

QDR comes out, and what some of the weapon systems needs are and what some of the basing needs are. We are the elected representatives of the people. We represent the people of our respective States. In my view, we should be the ones who review this type of information before we make votes on shuttering bases across the country. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, and my chairman and distinguished ranking member are here, I think we have a responsibility before we make decisions of this consequence and this magnitude about bases that may never be able to be opened again. Once we shut these things down, they are shut down for good.

There are a lot of questions that remain unanswered about the QDR, about basing needs overseas, about what our needs are going to be when those troops start coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan from other theaters.

I appreciate and respect the leaders of this committee on their thoughts. I understand their opposition to this amendment. Frankly, I would urge my colleagues who look at these issues and are concerned about moving forward too quickly on decisions that have enormous and major consequences, not only for the communities that are impacted but for the national security of the United States of America, that without having this kind of information, it seems to me at least that many of the decisions are, at a minimum, very premature.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank our colleague. We have had quite a good debate. I am prepared to move on, subject to the views of my colleague.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I think it is important that in addition to getting the general views of the administration about the importance of this BRAC process proceeding for the reasons they have set forth, the language of this amendment be forwarded to them. I will give an example of why.

As I understand it, one of the impacts of the amendment would be that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Army to bring back to the United States about 49,000 personnel and their families because those relocations back to the United States are dependent upon certain steps being taken as proposed in the BRAC process. We are leaving a lot of people in limbo overseas, I believe—that is our conclusion—but I would like to hear from the Defense Department as to the specific ramifications of this kind of delay, in addition to the reasons they have already given for opposing any delay or cancellation of the BRAC process. So I agree with our chairman that they are very clear that they would veto this bill if this kind of amendment passes.

But in terms of the argument on the amendment, there are practical problems, in addition to the ones already raised by the Defense Department, that they may want to raise if we get them the language. I hope that over the

weekend the chairman will forward the language to the Defense Department.

Mr. WARNER. Rest assured, that will be done. I will prepare a letter. The Senator from Michigan and I will be here tomorrow morning and perhaps we can make a joint request outlining precisely what our views are.

Mr. LEVIN. I hope the Senator from South Dakota, if available tomorrow or Monday, if there is further debate on this amendment, might be present or be able to listen to the debate so he could respond to it.

Mr. WARNER. I anticipate that the reply from the administration would be forthcoming on Monday. I think the Senator would be available to debate this matter later in the afternoon.

Mr. THUNE. I will, and I welcome the opportunity to come to the floor and speak to it as well.

Mr. WARNER. The Senator has a very distinguished list of cosponsors, I might add.

Mr. LEVIN. And an even more distinguished list of opponents. Just kidding. The hour is late.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, in great seriousness, referring to the cosponsors, they are Senators LIEBERMAN, SNOWE, LAUTENBERG, JOHNSON, DODD, COLLINS, CORZINE, BINGAMAN, and DOMENICI.

I stick by my words that it is a distinguished list of cosponsors.

Mr. THUNE. I thank the chair.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the managers wish to advise the Senate that we have accomplished a good deal today, and we will be fully in business tomorrow, with the exception of roll-call votes. It is our hope and expectation that we can go through a number of amendments and stack those votes for a time to be decided by leadership.

Therefore, Mr. President, I think we can move off of the bill and do such wrap-up as is necessary.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

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

TRIBUTE TO FORMER SENATOR JAMES EXON

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to pay tribute to former Senator Jim Exon, a friend and colleague, who passed away on June 10, 2005.

Jim Exon is a legend in his own State. For almost three decades, he served the people of Nebraska as both Governor and Senator. And through dedication and the force of his personality, he almost singlehandedly founded the Democratic Party in his State. In his entire career, he never lost an election because his constituents recognized his basic decency and common sense.

However, Jim Exon didn't only serve his Nebraska constituents. He also served his country and our Government in ways that we could sorely use today. He was, of course, a patriot and World War II veteran who brought his wartime experience to his important role on defense matters. But beyond his obvious love of country, Jim Exon especially loved his country's democracy, which he saw as the crucial spark animating the American community.

Jim Exon relished forthright debate and always had tremendous faith in the fairness of our system of Government. But while he advanced his beliefs with conviction and passion, he also listened to those with whom he disagreed. Indeed, he was renowned as a fair and considerate lawmaker who routinely sought common ground with adversaries out of genuine sympathy for their concerns.

Jim Exon's facility for finding common ground with others stemmed from his roots in America's heartland. In rural areas and small towns, neighbors must depend on one another. People in the country rely on pragmatism to solve problems, having little patience with argument for its own sake. Jim Exon brought these Midwestern values to his work, fighting openly for his beliefs, while still playing a cooperative and constructive role in resolving differences.

Given his ability to see the point of view of others, it's hardly surprising that Jim Exon made abundant legislative contributions. I was privileged to serve on the Senate Budget Committee with him, where he fought to keep our Nation's fiscal house in order. Here, too, his approach was balanced, offering a fierce opposition to wasting taxpayer money on unjustified spending, while maintaining an abiding faith in effective government. Most importantly in this area, he recognized that lawmakers must resist the temptation to use public debt to shift current burdens onto future taxpayers. To Jim Exon, skyrocketing Federal debt was a shameful legacy to leave our children.

Senator Exon also understood the wisdom of investing in the family farmer, the backbone of rural communities. A tireless advocate of rural economic development, he was one of the first to recognize the importance of ethanol as fuel, a renewable energy source that we produce here at home. And he fought for better transportation, better medical care, and better