

the 21st century and it is important that all businesses are treated fairly.

It is also important that the U.S. Senate realize the damage that can be done if you continue to see a growth in the kind of confusion that the Vertex Company has pointed out with respect to the inability of businesses to get answers. We will damage Internet commerce if we see more small businesses like the Tennessee businessman who testified before the Commerce Committee that he went out of business because of the confusion on the part of his State with respect to how electronic commercial transactions ought to be handled.

No Member of the U.S. Senate wants to see that happen. We have an opportunity to get this issue with respect to the digital economy right. We have a chance to take a timeout from discriminatory taxes, come up with a policy for Internet taxation that is fair and makes sense. Let's not kill the Internet goose that is showing the capacity to lay an extraordinary number of golden eggs.

I hope we will have a chance to discuss this issue at great length throughout the course of the week. I especially want to thank my colleagues, Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, who has worked diligently with me on this legislation for more than a year; my colleague, Senator DORGAN, who does have questions about this legislation but has always been very fair in terms of raising them. I am very hopeful we will have a chance to debate and vote on this legislation during the course of this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Susan Goodman be granted floor privileges during the duration of my remarks.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, what is the current time limitation for speaking as in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ten minutes is the time limit.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes to deliver 2 statements on 2 different topics.

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

(The remarks of Mr. GRAHAM pertaining to the introduction of S. 2061 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

NATO EXPANSION

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, approximately ten days ago, the Senate

voted to ratify the accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance.

I joined 79 of my colleagues in supporting this historic measure.

This vote occurred at the end of a week of debate in the Senate on this matter. But it signaled the beginning of an equally important process—that of redoubling or diplomatic efforts to build greater trust and cooperation with Russia.

Many who argued against expanding the alliance did so on the assumption that such expansion would sour our relations with Russia and reduce the chances for progress in arms control. I believe that the consequences of expanding NATO are still undetermined, and that those consequences will depend largely on how we conduct our relations with Russia in the coming years.

Russia currently has 6,680 strategic nuclear warheads, thousands of tactical warheads, and hundreds of tons of fissile material that could be used to produce additional nuclear warheads.

Ensuring that these weapons are properly controlled and further reductions in strategic warheads are made is one of the principal national security interests of the United States.

This is why it is critical that we take greater steps to reach out to Russia and demonstrate our desire to work with them in a cooperative fashion.

Mr. President, in 1996, I was a member of the Commission on America's National Interests. This commission, which included my colleagues Senator MCCAIN, ROBERTS, and former Senator NUNN, as well as other foreign policy experts, was charged with identifying American national interests in the Post-cold-war era.

The Commission specifically addressed the question of expanding NATO, saying, "NATO enlargement is in the U.S. interest, but it will be essential to manage the process in ways that take account of Russian concerns."

We have already taken several important steps, including the U.S.-Russian Founding Act, the Nunn-Lugar programs, and the Partnership for Peace. Indeed, U.S. and Russian forces have served side by side in Bosnia. But there is much more to be done.

We must seek new ways to cooperate and build trust between our two great nations. What is needed is a sustained creative program of outreach to demonstrate that NATO expansion was not a hostile act designed to build a new Iron Curtain closer to Russia's borders.

Nor was it a signal that we have lost interest in helping Russia work through one of the most significant societal transformations in history.

One suggestion for creative outreach involves the Year 2000 Problem, which is sometimes referred to as Y2K.

We have undertaken a massive effort to deal with this issue of the reliability of our information systems after the year 2000. The Defense Department has

alone identified 2800 critical systems that must be "cured" before Y2K.

The Russians have not yet determined if they have a similar problem, not to mention they have not commenced the process of attempting to fix it.

It is in our interests to work with Russia to help them identify the scope of their Y2K problem and to remedy it.

It would be detrimental in the extreme to our interests if the Russians awoke on the morning of January 1, 2000, with blank screens on their early warning radars and command and control systems. What could be even worse is if their critical systems continue to operate with false and corrupted information. It is in both U.S. and Russian interests for us to have the highest level of confidence in our command and control systems and to build confidence through transparency and other cooperative measures.

Another area that presents opportunity for sustained outreach to Russia is interparliamentary cooperation. Each member of Congress, regardless of their feelings on NATO enlargement, should make an effort to reach out to our counterparts in Russia to foster greater trust and cooperation.

During the Cold War, intermittent attention was paid to interparliamentary relations. Unfortunately, since 1989, Russians believe that U.S. interest in such contacts has dwindled.

Some efforts at interparliamentary cooperation are underway. I will mention two of them. The Aspen Institute has held yearly meetings since 1994 that bring together U.S. and Russian parliamentarians. Speaker GINGRICH has established an initiative, under the direction of Congressman CURT WELDON, to reach out to the Russian Duma. But more should be done. Because of its responsibility to provide advice and consent on treaties, the Senate has a special responsibility to play a role in this effort.

We can be instrumental in creating an environment in which the Russian Duma will seek to cooperate with the United States. In fact, the commission on America's National Interests spoke of "direct contact—engaging Russia in ways that demonstrate the benefits on nonaggressive behavior," as one of the principal ways that we can promote a benign Russian foreign policy. These types of contacts will also serve to strengthen Russian democracy. All of these are very much in the United States national interest.

While I supported NATO expansion, I was concerned that the Senate entered into the debate after the United States had already committed to expanding the alliance.

The vote for NATO expansion in the Senate was bipartisan, but in my judgment that support was not very deep. Many senators, including myself, felt we were too deeply committed to reject expansion, calculating that the cost of non-action at this point would be greater than the risk of action.

Preventing a repetition of this if and when there is to be additional expansion of the alliance is critical. A serious dialogue must involve Congress, the White House, and the American people, and must take place before commitments are made.

An example of this was the structured consultations that took place between a Congress which was shifting in terms of its partisan leadership and a Democratic President immediately following the end of the Second World War.

In fact, Senator Tom Connelly and Arthur Vandenburg, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, were personally involved in negotiating many of the post-war treaties, spending much of 1946, for instance, not in the Senate Chambers but overseas involved in the detailed negotiations of what was to become the framework of our cold war strategy.

President Truman used these close consultations to build a bipartisan consensus that led, among other things, to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, and the strong vote of support which that treaty received from the U.S. Senate.

Divided government raises the level of partisanship on domestic issues. As a nation, we cannot accept similar destabilization of our international values, goals, and responsibilities.

It will be on our ability to meet those challenges that the ultimate test of the wisdom of our vote to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will be predicated.

Thank you, Mr. President.

140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AD-MISSION OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA INTO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and to help celebrate the 140th anniversary of Minnesota's admission into the United States of America. Let me begin, Mr. President, by quoting James Hill, founder of the Great Northern Railroad and one of Minnesota's true pioneers. It is said that Mr. Hill proclaimed his reasons for living and working in Minnesota by saying, "You can't interest me in any proposition in any place where it doesn't snow."

Well, Minnesota has never had a shortage of snow, which—depending on who you ask and just how many months the winter has lingered—is considered either a blessing or a curse. But even Mr. Hill recognized that snow is just one of Minnesota's many riches. Ever since word began to spread last century about a northern land of promise and prosperity, a land with abundant natural resources and indescribable beauty, people have traveled to Minnesota to live, work, and prosper. And during its 140 years of statehood, Minnesota has produced some of the country's best and brightest, making it

a world leader in agriculture, technology, medicine, and business.

Along the way, Minnesotans have endured cold winters, hot summers, floods, tornadoes, and any other natural disaster Mother Nature has thrown their way.

At no time has the resolve of our people been more tested than with the natural disasters that have plagued our state during the last year. Last spring, the people of northwestern Minnesota were hit with the worst flooding in our state's history. Earlier this spring, the residents of south-central Minnesota lived through one of the largest tornadoes ever to hit our state. Yet, in both cases, Minnesotans worked together to rebuild and recover, and Minnesota is stronger for their efforts. Strangers have labeled that willingness to step forward and help one another as "Minnesota Nice." We think that is just the way things ought to be.

Throughout our history, Minnesotans have understood the importance of family, hard work, and personal responsibility. It is not just talk—they live it. Growing up on a Minnesota dairy farm in a small farming community, I saw those strengths firsthand. I saw how these qualities help make Minnesota one of the world's premiere food producers.

Farming and farm-related businesses play a critical role in our state; one of every four Minnesota jobs is tied in some way to agriculture, and 25% of our economy is dependent upon farmers and agri-business. In 1996, Minnesota was ranked 15th in the country in agriculture exports to Asia.

Minnesota's world leadership is not limited only to agriculture. Our state is home to some of the world's leading job providers—including 3M, Pillsbury, Honeywell, Cargill, and a list far too long to mention here. Minnesota is also known for its achievements in the area of health care. It is a leader in the medical device industry and home to one of the world's premiere health care facilities, the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

The commitment of Minnesotans to hard work and to producing some of the best products in the world has made Minnesota an active participant not only in the nation's economy, but in the world economy as well.

Minnesotans have long understood the importance of America's role within the international community. Our residents have had the insight to understand that we do not live in a vacuum . . . that our economic prosperity depends on our ability to trade freely with the rest of the world. This point was highlighted during a meeting I had last month with farmers in Crookston, Minnesota. Although they asked questions about issues here at home, many of their questions were about IMF, free trade, and the Asian financial crisis. Our farmers and other business people know that what happens in Asia or Europe today can affect business in America and Minnesota tomorrow.

One Minnesotan who has helped to shape our leadership role on international issues is former Governor Harold Stassen. Governor Stassen helped to write the charter for the United Nations and at age 91 continues to be an outspoken proponent of free and open relations with the rest of the world.

This coming weekend, Minnesota's international tradition will continue when Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan comes to Minnesota to tour the Center for Victims of Torture. Many may be surprised to hear that the Secretary General attended college in Minnesota, at Macalester College in Saint Paul.

For the last few minutes, I have been speaking here on the floor, with great pride, about my home state. To some, I am sure it sounds a bit like bragging. But on this day, 140 years after Minnesota became the 32nd State admitted to the Union, I want to express the honor I feel in representing the people of Minnesota in the U.S. Senate—for Minnesota is one of the premier states in the greatest country on Earth.

I want to end today with the sentence used by Minnesota author and radio personality Garrison Keillor to describe the fictitious town of Lake Wobegone, Minnesota . . . because I think it can be applied to all of Minnesota. I am proud to hail from a state "where all the women are strong, the men are good looking, and the children are above average."

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, May 8, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,485,869,171,398.56 (Five trillion, four hundred eighty-five billion, eight hundred sixty-nine million, one hundred seventy-one thousand, three hundred ninety-eight dollars and fifty-six cents).

One year ago, May 8, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,330,417,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred thirty billion, four hundred seventeen million).

Twenty-five years ago, May 8, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$452,712,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-two billion, seven hundred twelve million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,033,157,171,398.56 (Five trillion, thirty-three billion, one hundred fifty-seven million, one hundred seventy-one thousand, three hundred ninety-eight dollars and fifty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.