



H.Res. 1266 – Congratulating Albania and Croatia on being invited to begin accession talks with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and expressing support for continuing to enlarge the alliance

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1266 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Elton Gallegly (R-CA) on June 11, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, but was never considered.

H.Res. 1266 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 30, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1266 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Congratulates Albania and Croatia on being invited by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to begin accession talks and recognizes the historic nature of that achievement, earned through years of hard work and a demonstrated commitment to common security and the shared values of NATO members;
- Expresses strong support for the timely completion of the accession process with Albania and Croatia;
- Fully supports the invitations to initiate an Intensified Dialogue between NATO and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia;
- Supports the enlargement of NATO and believes that continued engagement with all countries that aspire to join NATO will strengthen security for all countries in the Euro-Atlantic region;
- Supports the declaration of NATO at the Bucharest Summit, which states that NATO's door should remain open to European democracies willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, in accordance with article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed at Washington April 4, 1949 (TIAS 1964); and
- Affirms the statement in that declaration that any decision with respect to the membership of countries in NATO will be made through consensus, by members of NATO, and no country outside of NATO has a vote or veto with respect to such decisions.

BACKGROUND

At its April 2008 meeting, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invited Albania and Croatia to begin talks to join the alliance immediately. On July 9, 2008, these two Balkan states signed Accession Protocols with NATO. The signing of protocols is a key step toward formal NATO membership for Albania and Croatia. The 26 NATO member states must now ratify the protocols according to their national requirements and procedures.

NATO is a military alliance established by the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, NATO constitutes a system of collective defense whereby its member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external force. NATO has engaged in military operations in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. The United States is a founding member state of NATO.

Albania is a parliamentary democracy which is currently transforming its economy to a market-based system. Albania, a country of 3.6 million, is located in the Balkans and borders Greece, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Croatia, also located in the Balkans, is a former Yugoslav state. Croatia is now a democratic republic with a population of 4.5 million.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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