

Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak for no more than 30 minutes.

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

CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP DAY

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, yesterday, September 17, the Nation observed Constitution and Citizenship Day. Yesterday, on the Sabbath, the Nation observed Constitution and Citizenship Day. The day marked the 219th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. On September 17, 1787, 219 years ago yesterday, an extraordinary convention of American statesmen met in Philadelphia's Independence Hall to adopt our fledgling Nation's fundamental governing principles, codified in the new Constitution. I am happy to glory in my good fortune, the blessing of living in this Nation and under this Constitution—this Constitution which I hold in my hand. I have long been a student of the Constitution, and I do carry it with me, close to my heart. Alexander the Great slept with a copy of the Iliad, written by Homer in the 800s before Christ—a copy of the Iliad under his pillow, they say. I do not sleep with a copy of the Constitution under my pillow, but I carry it close to my heart.

Over the years, I have read deeply about our Founding Fathers and the great national debate that accompanied the development, the adoption, and the ratification of this critical document. This history is enlightening, revealing the lessons of our Founding Fathers, the great lessons of our Founding Fathers and the lessons they learned from ancient history as well as from their own experience as colonists subject to the British King.

As a Member of the Senate, I have many good reasons to want to know more about the Constitution. Yes, I am 89, but I want to know more. The Constitution affects all Americans, and I urge all Americans to learn more about the Constitution. Why? Because it remains as vital to our lives today as it was 219 years ago. That was a long time ago, 219 years. This Constitution affects the structure and operation of our government, a government of laws, not a government of men. Yes, this Constitution, this is the roadmap, this is the cornerstone of our Republic. It dictates who is eligible to run for office and hold office. It dictates who may elect government officials and how those officials—like me, like myself—must conduct themselves while in office. It outlines who does what within the Federal Government and between the Federal Government and these United States. It requires the President, the Chief Executive in the White House—who is he? He is the Chief Executive, but it requires that he, the President of the United States, report. To whom? To the people and to Congress.

The Constitution decides who may declare war. It says, "The Congress shall have the power to declare war." Yes, the Congress. It decides who may appoint Ambassadors, who may levy taxes, who may decide how Federal dollars will be spent. If all of that does not affect every American, I do not know what does.

I firmly believe that our Constitution deserves greater awareness in our national life and in our everyday lives. A distressing number of studies have shown a profound ignorance of and, yes, even indifference to this fundamental document of government. This is it. I hold it in my hands. Of course, more than the Constitution is included in this fine little document that I have and carry in my pocket, but the title of this little book is the "United States Constitution." That is it. This is the pillar of my liberties, the pillar of your liberties, and it is the roadmap by which those who govern shall govern.

Too many citizens have little or no knowledge of this Constitution, from the functions of government to the scope of their own rights and liberties. Did you realize that, every one of you who is within the sound of my voice throughout this great Nation? You may revere the Constitution—and most people do. Yes, they are proud of the Constitution. They revere it. But they do not know what is in it; too many do not know what is in it. Many do.

I think that may also be true of many Members of Congress, many Members of this body. As you know, there are two bodies of Congress. Two bodies make up the Congress, not one body. It may be true of many Members of these two Houses. It may be true of many Members of this House, the Senate of the United States. It may be true of the executive branch officials. Did you hear that it may be true of executive officials, many of them? It may be true of military officials, many military officials and personnel, and members of the news media. Hear me now, yonder on the back benches, those who write, those who question, those who explain: members of the news media.

Few people know why the Constitution was designed the way it was. Few people may understand what the checks and balances contained in our governmental structure are meant to do.

When the Constitutional Convention sent to the States this Constitution for ratification, in 1787, it stimulated an active political debate out there—in the mountains, the hills, and the valleys of this land. It was not a political debate such as we see today—a cacophony of short sound bites and slogans that do not answer the questions or which are aimed only at attacking a political opponent—but a real debate, a real discussion, a real looking at the structure, at the parts of the structure, at the words, at the sentences—yes, a real debate and discussion.

Supporters and opponents wrote pamphlets and published essays that were widely read. Can you imagine

that? They wrote pamphlets, essays that were widely read, widely discussed? The Constitution became a topic of conversation around dinner tables and at public meeting places. Imagine, just imagine—hear me now, imagine that today.

Imagine that happening today. The Federalist Papers—may I say to the pages—read them. The Federalist Papers—not just the Constitution but also the Federalist Papers. Read them. The Federalist Papers, that great defense of the Constitution written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay—read the Federalist Papers. They were widely printed in newspapers and still more widely read and discussed. The Federalist Papers served as the centerpiece for the debate over the form of government the Constitution created, the form of government this little Constitution created. Yes, I hold it in my hand. Sadly, today there are few people outside of college classes and history and politics who have read the Federalist Papers. They should be read by all Americans who want to understand the Constitution.

Read the Federalist Papers. If you have read them, read them again. It is like reading the Holy Bible. Each time you read it, you will see new things, you will understand new things, new words are being said, new sentences, new thoughts are being expressed, some that you had not seen before.

Madison, Hamilton, and Jay—those great men, Madison Hamilton, and Jay—turned to the mass-communication system of their day, the newspapers. Now, in the 21st century, we have the ability to promote better knowledge and better understanding of the Constitution through the newest form of mass communication—think about that—the Internet. As an excellent resource for Americans on this vital topic, I draw attention to the considerable information about the Constitution that the United States is making available—get that—the United States is making available to the public on the Senate Web site. You hear me. It is there.

By publishing articles in newspapers, Madison, Hamilton, and Jay reached out and touched an audience of thousands. Through the World Wide Web, the Senate's Web site, material on the Constitution can be accessed by an audience of millions, millions of citizens, teachers, and students—people from all around, the world.

In honor of this year's celebration of Constitution Day, the U.S. Senate has included a variety of features on its Web site—at www.senate.gov—to promote a more thorough understanding of our Constitution, the blueprint—here it is—for the Federal Government that still defines and guides us today, I say to the President who sits in the chair. Visitors to the Senate Web site will find many items related to the Constitution. The full text of the Constitution can be viewed, along with annotations and Senate-specific clauses.

There is also a feature on the Federalist Papers and a special section featuring books about the Constitution for children. There is a beautiful color reproduction of the mural unveiled in the Senate wing of the Capitol Building just a few days ago. The mural depicts the authors of the Connecticut Compromise of 1787—also known as the Great Compromise—that led to creation of the Senate and the House of Representatives. There is also a Virtual Reference Desk that can guide visitors to further reading and resources to help them learn more about our—our, our—Constitution.

I commend the Secretary of the Senate, the Sergeant at Arms, and their staffs, who collected and posted this array of constitutional material in such an attractive and easy-to-use format. Their work reflects well on the Senate and offers a real service to the Nation. It embodies the spirit of Constitution Day, which I am proud to have had a hand in establishing. I also commend the many other organizations that have made an abundance of educational material available to all those seeking greater knowledge of the Constitution. Notable among these are the Web sites of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Justice Learning, the Center for Civic Education, the Constitutional Rights Center, the Constitution Project, and the Freedom Forum. They have all done fine work that deserves widespread attention.

Our Constitution is what sets the United States—yes, our Constitution is what sets the United States, a star, above other nations. Our Constitution is what makes the United States such a shining beacon, such a shining star for the people of other nations, for those still struggling to establish democratically elected representative governments.

Our Constitution empowers our leaders but also places limits on our leaders to prevent autocratic rule. "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." James Madison wrote in the Federalist Papers, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." "If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty is this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself."

The self-control mechanism in our Constitution and therefore in our governmental structure comes first from the competition between and among the three branches of Government, the famous "checks and balances." Ultimately, the self-control mechanism in our Government comes from the powers and the responsibilities placed by the Constitution upon the people of the United States. In order to effectively play our safeguarding role as citizens, we each—each of us; you, Mr. Presi-

dent, me, each of us—has an obligation to be informed. The system of checks and balances between and among the three branches of Government and the ideals of freedom and of rights and liberties set forth and realized in our Constitution are our greatest contributions to the world—our greatest contributions to the world.

My hope is that observances of Constitution Day—yesterday, today, this year, and in future years—will encourage all citizens, all citizens high and mighty and low, to learn more about our Constitution and Government. Certainly there is no better way for people to start than by clicking on the U.S. Senate's Web site. I hope many people listening today, many people watching today, will be inspired to use the Internet today—yes, today—to visit the Senate's Web site and see the marvelous collection of information about the most marvelous document, the Constitution of the United States.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair.

OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose the so-called Oman Free Trade Agreement. There are two primary reasons that I oppose this agreement. First, the Oman agreement is a continuation of an utterly failed trade policy. I believe we must change direction, and we need to change direction now before our record trade and budget deficits cripple our economy.

Mr. President, this chart shows the trend in the U.S. trade deficit. This chart shows the trade deficit per month, and if we go back to 1992, we can see the trade deficit was running about \$3 billion a month—a little over that. The total trade deficit that year for the entire year was \$40 billion.

Now we fast track to this year. After 10 trade agreements and 14 years, we are now at a trade deficit, as of last year, of \$718 billion. And we are headed for a trade deficit of over \$800 billion based on the most recent trade deficit. In July, we saw a trade deficit approaching \$70 billion for the month.

When are we going to conclude that we are on a course that is leading nowhere?

Mr. President, NAFTA provides one vivid example of how these trade deals have affected our trade deficits. In 1993, the year before NAFTA took effect, we had a small trade surplus with Mexico—as this chart shows, about \$1.7 billion. Last year, after 12 years of

NAFTA, our trade deficit with Mexico exceeded \$50 billion. In other words, before NAFTA, we had a trade surplus, albeit a small one. Now we have a massive trade deficit, and some say this is a success. I would hate to see a failure. If this is a success, what would be a failure?

Agriculture provides another clear example. When this administration took office, we had a trade balance in agriculture of a positive \$15 billion. That was in 2001. Every year, this balance has gone down: to \$13 billion in 2002, \$10 billion in 2003, just under \$10 billion in 2004, last year it slipped to under \$5 billion, and this year they are now anticipating a trade balance in agriculture of only \$2 billion. That is stunning, absolutely stunning. We used to run a trade surplus in agriculture of over \$25 billion a year. Now we are very close to having no trade balance in agriculture. Yet we keep going down the same path, trumpeting every one of these trade deals as another great success.

I do not think there is much credibility left in that argument. I would be the first to admit I have voted for some of these trade agreements. I voted against NAFTA, and I voted against the CAFTA agreement, the most recent agreement entered into here. I voted against the so-called Canadian Free Trade Agreement, but I supported the agreement with China, I supported WPO, and I believed that it would advance the cause that is so important to the international economy.

At some point we have to deal with facts. We have to deal with reality. We have to deal with what is really happening, not some academic argument. We have to deal with the reality that our country is going deeper and deeper into debt. We are now the world's largest debtor nation, and by a large margin.

I believe the Oman agreement continues that failed trade policy. We are now getting more than we are giving. When you read the fine print in the study that was done by the U.S. International Trade Commission, the non-partisan U.S. agency in charge of analyzing trade agreements, you discover that this agreement will increase our trade deficit with Oman. So here we go again, one more time of failed negotiations leading to more deficit, more debt, and the United States borrowing more money.

In the fine print of the analysis that has been done what you find is that imports of apparel from Oman will increase by more than \$42 million a year, but the exports of all products to Oman will increase only between \$14 to \$41 million. So, once again, we are asked to approve a deal that is the product of a failed negotiation. Once again those who negotiated on behalf of the United States have brought back a loser, claiming all the while it is a great success.

At some point you have to check the record. At some point you look at what