

is a welcome addition to this to this wonderful park, and one that has been long sought.

The monument itself has long stood as an inspiring reminder of the enduring peace of nearly two centuries between the United States and Canada. It is a moving and educational destination for thousands of families.

The park and monument commemorate one of the most important and decisive battles in American history. The victory of Commodore Perry and American naval forces over the British off the shores of this island changed the course of American history, and facilitated the westward movement of our nation across the continent. It ushered in an unprecedented period of peace and friendship.

The visitors' center for the first time provides a means of explaining to visitors the significance of these events. It is the culmination of the efforts of many over a period of years. Some years ago I met with the leaders of the Perry Group, citizens joined together to promote this park, to begin discussions regarding the need for this center and how to achieve it. I commend the group and its strong leaders such as Judge George Smith and Ann Heidenreich Fisher for their tireless and successful work.

I was fortunate to obtain approximately two million dollars in federal funds so that this project could come to fruition, and I wish to thank my colleague, Congressman RALPH REGULA, for his invaluable help in making it happen. I also commend the superintendents at the park during this period for their efforts in support of this center, including our current Superintendent Ralph Moore, and his predecessors Dick Lusardi and Phyllis Ewing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the diligent effort and unwavering spirit of those individuals determined to see this project through to completion. Our communities are served well by having such honorable and giving citizens who care about the education that future generations receive so that our historical landmarks are preserved well into the future. I am confident that this new visitors' center will serve as an educational tool for all, and be our link to a piece of American, and Ohio, history.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 27, 2002*

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 24, 2002 I missed the following votes. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on the following votes:

Rollcall Vote No. 249—H.R. 3937, a bill to revoke a Public Land Order with respect to certain lands erroneously included in the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, California.

Rollcall Vote No. 250—H.R. 3786, the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Boundary Revision Act of 2002.

Rollcall Vote No. 251—H.R. 3971, a bill to provide for an independent investigation of Forest Service firefighter deaths that are caused by wildfire entrapment or burnover.

Rollcall Vote No. 252—H.J. Res. 95, Designating an Official Flag of the Medal of Honor and Providing for Presentation of that Flag to each Recipient of that Medal of Honor.

### REAFFIRMING OUR SUPPORT FOR NATO AND ENLARGEMENT

### HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 27, 2002*

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a Resolution which addresses the importance of NATO, its future, enlargement and continued U.S. support for the Alliance.

In just five months, the Heads of State and leadership of NATO will meet in Prague to, among other things, discuss the future of the Alliance and its capability to address new and emerging threats and to make a decision on the enlargement of the alliance. It has been eight months since the House of Representatives debated NATO enlargement and overwhelmingly passed the Gerald Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act.

Since then, there has been a great deal of debate within the Bush Administration, within the international community of experts and among the NATO partners with respect to NATO's future.

But since we last discussed whether new members should be invited into NATO, I felt we should take a moment to discuss exactly what type of alliance we will be inviting new members to join and what we believe the role of this alliance should be in the future. I also wanted to address the relationship between NATO and Russia which many Members raised during the House debate on the Solomon bill last November.

To that end, as Chairman of the Europe Subcommittee I held three comprehensive hearings on the question of NATO and enlargement. We heard from outside experts, we met with the Ambassadors of the ten candidate states and we heard from the Bush Administration and our SACEUR. The resolution I am introducing today is the work product of those hearings and all the other meetings and briefings which have taken place in between.

Clearly, NATO must maintain its political purpose and military coherence.

In this context, I disagree with those who believe that in this post-Cold War and post-September 11 era, NATO may no longer be relevant to the overall security of the United States.

NATO is indeed relevant to the U.S. NATO remains the foundation of American security policy in Europe. NATO has proven to be a strong and viable alliance preserving the collective security of Europe for over 53 years.

Back in 1949, when the Senate debated the ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty there was concern about what Article 5 would commit the U.S. to do in Europe. Isn't it ironic that the first time in 53 years Article 5 was invoked, as it was on September 12, it was invoked by our allies in defense of the U.S.

NATO was relevant in ending the brutal conflicts in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Today, our NATO Allies provide eighty percent of the military forces remaining in those countries. And, NATO, working with the European Union, was instrumental in helping resolve the problem in Macedonia before things got out of hand.

Since September 11, NATO's relevance has been clear with respect to the campaign against global terrorism and the war in Afghanistan. Although the Afghan campaign was

never a NATO operation, fourteen of our allies from NATO, with some 5,000 troops are operating today side-by-side with U.S. military forces in Afghanistan as many of them have been since the first days of the conflict. Just last week command of the International Security Force transferred from British forces to Turkish forces, both NATO partners. Where would the U.S. effort be if these NATO partners considered themselves too irrelevant to help keep the peace in Afghanistan. Whose 5,000 troops would be patrolling the streets of Kabul if not for NATO forces.

I also disagree with those who believe that unless NATO is willing to undergo major restructuring to become a global rapid reaction force in the war on terrorism, it can no longer be relevant. Global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are challenges worthy of NATO concern and capability to act against and NATO must seriously address these issues between now and Prague. But at the Ministers meeting in Reykjavik in May and the Defense Ministerial in June, NATO leaders did address the realities of the new and emerging threats and have committed, with strong U.S. support, to build the capabilities necessary to address them. For many, NATO does not have to be present in places like the Philippines, or Sudan or Kashmir or even Iraq to be relevant. These matters, while important, should not be seen as the only issues which define NATO for the future.

With respect to Russia, I believe the concerns expressed by some of our Colleagues last November and since then had great merit and needed to be clarified by NATO. At the Iceland summit, the U.S. and NATO initiated a new relationship with Russia which resulted in the formation of a new NATO-Russia Council which was inaugurated in June at the Rome summit between NATO heads of state and Russia President Putin. I believe this new relationship represents a breakthrough in NATO-Russia relations and should address the concerns of many.

Finally, an essential aspect of NATO is the welcoming of new members into the alliance.

I believe enlarging NATO does contribute to the overall security of the United States because membership in NATO does enhance overall European stability and security. We are encouraged by the number of applicants for NATO membership and their dedication and enthusiasm to achieving that goal. As we all know, there are ten applicant countries who have decided that NATO is certainly relevant to them and an organization in which they wish to be a member. But, NATO membership for them is more than joining a military alliance. For them, it will be a validation of their return to being democratic, European and pro-western states. The process under which these applicants are being evaluated, called the Member Action Plan, has been a useful tool for us to analyze their own commitment to meeting the political, economic and military standards expected of all members of the Alliance.

Mr. Speaker, my resolution addresses all of these issues in a comprehensive way. Our Subcommittee intends to mark this resolution in the Fall and will consider endorsing candidate countries for NATO membership at that time and based on the best information we have on their readiness to contribute to the overall security of the Alliance. It is my hope that the House Leadership will then make time