

may, let's all agree to come back with a focus on where we need to go, what we need to do, and the courage to make the tough choices for the future.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO EDWARD LEVINE

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, it is my pleasure but also a sad moment for members of the Foreign Relations Committee to take this time to celebrate the service of and also to salute the retirement of one of the Senate's great staffers: Ed Levine.

Ed is retiring this week after a remarkable 35 years of service to the Senate—a lot longer than most Senators get to serve and that most staff up here have the courage to hang in there and serve.

In his decades of service, Ed has provided wise and perceptive counsel to two committees, to many Members, and most recently to the Foreign Relations Committee. His deep knowledge of foreign policy and his remarkable sense of this institution are truly going to be missed and I mean missed enormously.

He grew up and he went to school here in Washington, DC, before he headed off to Berkeley and then later to Yale. When he was a young man here in this community, he used to ride the streetcar down to Georgia Avenue, where he would watch the Senators play at Griffith Stadium. For those who are too young to remember, there actually was a baseball team called the Senators once upon a time. He did not watch folks here playing at Griffith Stadium. But when the Washington Senators left for good to become the Texas Rangers, I have to reckon that Ed just decided that the U.S. Senators were the only game left in town, and he has been here ever since.

He first came to the Senate in 1976. He joined the Select Committee on Intelligence back then—literally right after it was established. It was a historic moment. Those who remember their history of the 1970s remember that was a time of great consternation about the covert activities of the CIA. The activities and the oversight of the CIA became a major national issue and concern. So it was a historic moment when the Senate was reasserting its constitutional responsibility to provide oversight.

Ed spent the next 20 years overseeing some of the Nation's most sensitive programs and some of its most closely guarded secrets. He was trusted with some of the most secret information of

our country because he never had anything but the interests of our country and the security of the Nation foremost in his mind.

I think that is also borne out in the fact that through the course of his career, he worked for Members of both sides of the aisle while he was on the Intelligence Committee. He served on that committee as the personal representative of Republican Senator Clifford Case and then Republican Senator David Durenberger, and then later for Democratic Senators Howard Metzenbaum and Chuck Robb. His work for the Intelligence Committee exemplified a standard of public service that puts the fulfillment of the Senate's constitutional duties above any other partisan concerns.

For him, there never was a party issue, Republican or Democrat, or an ideological issue, liberal or conservative. It was: What are the best interests of the United States of America and how do we protect its security? He has applied that very same approach to his work on the Foreign Relations Committee, where I have had the privilege of watching him work over the course of the 26 years I have been here.

He worked mostly previously for now-Vice President BIDEN. A few days ago, we held a business meeting at the Foreign Relations Committee, and it was characteristic of Ed's diligence in representing the interests of country above party that Senator LUGAR, the ranking member of the committee, and who has served with him for a long time, took time to acknowledge his service and to note how constructively he had worked with the Republican counterparts on the committee over these many years.

We saw that in large measure last year when we considered the New START treaty, in which Ed played an integral role. You know, I might mention to colleagues, when Vice President BIDEN was Senator BIDEN and chairman of the committee, he coined a nickname for Ed. He called him "Fast Eddie." And the irony of that for all of us who know him is that Ed does not do "fast." He is one of the most careful and deliberate thinkers on our staff, and that is one of the things people valued in him the most. It was never a hip shot. It was always based on thinking, research, experience, and knowledge.

His knowledge of arms control, I may say, is encyclopedic. During the New START debate, we had a war room set up one floor below this in the Foreign Relations Committee room, with dozens of experts from the various departments of our government, and stacks of briefing books, and instant computer linkage to the State Department, to the Defense Department, Intelligence, and so forth, but often when we had a question, all we had to do was turn to Ed and he would know the answer from right up here in his head, from his experience.

That is not surprising, given how many treaties Ed has helped this body

to consider during his career. He worked on the INF Treaty, on the START I treaty, on the START II treaty, on the Chemical Weapons Convention, on the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

I went up to him a moment ago. I saw he was wearing a tie with a sword being beaten into plowshares, and he reminded me that came from the mutual and balanced force reduction treaty, which he said was the only thing they could agree on, but he is proudly wearing it today.

What all of this adds up to is that Ed spent a great chunk of his life doing his best to help the Senate protect our Nation from the most dangerous weapons that ever existed. He did it with such professionalism, even, I might add, when faced with personal loss, as when his father died last year right during the consideration of the treaty, but it did not stop Ed from doing his duty.

All of his Senate service is a real testament to his character. That he earned the respect from the Members he served and the staff he worked with is a testament to his great skill and knowledge. And that he has done so for so many years is a testament to his sense of public citizenship and his love of country.

So, Ed, we thank you, all the Members of the Senate, for your service. We will miss you in the Senate. I wish you personally the best in all of your future endeavors.

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

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

BUDGET CONTROL ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we just passed legislation that would raise the debt ceiling. Part of that was an effort to reverse the debt trajectory we are on, but it can only be called, at best, a first step. We can all agree on that.

Indeed, there is an article in the Financial Times, written by Professors Rogoff and Reinhart, who wrote a book that has gotten a great deal of attention and is widely respected, describing and analyzing sovereign debt and countries that have gone bankrupt around the world. They commented that much of what occurred in our debate occurred in those other nations. The other nations scramble around when the pressure is on with something like a debt ceiling, and they don't really change anything significantly, but they meet the crisis and tell everybody everything is OK.

They say in this article in the Financial Times that everything is not OK. Indeed, the debt will increase over the