

step forward in the authorization bill for the Armed Forces—I wish to thank the distinguished leader and, indeed, the minority leader for their tireless assistance, and that of Senator REID, and of course, Senator LEVIN. They have enabled us to move this another important step forward. I thank them on that.

VITIATION OF THE ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT NOS. 3231 AND 3418

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the adoption of amendment Nos. 3231 and 3418 of the Defense authorization bill be vitiated.

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

Mr. WARNER. To explain this, these were two gold medals. Unintentionally, the proponents of those amendments did not recognize that the Banking Committee had an important role to play. Both proponents are now working with the chairman and ranking member of the Banking Committee. In the case of Senator CLELAND, he has over 68 signatures on a gold medal for the distinguished former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, General Clark, including the signature of the Senators from Virginia and from Michigan. That request has been granted?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2549

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the only first-degree amendments remaining in order to the Department of Defense authorization bill, S. 2549, be limited to amendments that are relevant to the provisions of the bill and on the finite list of amendments in order to the bill, that these first-degree amendments be subject to relevant second-degree amendments, provided further that the first-degree amendments must be filed at the desk by close of business Friday, June 30, 2000.

I further ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the two managers to send to the desk any packages of amendments that are relevant and from the finite list of amendments in order to the bill and that these amendments be cleared by both managers of the legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, we do not object. Quite the contrary; we thank the distinguished chairman of our committee and the leaders, both majority and minority, for their good work, and also Senator REID, who has worked so hard on this, and all the other Senators who have cooperated to make this unanimous consent agreement possible. I also thank Senator BYRD, who has been waiting very patiently, so we could dispose of this important measure.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, we thank Senator BYRD. He has been an integral part of these negotiations, together with Senator ROTH and others. I am hopeful that matter can be resolved in the future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous consent request? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague, Senator LEVIN, who has worked with me throughout on this bill. For 22 years we have been together, and our respective chiefs of staff. It has been entirely separate, but we have achieved another milestone. Now it appears to me that we will be able to come to the Senate at a time convenient to our leadership and complete action on the annual Defense authorization bill. I believe this will be 42 consecutive times the Senate has passed this wide piece of legislation for the men and women in the Armed Forces and, indeed, the security of the Nation. I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I notice our staffs are smiling as well because this has been a big effort on their part. With all the years we have put in together, we will not be able to catch up to Senator BYRD, but we are going to keep using him as our role model.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee for the excellent work they have consistently given to this legislation, the many times they have brought it to the floor of the Senate. The distinguished Senator from Virginia, Mr. WARNER, and I worked together on several amendments. I am always happy to have his cooperation and his cosponsorship. He is a man whose heart is as stout as an Irish oak and as pure as the Lakes of Killarney.

As to the distinguished ranking member, the Bible says: Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings. Senator LEVIN has already stood before Kings and will probably stand before more if there are any left.

Mr. WARNER. We thank our distinguished former majority leader and a member of the Armed Services Committee for his kind remarks.

Mr. BYRD. I thank both of my colleagues.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, in a few short days, our Nation will celebrate for the 224th time the signing of the Declaration of Independence. For some, the occasion will take on an unwarranted special significance because there are people who have been led to believe—in some cases misled, I would say—that this is the first Independence Day of the new millennium. For them,

the celebration requires extra fanfare, even more spectacular displays of fireworks, and an even bigger party, akin to the gala bashes of last New Year's Eve. However, in reality, the millennial Independence Day celebration coincides with the 225th anniversary of the signing next year, in 2001. So I, at least, will reserve my extra sparklers and Roman candles for next year.

I will not, however, let any confusion over the new century/new millennium stand in the way of one of my favorite holidays. The Fourth of July is a standout. It is one of the few holidays still celebrated on the actual anniversary of the day, as opposed to being appended to a weekend for convenience's sake. Though sales may beckon from nearby shopping malls, the holiday is not obscured beneath any major sporting event.

There are no 4th of July college football championships, no basketball finals, no baseball World Series games to divide families into the camps of the spectators and the ignored. The 4th of July is instead, typically, celebrated by families and friends in the great beauty of the outdoors.

Some years, the weather is perfect, with blue skies, moderate temperatures and low humidity, when the American flags are fanned by gentle breezes—the kind of a day that fills me with a sense of exhilaration and anticipation. Other years, the weather is almost unbearably hot and sticky, the flag hangs limply from the pole, and sun screen mingles with sweat to turn picnickers into melting human popsicles. But even these sweltering days can be relieved by mimicking childrens' refreshing runs through a water sprinkler arcing manmade rainbows across the yard, or by dousing the heat with gallons of tart lemonade and sweet watermelon chilled in a tub of ice. On summer days like these, people still resort to rocking chairs on porches and paper fans waved lazily before faces, much as they did when I was a boy in the days before air conditioning.

The highlight of the day, is, of course, the fireworks. My favorite time of this holiday comes as the temperatures cool and the skies darken, and the fireflies' display hints of the light show to come. I cannot wait to see my little great-granddaughter Caroline's expression as she is presented with the mysteries of smoke worms, sparklers, and Roman candles. I hope that she will not be so afraid of the explosive booms of the big fireworks that she cannot enjoy the fiery display, the cascades of red, blue, green, and golden sparks drifting down over our heads.

It is alright for her to be afraid, of course. After all, those fireworks, so festive now, recall the great battles fought by our young nation to gain its independence from mighty Britain. Two-hundred and twenty-four years ago, on a similar hot summer night,