not able to use loopholes and shelters to arrive at a zero tax liability. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the AMT was not indexed it has turned into a debilitating liability with the code affecting millions of middle-income taxpayers. Something must be done.

These proposals are all about one thing: increasing personal and family financial security—helping Americans meet their needs today and prepare for their needs tomorrow. I intend to push this agenda by going beyond a broad-based tax cut and creating incentives to promote and strengthen pensions and personal retirement accounts. I have proposed a plan to increase IRA contributions to $5,000 a year, and to allow up to $2,000 a year to be placed into education savings accounts.

I will also introduce legislation to dedicate a portion of the ever-increasing budget surplus to creating Personal Retirement Accounts for every worker—giving individuals at all income levels an opportunity to own a piece of America's economic future.

This is the most important agenda we can have as we look to a new millennium—a millennium that I believe will be bright and prosperous, one that will hold great promise for all Americans if we stay focused, work cooperatively, and put the interests of hard-working taxpaying families before the interests of a big-spending, over-bearing government.●

TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN H. HARDY, JR.

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Benjamin H. Hardy, Jr., an outstanding Georgian whose insight and courage helped shape the course for U.S. foreign policy for decades and paved the way for the people of many nations to improve their lives.

On January 20th, 1949, precisely fifty years ago today, President Harry Truman gave his inaugural address to the nation and, in doing so, spelled out his four point plan for U.S. foreign policy. The first three points of the plan were consistent with President Truman's previous policies in support of the United Nations, the Marshall Plan and our NATO allies. The fourth point of the plan, however, was a ''bold new program'' to provide technical assistance to developing nations which subsequently became known as ''Point Four.'' The idea for the new assistance program was developed by Mr. Hardy, who, at the time, was serving as a public affairs officer in the Department of State. Mr. Hardy had seen the rewards of technical assistance while working in Brazil and knew that this type of assistance was the key to unleashing the potential of so many developing countries.

According to various accounts, Mr. Hardy risked his career to bring his brilliant proposal to light and, ultimately, assisted in drafting the foreign policy portion of President Truman's address. Responding to a White House request for new initiatives in foreign affairs, Mr. Hardy produced his plan. However, his plan was not received favorably by the upper levels of the State Department and was sent back for ''further review''—virtually killing the idea. Refusing to give up, Mr. Hardy bypassed the normal channels of bureaucratic red tape and policy review and went directly to a contact inside the White House. There, Mr. Hardy's development plan was greeted much more favorably and soon made its way to President Truman's desk and, later, into the President's State of the Union address.

Point Four received widespread acclaim and, soon after Truman's address, Congress created the Technical Cooperation Administration within the Department of State. Mr. Hardy went on to serve as chief of public affairs and chairman of the Administration's policy planning committee. On December 23rd of 1951 Mr. Hardy was killed in a plane crash along with the director of the Technical Cooperation Administration, Dr. Henry Bennet. Soon, the Technical Cooperation Administration was transformed into the agencies responsible for foreign aid but the Point Four idea, remains vibrant today. It survives in the U.S. Agency for International Development, the agency which works to develop, train, educate, and strengthen democracy in the most needy countries across the globe.

Were it not for the determination of Mr. Benjamin Hardy, these agencies, and their successes, may never have been realized. Benjamin Hardy is a wonderful example of one person making a difference in the world and I am honored today to recognize the indelible mark this distinguished Georgian has left upon the history of this nation and the people of the world.●

AIR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT ACT

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Air Transportation Improvement Act. This bill would provide a two-year authorization for the programs of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), including the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). As Senator MCCAIN has noted, this bill is almost exactly the same as S. 2279, which the Senate passed last September by a vote of 92 to one. The only differences are technical in nature.

I would like to commend Senator MCCAIN for moving quickly to deal with FAA reauthorization in a timely manner. If no action is taken, the AIP will expire on March 31, 1999, and airports will not receive much needed federal grants that would allow them to continue to operate both safely and efficiently. The Air Transportation Improvement Act would establish contract authority for the program. Without this authority in place, the FAA cannot distribute airport grants, regardless of whether an AIP appropriation is in place. A lapse in the AIP is unacceptable, and I will work tirelessly to ensure that this does not occur.

Mr. President, this bill reaffirms our commitment that the United States should continue to have the safest and most efficient air transportation system in the world. Although the role of Congress is vital, the FAA has the immediate responsibility for managing the national air transportation system. In very broad terms, the FAA is directly responsible for ensuring the safety, security, and efficiency of civil aviation, and for overseeing the development of a national airports system.

One critical activity being performed by the FAA is modernization of the air traffic control (ATC) system. This process has been ongoing for 15 years, and will continue for many years into the future. During my tenure as Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, I have learned that the modernization program is at a critical juncture. We can no longer allow the program to continue the ''stops and starts'' of the past. Improvements must get on track, or the growing demand for air services combined with outdated equipment will soon bring gridlock and serious concerns about safety.

I am encouraged that the FAA is working with industry to put the ATC modernization program on track and develop a plan to deliver equipment, on time and on budget, that will ensure increased safety and efficiency for all Americans. This bill will help ensure that these very important efforts continue. The FAA must spare no effort over the next few years to modernize the ATC system, as airlines will also be spending a great deal of money to purchase and install the components needed in their aircraft to use these new systems. All of this needs to be done right, and done now, to ensure continued safety and efficiency in the aviation industry.

Another matter requiring immediate attention is the FAA's progress in dealing with the Year 2000 problem. This issue has far reaching safety and economic implications, and has already been the subject of many hearings in Congress. It is imperative that the FAA makes the most out of limited time and resources, and Congress must ensure that this is a top priority. The public is aware of the Year 2000 problem and must be reassured beyond any doubt that it will be possible to fly and, most importantly, to fly in complete safety, on January 1, 2000.

As I already mentioned, this bill contains numerous provisions designed to improve competition and service in the airline industry. The inclusion of these measures in the bill does not in any way mean that airline deregulation has been unsuccessful. The overall benefits of airline deregulation are clear: fares are down significantly and service options have increased.

Many of the benefits of deregulation can be attributed to the entry of new airlines into the marketplace. The low

fare carriers have increased competition, and have enabled more people to fly than ever before. Air traffic has grown as a result, and all predictions are that it will continue to grow steadily over the next several years.

In spite of the success of deregulation, many believe that competition can be improved. The competition provisions in the Air Transportation Improvement Act would ease some of the federally-imposed barriers that remain in the deregulated environment. These barriers include the slot controls at four major airports and the perimeter rule at Reagan National Airport.

Although this legislation is a positive step forward for our national aviation system, one of my main priorities, which is not included in the Air Transportation Improvement Act, will be to push for an increase in the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) cap. We must address the widening infrastructure gap that threatens to hamstring our national aviation system. The independent National Civil Aviation Review Commission and the GAO also estimate that there is a backlog in airport improvements of approximately $3 billion per year. To ensure that our infrastructure deficit can be met, we must look for innovative solutions such as a PFC increase which allow local control and responsibly for improving our national aviation system.

I look forward to working with Senators MCCAIN, HOLLINGS, and ROCKEFELLER to ensure that our common goals of providing a safe and secure aviation system for both commercial airlines and the general aviation community as well as providing adequate resources for the FAA to carry out this task are met.●

RECOGNITION OF BERNICE BARLOW

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable person from Saginaw, Michigan, Mrs. Bernice Barlow. Mrs. Barlow is leaving her position as president of the Saginaw branch of the NAACP after thirty years.

As president of the Saginaw NAACP, Bernice Barlow has been a powerful advocate for equality and civil rights. Although her tireless efforts on behalf of the NAACP are admirable in their own right, Mrs. Barlow has not confined her community service to the NAACP. She has also served with distinction in leadership roles with organizations like the Saginaw Education Association, the Tri-County Fair Housing Association and the Saginaw County Mental Health Board.

Despite her retirement from the presidency of the Saginaw NAACP, Bernice Barlow will continue her service to the people of Saginaw. Her husband, Charles, and her four children will surely be pleased to have more of her time, but I have no doubt that they will support her continuing efforts to ensure that equality and justice are recognized as the birthrights of every citizen.

Mr. President, I am confident that my colleagues will join me in congratulating Bernice Barlow as she steps down from her position as president of the Saginaw NAACP, and in thanking her for her longstanding commitment to the people of the city of Saginaw.●

FOREIGN TRAVEL OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

● Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, during the winter recess, I had the opportunity to travel from Dec. 12 through Dec. 31, 1998, to 13 countries in Europe, the Mideast and the Gulf. I flew over with President Clinton on Air Force One, spent the first several days in Israel essentially working with the President's schedule, and then pursued my own agenda when he returned to Washington. I believe it is worthwhile to share with my colleagues some of my impressions from that trip, which I am placing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Jan. 19, 1999, the first day for statements in the 106th Congress.

ISRAEL

From December 12 through December 15, I traveled with President Clinton to the Middle East to encourage the advancement of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the wake of the accords reached in October at Wye Plantation. Although somewhat overshadowed by the pending impeachment process, the President's trip was useful, I believe, in applying pressure to both sides to abide by their commitments toward further progress.

SYRIA

When President Clinton returned to Washington, I proceeded to Damascus, Syria, where I met with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, to examine the possibility of progress on the Israeli-Syrian track of the Mideast peace process. While I believe that progress between Israel and the Palestinians could be made with the resumption of a dialogue between Israel and Syria, the pending Israeli elections have rendered the prospect for that dialogue unlikely in the short run.

The big news while I talked with President Assad was the increasing tension between the United States and Iraq over the U.N. inspection of Iraq's weapons program. Because Syria shares a long border and cultural heritage—though certainly no great friendship—with Iraq, even the threat of military conflict between the U.S. and Baghdad produces immediate and tangible emotions among many Syrians.

That afternoon in December, the situation in Iraq seemed grave: the U.N. team had evacuated the country, and chief inspector Richard Butler was preparing to address the U.N. Security Council in an emergency session. I did not know that a strike was imminent, but President Assad and I speculated during our meeting on news reports concerning what the immediate future might hold.

Past midnight in Damascus, CNN carried live footage of anti-aircraft fire and air-raid sirens in Baghdad, only a few hundred miles away. The President's remarks from the Oval Office followed shortly thereafter, and, after a short night's rest, I was asked to comment on the bombing to an expectant Syrian press corps.

I told the press the same thing that I told President Assad in the previous day's meeting: I had written the President on November 12 urging him not to order the use of U.S. force against Iraq without first obtaining Congressional authorization as required by the United States Constitution. I believe that a missile strike is an act of war, and only the Congress of the United States under our Constitution has the authority to declare war.

Had the President taken the matter to the Congress, as President Bush did in 1991, I would have supported it. I believe that Saddam Hussein is a menace to the region and to the world. I believe it is true that he is developing weapons of mass destruction, and that he has demonstrated a willingness to employ chemical weapons for the most destructive and terrible purposes. Clearly, some forceful international action has to be taken.

I said I did not believe the President acted because of the pending impeachment vote. I indicated that, in my opinion, the President acted because he had put Saddam Hussein on notice in the past, and Ramadan was coming, as the President explained the previous evening. I said that I believe the House of Representatives was right in delaying the vote for a couple of days while we commenced a military strike on Iraq.

Constitutional requirements aside, there is a practical benefit to seeking Congressional approval for acts of war. When a President has the backing of Congress confirmed by way of a recorded vote, his hand is immediately strengthened in the eyes of the world. Absent that imprimatur of support, America's enemies or would-be enemies are left to poke and carp at the propriety and the purpose of the military action. And the attendant Congressional debate helps to sharpen the aims and follow-on goals of any action. Winning Congress' approval requires a President to spell out exactly what he hopes to accomplish through military force, and it forces him to keep those goals within the bounds of reality.

A recorded vote on military authorization is healthy for the Congress, as well. It puts Senators and Congressmen on the spot, up-or-down, on a matter of pivotal importance in national policy: deciding whether the goals of a military action justify the price in the blood and sweat of our troops. It is simply too easy for Congressional critics to bob and weave around taking a position on a given military action. If a particular campaign takes a difficult