagues in commending her for a job well done.

During her tenure, Under Secretary DiBattiste served with honor and distinction, providing exceptional leadership to reinforce a promising future for the Department of Defense, the Air Force, and for American aerospace power. Coupled with her unprecedented energy, commitment, and enthusiasm, Under Secretary DiBattiste's initiatives became catalysts for success, and helped lead the Air Force through a critical period of modernization and consolidation. She was the Air Force's key leader in the fight to solve and reverse Air Force retention shortages and recruiting shortfalls. Her successes in these endeavors are both impressive and lasting.

Most notably, Under Secretary DiBattiste did a remarkable job on behalf of Air Force members and their families. Her leadership of a special Department of Defense task force to formulate anti-harassment policy resulted in outstanding guidance on this emotionally charged subject. This emphasis on equal opportunity and her tireless pursuit of higher standards for Air Force quality of life are examples of the many ways she found to invigorate morale and retention during a period of critical shortfalls, personnel reductions, and increased operations tempo. Her visionary and aggressive campaign against recruiting shortfalls, including creation of the Air Force Recruiting and Retention Task Force, the Air Force Marketing and Advertising Office, and the Strategic Communications Outreach Program, made all the difference for the Air Force in their ability to make recruiting goals and erase shortfalls. Under Secretary DiBattiste led by example, delivering almost 100 speeches in a 12 month period, and traveling to over 85 bases and locations throughout the world during her tenure.

I join my colleagues on behalf of a grateful nation in thanking Carol DiBattiste. The increased opportunities and improvements she affected across the Department of Defense and the Air Force have poised both for a brilliant future.