

You have already demonstrated that the key to your strength as a leader is in supporting the people of the U.S. Navy. I was heartened to hear you openly back programs like food stamp relief for service members, and testify at your Senate confirmation hearing this spring about the sailors that, I quote,

"We know that nothing is impossible with them. We can't do readiness. We can't successfully complete missions. No, we can't be victorious without them. And so nothing is more important to me than them." End quote.

The Navy has selected an outstanding 27th Chief of Naval Operations, another Vietnam combat veteran, a Destroyer-man who brings an outstanding breadth of command and joint leadership. Admiral, it is clear that you are more than capable of continuing the strong, insightful leadership provided by Admiral Johnson, leadership which will be required to guide the Navy with the vigilance and courage needed to implement reforms.

Forty-five years ago this August, when I was a youngster at the academy, I stood in Dahlgren Hall to hear the words of Admiral Arleigh Burke as he became the New Chief of Naval Operations. He went on to serve an unprecedented, distinguished three terms as CNO.

The uncertainties and challenges of the age we live in stand in stark contrast to the moment in which Admiral Arleigh Burke summoned his destroyer squadron and ordered them into battle against a superior Japanese fleet. They had to attack at the Bougainville coast to protect the landings in progress at Empress Augusta Bay. Defeat—a mathematical probability if not certainty—would have led to a loss of the battle and left vulnerable nearly all naval defenses of the Southern Pacific.

What compelled Admiral Burke to take what seemed such a desperate gamble by committing the little ships of Destroyer Squadron 23, the Little Beavers, against the immense strength of the Japanese fleet? What explains his firm faith in the reliability of the intelligence upon which he based the supposition of his ships and his confidence in the men who would command them in battle? How was he sure that the Americans whom he ordered into harm's way would obey his orders and reward his trust with such courage and resourcefulness?

He believed in his people. He believed in their courage and their ability. He knew that they, like he, were empowered by the justice of their cause, by a love of America expressed in action, and in sacrifice. Trust, derived from his appreciation of his countrymen's virtues, and his wisdom and confidence about how they would discharge their duties in a desperate battle was the essence of Admiral Burke's extraordinary leadership.

By memorializing Admiral Burke, we memorialize the very finest virtues of our blessed country. We also pay tribute to the attributes of leadership embodied in the service of Admiral Johnson and Admiral Clark, attributes that are reflected in their actions to support the men and women under their command.

The greatness of our destiny rests in the hands of every man and woman blessed to call America home. That's why Admiral

Johnson has taken so seriously his responsibilities to his sailors. He knew that together they shared equally in the honor of defending a great nation. Admiral, you will be the first to direct all praise to the men and women under your command. But I know that they would direct it back to you—the man at the helm.

Jay, you have served your Navy and your nation well. I want to thank you and Garland for your many years of exemplary service to America, and bid you fair winds and following seas, for I know we will see you again. I know you will find new ways to serve the Navy and America, and I will always rely on your wise counsel.

Admiral Clark and Connie, congratulations and welcome. I am confident that you will both distinguish the noble tradition you inherit today. Admiral, I look forward to working with you as you lead the Navy toward its always magnificent destiny.

I would like to close by speaking directly to the women and men of the U.S. Navy. As we stand here this morning, our sailors are risking their lives above, on, and below the ocean.

But this risk is not without reward—the reward of serving a cause greater than one's own self-interest. I commend your service in the Navy. I hold the Navy closer to my heart than any other human institution that I have ever been a part of—save my family. The Navy for many years was the only world I knew. It is still the world I know best and love most.

I trust in your willingness and ability to uphold the honor of your Navy and your country, for I have seen the best of America in my travels over the last year and know that America deeply appreciates your service. I recognize that we still have many miles to sail to ensure that you are properly rewarded for your continued sacrifice and service to our nation.

Make the most of these days, for you will never forget the honor of your service in this Navy. Nor will your country forget the honor you gave her in seas where so many Americans, like Admiral Burke and Admiral Johnson, fought for the love of their country. Admiral Johnson, I thank you for the honor of inviting me to return to a place I love so well. Admiral Clark, I offer my best wishes and look forward to working with you. Thank you.

#### GUN DEATHS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, this week we received some positive news from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. According to newly released statistics, firearm deaths among young people decreased in 1998.

The new report shows that firearm deaths among children and adolescents under 20 dropped 10 percent—from 4,223 in 1997 to 3,792 in 1998. Perhaps even more significant, in 1998, deaths among young people were down 35 percent since 1994, when firearms led to the deaths of 5,833 young people.

It is no coincidence that firearm casualties have been reduced by 35 percent since 1994, the year the Brady Law went in to effect. The Brady Law, which requires licensed firearms sellers to conduct criminal background checks on prospective gun purchasers, has successfully kept guns out of the hands of hundreds of thousands of criminals and youths.

Although we can rejoice that fewer youths are subject to the danger of guns, we should still be dismayed that 10 of our young people (on average) die from guns every day. 10 children and adolescents as well as 74 adult Americans suffered gun-related deaths daily in 1998, and that is far too many.

Congress must do more to protect our children and loved ones from these gun tragedies. We can start by strengthening the Brady Law by closing the gun show loophole. That loophole allows perpetrators of violent crimes to buy guns from non-licensed or private sellers, who are not required to conduct criminal background checks. This loophole undermines the successes of Brady by arming those who would otherwise not be permitted to purchase firearms. In May of 1999, the Senate passed legislation to close this loophole by extending criminal background checks to guns sold at gun shows and pawn shops, but opponents of this common sense provision have kept it from becoming law.

It is disheartening to know that Congress has not yet passed sensible gun laws—laws designed to protect American lives. Without addressing this issue, America will continue to lose 10 young people a day to guns, and that is 10 too many.

#### A COMPILATION OF INFORMATION ON ETHANOL ETHERS

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I would like to note the release of a recent publication that all members of Congress should read. This new publication was produced by the Clean Fuels Development Coalition and it includes a presentation of facts about ethanol-based ethers.

As we attempt to deal with the water contamination problems resulting from leaking underground storage tanks, much of the debate is focusing on methanol-based ethers, i.e. MTBE. While MTBE has played an important role in reducing ozone throughout the U.S., the problems of water contamination have led many to advocate limiting or even banning this product.