our colleague ROBERT TORRICELLI on the question of NATO expansion. He points out that the Contract With America's National Security Revitalization Act, H.R. 7, proposes the most significant expansion of U.S. military commitments in 40 years. I agree with him that ''the American people should insist that swift expansion of NATO is a pledge that should not be kept.'' The text of Mr. TORRICELLI's article follows:

[From the Los Angeles Times, Feb. 9, 1995]

PERSPECTIVE ON NATO EXPANSION—A PROMISE BEST NOT KEPT

(By Robert G. Torricelli)

The Republican ''contract with America'' contains a proposal for the expansion of NATO to include the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary by 1999. The Baltic states and Ukraine would follow. This represents the most significant potential expansion of United States military commitments in 40 years. It is one promise by the new congressional majority that is best forgotten.

The central feature of the NATO treaty is Article V, which commits each signatory to regard an attack on any one state to be an attack on each state. It is an unequivocal pledge of war.

The success of NATO during the Cold War was a result of the credibility of the signatories. World Wars I and II demonstrated that the United States regarded the security of Western Europe as central to its own freedom and prosperity. It was not a difficult commitment for a potential adversary to understand. With $200 billion in transatlantic trade, there is no separating the economic futures of the United States and our allies. Similar political institutions gave the treaty meaning and military capabilities gave it credibility.

An arbitrary expansion of our NATO obligations to these Eastern European nations would not conform to the original treaty objectives. A future adversary would never believe that the United States would risk its own survival to extend the nuclear umbrella in defense of nations where it has little economic, political or security interests.

Conventional military assistance would be no more credible. The Balkans war has set the precedent with the United States' refusal to become involved and our allies' rejection of military force to defend interests on their own frontiers against a comparatively weak opponent.

This is not to suggest that the United States does not sympathize with the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe. We welcome their freedom, and their success is in our national interest. We should give them substantial economic, trade and security assistance. But a commitment to wage war requires a vital national interest of a different dimension.

Central to the arguments against the ''contract with America'' pledge of NATO expansion are the contradictions that it represents. Republican promises of a strong national defense would be undermined by rapid NATO expansion. Great powers make impossible or insincere military commitments at great risk. A commitment of assistance to a small European state that is not fulfilled might lead an adversary to conclude that a genuine interest protected by the same pledge also will not be defended.

Underlying the policy debate is the question of capability. The ability of the United States to defend the current 15 NATO nations in a prolonged conflict with Russia was always arguable. Now Republicans contend that, having reduced our own forces by 25% and withdrawn 200,000 troops from Europe, the United States should rapidly expand our commitments to four additional nations and 73 million people. The credibility of their proposal is further compromised by their assurance that such an expansion can be achieved at no cost to the American taxpayer.

None of these potential allies offers any serious military ability to contribute to its own security. None is equipped with weapons or ordnance compatible with our own. Opposing Russian military forces, while diminished, include 72 divisions totaling 2.4 million men in adjoining regions. Their potential under some future authoritarian government commanding a nation of 150 million is obviously considerable.

Concern with the impracticability of broadening our military obligations is inevitability leading some to compromise. They propose that some nations join NATO while those more proximate to Russia be excluded. This represents the worst of all outcomes. NATO would still be left with responsibilities that it cannot fulfill, and the excluded states would implicitly fall into a new Russian sphere of influence. A new line would be drawn across Europe.

Missing from arguments for NATO expansion is an understanding that the central element in the maintenance of Eastern European security is the strengthening of Russian democracy. The ultimate maintenance of Eastern European sovereignty will be decided by the struggle for power within Russia. NATO expansion would strengthen Russian nationalist forces and, ironically, undermine the very Russian institutions and leaders that offer the principal opportunity to maintain Eastern European security.

The Clinton Administration's ''partnership for peace'' offers a far more balanced approach. Joint training exercises in the Netherlands and Poland are an example of the alliance's ability to increase capabilities. The promise of increase capabilities. The promise of eventual NATO membership sends a signal of our interest without recklessly committing ourselves to a future conflict.

The Republican leadership is determined to restore electoral confidence in Congress by maintaining campaign promises. The American people should insist that swift expansion of NATO is a pledge that should not be kept.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

HON. MIKE WARD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to join my colleagues in commemorating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Building on the strengths and hardships of the women's suffrage movement, Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters and urged its members to be active participants in their government, not bystanders. However, Catt's effort did not end with securing women the right to vote, she demanded the full inclusion of women into every aspect of society: political, social, and economic.

Today, women have gained much in the areas of political and social equality; however, in terms of economic equality, women fall far short of their male counterpart. We know that 62 percent of the minimum-wage earners in the United States are women, but many in our government are still not committed to raising the minimum wage and empowering women with the economic security they so rightly deserve.

I hope that my colleagues will reflect upon the numerous achievements and successes the League of Women Voters have gained and recognize how crucial economic stability is for all, but especially for women.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

HON. PAT DANNER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Ms. DANNER. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 75th anniversary of a defining moment in American history, a moment that is partially responsible for me and for all of my female colleagues serving the American people as Members of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago a courageous woman named Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters.

Since its inception, the league has championed equal rights for not only women, but for all Americans, regardless of gender, race, or religion. This creed of equality, this commitment to freedom and justice transcends the vision of our Founding Fathers.

With the proper focus on education as the means to liberty, the league has been instrumental in providing access at all levels for people who were once ignored, who were once denied, and who were once suppressed. Much has been accomplished since the 1920's movement for womens' suffrage.

With the help of organizations such as the League of Women Voters, we as a people can do even more.

TRIBUTE TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this Valentine's Day to commemorate a very special organization. The League of Women Voters turns 75 today, and it deserves our congratulations.

The league traces its roots back to the suffrage movement, and since then it has enjoyed great significance in American civic life. Dedicated to educating the American voter, the league's leaders have led the way in increasing the public's understanding of the great policy debates that have shaped our time. The wide scope of its concerns, on issues that rage everywhere from townhalls to the halls of Congress, is illustrative of their true devotion to the democratic system.

With 1,100 chapters nationwide and a membership of 150,000, the league continues to exert outstanding leadership in ensuring that the American electorate is an educated one. I am sure that no one in this body has been denied the benefit of the league's involvement in their elections.

I, myself, enjoyed an engaging evening at a League of Women Voters candidates' forum during my campaign, and was provided the

opportunity to explain my views in a candidate profile. I appreciate the fine work these ladies have done, and thank them for providing avenues through which I was able to communicate in a substantive manner with my constituents. Once again, happy birthday League of Women Voters, and here's to another successful 75 years.

FOOD SAFETY

HON. CARDISS COLLINS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last week the Government Reform and Oversight Committee began marking up H.R. 450, the Regulatory Reform Act. I must say that I was surprised at just how obsessed with reducing the regulation of business, they are; so obsessed with destroying even commonsense regulations that it is even willing to sacrifice the health and safety of the American people.

Last Friday, February 10, Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER and I offered an amendment that would have done one thing only; it would have allowed the Department of Agriculture to go forward with its new rule, announced just a week or so ago, for the inspection of meat and poultry. Not a single Republican member of the committee voted in favor of it.

Meat and poultry sold to the American consumer are currently subject only to visual inspection under procedures that were implemented in 1907. The new inspection procedures would require microbial testing for bacteria; it is the Agriculture Department's long-awaited response to the massive food borne illness outbreak caused by *E Coli* that spread across the west coast 2 years ago.

Mrs. Nancy Donley of Chicago, IL, was at the markup to remind us of the price many American families have paid and will pay for inaction. Mrs. Donley lost her 6-year-old son, Alex, in July of 1993 after he died from eating *E Coli* contaminated hamburger meat.

The USDA's new inspection rule is not being promulgated to punish meat and poultry processor; its purpose is to stop people from dying and getting sick from food borne bacteria, such as salmonella and *E Coli*. Food borne disease causes an estimated 9,000 deaths per year and 6.5 million illnesses. Medical costs and lost productivity associated with the treatment of food borne illness are estimated to be between $5 billion and $6 billion each year.

I completely disagree with the proponents of this regulatory moratorium bill that we should delay for 1 minute, much less 6 months, the implementation of USDA's regulations to reduce the number of deaths and illnesses that occur each year from food poisoning.

I first became aware of the problem with unsafe meat, in 1991 when a USDA inspector testified before the subcommittee I chaired under the Committee on Energy and Commerce. This inspector, Mr. William Lehman, told our subcommittee that 9 out of 10 truckloads of meat entering our country from Canada did not stop at the border for a casual inspection.

After five hearings, a GAO investigation, and four different letters to the Secretary of Agriculture, these procedures were finally changed.

Mr. Lehman appeared before my subcommittee again, and told us that he was beginning to see large quantities of Canadian hamburger entering our country. The problem this presents for the inspector is that grinding meat into hamburger disguises problems, such as the presence of fecal material or abscesses, that a visual inspection would allow you to see on a whole carcass.

It was also at this time that the outbreak of *E Coli* deaths and illnesses occurred in the Northwest. Some of the meat supplied to the Jack-in-the-Box Restaurants, it is believed may have come from Canada.

We should not allow meat to be imported into this country in the form of hamburger, and we should continue testing the hamburger produced here for bacteria.

The USDA has proposed a rule that will allow us to take an important step towards ensuring that meat and poultry products sold in this country are free of deadly bacteria. We should not permit this bill to stop those efforts.

For the Republican majority that now controls this Congress to not allow the proposed meat and poultry food safety rule to be implemented is a callous disregard for human health and life.