

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 ADMISSION 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.