

It also soon became apparent that John was not a bureaucrat or intent on maintaining the status quo. In fact, he is an intellectual and innovative thinker who is willing to explore new ideas to advance the cause of veterans health care.

During his assignment to the Committee, John played a major role in shaping the following legislation: the Veterans' Health Care Improvements Act of 1998, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998, and the Veterans Compensation Cost of Living Adjustment Act of 1998. Additionally, John has spent many hours this year working on S. 1076, the Veterans Benefits Improvements Act of 1999 which I hope will pass the Senate soon.

Upon his departure and on behalf of the Committee, I extend my deep appreciation to John for his courage, his innovation, his professionalism and, above all, his enduring concern for veterans. He shall be missed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Executive Calendar Nos. 192, 193, and 200. These nominations are Michael A. Sheehan to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism; Robert S. Gelbard, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Indonesia; and William B. Taylor to be Ambassador during tenure of service as Coordinator of the U.S. Assistance for the New Independent States.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Michael A. Sheehan, of New Jersey, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, with the rank and status of Ambassador at Large.

Robert S. Gelbard, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Indonesia.

William B. Taylor, Jr., of Virginia, for the Rank of Ambassador during tenure of service as Coordinator of U.S. Assistance for the New Independent States.

NOMINATION OF JACK E. HIGHTOWER OF TEXAS TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Mr. LOTT. In executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the nomina-

tion of Jack E. Hightower be discharged from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and further the Senate proceed to its consideration.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Jack E. Hightower, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for a term expiring July 19, 2004.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2465.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2465), have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by all of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report. (The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of July 27, 1999.)

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am very pleased to bring before the Senate the Military Construction Conference Report for fiscal year 2000.

Mr. President, this conference report was passed by the House of Representatives last week by a vote of 412 to 8. It was sent to the Senate late last week and now awaits or final passage.

We have worked hard with our House colleagues to bring the Military Construction Conference to a successful conclusion.

It reflects a strong bipartisan effort of behalf of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Both bodies took a different perspective on the allocation of military construction funding for the Department of Defense.

However, in the final conference report, we met our goals of promoting quality of life initiatives and enhancing mission readiness.

Mr. President, this bill has some points I want to highlight. It provides a total of \$8.37 billion for military construction.

Even though this is an increase of \$2.9 billion over the President's budget for fiscal year 2000, it is still a reduction of \$79 million from what was appropriated last year.

The conferees rejected the administration proposal to incrementally fund military construction and family housing projects throughout the Department of Defense.

Instead the conferees believed that fully funding these projects was essential for the well being and moral of the men and women who serve in uniform.

Some 43 percent of the bill is allocated to family housing—a total of \$3.6 billion. This includes new construction, improvements to existing units and funding for operation and maintenance of that housing.

We strongly protected quality of life initiatives. We provided \$643 million for barracks, \$22 million for child development centers, and \$151 million for hospital and medical facilities.

We provided a total of \$695 million for the Guard and Reserve components. Overall this represents an increase of \$560 million from the President's budget request.

Many of those projects will enhance the readiness and mission capabilities of our Reserve and Guard forces, vital to our national defense.

I would like to thank my ranking member, Senator MURRAY, for her assistance and support throughout this process. She and her staff was extremely helpful.

I commend this product to the Senate and recommend that it be signed by the President without delay.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased to bring before the Senate this conference report on the fiscal year 2000 military construction appropriations bill—the first of the 13 regular appropriations bills to be completed this year.

This is a good bill, leaner than we would wish but sufficient to meet the Services' most pressing military construction needs, particularly in terms of readiness and quality of life projects. The projects funded in this bill will give the men and women of our armed forces—and their families—a wide array of improved facilities in which to work, to train, and to live.

In my home state of Washington, for example, this bill provides nearly \$129 million in funding for 16 different military construction projects plus \$9 million for Army family housing at Fort Lewis.

Congress was faced with a difficult situation this year when the Pentagon, in a radical departure from regular procedure, requested incremental funding for the entire slate of fiscal year 2000 military construction projects. Thanks to the cooperation of Chairman STEVENS and Ranking Member BYRD, and to the efforts of Senator BURNS on the

Subcommittee, it didn't happen. What's more, we included language in our Committee report directing the Administration to fully fund all military construction requests in future budgets.

Unfortunately, this bill reflects a continued decline in the amount of money that is being allocated to military construction. This year's bill is funded at a level of \$8.374 billion, which is \$76 million less than the fiscal year 1999 bill. And this is at a time when funding for the Defense appropriations bill is heading toward a major increase. Military construction does not have the glamour of some of the gee whiz, high-tech items in the defense bill, but it is an integral part of readiness and quality of life in the military. If military construction is underfunded, we will wind up undercutting our nation's war fighting capability. We must not allow that to occur.

We will continue to fight the good fight for military construction dollars, ably led by our chairman, Senator BURNS, who is an extremely effective advocate for the needs of the military and a pleasure to work with on the Committee. I thank Senator BURNS, and Senators STEVENS and BYRD, for their unflagging support, and I also thank the Subcommittee staff for their hard work on this bill.

This is a good bipartisan conference report, and I urge my colleagues to accept it so that it can be sent to the President without delay and become the first fiscal year 2000 regular appropriations bills to be signed into law.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the conference report be printed in the RECORD.

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

The conference report was agreed to.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 2000 AND 2001

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 229, H.R. 2415.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2415) to enhance security of the United States missions and personnel overseas, to authorize appropriations for the Department of State for fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of S. 886 as passed by the Senate be inserted in lieu thereof. I further ask consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table. I further ask consent that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate.

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

The bill (H.R. 2415), as amended, was passed.

(The text of S. 886 was printed in the RECORD of June 22, 1999)

The Presiding Officer (Mr. ALLARD) appointed Mr. HELMS, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. GRAMS of Minnesota, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. DODD conferees on the part of the Senate.

NATIONAL AIRBORNE DAY

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 241, S. Res. 95.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 95) designating August 16, 1999, as "National Airborne Day."

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to this resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. 95) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 95

Whereas the Parachute Test Platoon was authorized by the War Department on June 25, 1940, to experiment with the potential use of airborne troops;

Whereas the Parachute Test Platoon was composed of 48 volunteers that began training in July, 1940;

Whereas the Parachute Test Platoon performed the first official Army parachute jump on August 16, 1940;

Whereas the success of the Parachute Test Platoon led to the formation of a large and successful airborne contingent serving from World War II until the present;

Whereas the 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd, and 101st Airborne Divisions and the numerous other regimental and battalion-sized airborne units were organized following the success of the Parachute Test Platoon;

Whereas the 501st Parachute Battalion participated successfully and valiantly in achieving victory in World War II;

Whereas the airborne achievements during World War II provided the basis for continuing the development of a diversified force of parachute and air assault troops;

Whereas paratroopers, glidermen, and air assault troops of the United States were and are proud members of the world's most exclusive and honorable fraternity, have earned and wear the "Silver Wings of Courage", have participated in a total of 93 combat jumps, and have distinguished themselves in battle by earning 68 Congressional Medals of Honor, the highest military decoration of the United States, and hundreds of Distinguished Service Crosses and Silver Stars;

Whereas these airborne forces have performed in important military and peacekeeping operations, wherever needed, in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Sinai, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia; and

Whereas the Senate joins together with the airborne community to celebrate August 16, 1999, as "National Airborne Day": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates August 16, 1999, as "National Airborne Day"; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on Federal, State, and local administrators and the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1999

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the hour of 9 a.m. on Wednesday, August 4. I further ask consent that on Wednesday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate immediately begin 40 minutes of debate on the dairy issue to be equally divided between the opponents and proponents, and the cloture vote occur at 9:45 a.m. with the mandatory quorum having been waived.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. LOTT. Therefore, the Senate will convene at 9 a.m. and we will have 40 minutes of debate, equally divided, on the dairy issue; at 9:45 will be the cloture vote on the dairy amendment. Following the vote, the Senate will resume consideration of the pending Agriculture appropriations bill. Amendments and votes are expected throughout tomorrow's session of the Senate with the anticipation of completing action on the bill.

After that is completed, we could have a vote on a nomination after some period of debate, and then we would turn to the Interior appropriations bill.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. LOTT. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 8:15 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, August 4, 1999, at 9 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate August 3, 1999:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL J. FRAZIER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, VICE STEVEN O. PALMER, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

GREGORY ROHDE, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION, VICE CLARENCE L. IRVING, JR.