

will ensure a more open and accountable regulatory process which will improve our health, safety and environmental protections while reducing the regulatory burden on those subject to those laws. It will not compromise health or safety protections. I recently wrote the Majority Leader urging that this legislation receive consideration on the Senate floor, and I am hopeful that we will have a debate on how to best ensure safe and healthy work places in the coming weeks.

On each Workers Memorial Day, I urge my colleagues to remember those American workers who have lost their lives or were injured on the job. Congress, the Administration, labor and business, must work together as they did nearly 30 years ago, to ensure that there are adequate protections to prevent unnecessary injuries and fatalities in the future and improve the lives of all of our nation's workers.●

TRIBUTE TO THE FLOYD COUNTY EMERGENCY AND RESCUE SQUAD: THIRTY YEARS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE IN EASTERN KENTUCKY

● Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the anniversary of the Floyd County Emergency and Rescue Squad. Thirty years ago this week, this squad of volunteers was formed to help the people of Eastern Kentucky in times of emergency and disaster, and have been doing so ever since.

The Floyd County Emergency and Rescue Squad was founded in April, 1958, as a result of a tragic accident in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, in which a school bus plunged into the Big Sandy River, killing 26 students and the driver. As a result of this tragedy, dozens of community members came together to form the Squad and the late Graham Burchett became the first Captain, a position he held for twenty years.

Since that time, over 300 community members have served on the Squad—doctors and lawyers, coal miners and factory workers—people from all walks of life have worked side-by-side in volunteer service to their community. The Squad operates without any public support. The members are all volunteers and all their equipment is paid for through private donations and grants.

The Squad currently maintains a roster of thirty active members and dozens of reserve members. The Squad is called on for auto extrication, water rescue and drowning recovery, lost or missing persons, and assistance to coal mine rescue teams. In the last month alone, they have assisted in the evacuation of flood victims, recovered a drowning victim and have assisted on four auto accidents.

Despite the fact that the Squad must labor mightily for every dollar they get, they have managed to secure ultra-modern equipment, and are called frequently to assist in recovery activities outside the county and even outside the state.

Mr. President, I hope all my colleagues will join me in offering our congratulations to Captain Harry Adams, Co-Captain Richie Schoolcraft, Treasurer and Secretary Brian Sexton, First Lieutenant Derek Calhoun and Second Lieutenant Lee Schoolcraft and all the volunteers of the Floyd County Rescue Squad. They carry on the Squad's rich tradition of volunteering their time and risking their lives to help the people of their community, and they are all worthy of our admiration and thanks.●

PROTOCOLS TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF POLAND, HUNGARY, AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

(The text of resolution of ratification to the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as agreed to by the Senate on April 30, 1998, reads as follows:)

Resolved, (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

SECTION 1. SENATE ADVICE AND CONSENT SUBJECT TO DECLARATIONS AND CONDITIONS.

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (as defined in section 4(7)), which were opened for signature at Brussels on December 16, 1997, and signed on behalf of the United States of America and other parties to the North Atlantic Treaty, subject to the declarations of section 2 and the conditions of section 3.

SEC. 2. DECLARATIONS.

The advice and consent of the Senate to ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic is subject to the following declarations:

(1) REAFFIRMATION THAT UNITED STATES MEMBERSHIP IN NATO REMAINS A VITAL NATIONAL SECURITY INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES.—The Senate declares that—

(A) for nearly 50 years the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has served as the preeminent organization to defend the territory of the countries in the North Atlantic area against all external threats;

(B) through common action, the established democracies of North America and Europe that were joined in NATO persevered and prevailed in the task of ensuring the survival of democratic government in Europe and North America throughout the Cold War;

(C) NATO enhances the security of the United States by embedding European states in a process of cooperative security planning, by preventing the destabilizing renationalization of European military policies, and by ensuring an ongoing and direct leadership role for the United States in European security affairs;

(D) the responsibility and financial burden of defending the democracies of Europe and North America can be more equitably shared through an alliance in which specific obligations and force goals are met by its members;

(E) the security and prosperity of the United States is enhanced by NATO's collective defense against aggression that may threaten the territory of NATO members; and

(F) United States membership in NATO remains a vital national security interest of the United States.

(2) STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR NATO ENLARGEMENT.—The Senate finds that—

(A) notwithstanding the collapse of communism in most of Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States and its NATO allies face threats to their stability and territorial integrity, including those common threats described in section 3(1)(A)(v);

(B) the invasion of Poland, Hungary, or the Czech Republic, or their destabilization arising from external subversion, would threaten the stability of Europe and jeopardize vital United States national security interests;

(C) Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, having established democratic governments and having demonstrated a willingness to meet all requirements of membership, including those necessary to contribute to the territorial defense of all NATO members, are in a position to further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area; and

(D) extending NATO membership to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic will strengthen NATO, enhance security and stability in Central Europe, deter potential aggressors, and thereby advance the interests of the United States and its NATO allies.

(3) SUPREMACY OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL IN NATO DECISION-MAKING.—The Senate understands that—

(A) as the North Atlantic Council is the supreme decision-making body of NATO, the North Atlantic Council will not subject its decisions to review, challenge, or veto by any forum affiliated with NATO, including the Permanent Joint Council or the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, or by any non-member state participating in any such forum;

(B) the North Atlantic Council does not require the consent of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or any other international organization in order to take any action pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty in defense of the North Atlantic area, including the deployment, operation, or stationing of forces; and

(C) the North Atlantic Council has direct responsibility for matters relating to the basic policies of NATO, including development of the Strategic Concept of NATO (as defined in section 3(1)(F)), and a consensus position of the North Atlantic Council will precede any negotiation between NATO and non-NATO members that affects NATO's relationship with non-NATO members participating in fora such as the Permanent Joint Council.

(4) FULL MEMBERSHIP FOR NEW NATO MEMBERS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Senate understands that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, in becoming NATO members, will have all the rights, obligations, responsibilities, and protections that are afforded to all other NATO members.

(B) POLITICAL COMMITMENTS.—The Senate endorses the political commitments made by NATO to the Russian Federation in the NATO-Russia Founding Act, which are not legally binding and do not in any way preclude any future decisions by the North Atlantic Council to preserve the security of NATO members.

(5) NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP. The Senate finds that it is in the interest of the United States for NATO to develop a new and constructive relationship with the Russian Federation as the Russian Federation pursues democratization, market reforms, and peaceful relations with its neighbors.

(6) THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.—