United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 143 WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, MAY 16, 1997 No. 65

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, these days in the Senate are filled with crucial issues, sharp differences on solutions, and vital votes on legislation. So we begin this day with the question that you asked King Solomon, ''Ask: What shall I give you?'' We empathize with Solomon's response. He asked for an ''understanding heart.'' We are moved by the more precise translation of Hebrew words for ''understanding heart,'' meaning ''a hearing heart.''

Solomon wanted to hear a word from You for the perplexities he faced. He longed for the gift of wisdom so that he could have answers and direction for his people. We are moved by Your response, Lord. ''See, I have given you a wise and listening heart.''

I pray for nothing less as Your answer for the urgent prayers of the women and men of this Senate. Help them to listen to Your guidance and grant them wisdom for their debates and their decisions. All through our history of this Nation, You have made good men and women great when they humbled themselves, confessed their need for Your wisdom, and listened intently to You. Speak, Lord. We need to hear Your voice in the cacophony of other voices. We are listening. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator COCHRAN, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, at the request of the majority leader, I announce today that the Senate will be in morning business during which Senators may speak. There will be no rollcall votes during today's session of the Senate. On Monday, the majority leader hopes that the Senate will be able to begin debate on the concurrent budget resolution. Senators will be notified as soon as any agreements are reached.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for a period not to exceed 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATO ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP FOR ROMANIA

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, last week I received a letter from the distinguished Senator from Indiana [Mr. LUGAR] on the subject of a task force which he had been asked to chair convened by the Council on Foreign Relations on the subject of Russia, its neighbors, and an enlarging NATO.

Senator LUGAR's letter discusses the highlights of the findings and agreements that were reached by this impressive task force made up of experts on foreign policy and national security. I think it is important for the Senate to consider and review carefully the task force report and the information in that as we are beginning serious consideration now in the Foreign Relations Committee and soon in this Chamber proposals for the enlargement of NATO. We have already had other agreements which have been widely publicized this week—the charter or the framework between Russia and the United States on the subject of NATO enlargement. So it is very timely, in my view, for us to begin to get all of the information and all of the viewpoints that we can from those who deserve respect on these issues so we will be fully advised as we are called upon to make decisions on proposals from the administration.

In his letter, Senator LUGAR points out that ''The Task Force reached a strong bipartisan consensus that the enlargement of NATO and improved NATO-Russia relations need not be incompatible.'' First he pointed out that the goal of this task force ''was to determine whether Russia's concerns could be managed and its internal transition bolstered without stopping or slowing NATO enlargement. The Task Force also looked,'' he said, ''at the security concerns of the Baltic states and Ukraine.''

He says the Task Force ''agreed that it is in the United States interest to try to achieve both'' enlargement of NATO and a strengthening of NATO-Russian relations. So we also should ''negotiate from a position of strength and not allow the NATO Alliance to be held hostage in any manner by Moscow. We strongly caution,'' he said, the Task Force said, ''that NATO's core mission of collective defense of its members—both old and new—not be diluted in any manner.''

Other highlights include an urging of the administration and NATO allies ''to take very specific steps, to reassure the Baltic states and Ukraine that they will not be left in a security no-man's land.''

And in conclusion, he says the Task Force recommends endorsing ''NATO's decision to add new, 'full' members at the Madrid summit in July 1997, and suggests the Alliance remain open to the possibility of adding more new members in the future.''

The Task Force said, and he quotes from their findings:

> We believe that the goal of NATO's enlargement with Russia should not be to provide compensation for enlargement. Rather, it should be to forge a new NATO-Russia relationship that builds on opportunities offered by a new Europe, a Russia in transition and an adapting NATO.

The Task Force recommended also ''To engage Russia, negotiate a formal NATO-Russia charter,'' which is being done, ''and a consultative mechanism

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste

that offers both sides incentives to cooperate on shared problems,'' and to ''Update Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty,'' which we approved this week.

In conclusion, he points out that the Task Force suggests that we,

Reject vigorously any efforts by Moscow to dictate the terms of Baltic or Ukrainian relations with NATO. The Task Force urges the administration and the Alliance to offer special assurances to the three Baltic states and Ukraine, including confirmation that NATO's open-door policy applies to all Partnership for Peace states; increased efforts to include all four countries in Partnership for Peace planning and training exercises; affirmation that the United States shares the aspirations of the Baltic states to become full members of all European institutions; and conclusion of a NATO-Ukraine agreement to deepen practical consideration over the coming years.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the letter from Senator LUGAR and the media remarks that he made on May 5 at the announcement of the task force findings and report be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, May 5, 1997.

Hon. THAD COCHRAN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR THAD: There is no more important foreign policy issue today than the future of European security. Our investments now in Europe's future will make a dramatic difference to our own security. NATO's decision to enlarge is a key element of that investment.

But so too is our investment in Russia's transition. Our security and the security of every nation in Europe will be affected by whether Russia succeeds or fails in becoming a fully democratic state, at peace with its neighbors and integrated into Europe. Yet Russia's leaders claim the enlargement of NATO is a threat not only to Russian security but also to the success of Russia's transformation.

I was recently asked to chair a Council on Foreign Relation's Task Force on the subject of ''Russia, Its Neighbors, and an Enlarging NATO'', and to pull together some of the best minds in the country to look at this dilemma. Our goal was to determine whether Russia's concerns could be managed and its internal transition bolstered without stopping or slowing NATO enlargement. The Task Force also looked at the security concerns of the Baltic states and Ukraine, given their history with Russia, its anxiety about their relations with NATO, and their strong desire for closer ties with NATO.

With NATO enlargement imminent, the premise behind this Task Force's deliberations was not ''whether and when'' NATO should expand, but ''how.'' We looked not only at how the Alliance might engage Russia, but also at how the process of enlargement, how NATO's own internal adaptation and how conventional and nuclear arms control, could improve the security climate across Europe, without dangerous concessions to Russia.

The Task Force reached a strong bipartisan consensus that the enlargement of NATO and improved NATO-Russia relations need not be incompatible, despite continued Russian opposition to enlargement. We agreed that it is in the U.S. interest to try to achieve both, so long as we negotiate from a position of strength, and do not allow the NATO Alliance to be held hostage in any manner by Moscow. The U.S. and the Alliance can offer Russia reassurances about its security and role in the new Europe that make sense on their own merits, without compromising NATO's effectiveness or independence.

In the process, however, we strongly caution that NATO's core mission of collective defense of its members—both old and new—must not be diluted in any manner. As discussions with Russia proceed, the Task Force warns the Administration and the Alliance to remain vigilant regarding Russian efforts to step or stall expansion, to turn NATO into a social club or debating society, or to have a veto over its decisions. We also caution against trying to compensate Russia for expansion with arms control or other concessions.

All NATO-Russia and U.S.-Russia political and security arrangements must be reciprocal. We also urge the Administration and our NATO allies to take very specific steps in the coming months and years to reassure the Baltic states and Ukraine that they will not be left in a security no-man's land.

The bipartisan Task Force brought together experts on Europe and the former Soviet Union from government, think tanks, universities, and the business community. Participants included Robert Blackwill, former Principal Deputy Assistance Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs and for Political Military Affairs; Richard C. Holbrooke, former Assistant secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs; William Kristol, Editor of The Weekly Standard magazine; Thomas Pickering, former U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Advisor; and Robert Zoellick, former Counselor of the State Department and Undersecretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs. There was wide agreement among the Task Force participants with the report's major findings and recommendations; additional comments reflecting divergent positions are presented in the report to help frame the dabate.

The Task Force calls for a series of measures to address Russia's concerns as NATO enlarges, but states ''we believe that the goal of NATO's engagement with Russia should not be to provide 'compensation' for enlargement. Rather, it should be to forge a new NATO-Russia relationship that builds on opportunities offered by a new Europe, a Russia in transition and an adapting NATO.''

Among the Task Force's conclusions and recommendations.

Endorses NATO's decision to add new, ''full'' members at the Madrid summit in July 1997, and suggests the Alliance remain open to the possibility of adding more new members in the future. The report asserts that an expanded Alliance does not threaten Russia; in fact Russia will benefit from increased European stability.

To engage Russia, negotiate a formal NATO-Russia charter and a consultative mechanism that offers both sides incentives to cooperate on shared problems. However, NATO-Russia arrangements must not: stop or slow expansion; give Russia a veto over NATO decisions or dilute the effectiveness of the North Atlantic Council; allow ''second class citizens'' in the Alliance or exclude any Partnership for Peace (PfP) participant from future membership consideration; or preclude any Alliance member from calling for a meeting without Russia present.

Update Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty in a way that: eliminates its current bloc-to-bloc character in favor of national limits and reciprocal overall troop reductions and does not make second-class citizens of the new NATO members; does not isolate the Ukraine; does not impinge upon NATO's future ability to extend a full security guarantee to other potential members, and does not set an arbitrary deadline for the conclusion of the treaty negotiations or link them the NATO expansion timetable.

Continue to reject vigorously any efforts by Moscow to dictate the terms of Baltic or Ukrainian relations with NATO. The Task Force urges the Administration and the Alliance to offer special assurances to the three Baltic states and Ukraine, including confirmation that NATO's open-door policy applies to all PfP states, increased efforts to include all four countries in PfP planning and training exercises; affirmation that the U.S. shares the aspirations of the Baltic states to become full members of all European institutions; and conclusions of a NATO-Ukraine agreement to deepen practical cooperation over the coming years.

I attach a copy of the Task Force Report, along with my summary of its findings and recommendations that I presented at a recent press conference to mark the Report's publication.

I recommend both to your attention.

Sincerely,

RICHARD G. LUGAR,
U.S. Senator.

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS NATO TASK FORCE PRESS CONFERENCE: REMARKS BY U.S. SENATOR RICHARD LUGAR, MAY 5, 1997

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to chair this very distinguished Task Force on ''Russia, its Neighbors and an Enlarging NATO'' and to present its findings to you today.

I agreed to chair this group because there is no more important foreign policy issue today than the future of European security. Just as our investments during the Cold War led directly to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, our investments now in Europe's future will make a dramatic difference to our own security. NATO's decision to enlarge is a key element of that investment. But so too is our investment in Russia's transition. Our security and the security of every nation in Europe will be affected by whether Russia succeeds or fails in becoming a fully democratic state, at peace with its neighbors, and integrated into Europe. Yet Russia's leaders claim the enlargement of NATO is a threat not only to Russian security, but also to the success of Russia's transformation.

The goal of the Task Force was to pull together some of the best minds in the country to look at this dilemma and to determine whether Russia's concerns could be managed and its internal transition bolstered without stopping or slowing NATO enlargement. We also looked at the security concerns of the Baltic States and Ukraine, given their history with Russia, its anxiety about their relations with NATO and their strong desire for closer ties with NATO.

With NATO enlargement imminent, the premise behind this Task Force's deliberations was not ''whether and when'' NATO should expand, but ''how.'' We looked not only at how the Alliance might engage Russia, but also at how the process of enlargement, how NATO's own internal adaptation and conventional and nuclear arms control, could improve the security climate across Europe, without dangerous concessions to Russia.

I am pleased to announce that we reached a strong bipartisan consensus that the enlargement of NATO and improved NATO-Russia relations need not be incompatible, despite continued Russian opposition to enlargement. We agreed that it is in the U.S.

interest to try to achieve both, so long as we negotiate from a position of strength, and do not allow the NATO Alliance to be held hostage in any manner by Moscow. The U.S. and the Alliance can offer Russia significant reassurances about its security and role in the new Europe that make sense on their own merits, without compromising NATO's effectiveness or independence.

In the process, however, we strongly caution that NATO's core mission of collective defense of its members—both old and new—must not be diluted in any manner. As discussions with Russia proceed, the Task Force warns the Administration and the Alliance to remain vigilant regarding Russian efforts to stop or stall expansion, to turn NATO into a social club or debating society, or to have a veto over its decisions. We also caution against trying to compensate Russia for expansion with arms control or other concessions. All NATO-Russia and U.S.-Russia political and security arrangements must be reciprocal. We also urge the Administration and our NATO allies to take very specific steps in the coming months and years to reassure the Baltic states and Ukraine that they will not be left in a security no-man's land.

Let me now mention some of our specific recommendations. For a more complete list, I call your attention to the short ''Statement of the Task Force'' which covers the longer report.

First, the Task Force endorses NATO's decision to invite new members to join the Alliance at the Madrid summit this July, and its commitment that these will be full members, not ''second-class citizens.''

On future enlargement, we recommend that NATO affirm that it remains open to the possibility of other new members. We believe Alliance selection of future members should depend on three factors: (1) The strategic interests of NATO members; (2) the Alliance's perception of threats to security and stability; and (3) future members' success in completing their democratic transitions and in harmonizing their political aims and security policies with NATO's.

At the same time, we believe NATO should offer ideas to draw Russia closer to the Alliance to deal with mutual security concerns in a reciprocal fashion, to support Russia's consolidation of a non-imperialist, stable democracy, and to reassure Moscow that we don't seek to isolate or weaken Russia.

Specifically, we endorse efforts to negotiate a NATO-Russia charter and a consultative mechanism that offers both sides incentives to cooperate on shared problems. These could include non-proliferation, aggressive nationalism, territorial disputes, security and safety of nuclear weapons, and peacekeeping.

That said, we strongly caution the Administration and the Alliance against even the appearance of trying to ''compensate'' Russia for NATO enlargement or allowing Moscow to weaken or hamstring the Alliance in any way. Specifically, NATO-Russia arrangements must not:

(1) stop or slow NATO enlargement;

(2) NATO-Russia arrangements must not give Russia an actual or de facto veto over NATO decision-making, or the ability to stall or divide the Alliance;

(3) NATO-Russia arrangements must not create ''second class citizens'' in the Alliance or exclude any participant in the Partnership for Peace program (PFP) from future consideration for NATO membership;

(4) NATO-Russia arrangements must not subordinate NATO to any other decision-making body or organization;

(5) NATO-Russia arrangements must not dilute the effectiveness of the North Atlantic Council or preclude any Alliance member from calling for a meeting without Russia present.

We also support adaptation of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty in a way that will facilitate both NATO enlargement and NATO-Russia cooperation, including eliminating the bloc-to-bloc nature of the treaty in favor of national limits and reducing the amount of equipment the treaty permits all signatories.

But we caution the Administration and NATO states, as negotiations proceed, to ensure that all geographic limits are reciprocal, and that future equipment limits do not make de facto ''second class'' citizens of the new Alliance members.

We further caution against any agreement that would isolate Ukraine or make it more vulnerable to Moscow's pressure. We urge that the revised limits in no way impinge on NATO's ability to extend a full security guarantee to other potential members in the future.

We also argue strenuously against setting an arbitrary deadline for the conclusion of the negotiations or linking such a deadline to the timetable for NATO enlargement.

On the nuclear side, the linkage between NATO enlargement and nuclear arms control is clearly more political than strategic. That said, we believe the U.S.-Russian arrangements with regard to START II and START III reached at Helsinki have improved the climate for Russian acceptance of the first tranche of enlargement as well as for Duma ratification of START II, while advancing our own security interests. This will not happen overnight, and probably not before the Madrid Summit in July. But Helsinki represented a good-faith effort on the part of the United States to address some Russian and Duma concerns.

Finally, with regard to the Baltic states and Ukraine, we believe the Alliance must continue to reject vigorously any efforts by Moscow to dictate the terms of these countries' relations with NATO, and to exercise a veto over their future membership.

We urge the Administration and the Alliance to offer reassurances to the Baltic states and Ukraine that they will not be discriminated against as a result of their history and geography. Such assurances could include:

(1) confirmation that NATO's open door policy applies to all Partnership for Peace states, including the Baltics and Ukraine;

(2) affirmation that the U.S. recognizes and shares the aspirations of the Baltic states to become full members of all the institutions of Europe including the EU and NATO, and will assist them in this goal;

(3) conclusion of a NATO-Ukraine agreement to deepen practical cooperation over the coming years, particularly until Ukraine decides whether or not it will eventually seek Alliance membership; and

(4) increased efforts to deepen the involvement of all four countries with NATO through active participation in the Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace.

If we proceed in this manner, as recommended by the Task Force, we believe the choice will ultimately be up to Russia to accept the hand of cooperation NATO has offered and to participate in crafting the new Europe, or to isolate itself.

Our concluding point is that NATO enlargement and deeper NATO-Russia relations both have value for the United States and the Alliance if they are pursued properly. A zero-sum debate about them therefore misses the point. The best outcome for the United States is for both tracks to succeed. This is also the best outcome for the Baltics and Ukraine that may have to live between an enlarged NATO and Russia for some time to come.

Now, before I turn to your questions, I want to say just a word about the deliberations of our group. We met four times between December and March, here in Washington. Overall, I was encouraged by the breadth of consensus we were able to achieve, considering the different perspectives and backgrounds of the individual participants. The caliber of the group was exceptional—so exceptional in fact that, during the course of our deliberations, four of our members were tapped by President Clinton to join the administration in the second term.

But, as the attached additional comments and the one dissent by General Scowcroft indicate, there were a couple of important points where views differed significantly. I point these out to you because I think they are instructive about the larger debate in this country and the challenges we will face when NATO enlargement comes up for ratification in the Senate.

The most controversial issue for our group was not what should happen this summer at Madrid, but what should happen thereafter to NATO and in Europe. Several of our members are less confident than others that the time will ever be right for a second, third or fourth tranche of NATO enlargement. General Scowcroft and Bob Blackwill call for a formal ''pause'' or breathing space after Madrid. A couple of other members question the Report's support for the Baltic states' aspirations to join NATO eventually.

My own personal view is that it would be a huge mistake to declare a formal pause in expansion after Madrid. This would cede precisely the kind of veto over NATO's plans to Moscow that the Report warns against. Making that pause permanent would effectively draw a new line across Europe slightly further east. It would relegate whole parts of Europe to a permanent security gray-zone, and would undermine any incentive those countries' leaders have to make the kinds of democratic changes that Alliance membership demands.

While I agree that NATO must proceed cautiously after Madrid and take time absorbing the new members, it is essential that the Alliance make clear at Madrid that the first new members will not be the last. Such a pledge would be particularly important for the Baltic states, which were, after all, also captive nations throughout the Cold War.

I endorse strongly all the cautions in the report that NATO's effectiveness as a defensive alliance not be diluted in any way. It is also essential that NATO's new members be full members and not ''second class citizens.'' In that regard, I want to close my comments today by lending my personal endorsement to one of the notes Bob Zoellick appended to the report. He cautions that between Madrid and the formal ratification of enlargement by all sixteen NATO parliaments, the new candidate members must enjoy all the privileges Russia might receive through a NATO-Russia charter and consultative arrangements. It would indeed be ironic, if over the next 2 years, Russia enjoyed closer ties to the Alliance than Poland.

I welcome your questions now.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I took time to comment and read some excerpts because in my view this is excellent work, and Senator LUGAR ought to be strongly commended for his leadership not only in chairing this traffic force on these important issues but in his work on the Foreign Relations Committee in connection with NATO enlargement, United States-Russia relations which are the subject of this work.

Madam President, I am pleased to cosponsor Senate Concurrent Resolution 5, which was introduced by Senator ROTH, supporting the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, because I believe the NATO alliance will be strengthened by including new members and that its capacity to contribute to stability and freedom will be enhanced by such expansion.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 5 specifically mentions four nations: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia, which should be considered for membership in the alliance, but I do not think the consideration of the Foreign Relations Committee should be limited to those countries. Serious consideration should also be given, in my opinion, to Romania, and maybe to others as well.

The Romanian Government has a record of cooperation with the United States and Western nations. During the Persian Gulf crisis, for example, Romania supported U.N. resolutions imposing sanctions against Iraq and voted to authorize the United States and other nations to enforce the sanctions and liberate Kuwait. In 1993, Romania supported continuation of a 30-year U.N. embargo against Cuba, and its military forces participated in the U.N. action in Angola in 1995.

Romania also supported the U.N. trade embargo against the former Yugoslavia, and following the Dayton accords, it deployed a 200-troop battalion to assist in the NATO-led IFOR mission. Romania has participated in many Partnership for Peace exercises and was the first nation to sign the Partnership for Peace framework document in 1994.

The Romanian Government has sought entry into several Western economic and security alliances. In 1993, Romania became an associate member of the European Union, and in 1995, it submitted an application to become a full member of the EU. In 1994, Romania became a member of the Council of Europe.

The people of Romania strongly support joining the NATO alliance. A recent European Commission poll of 20 Eastern and Central European nations shows a higher percentage of Romanians favoring membership in NATO than any other prospective new member's citizenry.

Since the fall of Romania's Communist government in 1989, the people of Romania have made great progress to achieve the goal of democracy, by showing respect for the rule of law, moving to a free market economy, and imposing civilian control over the military. By the end of 1996, Romania had completed a round of elections at all levels of Government, including both Parliamentary and Presidential elections. Observers from the Council of Europe classified the November Presidential elections ''reasonably fair and transparent,'' and it should be noted that they resulted in the first peaceful transfer of power since 1937. The current political situation is particularly remarkable when compared with the regime which held power in 1989.

In addition to strengthening the elements common to democracies worldwide, the Romanians have directly confronted and worked to abate both internal and external ethnic conflicts. In March of this year, the Prime Minister outlined steps the Government will take to ease domestic ethnic tensions. In an effort to discourage ethnic conflict with the Hungarians living in Romania, the Government negotiated and signed a treaty with Hungary. The ruling party coalition includes the party most closely associated with ethnic Hungarians. I understand also that the Romanians are nearing the end of treaty negotiations with Ukraine over remaining border issues. Both of these cases demonstrate a willingness to settle disputes with its neighbors in a peaceful way. NATO Secretary General Solana has cited the programs that Romania, among other nations, has made toward resolving outstanding bilateral differences.

Including Romania in NATO would enhance European security. Romania's military forces are among the largest in Europe. Of the countries currently being considered for NATO membership, only Romania and Poland have army, navy, and air force capabilities.

On the day their Minister of Defense was sworn in, he declared that one of his administration's highest priorities would be to prepare Romania's military for interoperability with existing NATO structures. As a result, Romanians have undertaken strenuous efforts to update their military equipment and improve their ability to operate in concert with the forces of other nations.

Perhaps the most concerted efforts of the Romanian people have been devoted to improving their economy. The results of the last election demonstrated a preference for leaders who favor privatization, freer markets, and a continuation of reform. Within 3 weeks of the decisive Presidential election, senior representatives from the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, and the World Bank traveled to Bucharest to finalize the details of a comprehensive reform package aimed at reducing inflation, cutting the deficit, and speeding privatization. This plan for reform—released in February—will be challenging for the Romanian Government and its people over the next few years, and the Government has planned certain countermeasures during the transition, such as a strengthening of the welfare program in anticipation of temporary unemployment. However, it appears that Romania is committed to this economic plan.

In August 1996, the United States granted MFN status to Romania, and this year our Department of State reported that 80 percent of Romanian farming and 70 percent of retail sales are being generated by private enterprises. This spring the International Monetary Fund announced a $400 million loan to Romania. To supplement this IMF assistance and support the Government's reforms, the European Commission has pledged $140 million. Indicators such as these all offer assurance to foreign investors, whose contributions are important to the growth and stability of Romania's economy.

Madam President, I am impressed and encouraged by the progress Romania has made, and I urge serious consideration of Romania for inclusion in NATO. I hope the Foreign Relations Committee will conduct a full and careful review of Romania's political, economic, and military strengths when it considers legislation on NATO expansion.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, are we in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period for the transaction of routine morning business.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, is each Senator allowed a period of 5 to 10 minutes to speak?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia would be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes.

FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE ACT

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, my good colleague from Missouri, Senator JOHN ASHCROFT, recently introduced legislation that would provide increased opportunities for working parents to spend more time with their families without losing 1 cent in compensation.

It is popularly called flextime. It is legislation that allows a worker an opportunity to trade time-and-a-half for just time. I think it is a very, very important piece of legislation and very timely, because there have been so many changes in the workplace.

This bill would allow employees to choose to work additional hours, more than 40, in one workweek and use those extra hours to fill in for a shorter workweek later. Or an employee could choose to take time off in lieu of overtime pay at a rate of 1½ hours for each hour of overtime. An employee could also choose to work 80 hours over a 2-week period in any combination.

Here is the important point, Madam President, that all of these choices are voluntary. These flexible options can only be exercised if the employee and employer agree to the concept. None of these choices would result in lower pay, and, in the case of comptime off,