is not stewardship. It is not governance. It is barbarism.

NATO SUMMIT

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call attention to the NATO summit that will take place next week in Chicago.

NATO was founded with the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949 to safeguard the freedom and security of all of its members. Since then, the alliance has been the mainstay of the transatlantic cooperation that has been an important part of this Nation's security.

All 27 of our NATO allies, along with 22 non-NATO partners, have served shoulder to shoulder with our brave men and women in Afghanistan, working to ensure that that country never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists.

In Chicago, we will continue important discussions on the transition of security responsibility from ISAF to the Afghans. Particularly in today's global economic environment, Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we recognize the value of NATO as a proven force multiplier. The alliance is working to ensure that NATO is well prepared for future challenges.

As we welcome our friends to Chicago on May 20 and 21, we affirm the vitality of this transatlantic bond and of our continued commitment to our common defense.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5652, SEQUESTER REPLACEMENT RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2012

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 648 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 648

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5652) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 201 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2013. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 112–21 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) two hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOODALL. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you coming in early to be with us early this morning. This is a big day. This is the reconciliation bill.

I serve on both the Rules Committee and the Budget Committee, Mr. Speaker. As you know, we've had some tremendous successes in the appropriations process. This week, we've been working through the Commerce-Justice-Science bill. It's a bill that's reduced spending to those levels that we had in 2008, doing those things that the voters sent us here to do.

We're going to vote on that bill today in final passage. But that appropriations process that we have control over here in the House, that process where we reduced spending from 2010 levels down to 2011 levels, down to 2012 levels, and are going to go down again to 2013 levels to be responsible stewards of taxpayers' dollars, those are only one-third of the taxpayer dollars.

Two-thirds of the taxpayer dollars that are spent in this town—and by spent I really mean borrowed and then spent—come on what they call mandatory spending programs. Mr. Speaker, as you know, mandatory spending programs are dollars that go out the door whether Congress acts or not. Appropriation bills require Congress to act affirmatively, but mandatory spending goes right out the door without any oversight from this body until you get to reconciliation.

Reconciliation is that process that Democrats put in place wisely years and years ago to allow the House and the Senate to come together and begin to reduce, restrain, do oversight on those mandatory spending dollars. This is a rule that brings that bill to the floor.

That bill is going to be coming under a closed rule, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about a bill that has been put together by almost every committee of jurisdiction here in this House and then assembled by the Budget Committee and brought here to the floor. It's been the subject of countless hearings already. We looked at whether we'd be able to bring a Democratic substitute to the floor. None was submitted that complied with the rules of the House.

So we have one bill on the floor today, an up-and-down vote, on whether or not we're willing to engage in the first serious reconciliation process on this floor—I would argue—since 1997. Some folks might say 2003. I say 1997. Why, Mr. Speaker?

□ 0920

I'll tell you, it's the right thing to do anyway. It's the right thing to do anyway as responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. But in this case, these aren't reductions for the sake of reductions. These are reductions for the sake of complying with what I would argue is a very good deficit-reduction agreement between the President and the Senate and the House last August. And as a part of that agreement, we put in some blanket cuts to national security, some blanket cuts to national defense. And some commentators have described these cuts, Mr. Speaker, as being intentionally so crazy that they would never happen but would be used only as a tool to get the Joint Select Committee to act.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Joint Select Committee did not succeed last fall. It's a source of great frustration for me and is also a source of great frustration for the Members who served on that committee. They had an opportunity to bring an up-or-down vote to both the House and the Senate floor on anything they came up with, Mr. Speaker. They didn't have to get the whole $1.2 trillion. They didn't have to get $1.5 trillion. They could have gotten $1 trillion. They could have gotten $500 billion. They could have gotten $250 billion, and we would have brought that to the floor for an up-or-down vote. But they got nothing.

So where are we? Well, in the words of Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, he says:

> We are at a place where, if these cuts were allowed to go, the impact of these cuts would be devastating to the Defense Department.

I happen to share his concerns. Again, these were across-the-board cuts put in place to be so intentionally crazy that Congress would never allow them to occur, and it would spur the Joint Committee to action.

I happen to have supported an amendment offered by CHRIS VAN HOLLEN of Maryland, the ranking member on the Budget Committee. When we were going through the Budget Committee process last year, he offered an amendment that said, dadgummit, everything's got to be on the table, and that includes the Defense Department. I agree with him. The Defense Department does need to be on the table. And in fact, the Defense Department is undergoing $300 billion worth of reductions today.

This bill does nothing to change that. There is $300 billion being reduced from the Defense Department, as well it should. It's not easy, but it should happen, and it is happening. This isn't dealing with that. This is dealing with even additional cuts. Again, in the words of Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, a former Democratic Member of this House: