

"fraying of American culture" and "the Balkanization of society into grievance groups organized around race and ethnicity," which he believes is already under way, would only be exacerbated by the State of Puerto Rico. Others predict that a State of Puerto Rico would be America's own Quebec; it would be violent, it would drain the national Treasury, it would allow gangs to run prisons; it would promote political patronage, and it would rob other States of their representation in Congress.

This is scary stuff, and it is meant to be. People are using fear to paralyze the Democratic process and to deny the 3.8 million American citizens of Puerto Rico the right to self-determination and the right to participate in the Democratic process of this Nation, a right that we defend on foreign soils, a right for which our people have died defending on foreign soils.

Puerto Ricans did not welcome American troops in 1898 for the privilege of transferring our colonial status from Spain to the United States. Our forefathers were certain that the world's most admired democracy would readily confer democracy to the people of Puerto Rico, but it did not.

When U.S. citizenship was extended to our people in 1917, it was devoid of the most fundamental Democratic right, the right of self-government and self-determination. It was not until 1950 that Congress invited the people of Puerto Rico to draft a Constitution as the ruling law of the established local self-government. The right of self-determination and participation in the democratic process of our Nation continues to be a dream deferred.

Yet, the American citizens of Puerto Rico are devoted to this democracy and its ideals, and we have demonstrated our commitment tangibly at the poll booth and at the battlefield. Whenever an election is held in Puerto Rico, 80 to 85 percent of the electorate votes.

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I challenge any State of the Union to try to match that. The fact is, Puerto Rico enjoys the highest rate of voter turnout of any jurisdiction in the world where voting is not mandatory.

And Puerto Ricans have given their lives in defense of U.S. national interests. We have served honorably, in disproportionately high numbers on a per capita basis and in absolute numbers, in every military engagement our Nation has faced during this century. Madam Speaker, 48,000 Puerto Ricans fought in the Vietnam War alone, and in the Korean War more Puerto Ricans died on a per capita basis than in 49 of the 50 States of the Union.

"When people fight for a country," as Senator DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN has so eloquently expressed, "they get a claim on a country." Puerto Ricans have a claim on these United States, and we make that claim today. It is time for this Nation to turn its back on nativism and honor Puerto Rico's right

to self-determination and the right to participate in the democratic process of our Nation.

We beseech the leadership, the Republican leadership in the Senate, to allow this bill in the Senate to go forward as it went forward in the House, so the people of Puerto Rico, the 3,800,000 U.S. citizens, can exercise their right to self-determination and the right to vote.

TAX FAIRNESS?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I come to the House this afternoon to talk about the U.S. tax system. We have all just paid our taxes, so I think it is appropriate to ask the question: Is the U.S. tax system fair?

Of course not. In fact, it is kind of a preposterous question to ask anyway. We all kind of accept the fact that the Tax Code has become a perverse mess. It is a lot of things, but fair is not one of them. But like so many questions, this one becomes more complicated the more we know about it.

For example, what if we eliminated all the problems with the Tax Code, the loopholes, the needless complexities, the special exemptions and the historical anomalies? What we would be left with in the United States Tax Code is its essence. It would be nothing more than a tax on Americans' incomes at a progressive rate.

So we have to ask ourselves a question: Is a progressive tax on income fair? Well, consider the word "progressive," what it means. It has got sort of a positive connotation today. It is a good thing; its basic definition is "of or pertaining to progress." But before jumping to any conclusions, consider the definition in the dictionary which is number 4, "increasing in extent or severity."

The American income tax code has been progressive from the start. In 1913 when the tax was first imposed, the bottom tax rate was 1 percent, rising all the way to 7 percent on income over \$500,000. Today the top rate is 39.6 percent as imposed upon all income above \$250,000. Obviously, this sort of progressive tax is problematic in its own right, but there is more.

The reason this discussion is important is because we are starting the debate on tax reform. In the late 19th century when the income tax was first debated, the economists used the marginal utility argument as the justification for the progressive tax. Until then, the typical approach was to make everyone pay the same amount so that the more a citizen made, the more they paid. However, the marginal utility theorists argued that the last dollar people made became less important to them as their incomes went up, so to

tax citizens "equally" one would have to tax wealthy persons at higher rates.

The idea seems pretty commonsensical at first, whether a citizen is Bill Gates or not. Whether Bill Gates earns \$1,000 more than above his salary in a year, it does not change his life much. To his cleaning lady, the last \$1,000 makes a huge difference in what she can afford. It might make the difference between a good year and a bad year. Thus, marginal utility works.

Not exactly, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, not all Americans are Bill Gates nor are all Americans like the cleaning lady. For example, contrast a family with an income of \$100,000 to a family with an income of \$125,000. Does one family really value its last \$1,000 more or less than the other? Moreover, is there any way to measure the difference in "utility" rationally and precisely enough to base policy decisions affecting millions of Americans upon this?

In fact, this is the first easy question to answer. There is absolutely nothing in the vast edifice of economics that could help us make such a finite decision on progressive tax rates. That is the basic flaw of progressive income tax. There is no objective way to decide what different tax rates should be, and that is why many people support a flat tax.

But ignorance should not be an argument for policy decisions. Unfortunately, the government can get away with it. Americans do not really believe in an income redistribution like the Europeans do, but Americans do not want their taxes raised either. Ultimately, it is a quandary best articulated by George Bernard Shaw who said, "A government who robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend upon the support of Paul."

The problem for the United States is that almost everyone is a Peter and even the Pauls are starting to get angry at the system.

So once again I ask: Is it fair? Is the U.S. tax system fair? Absolutely not. But it is not just a matter of convoluted and messy tax codes. It is a question of basic fairness. Is one taxpayer's last dollar bill really worth more or less than another taxpayer's?

Madam Speaker, I call upon the Speaker to put this issue before the House soon so that we can debate ways to simplify our tax system, albeit a flat tax, sales tax, or simply a simplified Tax Code that everyone can understand.

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, 100 years ago this past Saturday, April 25th, the United States officially declared a state of war with Spain, and

the "splendid little war" was officially underway. The Spanish-American War is generally remembered for the destruction of the *Maine*, Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and America's first acquisition of colonies. Many people tend to forget that the American victory was initiated and secured by the American activity not in the Caribbean but in the Pacific. And as we commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Spanish-American War, I would like to draw attention to a couple of unresolved issues which are a legacy of this conflict and our self-perception as an "anticolonial" but nevertheless colonial power.

This was the war that clearly established the United States as a colonial power in the world. The island of Guam was first acquired as a coaling station in 1898 and has since become America's foothold in Asia. Over the years Guam has provided a much-needed opportunity for the United States to protect its vast Asian interests and, more importantly, secure its military goals. Guam's strategic location in the western Pacific continues to be its major value to this country, and I am proud to say that we on Guam have realized this value and are more than willing to draw attention to it, particularly to our determination to finally exercise self-determination.

The acquisitions resulting from the 1898 war plunged the United States Government into uncharted political territory. Never before had noncontinental real estate come under its control. Prior to the acquisition of the islands, the continental American territories were intended for eventual incorporation into the Union of States. What then was to be the fate of these new possessions? And this issue continues today.

There are no easy solutions to this particular problem. However, we are currently presented with a rare opportunity to deal with it not only in the case of Puerto Rico, but in the case of Guam.

I would also like to draw attention to an issue with the Philippines. We have, in Wyoming, a structure designated as a memorial to American servicemen attacked and killed in the town of Balangiga, Philippines. One hundred years of misrepresentation and misinformation has gradually transformed this memorial into a symbol of a slanted and mistaken view of history, a reluctance to admit and correct mistakes from the past, and resistance to advance to the future.

On November 7 of last year I introduced H. Res. 312, urging the President to authorize the transfer of ownership of one of the "Bells of Balangiga" currently displayed in Wyoming to the people of the Philippines. Contrary to several misconceptions, H. Res. 312 recognizes that the memorial at F.E. Warren Air Force Base has a legitimate but not exclusive right to memorialize tragic events which occurred during the Philippine Insurrection, and does

not seek to dishonor the memory of the American troops who perished in the Philippine Insurrection or to disestablish the monument in Wyoming. H. Res. 312 proposes a compromise wherein both the Philippines and the United States will share in the legacy of these historic symbols.

The matter touches upon a greater issue and reflects the true nature of our special relationship with the Republic of the Philippines. In the course of subduing the Philippines right after the Spanish-American War, over 4,000 Americans and over 200,000 Filipinos died. The Bells of Balangiga are a symbol of that conflict. For us, they are the trophies of war that marked the killing of over 50 Americans, and for Filipinos they represent the eventual order to kill every Filipino male over the age of 10 on the island of Samar. If we share these bells, we bring honor to both countries and all who suffered and died.

Today, each and every one of us is faced with a challenge. As we commemorate the centennial of the Spanish-American War, we must decide whether we should focus upon the true dimensions of this historic event, reflecting upon its far-reaching results, take advantage of the knowledge we have gained, learn from our experience, and bring resolution to these issues, or perhaps we should just save all these lofty aspirations for the bicentennial.

THE "GIVE FANS A CHANCE ACT"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, this month a little drama is being acted out in New York City and the venue is Yankee Stadium. What should have been the glorious 75th anniversary of "the house that Ruth built" may in fact see the end of a tradition unless New York City comes up with perhaps as much as \$1 billion.

This is another example of professional sports, instead of being a source of civic pride, are to be often a symbol of what people do not like. The players now are the television networks, major corporate sponsors, athletic equipment and apparel giants. The fans appear to be almost an afterthought.

This trend, some would suggest, started about 40 years ago when the Brooklyn Dodgers tore the heart out of that community by moving a very profitable franchise to the West Coast in pursuit of greener pastures.

It continues today. I have heard from fans all over America: Houston, Chicago, Sacramento. New York is just simply the most recent and perhaps the most egregious example. And of course it has come full circle because recently the Dodgers were sold again, this time to Rupert Murdoch, and the trend is growing. Over 50 million people live in

and around communities with sports teams which have recently moved or are threatening to relocate.

The change of focus away from the fans has become more acute as these leagues have upped the ante. Between now and the year 2006, more than \$7 billion will be spent on new stadiums, most of which will be public money. In comparison to the stadiums, teams are cheap. The stadiums currently under construction range in price from perhaps \$250 million to, in the case of the New York Yankees, as we have mentioned, perhaps \$1 billion or more.

But wait a minute. The average value of a baseball team is only \$134 million. The average for a football franchise, \$205 million. Thus, these stadiums cost significantly more than the teams themselves; in the case of the Yankees, as much as four times as much.

Madam Speaker, it would be cheaper for the community just to buy the team. Well, there is one city in America that does not have to worry about this little drama. Green Bay, Wisconsin, one thirty-fourth the size of Los Angeles, owns perhaps the most successful franchise in American sports. But the NFL will not let it happen again. They have passed rules against municipal ownership.

The Federal Government must stop aiding and abetting this abuse. We are not innocent bystanders. Besides the massive tax subsidies that we provide for the construction of stadiums, we provide an antitrust exemption that enables professional sports franchises to make billions of dollars. The NFL, for instance, will earn \$17.6 billion over the next 5 years. We have made the NFL rich, yet the NFL will not allow another community to own its franchise.

That is why I have introduced the "Give Fans a Chance Act." It would tie the sports broadcast antitrust exemption to the elimination of rules that prohibit public ownership. And it would give communities a voice in relocation decisions.

The advantages are clear: It would end the franchise feeding frenzy; it would make stadium decisions based on what is good for a team and community, not on what looks to be blackmail; it will make it easier to get support for needed stadium expansions; and will help eliminate the cynicism that is permeating professional sports.

Sports fans from coast to coast love this idea. There is a congressional responsibility to help these fans, since we helped create this monster. I urge my colleagues to give fans a chance and support H.R. 590.

PRESIDENT SHOULD SUPPORT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, RATHER THAN APPEASE OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.