A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to applaud those colleagues of ours who will join me tomorrow, equally divided between both sides of the aisle. Ten of our colleagues will join me as we travel to Moscow. The purpose of our trip is to lay the foundation for a new relationship with the Russian people and the Russian Government.

Over the past 2 months, we have worked out an in-depth assessment of a way to connect Russian people. Not to pour massive amounts of American money into Russia, because that is not the answer, but ways to continue to support those efforts that are already underway by private foundations, by nonprofit groups, by academic institutions, and, in some cases, by governmental entities.

The document and the process that will be speaking to our Russian counterparts will include a new era of engaging Russia, the culture, the economy, the environment, justice and legal system, health care, science and technology, defense and security, agriculture, space, local government and energy.

Today, I had a chance to brief our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol in both parties, and the White House and the National Security Council as well. This new initiative is designed to create a new era of opportunity for us where Americans and Russians can work together. We will also be providing an opportunity for the Russian Parliament, the Duma, and the Federation Council to enact a piece of legislation that I will be introducing in the Congress, and they are identical, that calls for a joint task force on terrorism, a legislative task force that has Russian members of the Duma and the Federation Council working with Members of the Congress and the Senate, the House and the Senate. This will follow support the efforts of our two Presidents. Our meetings will include senior leaders of the Duma, members of the Federation Council, the Minister of Interior for Russia, and members of President Putin’s leadership in terms of security and foreign policy and the other major issues that we will be dealing with.

We will leave Moscow on Saturday and travel to Rome where we have planned meetings with the King of Afghanistan, who is in exile, and lead of the opposition forces in that country. We will be extending our best wishes and our praise to the King as he attempts to reunify the people of that troubled country and to let him know that Americans do not have a problem with the Afghan people, that we want to be their friends.

We will leave Rome and travel on to Turkey where we will meet with the leadership of the Turkish Government, letting them know that we appreciate their support and solidarity with the U.S. and the allies, that we appreciate the work of the Turkish military, and that we appreciate their friendship during this troubled time.

I look forward to the trip. Our colleagues are giving up time that they could be home with their constituents. It is an important role they are playing to support our President in his effort to have a unified world in eradicating the terrorism that has done so much devastation here in this country in this past month.

So I thank our colleagues for being involved in this process. We will issue a report upon our return, giving the response to their ideas that we meet and making recommendations back to our colleagues about future actions.

\[2100\]

TRIBUTE TO TED C. CONNELL, A PATRIOT AND TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WASHINGTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, September 16, Texas and the Nation lost a patriot and a true public servant, Mr. Ted C. Connell. My friend, our Nation’s friend, passed away at his home in Killeen, Texas, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Ted Connell lived a life of service to others and to his beloved country. He was a World War II combat veteran, was elected Commander in Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was a great friend of my political mentor, former Congressman Olin E. (Tiger) Teague, and he was a friend of President Lyndon Johnson and the Johnson family.

Ted Connell was born in 1924 in the small town of Hamlin, Texas, the fifth of ten sons. He dropped out of high school, but finished his diploma while serving in the U.S. Army field artillery on the island of Guam during World War II.

During his 30-month tour in the South Pacific with the 316th Tank Destroyer Battalion of the 98th Division, he also fought in Salipan, Tinian and Okinawa. He eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve.

While on Okinawa, in one of the bloodiest battles of the war, Ted Connell was seriously wounded and killed when a shell fragment had been shot in the chest. He sat with his mortally wounded comrade for 3 hours, comforting him in the last moments of his life. When Ted returned to the United States, he traveled to the Marine’s hometown in Colorado to tell his parents in person about their son’s death.

That mission of comfort and solace opened a new chapter of service in Ted Connell’s life. The Marine’s father was heavily involved in veteran’s affairs, and encouraged Ted Connell, to do likewise.

He did just that, becoming active in his local VFW post, and rising to the leadership at the State and national levels, culminating with his election as national Commander-in-Chief of the VFW in 1960.

Ted Connell was a friend and confidante of President Lyndon Johnson, coordinating and advancing Presidential visits to Guam, Uruguay, Central America, South Vietnam, Australia, and Pakistan, and serving as an on-scene coordinator for a meeting with Pope Paul VI with the Vatican.

He served on several congressional and Presidential fact-finding missions, taking him to Vietnam five times, to Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, and Korea.

Ted Connell also served the State of Texas with great distinction as a member of the Texas Veterans Land Board, chairman of the Texas Veterans Commission, and as a member of the Sam Rayburn Foundation.

When his hometown of Killeen needed leadership, Ted Connell answered the call to duty once again, spearheading efforts to build the Lake Belton Dam, Central Texas College, and Metroplex Hospital, and to strengthen the U.S. Army’s Fort Hood.

He served two terms as mayor of Killeen, was director and president of the Killeen Chamber of Commerce, the Industrial Foundation, a director of the Metroplex Hospital, and chairman of the hospital’s building fund campaign.

Somewhere in all of this service to the public Ted Connell found time to operate his successful car dealership for 46 years, and to further leave his footprint by bringing local airline service to his community. He opened an airline in 1965, eventually merging it with Hood Airlines and with Rio Airways. By 1974, Rio, serving small- and medium-sized cities in central, north, and south Texas, had become the seventh largest commuter airline in the country.

Fittingly, the Killeen City Council recently named the new passenger terminal at the about-to-be-completed, over the next few years, Fort Hood-Killeen Joint-Use Airport in honor of this great veteran and community leader.

Ted Connell fought for his Nation, Mr. Speaker, in time of war, and served his community and country in time of peace. His indomitable optimism and love of country were quintessential American values. He represented the special spirit that makes us optimistic about our Nation’s future.

As a businessman and community leader, Ted Connell worked tirelessly for jobs, prosperity, and opportunities for central Texans. His unparalleled