JOHN W. WARNER

United States Senator from Virginia
1979–2009

Oral History Interviews

U.S. Senate Historical Office
Washington, D.C.
December 10, 2014 to November 9, 2017

AGREEMENT AND RELEASE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
U.S. SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE

I, **John W. Warner**, agree to participate in the Oral History Project and understand that the physical audio recordings and transcripts of my interviews are and will remain the property of the United States Senate.

In entering into this agreement, I understand that all or portions of my oral history may be made available to the public in an online feature on the Senate website, may be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published, or broadcast in any other medium (consisting of all forms of print or electronic media, including the Internet or other emerging, future technologies that may be developed) that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate. I also approve the deposit of the recordings and transcripts at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and any other institution that the Senate Historical Office may deem appropriate.

In consideration for my inclusion in this project, I understand I am entitled to receive a copy of the transcripts of my interviews. While I hereby relinquish any intellectual property rights or interests I may hold in the content of my interviews, I acknowledge that the Senate has the discretion to decide whether or not to make all or any part of my oral history available to the public.

The Honorable John W. Warner

Dated: March 6, 2019

I, Betty K. Koed, accept the interview of the Honorable John W. Warner for inclusion into the Oral History Project of the U.S. Senate Historical Office.

Betty K. Koed, U.S. Senate Historian

Dated: June 27, 2020

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Preface

by Betty K. Koed

John William Warner dedicated his life to public service. Born in Washington, D.C., on February 18, 1927, to Dr. John W. and Martha Budd Warner, he attended St. Albans School and graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School. In 1945, at age 17, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and remained on active duty until the summer of 1946, attaining the rank of petty officer third class and serving as an electronics technician. He subsequently graduated from Washington and Lee University in 1949 and began the study of law. When war in Korea began in 1950, Warner interrupted his legal training to again volunteer for service in the military, this time in the U.S. Marine Corps as first lieutenant in communications. He served until 1952 as a ground officer with the First Marine Air Wing, then continued on reserve duty after the war, obtaining the rank of captain.

Returning to civilian life in 1952, Warner resumed his legal training and obtained his J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law. Beginning in 1953, he clerked for Chief Judge E. Barrett Prettyman of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Three years later, he became assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia in the trial and appellate division, a position he held for four years before turning to private practice and joining the firm Hogan & Hartson (now Hogan Lovells).

By 1960 Warner also had a growing interest in politics. He served as an aide to Richard Nixon's presidential campaign that year and later became director of the Washington headquarters for Nixon's successful 1968 presidential campaign. In February of 1969, President Nixon drew on Warner's military experience and appointed him as undersecretary of the navy. He was promoted to secretary of the navy in 1972, serving until 1974, during the final years of the Vietnam War. As secretary, Warner acted as U.S. negotiator and signatory for the Incidents at Sea Executive Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1975 President Gerald Ford appointed Warner as director and administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration to coordinate commemorative events in all 50 states and in 22 foreign countries.

Elected as a Republican to the United States Senate on November 7, 1978, John Warner took office on January 2, 1979, and served until his retirement on January 3, 2009. Over the course of his 30-year Senate career, Warner served on numerous committees, including the Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Environment and Public Works, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, and the Committee on Rules and Administration. As chairman of the Rules Committee, he also chaired the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, directing the swearing-in ceremony for President William Clinton in 1997. Most influential was his service on the Committee

on Armed Services. For nearly two decades, from 1999 to 2007, Warner served as chairman or ranking member of that powerful committee. In 1991, at the request of President George H. W. Bush and Republican Leader Robert Dole, Warner led the effort to secure Senate authorization for use of military force during Operation Desert Storm.

At the time of Warner's retirement from the Senate in January of 2009, the secretary of the navy announced that a new Virginia-class submarine would be named in his honor—the USS *John Warner* (christened on September 6, 2014). That same year, Queen Elizabeth II awarded him an honorary knighthood—Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire—for his efforts in strengthening the ties between the United States and the United Kingdom, a rare honor for an American citizen. In 2015 the U.S. Marine Corps University at Quantico, Virginia, named in his honor the John W. Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies. After his Senate service, Warner returned to the law firm of Hogan Lovells as senior advisor for government relations, retiring from the firm in 2020. Senator Warner died on May 25, 2021, at the age of 94, in Alexandria, Virginia.

These 12 interviews, conducted over a period of three years, from 2014 to 2017, cover the scope of Warner's long and distinguished career, from his service as a 17-year old sailor in World War II to his later years as elder statesman in the United States Senate. Warner discusses his role in the Nixon campaigns of 1960 and 1968 as well as his own campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1978 and his four successful bids for reelection. The important bipartisan coalitions that he built, the strong working relationships he formed with Senate colleagues, and his collaborative work with presidents ranging from Nixon to Clinton are discussed. He recalls important Senate mentors, including Barry Goldwater, John Stennis, and Robert Dole, and shares thoughts on colleagues such as John McCain, John Chafee, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Joseph Lieberman, Robert Byrd, and George Mitchell. Of particular note are interviews focusing on his influential service on the Armed Services Committee and the close bonds he formed with his Democratic counterparts Sam Nunn and Carl Levin. He also recounts events and issues of special importance to the state of Virginia and reflects on the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath.

Seasoned with anecdotes of personal and family life, this oral history reflects the richness of a senator's service as well as the evolution of an institution over the course of three decades.

About the Interviewer: Betty K. Koed is the U.S. Senate Historian and Director of the Senate Historical Office. Koed earned her Ph.D. in political and public history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, before joining the Senate Historical Office in 1998. In 2016 Koed was awarded the university's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Appointed Senate Historian in 2015, Koed supervises all historical and archival projects, provides talks and presentations to senators, staff, and the public on wide-ranging topics of Senate history, and conducts oral history interviews with former senators and staff. She oversees more than 10,000 pages of historical material on the Senate website, is senior editor of the *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress,* and provides research and reference assistance to the Senate community, the public, and the media. She is a former officer of the Society for History in the Federal Government and has served on editorial board of *The Public Historian*.

A Note from Senator Warner

The interviews in this oral history were conducted and compiled exclusively by the staff of the United States Senate Historical Office. I requested to write this brief introduction to expressly give credit to the many Senate staff whose labors and wisdom were essential contributions to the accomplishments recited in this book, as well as to the innumerable challenges that I experienced over my entire 30 years as U.S. Senator representing Virginia. I thank you staff wherever you are today!

Accordingly, I acknowledge my deepest appreciation to the distinguished members of the Senate Historical Office, especially Betty Koed, Historian, whose skills and patience are without parallel.

What is the role of the thousands of individuals who are referred to as U.S. Senate staff? There are four basic categories:

1. A Senator's personal staff, selected by the Senator, who serve the needs of the state as well as the Senator. Most will be selected from active participants in the Senator's political party in his or her state.

2. Committee staff selected by Chairs and Ranking Members for their expertise in the areas of the committee's designated jurisdiction.

3. Non-partisan, experienced professionals, such as the essential parliamentarians, and those with experience in compiling the daily *Congressional Record* of the Senate floor statements and floor proceedings. These positions are filled by the Majority Leader and the Secretary of the Senate. Given we elect one-third of senators and therefore a new Senate (and House of Representatives) every two years, emphasis is put on selecting staff who express a willingness to stay in these positions longer than two years, to give continuity of experience as a new Senate convenes.

4. Lastly, but equally important, are the staff members of the "political party" cloakrooms located opposite the presiding officer's desk in the Senate Chamber, one for Republicans and the other for Democrats. They are under the control of the respective party leaders who staff them with legendary, versatile, politically savvy persons who have knowledge of how the Senate operates. Invariably these unique persons gain the personal respect of members from both sides of the aisle, enabling them to have a high level of cooperation to solve practical operating problems that on occasion arise unexpectedly.

This is my brief summary of how individual staffers have, over the years, come from their homes in the 50 states and territories to their nation's Capitol to meet the needs of Congress. They are united in reaching the common goals of economic and national security for all Americans. Our representative form of government is entrusted to those in elected office and those who serve them as staff. There is nothing comparable to be found in the world.

I am particularly grateful to the more than 200 members of my personal staff who served on our team, for periods, during my 30-year career. Space allocated to me to write this

brief introduction will not suffice to give the well-deserved individual recognition to each one, but they know the high esteem in which I hold them. We were always a team!

We are indebted to our distinguished Chiefs of Staff: Andrew Wahlquist, Susan Aheron Magill, Ann Loomis, and Carter Cornick. Their diverse talent, wisdom and dedication to our Republic is legendary.

They directed the daily work of the Legislative Directors: Jack White, Chris Brady, Jennifer Joy Pinniger, and Chris Yianilos. We had the finest retired military professionals who served as Staff Directors of the Armed Services Committee: Pat Tucker, Col. Les Brownlee, and Lt. Col. Charlie Abell along with Colonel Grayson Winterling, Staff Director of the Committee on Rules and Administration. And standing tall with them was the first woman to serve as a Staff Director of the Armed Services Committee, Judy Ansley! May I also add Col. John Campbell, who coordinated my international appearances, and Col. Chuck Alsup, who coordinated many of the Intelligence Committee assignments.

Only with these incredible professionals could I have maintained a well-run and highly respected Senate personal office. Each staffer added his or her own expertise and opinions to the challenges of the day. As my mentor Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole used to say, "Only with a strong staff at your side can you succeed in the Senate."

America's great Constitution has been a beacon of hope for Americans and many others the world over. Members of the staffs of the House of Representatives and the Senate are key to keeping our great republic "rolling forward." The staff are united in their desire to serve the people of the United States for which our nation is most grateful. Our nation is also grateful to the families of the staff for their unwavering support.

John W. Warner
June 26, 2020

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #1: December 10, 2014

JOHN W. WARNER: I literally parachuted into the Senate. Are you ready? Are we recording?

BETTY K. KOED: I'm ready. The machine is on.

WARNER: I use that phrase because in my state, and I think in many states, the traditional route for going to the Senate is through statewide officeholders, either state legislature or the elective offices of governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and so forth. That usually, in my state, equipped someone to become a member of Congress.

The Senate was dominated literally by a very small core of the Democrat Party for a hundred years in my state. As a matter of fact, in history I am the second Republican senator in nearly 100 consecutive years preceding my election to serve as a United States senator from Virginia. That's astonishing. I saw the Mary Landrieu statistic the other day and it was something similar to that. Democrats controlled the Senate until a senator was elected by the name of Bill Scott. He was the first and then he decided not to seek a second term and I succeeded him. He was the first in a hundred years. I was the second in a hundred years.

KOED: The first since the Reconstruction Era?

WARNER: Yes, that's exactly right, the Reconstruction Era when there was a mix of Republicans in the Senate.

I was married to a lovely lady. She remained so until her death—she died a couple of years ago—Elizabeth [Taylor]. She had been active in my campaign and very much in my election. I think most senators would say that their wives played a pivotal role, and this one played a pivotal role.

So, fast forwarding, we hadn't been in the Senate three weeks when the governor of Virginia, a man named Mills Godwin, a very interesting politician who was once part of the old Democrat [Harry] Byrd machine but with the Ronald Reagan era switched parties to Republican. He served as a governor for the Democrat Party and then he later served a second term—not successive, but broken terms, which is available in Virginia, you can't succeed yourself—as a Republican. But he was a wonderful man, a very formal sort of fellow.

I am now at the Senate, still unpacking boxes and trying to figure out where the office should be, and I might even have been in a little temporary office for a while. The secretary said, "The governor's on the line." He came to the phone and said, "Now, look here, Senator, I want you to come down to Virginia and bring that lovely wife of yours. We're going to have a nice luncheon at the mansion together, a small group, in your honor, because we're proud to have you as our United States senator." And so I acknowledged, "Governor, I'm happy to do that." He said, "Well, let's do it here within the next two weeks." I said, "We'll put our staff together and pick a date." We picked a date.

Elizabeth and I were all ready to go—just a day trip down and a day trip back. He didn't have an airplane. Governors of Virginia didn't have them. I suppose they could have gotten a state police plane, but I always tried to stay away from using state things. I'm just in the Senate. What do I know about that? So we just booked our air traffic to Richmond, Virginia, and back, round trip, allowing ample time for luncheon, on good ol' Capitol Airlines—not that you would remember that. They had the old turbo jet engines.

Elizabeth is all excited and she lays out a special dress and everything. We woke up on the morning we were due to depart. The airplane was going to leave National Airport at 10:00. At that time I was living in Georgetown. I had my farm down in Virginia where I was registered as a senator and that was my home, but we stayed up here for Senate duties at our house in Georgetown. Well, lo and behold, we had had about a foot of snow overnight and there had been a heavy overlay of ice on top of the snow, but we plowed our way to National Airport with some difficulty, trying to make sure we got there on time, only to find when we got there that the whole airport was shut down. No air traffic! But, as they do in those instances, they had hired Greyhound buses to carry passengers. "Well," Elizabeth said to me, "this poses an interesting challenge." I said, "We'll just get on the bus." The roads had begun to be cleared, so we would get there by the appointed hour.

Now, mind you, we courted for a year and had been married about two years. She turned to me and said, "Well, I've never been on a bus! This should be exciting!" (laughs) So we arrived at the bus. The driver had been tipped off—they knew she was going to be on the bus—so he gave us the front seat right up there along the railing. A whole lot of people piled on the bus, including about two dozen young soldiers who had just finished boot camp. The bus is rolling down the road. It's a beautiful day. The snow draped everything outside. Elizabeth is having a fine trip, and she said to me, "Now, look here. Would you kindly speak to the driver on my behalf?" "Yes, what is it, Elizabeth?" "Ask him to pull over at the next facility where there would be a bathroom." I said, "Elizabeth, this guy is trying to make up for lost time and that's not done." (laughs) She was dressed to the T and she said, "Oh, oh!" And she fell silent. Finally, I could

determine that she was not comfortable and we had been underway for two and a half hours, getting through the snow from the house and getting on the bus and everything. I checked, then said, "Elizabeth, there's a bathroom in the back." "Oh," she said, "oh, will you excuse me?"

Now when the soldiers got on, I noticed each of them carrying brown bags. It turned out that they were all six-packs of beer. These guys were on their first liberties since they finished recruit training and they were having a grand time. As a matter of fact, some of them, in the joy of their voyage, came up and very politely asked for autographs and pictures, so we had gone through that. The time passed, a very short period of time, and Elizabeth came back and sat down. She was dead silent. I could detect that the problem had not been solved. She said, "I want you to go back and see why I cannot handle this!" Well, in that jostling bus with the beer and everything else, the place was awash. This was a day before—I don't think we even had cell phones.

KOED: Oh, no, not at that time.

WARNER: So anyway, we rolled up, as buses do, they go from airport to airport, to the terminal, and there was a state police with escort and a limousine for us. We got off and I said to the state police captain or whoever was there, "We've got to go in the airport right away. We need to avail ourselves of the facility." He looked at me and he said, "This airport's closed." (laughs) I said, "Well, listen"—this story is unbelievable—I said, "Captain, you and I are going to figure out where the hell the night watchman is, because I want in there." So we went in and found a guy in there. He got a light on and got the facility open and Elizabeth disappeared. Not a minute and a half passed before she ran out and said, "Give me a dime!" "A dime? I don't have a dime. Police Captain, do you have a dime?" No. "Night watchman, do you have a dime?" No.[1]

KOED: By now she's desperate.

WARNER: Well, she had a volcanic temper—we all know that, having seen it on the screen—it was ready for eruption. Nothing we could do. We got into the police car, and I think the policeman got the message. He said, "We'll get you there." We tore through Richmond as if it was the last motorcade before the rebs were thrown out of there by the Yankees and arrived at the governor's mansion. Of course, the policeman had dutifully radioed the governor our arrival time. It's a beautiful building down there, you know. We pulled up in front and the governor and his wife were standing on the porch. We got out and Elizabeth starts up. She breaks off my arm and she's on her way. She

[1]In order to reserve restrooms for passengers only, railway companies began installing pay toilets in railway stations in the early 1900s. The practice soon spread to bus stations, gas stations, and eventually airports. By the 1950s, pay toilets were commonly used in many public spaces, and most pay toilets accepted only a dime as payment.

went straight by the governor, straight by the first lady, and grabbed the maid. “Where is the bathroom?” When I got there, the governor—who was a very formal fellow—said, “Well, John, is she all right? What’s the problem?” I said, “It’s one that can be solved and will be solved quickly.” He was going to ask the first lady to help. (laughs)

We went through a lovely luncheon, and now we’re going to drive back home because there’s still no airplane. Going back home, I’m not sure what happened to the driver, but she laid into me. She said, “Listen, old boy, we’ve got a good, happy marriage. We’ve got this challenging thing in the Senate, but I’m telling you right now, life with me is not going to be the same until you can assure me that you have passed a law to get rid of this frightful practice foisted upon the lovely female population of America!” Well, freshman senators in those days were seen but not heard from and you can’t just walk in and put in a bill. She said, “That’s your problem, but I’m telling you if you want a quiet home life, you’ll want to do this.”

Well, Howard Baker was the leader. While I had known him slightly beforehand, I had gotten to know him better. I said, “Howard, I’ve got this problem.” I told him the story and I thought he’d never stop laughing. I said, “But it isn’t funny. I’ve got to do something.” And this fact would have to be checked, but my recollection is that I had a friendship with a certain senator owing to the fact that I was at UVA [University of Virginia] law school with his brother—Bobby Kennedy and I were at UVA law school together—and I had met Ted as a young man coming down there. In the years thereafter he had gone to the Senate. He was way ahead of me, but we had a good friendship. I knew he had a jovial side to him, so I picked out an evening when we were going to have a few—imbibe a little bit—and then do whatever was happening on the floor. That’s what we did in those days—nothing huge. We all marched on the floor and did our business. I thought he wouldn’t stop laughing, because I spilled the whole damn story for him. He said, “Okay, I’ll be your co-sponsor.”

KOED: And that became your first bill?

WARNER: First bill. Elizabeth was overjoyed. I had to containerize her because she started telling the world what *she* had achieved, not what I had achieved, but what *she* had achieved.

Those were happy days. There is nothing more exciting than to win a tough race, which I had been in.

KOED: And what made you decide to run for the Senate?

WARNER: That will back up the engine a bit. I had been an assistant U.S. attorney, and if I may say with modesty, a pretty good trial lawyer. I had been there five

years and I was now handling the big gambling cases, the big murder cases, the cases of substance, and doing quite well. You've got to understand that I'm an assistant U.S. attorney, then the pyramid goes up to the U.S. attorney, then the U.S. attorney reports to the attorney general of the United States. A call comes into the office from the attorney general of the United States [William P. Rogers] and he wants to meet John Warner, so the U.S. attorney says, "What are you doing? Are you circumventing me?" I said, "Hey, time out, boss, I haven't got a clue! Not a clue!" He said, "Well, you better trot over there and then come back and tell me what it is." So I went over there.

I can close my eyes and as if it were yesterday—Mind you, the Department of Justice is right down here. The attorney general's office is the same as it was back in the '30s. I think it was part of the building complex that Andrew Mellon designed for Washington. He was very active in trying to make edifices of government—he was secretary of treasury under three presidents, an extraordinary man—but the point is that the office of the attorney general was a beautiful one, and it still is. It's a very long office with this formidable desk at the end with the typical portraiture around it. I'm ushered into this office and I suddenly realize that I got to go another 30 or 40 feet to get to the desk. I had time to pull my thoughts together walking those 30 or 40 feet.

He couldn't have been warmer. He said, "Sit down. I don't know how much you're involved in politics." I said, "Really, not much at all. My father was a doctor in this city and I've been in a nonpolitical job in the U.S. attorney's office. It was in Washington, D.C., but very much a nonpolitical job." He said, "Well, do you have any interest in it?" I said, "Yeah, I've already had a little interest in it, but I can't say that I'm experienced." He said, "That's all right. I'm on a search committee to find men of your age"—no women, just men—"to form what is known as an advance team to do the work with the vice president on his travels. You take him on a trip, go in advance to do the planning, then walk him through the trip. Then he leaves and you leapfrog over to further stops and then he'll meet you again in two or three days."

KOED: This is Vice President [Richard] Nixon?

WARNER: Nixon, yes. So I said, "Well, that sounds pretty interesting." I went home and chatted with my wife. The U.S. attorney was flattered that one of his guys was being considered and I got the job. They sent me to the White House to begin to get familiarized with the vice president to some limited degree, not a great deal, but to watch him work and his habits and get to understand him. Of course, [Dwight] Eisenhower is president. I had been in the navy at the end of World War II and in the marines—[2]

[2] In 1946 John Warner was honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy, having attained the rank of petty officer third class. In 1950 he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served on active duty during the Korean War with assignment to the First Marine Air Wing as first lieutenant communications officer. He subsequently served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, obtaining the rank of captain.

KOED: In Korea.

WARNER: In Korea. You know, this was the president. I had never met a president.

KOED: Yes, pretty haughty company.

WARNER: Yes, heady stuff. I remember Eisenhower was very courteous, but when he came down the hall, it was like when we were in the navy. The navy captain, when he travels his ship, there is always a sailor going aboard, "Flatten yourselves, flatten yourselves," which meant you squared your shoulders to the bulkhead and looked forward and the captain went by. "Phew." He didn't want to bump into a lot of sailors, you know. I was a level below that, but you knew that if he stopped and spoke to you, which he did on occasion, he was getting from point A to point B.

KOED: You just got out of the way.

WARNER: Got out of the way. My job was interesting. I had been in the appellate division of the U.S. attorney's office where you do writings of briefs, you know. We all had to spend a year in it, and I was in my fifth year so I had done my work in that area and in the trial courts, but I knew something about writing, the basic structure of grammar, syntax, and things like that, so I got into the speech-writing department. Well, here I am. Okay, I can use my brains! But my first job, which was interesting, was called splicing.

KOED: Spicing?

WARNER: Splicing. The White House has a requirement, much like they've always done, that all speeches given by cabinet and other significant members of the administration are sent for review. I would review, watching out for certain points. If I felt there was some trouble, I took it to somebody and they checked it out. But my most important job was that when the cabinet officer was saying, "Now, on this question of increased gas tax," or such a thing, I'd splice it to say to the cabinet officer, introduce the subject and then say, "While I'm covering this, I want to mention that the vice president of the United States on such and such a day at such and such a time annunciated much the same policy." This meant that Nixon's name and what he had done was in two places in the speech at every speech that was given.

KOED: Oh, interesting.

WARNER: So, I'm now splicing. That didn't overtax my brain, but I found it interesting because I had to research everything he said and then be prepared with my index. A lot of this was available to me, but it wasn't like the computer where I can put in

three words and there it was. We didn't have any computers. So that was my first job. That gave me an introduction to the Congress, because from time to time I had to do a lot of research on what various members of Congress had said. While I didn't meet them, I got to understand their work.

So, now I'm an advance man and I'm really traveling. It was a long nine months. I traveled this country. I did two of the debates with him, where he debated [John F.] Kennedy, and traveled the west coast, the east coast. Fortunately, I didn't get on the trips to Hawaii or Alaska—they were long trips. I had fascinating experiences as an advance man, but it opened up my eyes to politics.

Now, when he went to a town you could be sure that any Republican worth his salt was there to be on the reception committee, starting with the senators or members of Congress, then getting down to governors and aldermen. I worked the politics at all the stops and got to know a lot of members of Congress. By the time the nine months were over and thousands and thousands of miles of travel and planning—I planned probably 40 to 50 events, you know. There's a sidebar to that and I'll tell you the sidebar in a minute. So, I began to get interested in the Congress.

KOED: And this would be a good introduction to politics in general, I would think.

WARNER: The [1960 Republican] vice presidential candidate was Henry Cabot Lodge, [Jr.] one of the most fascinating men in American history, not only because of his own achievements but of his predecessors.

KOED: Yes, an illustrious family. His grandfather is a legendary Senate figure.

WARNER: Oh, yes. I was picked to take him—[H. R.] Haldeman selected me—to take him on his first appearance as the vice-presidential nominee. It was some area up in Pennsylvania and I can't pull out of my memory now exactly where it was, but I'll never forget this. I had never gotten to know him until that trip when I went over and pre-briefed him, then traveled in his entourage. The Secret Service guy was in the car and another one would be in the follow-up car with the local police and that's where the advance man would be. It had been pretty well planned. I had some planning to do, but it was no big deal. He was to arrive, pull himself together and let her change her clothes, whatever, then we went into the reception that night—a big reception. We probably stayed in a hotel. He went to sleep and then we were off the next day.

So the next morning or whenever it was, he summoned me and he said—I've got to get this right. I knew his wife's name by heart, a very lovely, stately lady [Emily Esther Sears]. He said, "Sit down, John Warner." He said, "I think things went well." I

said, “Yes, sir, the crowd was very enthusiastic and I think it went well.” He said, “Well, I failed and others had failed to inform you that I’ve been in public life a long time.” He had been in the Senate. “My lovely wife and I always have tea together and usually that tea is preceded by a 15-minute nap. Yesterday, it was sadly missing from that schedule, but it was too late to resolve that problem. Do you understand? It’s not to happen again!” (laughs) Well, he had his ways. It turned out, regrettably, and I don’t know the full story because I always went with Vice President Nixon, but he didn’t work out as a candidate.

KOED: No, he didn’t.

WARNER: You know your history.

KOED: He went on to do other useful things, but he was not a strong candidate.

WARNER: Which surprises.

KOED: Particularly considering his background and experience and his family history.

WARNER: And his bearing. He had what I call a command presence in his voice and mannerism.

KOED: He had a distinguished career in the Senate and had left to serve in the military in 1943.

WARNER: Enlisted in the army, was in Europe in combat situation.

KOED: But he didn’t click as a candidate.

WARNER: He did not click as a candidate. So this is my slow introduction to Congress. I’m going to add another little vignette onto this story. My last trip with Nixon, I took him from point X, met him and took over as the advance man to take him back home to California to vote, then bunk him down, and then depending on [election result], the next day bring him back to Washington. So we fly into—I’m pretty sure it was San Diego, but I just can’t remember. I remember where he lived but I can’t remember the airport we used. It was a big one. We had a big four-motor engine airplane. We all got laid out at the hotel. Mind you, he was traveling with probably 20 or 25 staff, by necessity—secretaries, stenographers. Remember that a lot of them carried their typewriters.

KOED: Well, he’s a sitting vice president so he has duties.

WARNER: Yes, and the women didn't want to be handed a strange typewriter, so those women were laden and had to carry their own clothes. I thought they really pitched in, because they arrived at the airport with pretty heavy bags.

KOED: Yes, we carry little computers now, but they carried heavy typewriters in those days.

WARNER: Yeah, they carried typewriters and steno machines and so forth. Of course, we took him to the polls and he cast his vote, then came back to the hotel. He had a nice suite. Haldeman, [John] Ehrlichman, and I as the advance man, and maybe Herb Klein, the press secretary, were there, and one or two others had rooms adjoining. The staff was elsewhere in the hotel. We're watching the election returns. He had voted and the returns were coming in and of course California was the last. It was about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, I'd say, Washington time, and probably 11:00 or 12:00'ish California time, and suddenly the door swung open in this room where I was lounging with Ehrlichman and Herb Klein. Nixon said, "Hey, Warner, where's my nightcap?" Oh, God. He always had a mild—and it really was mild, it was one-third of a shot of scotch filled with soda water and that was his nightcap. "Where's my nightcap?" He said it in half jest, but we're all watching this election and it's not going very well. I whipped together this nightcap—we had something in the room—and he sat there a minute in his pajamas and he said, "You know something, guys, this election is not going to be settled tonight. I'm not sure when it's going to be settled, but I know one thing, I'm going back with Pat, we'll watch it for a while, and we'll likely fall off to sleep." I've forgotten the rest of the conversation, but that was the framework. We watched this thing.

KOED: It was an extremely close election.

WARNER: It was quite inconclusive, particularly Illinois. I collapsed somewhere and went to sleep. I remember that I was still in my clothes and the phone rang at some hour. Of course, we were on California time, three hour distance from east coast time. It was Haldeman on the phone. He said, "The boss just called me. He wants to go back to Washington as quickly as you can reasonably get the plane, get every staff guy and woman back on the plane." I said, "I'll turn to it right away."

The first thing I did was to call American Airlines to get our plane pulled out, serviced in time to get out of there, because I had anticipated this for much later. If he'd won the thing, I thought he'd want to celebrate in his hometown a little bit before he got back to Washington. We had contingency plans. I'll never forget the American Airlines, a high-ranking official, said, "For some reason, a line of credit for the campaign is not able to take the cost"—I think it was $50,000 or whatever we needed to get a big-engine plane. I said, "What?" "Yeah, we can't get this arranged until we clear up this." You know, those campaigns, when they shut down, a lot of things shut down with them.

KOED: Gosh, they shut down fast! I didn't realize that.

WARNER: Oh, yeah. So I said, "Okay, let me get on this!" I called back to Washington. There was a marvelous team of men. I had known a guy named Cliff Folger who was the founder of a big investment banking firm and he was Mr. Republican. I had done some events with him and Nixon. He was very fond of Nixon. I called him up and said, "I got a problem. I'm out here with the vice president and I'm having trouble with his line of credit." He said, "What do you need?" I said, "$50,000." He said, "I'll wire it right now."

KOED: Wow.

WARNER: He wired me $50,000. The hotel clerk called me. "Are you John Warner?"

KOED: We've got $50,000 for you! (laughs)

WARNER: "We've got this wire." Well, I had to turn around and get it to the airplane company. I rounded up staff. I parked the plane at—oh, it was LA, Los Angeles, now I remember—

KOED: LAX.

WARNER: Yes, huge strips. We didn't want to get anywhere near the press because of this whole uncertainty. This is a long story of how I got interested in Congress, but these are interesting anecdotes and this was my baptism under fire in politics. I got the plane all loaded up and then went back to the hotel with the limousine and got the vice president and Mrs. Nixon and the one Secret Service guy who stayed with him to check out the planes and stuff like that and drove to the airport. I explained to him where the plane was. He said, "Good idea. I don't want to talk to anybody."

I think this is true in today's airports. The end of the air strips are pretty nasty places because they're dumping fuel. Planes are parked and sputtering and dripping excess oil. We had to hop around to keep him out of the debris out there. There was this old mechanic there, in his overalls, who was assigned to get out there and check on anything on the plane that wasn't working. If a tire had punctured, he's there. He's listening to a hand-held radio. He's out there in this old chair with his sack of tools. As we walked by him, the radio was talking about the election. Nixon turned around to this old mechanic—and the mechanic had been told who it was—and he said, "Can I listen to the radio with you?" There was Herb Klein, me, and one other staff guy with him. It was, "Yes, sir," and he handed the radio to Nixon. (laughs) We stayed there four or five minutes. It was a major station, NBC or something, so very credible. Nixon turned to

Herb Klein and said, “Herb, those 10,000 votes in Chicago, I don’t know how long this will take to straighten this thing out or whether we’ll ever get to the bottom of it.” So it was the mechanic, me, and Herb talking about a great moment in history.

KOED: At that point, everybody knew it came down to those votes in Illinois.

WARNER: Yeah. He said, “Get Ike on the phone,” or “Get the president.” He was always formal. Herb jumped on the plane and got Ike on the phone. The vice president got up and said to the two or three of us there with him, “I’m going to tell Ike that I’m not going to contest this election.” He got on the phone and he said, “Mr. President, never in the history of this country should there ever be a moment in time that puts in doubt the normal transfer of power. I’m not going to contest this.” I didn’t hear the other side. He hung up the phone and he said, “Ike understands.” I think Eisenhower made the announcement for him. I’ve forgotten exactly how that happened. But all that happened while standing next to a mud puddle filled with old gas and oil—

KOED: Listening to a radio in the hands of an old mechanic.

WARNER: Listening to the radio. So that chapter in my life in politics closed out. I kept up with him, did little things here and there. He ran for governor, you know, and so forth. I got back into the mainstream. I guess I had come to [Hogan & Hartson, later Hogan Lovells] by then. Yes, I was here nine years and had just been made partner, then I got a call one day from the guy who was [Nixon’s 1968] campaign manager and became attorney general [John N. Mitchell]. He said, “I’ve been talking to the vice president”—we still called him vice president in those days. He said, “The vice president wants to do the following. He wants to have two offices, a big office in Washington, I mean big, and a small office in New York City near the hotel”—the Pierre Hotel, where he lived, near his law firm, Nixon, Mudge, Stern. “That’s where the decisions are going to be made. All the people who want to help me”—he said, “political wannabes”—“and other people I don’t need up here in New York, you take them there.” By pure irony, now I had been in this firm for eight or nine years and I knew Washington and Washington banking and things like that. The Willard Hotel was in bankruptcy.

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: It was closed.

KOED: Oh, that’s right. They used it as campaign headquarters.

WARNER: I opened the campaign headquarters.

KOED: You did? I had forgotten they used the Willard.

WARNER: There was a guy named Charlie Ryan who had been a professor at Duke Law School. He was kind of the top guy because he was a friend of Nixon's from way back, but I was the chief executive who—between you and me—got things done. He was handling some matters, very active, but for all the other things he turned to me. I would get these calls from—he was the guy who actually went to jail after Watergate.

KOED: Oh, yes, I know who you mean, Mitchell.

WARNER: Yes, a colorful man, a good man, and a smart lawyer. I think he was at Mudge law firm. He called me periodically and said, "Take the vice president and keep him down there. Give him a big suite in the hotel." A call would come in another week or so. "The president's son, John Eisenhower, wants an active role. Create a big suite, get John over there." I had Undertakers for Nixon, to Dentists for Nixon, to Doctors for Nixon. I had close to a thousand people in that hotel working.

KOED: Oh, my gosh.

WARNER: We had the hotel furniture. They were in bankruptcy. It was empty anyway. What do you do with the beds? I don't need beds! So, I locked the beds up under padlocks and the kids broke those padlocks and got to those beds. (laughs) That's just a sidebar, but it was an interesting experience. It was a wonderful job. A lot of political advice transferred out of there. We had direct contact with the [Lyndon B.] Johnson White House and [Hubert] Humphrey's headquarters I think was in the state, but it really served its purpose. It was an exciting adventure. I had that for the better part of a year.

KOED: It was wonderful training ground.

WARNER: My poor wife had produced three children and she was not interested in politics. I regretted that it put a tremendous drain on the family. Anyway, I did the job and [Secretary of Defense] Mel Laird—

This is a sidebar. Nixon had chosen [Henry] Scoop Jackson, United States senator, to be secretary of defense and everything was moving in that direction. I was asked to close the [campaign] office up and then come over to the transition office where I worked with a team and fortunately got assigned to the Department of Defense and State to go through all the wannabe secretaries—the assistant secretary of state for this and defense. Collect, collate, go through the letters, and Congress was dumping letters in. It's an interesting job, transitioning.

KOED: It must be an overwhelming job.

WARNER: It is an overwhelming job. I'll never forget. We were closing the headquarters down and Haldeman called me up. He said, "I want you to help start this

transition office. The first thing I want you to do is to go over to the White House and get the spaces and give me a diagram of the spaces we've got." Well, I went over there—I'll never forget this—the Democrats, Lyndon is still president of course, and Hubert was their candidate, and this guy was all Democrat. He said, "Oh, you damn Republicans, you got it." Under the law, the president is required to allocate space for the incoming transition team to work, because there's a lot of sensitive stuff and they wanted a pretty good protective system, so they use government spaces.

KOED: And you want as smooth a transition as possible.

WARNER: Yeah, but I remember this old guy, he had a wad of keys and he threw them at me. He said, "Go find the rooms." He was not happy. This was not more than a week after the election was over.

Anyway, I untangled that web. Eventually, I finished closing that down and went over to work. That's how I met Mel Laird. He gave me the job as undersecretary [of navy] and the secretary's job was given to John Chafee who was one of the most beautiful, marvelous men I ever knew in my life. As you know, he succeeded to the Senate, but the deal was that I would succeed him. He made the judgment that he could bring down [John] Pastore.

KOED: Which was a pretty big challenge!

WARNER: Huge! (laughs) It turned out, he didn't do it. Pastore brought him down. But he got the next round. I succeeded him as secretary.

KOED: Secretary of the navy.

WARNER: That was a big job. I was all of 42, 43 years old. A huge war was going on and in bad shape.

KOED: You served about three years as undersecretary and then two or so years as secretary.

WARNER: About two, two and a half years.

KOED: And this was during Vietnam.

WARNER: Yes, during Vietnam. Then came another interesting chapter in my life. I kept up with Nixon. He would call me from time to time. He called me up one day and said, "I've got a challenge for you." I knew something was coming. He said, "I've made a decision." "Yes, Mr. President?" "I'm going to have women admitted to all three service academies." I said, "Oh? *Oh!*" He said, "And you'll be in charge of laying the

plans for integrating them into Annapolis." (laughs) I was still kind of a chauvinist. I said, "Yes, Mr. President. This is going to be an interesting challenge." I remember this like it was yesterday. Nixon said, "You're up to it." I said, "Yeah, but where the hell are they going to sleep?" He said, "Solve it," and bang, down went the damn phone.

Another time he called me. He said, "Warner, I just flew in on the helicopter and landed on the lawn. As I was landing, I looked down and saw an old friend of mine." I said, "Oh, yes, Mr. President." I was always formal with him. He said, "Yeah, I saw an old friend. We came right down Constitution Avenue." At that time, main navy, the headquarters of the United States Navy, was along Constitution Avenue in temporary World War II buildings.

KOED: Really? As late as the '70s?

WARNER: Actually, the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] was in the Old Executive Office Building [EOB], but the CNO staff was all there and the army staff was at Ft. McNair. The old EOB used to have several cabinet offices, the vice president, and the military chiefs. He said, "Yes, an old friend of mine. You know, it reminded me of one of the first things I wanted to get done in my administration." "Yes, Mr. President?" "That old friend had four legs." "Yes, Mr. President?" "It was G.D. Rat, on the roof, as big as a hound dog. That place was infested with rats when I was stationed there in World War II and the same damn rats are there now. I want those buildings torn down and navy moved and you got six months to do it!" Bam, down went the phone!

Well, it was pure coincidence, because it all came together later in life. My dear friend and fraternity brother at Washington and Lee University was Linwood Holton. He was the first Republican governor since Reconstruction in Virginia. He's governor. Before anybody else knew of my orders, I called Linwood and said, "Linwood, I've got a challenge. I've got to move two to three thousand people and get them in offices. And guess what, Linwood, *we're gonna move 'em to Virginia!*" He said, "Hot damn! I want to do it before those Maryland guys get on my butt." (laughs)

KOED: Take advantage of it! (laughs)

WARNER: So we did it. That created Crystal City.

KOED: Oh, no kidding. I didn't know that.

WARNER: That's where we moved navy. We got Charles Smith and Company, the realtor, and he started building buildings for us overnight.

Okay, so that's a chapter in life. I'm in transition. Now I'm undersecretary of the navy and now I begin to testify before Congress and did a lot of what we call

"congressional relations"—you know, congresspersons have a lot of things they want done by the services. Chafee handled this, too. So I got to know about working with Congress, traveling with them occasionally for a codel (congressional delegation) or something. I'd make sure the naval part of it was set up for him and the marine part of it. Then one day, I got a call from Al Haig, [Nixon's] chief of staff. As you say in the military business, "You could hear the rumble of the guns distant."

KOED: Ominous.

WARNER: Ominous. Al said, "We've got one problem and we want to try to solve this thing before we get accused for this." It hadn't all broken out yet. He said to me, "Mr. Secretary, I'm going to be in Florida at Bebe Rebozo's house." That's where he used to go.

KOED: Uh huh.

WARNER: You know a lot of this history. "At Bebe Rebozo's house. I want you to get down there as fast as you can." I think he was there when he called me.

KOED: This was in Florida.

WARNER: Yes, Bebe had this place down on the southern tip, a well-known community [Key Biscayne, FL]. Bebe had been a big contributor and a personal friend from the old California days.

KOED: Yes, he was a loyal Nixon man.

WARNER: He was always getting accused of having Bebe pay all his bills and stuff. Nixon was a man of modest means.

There's a vignette—I was traveling with [Mrs. Nixon] one day during the campaign. I would occasionally do trips with her. She was such a lovely, quiet-spoken person. I don't know how this subject came up, but she dwelled a lot on the simplicity of their origins and how they met. She used to have a wedding ring, and she would twist it around. She said, "You know, Dick and I almost had to put that in the pawn house one time." I'll never forget that.

KOED: Yes, they had very humble beginnings.

WARNER: I couldn't believe that. Very modest.

Anyway, I flew down to Florida. I didn't have the foggiest idea of where Bebe's house was, but the Secret Service met me at the airport and took me there. I hadn't a clue

as to what he wanted to talk about. I walked into this room. Al Haig was there in his military fatigues. I think his rank was a couple of stars in the army, because when he came to the White House he had four stars to my recollection. The president was kind of slumped over. There wasn't a lot of sheer joy in there. Nixon said, "You know something, John, I got a problem. We've kind of looked through people we know and we've known you for a long time and you've been very friendly toward me." He said, "This nation is about to celebrate its 200th anniversary. I'm a historian and this thing has got to be done right and memorable with the world's eyes focused upon it, something that befits the dignity of the beginnings of this great nation."

He went on for a while. He was a historian and very well spoken. He said, "You know, this thing was established under Lyndon Johnson's administration. I appointed X." I know who X is, but I don't want to put it in here—a very prominent man, but he had no historical background. This thing had drifted sideways. Nixon said, "If this tanks on me, this will be another thing that I'll get pilloried with." I said, "Well, Mr. President, I really know very little about it." I tried to lighten the conversation up and said, "I don't even know how to spell the word [bicentennial]." (laughs) Al Haig, who was very funny—he had a good sense of humor—said, "John, we know that, but look here." He had two binders, each of them twice the size of this [indicating a large binder on desk]. He said, "There's the whole legislative history, everything that's been done. Congress passed a law. We're going to get a new law passed to straighten it up. We're going to create a special agency, the Bicentennial Administration." The President said, "I want you to head it." I took in a deep breath.[3]

KOED: A huge responsibility.

WARNER: I said, "Thank you, sir, I'm honored." He said, "I want you to answer this in one week's time. Figure it out. Tell me if you can do it. I really want you to do it." I've forgotten all the other exchanges we had, but the meeting was over and done in less than an hour and I was back on a plane going back to Washington and reading this stuff.

Well, it was really quite interesting. The concept was there with a lot of complexities to it. A number of nations wanted to participate. How do they participate? How do we handle the gifts that are going to come? We can't dump all this stuff into the White House. You can only take so many Ming pieces, or statues, or British antiquities and tapestries. It was a really interesting array of gifts to sort out and maybe tactfully tell them, "This won't work." The people were all excited.

[3] On July 4, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed S.J. Res 162 (PL 89-491), establishing the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, which lasted until 1973. On December 11, 1973, President Richard M. Nixon signed H.R. 7446 (PL 93-179), creating the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration.

I'll never forget Nixon. He sat there and said to me, "The one thing you've got to be careful of is you can't let the damn intellectuals get a hold of this thing because they'll just sit in a room and argue and they'll never decide on what's to be done. You cannot reconcile all the disparate opinions among the historians on how to do this." (laughs) He said, "Give them a big program. Give them some money. Give them a building and tell them to go off and work. You'll probably never see them again."

KOED: That may have been the best advice.

WARNER: That's exactly what happened. Best advice he ever gave. That was one of several meetings we had on this thing. Once I decided to take it, which I did—my wife was so relieved, but then she suddenly realized all the travel I had to do, because I had to visit each state.

KOED: The scope of it was huge.

WARNER: Huge! Twenty-two foreign nations wanted active roles. I visited them, went over their gifts, took pictures, and brought back information. But it was a simple concept. And Nixon said another thing about the intellectuals. He said, "Also, John, each of the 50 states has a certain framework of unique qualities. Let them kind of do what they want to do. If they're marching off on something that you really think is wrong, tank it, but convince them that the other things are better." So that was the way we did it. He said, "We'll back you on the appropriations. You'll have money, not truck loads, but enough to help subsidize the campaigns." Nixon had gotten into this thing and studied it. He said, "The next thing you got to do is stop all these damned"—he used pretty tough language—"people who are trying to make a buck on this thing." He showed me some ads for bicentennial bathtubs, bicentennial toilet seats. He said, "That's demeaning."

KOED: Commercialization.

WARNER: The commercialization. I said, "Okay, okay, I'll figure that out." I developed a trademark. So I undertook this thing and believe me I was the most popular guy with every member of Congress, because they all wanted recognition in their states. I had my picture taken in the offices with every single member of Congress, handing him or her a big bicentennial logo to put up on their wall. You know, simple things like that. We designed a logo, which was very good. I'll find one and show it to you. And the other thing—Nixon was funny—he said, "Develop a bicentennial coin. The Numismatist Society can help you a little bit, but if they get off in a corner and start arguing, you better figure it out for yourself." The numismatists, I gave them this task, and they—God, you could not get them going. And they were the ones who had a lot of influence in the marketplace on the sale of these things. So I said, "Hey guys, I'm going to design it, very

simple, seal of the United States on one side, Statue of Liberty on the other side." We sold millions of dollars of them.

KOED: I have one of those somewhere.

WARNER: Do you really? We generated the revenue to allocate to the states for their different programs.

KOED: So you had an umbrella organization at the national level and that coordinated with each of the 50 states.

WARNER: Each of the 50 states, being careful to allocate funds. I visited every state at least once, and many states a couple of times. Of course, I visited Virginia unlimited times. I was laying the foundation. By this time, I had testified before Congress a lot as secretary of the navy and had really done a lot of things with the Congress and it was in my bonnet that I wanted to do it.

KOED: You were looking in that direction. And, well, Virginia's role in the revolution was pivotal anyway.

WARNER: Virginia was taken pretty good care of and I laid the foundation for running for the Senate. And I really learned a lot of history.

KOED: I remember a large national ceremony, and there was a big naturalization ceremony at the Statue of Liberty.

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: I remember how tremendously large the event was. Also involved in that was renovation of structures.

WARNER: That's right. As a matter of fact, I've always been interested in railroads. Historically, there was a tremendous competition between America's railroads. There were so many of them. Each one wanted a more beautiful station than the other for their main station where the president had his office. They built structures that ten tons of dynamite couldn't have blown up, they were so strong. I said, "Wait a minute! These are historical shrines." So, we put out a grant program to rehabilitate America's edifices of rails because railroads developed this country. I had a free hand, a total free hand, and a wonderful staff.

KOED: How large of a staff did you have?

WARNER: Well, I had a core staff of say 50 or 60 here. We had beautiful offices. They gave us not one but two full houses on Jackson Place, right across from the White House. They were the reception offices for foreign dignitaries, my office. To really run it, I had to have my office with the gang. We used the Watergate office building, a beautiful suite of offices there, and an absolutely totally enthusiastic bunch of young people.

KOED: Wonderful. Did this culminate in one final ceremony?

WARNER: There was a series of events, but the focal point was that each state had to do a special event on the 4th of July, 1976. [Gerald] Ford had now become president. I had gotten to know him and he very graciously said, "Plan some things for me to do, given that I'll do the full day." The vice president—

KOED: Nelson Rockefeller.

WARNER: Rockefeller was involved in it. I remember very well that I laid out options for him. He selected what he wanted. Ford turned to me kindly and said, "I'd be privileged if you would travel with me." I said, "Mr. President, I would be honored to do it." He said, "Meet me in church across from the White House at 7:00 in the morning and we'll get in that helicopter and we'll go." I did that. We flew from here to Valley Forge. That's where he wanted to start. I remember we got up there and there were clouds everywhere. The pilots were circling. We were talking to the ground. There was something like 8,000 to 10,000 people down there and we couldn't get the helicopter below the clouds. President Ford talked to the military guy and got the pilot back. He said, "You find the first hole, cut the rotor, and just parachute down to the ground. If we bounce hard, we'll bounce." (laughs) "Yes, sir, Mr. President." They found that hole and suddenly the whole thing just dropped out of the sky. We came down holding our breath and there it was. We got below the cloud level. We went from there to Philadelphia.

Then, the most memorable was that we had taken an aircraft carrier and pulled it up at the Statue of Liberty. We had built a big stage. The president of the United States came up and addressed the nation from that historic site. It was so amusing. It was nautical and we were on the deck of an aircraft carrier. The picture to go out was really planned—the power of the aircraft carrier, Statue of Liberty, the president, everything. We had a ship's bell because Ford had been in the navy. My job was to go up with the boatswain mate, escort the president up, and I would ring the ship's bell at the stroke of, I think it was 2:00 or maybe 3:00. We had it electronically set up that every church bell in the nation would ring at that time. The churches all came in and suddenly the whole country was listening to the ringing of the church bells or other carillons that they may have had in their townships. Ford would then address the nation. It was to start precisely. Everything was electronically set. There was an old grizzled sailor, an old boatswain

mate, standing next to me. I looked at my watch and I said, "Sailor, according to my watch"—I had the president timed to have about a minute to collect himself and my watch was wrong. I was five minutes ahead.

KOED: Your watch was five minutes fast?

WARNER: The boatswain mate said, "Mr. Secretary"—he knew who the hell I was—"Your watch is wrong! I've got Greenwich Mean Time on my wrist watch. You've got to kill four or five minutes." So, I leaned over to Ford. He was amused. He said, "Okay."

KOED: He was an easy going personality.

WARNER: I'll never forget. While we were standing there, he was so excited about the carrier that he talked about his World War II experience aboard an aircraft carrier. Here are the two of us—

KOED: Two military men.

WARNER: We're talking about World War II and he's talking about a terrible hurricane he went through. Not a hurricane, but a bigger storm—

KOED: A typhoon?

WARNER: Typhoon, yeah. He said it was the worst voyage they ever had in the whole war. I went through one myself in the marines as our unit was going to Korea. Finally, the boatswain mate said, [whispering] "Stand by, five seconds." I said, "Five seconds, Mr. President." Then, I put his hand on that halyard and he banged that bell and banged that bell, and then he addressed the nation.

Going back that night, we had a flight plan to fly over a little bit of Manhattan and wiggle the wings. They knew the president was there. We looked down and Ford was so emotionally taken up that he said, "Wait a minute, I want to go back and go way up on Fifth Avenue and come all the way down Fifth Avenue and Madison so that all those people"—

KOED: In the helicopter?

WARNER: Yes, in the helicopter, at the lowest possible level, so they know who it is and that the president is paying tribute to that massive number of people in New York City. There was not a single incident of any wrongdoing. The police had no problems. America just rejoiced well into the night.

KOED: On a personal note, it was the Bicentennial that spurred my interest in history.

WARNER: No kidding!

KOED: It's why I'm a historian today. I was still a teenager at the time, but I remember watching the ceremony and being fascinated by it.

WARNER: Isn't that interesting.

KOED: I started to read about the American Revolution, and that's what started me down the course to be a Senate historian.

WARNER: Well, here you are hearing a little first-hand edition. I'll give you one last chapter.

KOED: Okay.

WARNER: So, we did that and then landed on the lawn of the White House. It was around 5:00. I got in the car with the vice president to go to the Capitol grounds where he was going to address the nation. There was an umbrella of the biggest fireworks display in history. We got to the grounds right at the monument here. Rockefeller and I had known each other. I had had a very interesting experience with him in the Nixon era—which is worth telling someday, but not today, let's keep this part clear. We had a cordial relationship. He actually made some trips for the Bicentennial, speaking, and really liked it. We arrived and were escorted up. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir was there. I think the Army or Marine Corps Bands were there. It was all ready to go. We had planned a big show. We were sitting there, being greeted by the platform guests, when this poor guy came up, absolutely distraught. He said to me, "I've got a problem!" I said, "Well, what is it?" "The microphone won't work."

KOED: Oh, my gosh. (laughs)

WARNER: The vice president is right there. He said, "Well, what do you think we should do? I've got a million people out there." I said, "I'll tell you what, Mr. Vice President, one of my jobs in the navy was electronic technician's mate. Let me get onto this thing." So, I'm down on my hands and knees, checking these wires out. The rest of the platform guests are watching, thinking, "What the hell is this?" (laughs) You know, my bum's up in the air. Next thing I know, Rockefeller is down next to me on the platform. "What do you think we can do?" (laughs)

So, we're fiddling around and sure enough we were beginning to get it to work when finally the mechanic came up and said, "Okay, fellows, I'm ready to help you." He

got down, so now you've got three guys down on their hands and knees. I think by this time the vice president had got up. He said, "Well, you two guys pretty well got it right." He didn't know it was the vice president. He did an adjustment and, pop, on she went, just in the nick of time.

Of course, the Mormon Choir—I don't know how you go through it, but to me it's heaven to listen to. We went through a flawless evening. I think at the stroke of midnight we shot all these things off, then I escorted the vice president to his car and he said, "Where's your car?" I'm thinking, "I haven't got a car," but I wasn't going to tell him that. He was tired. I said, "I'm fine." So, he motors off and a million people are going home. There are no taxis, no nothing, so it was the most interesting chapter of this whole thing. I lived in Georgetown then, and lived on my farm in Virginia, and I walked all the way home that night from the Capitol grounds. I needed to unwind. Seeing people in the streets, having a good time, I never was concerned about any personal safety. I walked all the way to my house. My poor wife couldn't quite figure out what the problem was—I called her and told her I was going to be late. I didn't want to tell her I was walking home. She said, "Oh, it was a beautiful show. I saw you!"

KOED: She saw it on television.

WARNER: I walked in and went to sleep in an orderly way, saying, "You know, by the hand of providence, all the way from Bebe Rebozo's little house, I put this thing together."

KOED: A job well done.

WARNER: A job well done by the American people. As Nixon said, "Just let them use their own imagination and their own ideas." He was a clever man. Later, I must talk to you about when I used to bring him to Capitol Hill with Bob Dole to speak. We'd bring together a group of senators to listen to him. He never had a note. He took us all over the globe.

KOED: You've had remarkable experiences in life.

WARNER: Yeah. I've had an interesting life, but I've had a lot of luck.

KOED: It takes a bit of luck along with everything else.

WARNER: Yes.

KOED: The Bicentennial must have put you perfectly in the place to turn towards the Senate campaign.

WARNER: Absolutely. Obviously, I was sort of the right guy for the right time to do this. I regretted leaving the navy secretary's office. Nixon said, "You can stay, but you'd help me and you'd help the nation. I think you can do it."

KOED: It was a wonderful job, but also a very unique experience in so many ways.

WARNER: Absolutely. The only one in history. You're looking at him.

KOED: That's it, a very unique experience. Perhaps that's a good place to stop today.

[Discussion of processing interview.]

WARNER: There's a story of why I didn't run for a sixth term. I had a clear track. I'll put it in the transcript. Mark Warner had run against me. He had been governor and was thinking about it. He came to me two years before my term was up. We had been friends. I worked with him when he was governor. We never really had any acrimony between us when we ran against each other. He said to me, "You know, I hope you run again for another term." I said, "Well, it's something that my wife and I are thinking about." He said, "If you do, I won't run against you. I'll even support you. As far as I know, nobody in the Democratic ranks will run against you."

KOED: That doesn't surprise me. In 2002 you were reelected with more than 82 percent of the vote.

WARNER: By this time, the more conservative elements of the Republican Party were beginning to grow in strength. We were going into the transition where a lot of evangelical interests were now infused in the party, but they had come to adjust themselves. "He is who he is and there's no one among us who could knock him out of there."

KOED: I think it would have been an easy reelection, if you had wanted it. We'll talk about that more.

WARNER: This is kind of fun for me. A lot of people have wanted to do it. I've done something with the navy. I did a little bit on Pearl Harbor Day for the navy, an admiral who is the same age as I am. The theme was where we were as 16-year-old boys on Pearl Harbor Day and how that tragic chapter of history impacted our lives and what were the communities in which we lived, what were they like? What was your recollection of how America absorbed that terrible blow and rose up again to dominate the whole military scene?

KOED: My parents often talked about that. My father was in World War II, in the army, and they often talked about the impact of Pearl Harbor.

WARNER: It was huge. So I did a little bit of oral history with them.

KOED: I think it's wonderful that you're giving us the time to do this and I think we'll have some fun with it. So thank you.

[End of interview #1]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #2: January 15, 2015

BETTY K. KOED: Last time, we talked about your years with Nixon, on the two campaigns, and we talked about the Bicentennial, but you didn't mention the Magna Carta story.

JOHN W. WARNER: I'll do it in the context of how I prepared, and what experiences did prepare me, for the Senate. For every member of Congress, I was welcomed in their office—every member—because the Bicentennial was truly a bipartisan program.

KOED: It would have to be in order to be successful.

WARNER: I'll ruminate a little bit about it.

KOED: Okay.

WARNER: I loved how beautifully you did all this work. I don't think I have a single change [to the first transcript]. With me, that's exceptional.

KOED: I try to stay as close to verbatim as possible, and that wasn't hard to do with you since you speak so well and speak in complete thoughts, which most people don't do.

WARNER: I did case histories for a couple of senators. I did one for George Mitchell and one for Ted Kennedy and some others. I pored over the copies to really straighten them out. But I'm thoroughly enjoying this, so why don't you just take off.

KOED: Okay, let's pick up where we left off last time.

WARNER: This is session two. This is a fascinating chapter in my life, A) to have met you; B) to be invited by the Senate to do this; and C) to actually sit down and reminisce about the exciting things that have happened in my life and my eternal gratitude to innumerable people for all they did to make it possible for me to get the experience and the training to try my best to serve as a good senator for the United States of America as a U.S. senator for my beloved state of Virginia.

KOED: Last time, we talked a bit about your time during the Nixon years and as director of the Bicentennial, but you didn't mention the role you played in bringing the Magna Carta here. I'd love to hear about that.

WARNER: Well, coincidentally, we are doing this interview as we approach the 800th anniversary of the signing by King John on the 15th of April, 800 years ago, at Runnymede. Actually, I went to visit Runnymede. It's interesting. I had to walk through a muddy field. There are really no prepared roads that go up there. You just park along the side of a road and walk up the hill. There's a small but beautiful pavilion there, marking the exact spot that allegedly King John stood on when he was addressing the barons.

Then, it's interesting, perhaps 50 yards to one side there is a very small pavilion that the Kennedy family erected to honor the visit of the president, John F. Kennedy, to that site. As part of their pavilion, they created a nice little walking, stone-covered pathway up the hill so at least for the last 200 yards of travel you have a walkway to get to the edifice that was put up by the British government. I will go to the Magna Carta, which was one of the many programs that we sponsored, but I'd like to sort of lay a foundation.

As I mentioned, I had been secretary of the navy and got a call from Al Haig one day, who was chief of staff to President Nixon. "Would I come to see the president?" I did. That's covered in our first interview, but only after many years of reflection do I look back upon that chapter of my career, over those two and half years that I was there, to see that it really laid a very solid foundation for getting into the world of senatorial politics and actually seeking to win a seat. All of my training before that, primarily at the Department of Justice as an assistant United States attorney and then at the Pentagon for five-plus years as undersecretary and secretary of the navy, was in the traditional bureaucratic area of responsibilities. Indeed, while in the navy secretariat, I testified a number of times before congressional committees and related to many, many members of the Congress in helping them resolve problems that involved the Navy Department and/or sailors and marines in their states and their constituents in their states. So I had extensive experience with the Congress then, both in testifying and working with members.

But the Bicentennial really transformed me—I don't say this pejoratively—from a bureaucrat. I suppose I qualified for that term. Over five years was a long tour in the Pentagon in those days. I became what I would say with a great sense of humility a people-minded person. In other words, here I am trying to translate what their hopes, desires, and aspirations are for a very significant milestone in the history of our republic, namely the 200th anniversary of the formation of our republic. As a result, as I said, I visited each of the states at least once and a number of states a number of times, particularly Virginia. I appeared before innumerable audiences and then participated in every conceivable type of program. I even donned an Indian uniform one time and rode in a parade on a horse. (laughs) My family, particularly my grandchildren, just love that picture with an Indian chieftain bonnet on my head. Then, from the serious analysis of the history of America at colleges and universities where I lectured, down to the town

square where I went to innumerable events, I wasn't necessarily the dominant figure there but I was part of the usual grouping of all the politicians. You see, I say "all,"—very specifically I chose that word—because this program of celebration was literally, totally, and I worked deciduously every day to make it nonpartisan, or devoid of any politics. I felt that we were celebrating something that they all own and benefit from equally, namely the formation of our country. That's the way it should be.

KOED: Were there some people who were trying to make it a partisan issue?

WARNER: Well, early on in the history of it, Nixon was accused of trying to use it as some kind of triumphant march into a second term of his presidency.

KOED: Ah, okay.

WARNER: But I knew Nixon quite well and he made a point that he wasn't going to use it for this. As a matter of fact, he then proposed legislation and Congress adopted it, passed it, and it became law, establishing a small administration which was solely devoted to celebrating the Bicentennial. Now, true, I was a Republican and proud of it, but I had many Democrats and many Independents. We just did not ever go into politics. I visited every single congressional office, Senate and House, over a period of eighteen months, presenting them with certain artifacts relating to their state and in recognition of programs in their state. We had, by law, the authority to say this is an official Bicentennial event, because there was some understandable invasion of the Bicentennial by the good ol' American free enterprise system to do a lot of things. I remember at one time I was furious because they were making bicentennial bathtubs and the word "bicentennial" was being freely attached to this, that, and the other thing. While most of it had some historical context, much of it was just tawdry, in my judgment, so we got Congress to give us specific authority to have a trademark. Only when that mark was on it was an event or an artifact recognized officially as part of the nation's Bicentennial. It was a good protective device.

KOED: So, perhaps people used the term "bicentennial," but it would not have an official status.

WARNER: That's correct, unless we conferred it, and we carefully did that process in conjunction with the respective Bicentennial commissions in each of the 50 states. Every governor had set up a Bicentennial commission in his or her state and of course it had its tentacles that went down to the county level. There was a Bicentennial chairman in every county in America and every city had a Bicentennial chairman. People really enjoyed it and to the credit of President Nixon, he said, "This thing is to be thought of as being equally celebrated by every small town as well as the nation's capital. We're all going to put our own interpretation on how best to celebrate it." Again, my job as the

overall administrator—which was my title—of the American Bicentennial Administration was to oversee such public funds as had been appropriated and/or funds that my organization raised through the sale of coinage. Again, official Bicentennial coins brought in many millions of dollars which I promptly dispersed out to the 50 states in large measure. So I became a people person. I was just a part of their events. It laid a solid foundation for running for public office and for federal public office.

KOED: And you realized that you enjoyed that kind of work, meeting many people.

WARNER: Oh, yes, it was a lot of fun. I traveled, again, to each state at least once, including Hawaii and Alaska. I remember making those long voyages. Then I visited 22 foreign nations in connection with their offering of gifts to America to celebrate and recognize their association with this republic.

KOED: Interesting. That put you in a frame of mind that made you realize that you would enjoy a political career.

WARNER: Oh, yes, it really did. I went right straight from the Bicentennial—took off about 90 days. My wife at that time, as you know, was a very successful and creative member of the Hollywood movie scene. I remember traveling with her to five different countries where she made movies. I would go and visit her for a period while she was on the set.

KOED: Ah, while she was filming.

WARNER: Yes.

KOED: When did you announce your run for the Senate? Did that come in ’77 or in ’78?

WARNER: It came in ’78, because I campaigned throughout 1978. I was elected in November of ’78 and took office in ’79. Actually, I should put a footnote in. I was the beneficiary of a then-recognized practice in the Senate whereby if a sitting senator who had not sought reelection, or had been defeated, could step down and that individual who had been duly elected in the November election could take his or her place.

KOED: And that gave you an advantage in seniority.

WARNER: Senator Bill Scott in Virginia resigned his seat a few days before his term ended, and therefore I served for a few days in the Senate and then in January of ’79 marched down the aisle to get my own election, which I had won in November, confirmed and ratified by the Senate. But this did affect positively my ranking in the

seniority rolls in the Senate, because I was actually a senator when the other dozen or so of our class [took office], although I think there were six of us who got what we called the "rollover seats," but in seniority I went to the top of the list.

KOED: I believe that was a fairly common practice in those days.

WARNER: I wouldn't say common, but it was certainly recognized as a proper thing to do. Now, since then, it has been suspended. Isn't that correct?

KOED: That is correct. By the 1990s, they had pretty much quit doing that. Leadership just quit acknowledging it as a step-up in seniority. You came in 1979—and came in a bit early as you mentioned—following an interesting election in '78. You came in second in the nomination race, but then fate intervened.

WARNER: Let me piece it together very carefully for you, because it is an extraordinary chapter in Virginia history. In the 1978 senatorial race in Virginia, there were four candidates. There was a former governor, a very dear and valued friend then and still today, Linwood Holton. He had finished his governor's service—I think he had been out of office for a couple of years—and he decided to throw his hat in the ring for the Senate. Then there was a party chairman named Richard Obenshain, a highly respected man—for good reason, he was just a fine person—but respected in the sense that he really had a clear vision of what conservatism should be and how our state really inherently was to be considered a conservative state.

KOED: Conservative, and by then Republican?

WARNER: Well, conservative in its thinking. Virginia was very conservative. The dominant party for a hundred years—not a full hundred, but the Democrats had controlled the Senate seats for a hundred years before I came in. On my election, I was the second, and the man who resigned to give me the seat was the first Republican senator elected in a hundred years. So it was a conservative state. The Byrd machine ran it for 30 or 40 years and they were very conservative in their outlook. And there was another distinguished state senator, Nathan Miller. There were the four of us: John W. Warner, former secretary of the navy; Linwood Holton, former governor; Richard Obenshain, statewide Republican Party chairman; and Nathan Miller, the senator from the valley, from Shenandoah County.

KOED: I have Andrew Miller written in my notes.

WARNER: Andy Miller was the Democrat nominee for the Senate in the '78 election.

We had a convention and it marked in political history in the United States the largest gathering of individuals—about 11,000—in any state for a political convention. It was very colorful. It was an all-day convention. There were five ballots and I lost on the fifth ballot by a very close margin. With the sequence of balloting, one candidate had to drop out.

KOED: With each vote, one dropped?

WARNER: Right. When the final ballot was cast just between myself and the former party chairman, Richard Obenshain, he won by a few hundred votes, maybe 500 or a thousand votes out of thousands of votes cast. It was tight. But I respected him, liked him, and he felt the same way towards me. I got up the next morning, went over and gave a modest contribution to his campaign. I spoke at his victory breakfast. Later, I made some campaign appearances and worked in his campaign to help him get elected. Late at night one night, he was coming into a very small, private airport and the little plane that he was flying hit the top of a tall tree coming in and he and the pilot were lost.

So the party then turned to me as the second one, but they didn't turn to me automatically. They felt there were some more conservative types that should have it. The decision was in the hand of a state central committee, probably around 50 individuals who were appointed by their districts as members of the central committee. It was sort of a governing body that operated under the chairman of the Republican Party in Virginia. They met several times and it was at their last meeting— There is one colorful segment to this. They were in quite a commotion as to whether or not they wanted to confer on me the nomination by the Republican Party. Now, mind you, this man had only been laid to rest for 72 hours, but there was a need to move forward because there were only 10 weeks left before the state-wide election. The widow, whom of course I had known, on her own initiative came in and addressed that central party of individuals and said, "John Warner and my husband were friends. They respected each other. John won second place in the nomination and he is entitled to it." And she turned around and walked out. They all looked at each other, then voted me in.

KOED: That won them over.

WARNER: That took guts!

KOED: It certainly did. Then you had a very intense nine or ten weeks of campaigning.

WARNER: We really did. In the first place, I didn't have an office. I didn't have a lick of furniture. I was living at my farm at that time. Actually, I was back working full time because I had kind of neglected the farm for a year or so while campaigning, so I

was busy down in the field with the men. We raised horses and had cattle, sheep, hogs—it was a big farm. I had to drop everything.

My wife had been nominated by the Irish government to be the grand marshal at the Dublin Horse Show, which internationally is one of the most important annual equestrian events in that Ireland is identified with horses from day one. I remember that the front hall was stacked with at least 10 pieces of her luggage, all waiting to be shipped to Ireland. I was going because, you know, I wanted to be with my wife and this was very important to her. I loved horses and riding and I had ridden in Ireland. Then the plane crash occurred. The luggage stayed in the front hall.

We did not try to reach out. We went to the funeral for Obenshain but immediately returned to the farm. It was only when people reached out to us to see whether or not we had a willingness to be considered to take the nomination that we became involved in becoming the nominee of the party.

KOED: You had to change gears overnight.

WARNER: Big time!

KOED: What was the short campaign like?

WARNER: Well, it was exciting. My wife thoroughly enjoyed it and was very much involved.

KOED: I would imagine that she was very good at it. She was such a public person.

WARNER: She was a public person, a people person. She drilled me more and more—I'm still learning lessons—on how to be a people person. I was kind of a stuffy swashbuckler and I needed to be brought back down and she was good at it, as were some others. We decided that with the campaign being so short, as much as we wanted to stay together, we simply decided that I would go to one end of the state and she would go to the other and campaign. That way we got two separate press coverages. We got together, obviously, once or twice a week. At some crossroads we'd join up, then the next morning we would be back pursuing our own separate agendas of political appearances.

The election was held and it came down to the wire. It went way into the night. Finally, they emerged sometime the next day, saying they thought I had won by several hundred votes. There was discussion as to whether or not there were sufficient votes to win it. [Andrew Miller] had to make the determination of whether or not he wanted to legally contest the election. He said, "Put a hold on it." He and his lawyers looked at it, and for several reasons he decided not to contest it.

KOED: So, there was no contest? The margin was less than one percent.

WARNER: Yes, less than one percent of the total vote, and the total vote was about a million and a half. They used to call me in the Senate, "Landslide Johnny." (laughs)

KOED: Then, you had to change gears again and create a Senate office.

WARNER: I had made a lot of contacts on Capitol Hill. The Republican Party of Virginia was very helpful to me. They completely rallied behind me, no question. We found a very able team of people to come in and open that office up, one of whom was just here a few minutes ago, Andy Wahlquist, who was my first chief of staff. He had been active in the Senate campaign and then came right in as chief of staff.

KOED: Did you have mentors? Were there senior senators who were particularly influential in getting your Senate career started?

WARNER: Once I got to the Senate, I would certainly attribute a great deal of support that I got from people like John Stennis of Mississippi, a Democrat. He was chairman of the Armed Services Committee and he was just marvelous to me. Never did I realize that someday, many years later, would I have his seat as chairman of the committee. There was Barry Goldwater, John Tower, Bob Dole. I could name dozens of them.

KOED: We'll talk further about some of these people.

WARNER: Yes, we will.

KOED: In early 1979, when you come to the Senate, it's an interesting time period. We are emerging from times of crisis nationally. The Vietnam War had wound down. We survived Watergate. For someone who had close ties to Nixon, that must have been a difficult experience, to watch the downfall of Nixon. We also had in 1979 the Iranian hostage crisis. It was a difficult time in U.S. history. I'm curious to know how you, as a new senator, looked at some of these issues.

WARNER: You've got to remember that we were heavily burdened at that time with a looming international crisis. The Cold War was on with the Soviet Union. In Southeast Asia, Vietnam was still slowly winding down, but it was a very difficult transition as we had our withdrawal from that country and the rest is history. The world was a pretty busy place, but I slid back into it. I had the benefit of considerable experience overseas, negotiating with other countries. I negotiated a special executive agreement for the navy, the Incidents at Sea Agreement with the Soviet Union, when I

was secretary.[4] I made several visits to the Soviet Union dealing with their chairman of their joint chiefs of staff, the chief of their navy, a powerful vice-chief of the navy, and I brought a delegation of the vice chief of the Soviet navy over here during the most intense period of the Cold War between our two nations. Fortunately, that thing did work out.

KOED: So during your years as secretary of navy, you got some strong foreign policy experience. When you came to the Senate, you went onto the Armed Services Committee very quickly. It often takes a while to get on that committee.

WARNER: I had the good fortune of being at the top of the seniority list of my class and there was a spot available. I believe I was the only member of that class on the Republican side. Carl Levin, who just stepped down as chairman of Armed Services, was in my class and he came in. The Armed Services Committee in those days, and I hope today in some respects it's the same, it was a like a close-knit family. Yes, we were one side Republicans and on the other Democrats, but, boy, we worked together. John Stennis was chairman and he couldn't have been more helpful and nice to me. Scoop Jackson was next in rank over there and was hugely helpful to me. Barry Goldwater, on our side, John Tower, all of these men couldn't have been more helpful in getting me started on that committee and pointing out the responsibilities I would have on the various subcommittees and so forth. It was really exciting.

KOED: I would like to hear a bit about working with John Stennis. What kind of person was he to work with? This is a time when committee chairmen had a lot of power.

WARNER: Oh, powerful! Somebody ought to write an article about this. He was chairman of Armed Services and also chairman of [Defense Appropriations Subcommittee of] Appropriations.

KOED: I didn't realize that.

WARNER: You ought to research that. It's just an interesting thing. That was the whole Senate then, that and the majority leader. John was a thoroughly respected and trusted man. He administered all of his responsibilities with great care. He was a Democrat, but he was good.

KOED: Did he rule with an iron hand?

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[4]Several incidents involving the U.S. Navy and the U.S.S.R. Navy in the late 1960s prompted this agreement, including close passing of ships and threatening activity by naval forces. In March 1968 the United States proposed talks to prevent the escalation of such incidents. Talks began on October 1, 1971, in Moscow, followed by another round of talks beginning on May 17, 1972, in Washington, D.C. The Incidents at Sea Agreement was signed by Secretary of the Navy John Warner and Soviet Admiral Sergei Gorshkov in Moscow on May 25, 1972.

WARNER: He was strict, out of the mutual respect that people held for him.

KOED: That was enough.

WARNER: That was enough with John Stennis. There was no one else like him.

KOED: He controlled that committee for a long time.

WARNER: And before him was Richard Russell, another iconic figure.

KOED: This is a time, the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, when southern senators dominated the committees.

WARNER: Oh, yes, Jim Eastland. That rascal out of Louisiana, what was his name?

KOED: Russell Long.

WARNER: Then there was Carl Hayden, Warren Magnuson, and Fritz Hollings had the Commerce Committee. They had a lock on it.

KOED: And you ended up with John Stennis' desk.

WARNER: I did have it for a while, then we gave it back because it's aboard the carrier now [U.S.S. *John Stennis*]. I think he wanted me to have it.

KOED: Yes, he requested that it go to you, as I understand it.

WARNER: You know, at that time I could have bought that desk under the rules.

KOED: I didn't know it was on the carrier now.

WARNER: Yes, there's a little office on the carrier. I remember he gave me one of those little triangular things that you put your name on, it's on the dais when you're there. He had one printed that said, "Always Look Ahead." He handed that to me. He said, "I want you to have this and the desk." He was just like a father figure to me.

KOED: As a junior senator there are many milestones that you pass.

WARNER: I don't say this in a bragging way, but I transitioned past the junior thing very quickly. On Armed Services, I think for 17 years I was either ranking [member] or chairman—chairman three times and ranking three times.

KOED: In the Senate at large, in the early days of the 1979 to 1980 time period, do you remember, for instance, when you gave your maiden speech? How long did you wait before doing that?

WARNER: It was sort of an undefined rule, but you waited about a year. I'll tell you about one of the most interesting speeches I ever gave. In your freshman year, your class selects a senator to give George Washington's Farewell Address.

KOED: Yes, on or near February 22 of every year. You did that in the midst of a big snow storm.

WARNER: I woke up in the morning. I lived down on my farm, that was my residence, but I had a house in Georgetown. I looked out the window and there was not a car moving on Wisconsin Avenue. We lived on S Street, about 500 yards off of Wisconsin Avenue. Our street hadn't seen a car. I looked at my wife and I said, "You know, I'm going!" She said, "I know, you old marine, you're going to get there. You fought in Korea through the snow and ice." (laughs)

KOED: This is nothing for you!

WARNER: I got out and walked down Wisconsin Avenue. It was a beautiful sunrise morning. I walked all the way down Wisconsin Avenue, all the way down M Street, then down to Constitution Avenue, and I walked to within a block of the Capitol. I was aware of this and somewhat involved—farmers were having a protest and they had pitched a tent camp right there behind the Capitol. They brought their tractors. They were running all over Washington, tying up traffic, in their tractors.[5] So, here I am plodding along and this farmer roars up in this big tractor.

KOED: On Constitution Avenue?

WARNER: On Constitution Avenue. He puts me on the back of it and drove me up the hill. (laughs) So for all but about one block, I walked to the Capitol. I had telephone contact, so the security opened it up and sure enough somebody from the Senate staff was dutifully there to record the speech. I waxed and waned to a totally empty chamber, but the *New York Times* picked it up as the "Speech of the Week" or something like that. It was a funny and wonderful experience.

KOED: So there were enough people there to convene the session and give the speech.

[5] Known as "Tractorcade," this protest by thousands of farmers driving their tractors to Washington, D.C., continued for weeks, tying up traffic on and around Capitol Hill.

WARNER: I don't remember. There weren't many there other than myself.

KOED: Probably two or three staff and you. You convened and delivered the address. That's determination.

WARNER: Uh huh. I've forgotten how I got home.

KOED: You probably walked home as well. You know how Washington is in the snow. There probably wasn't much moving and this was a big blizzard.

WARNER: This was a whopper!

This reminds me of another funny experience I had as chairman of the Bicentennial. On July 4, 1976, I traveled with President Ford in the helicopter up to Valley Forge, to Philadelphia, and to the Statue of Liberty where he gave a beautiful speech. I flew back with him in his helicopter, then I went up to Capitol Hill where Vice President Rockefeller picked me up. There were a million people celebrating Bicentennial night.

KOED: On the Mall?

WARNER: On the Mall, right up at the foot of the Washington Monument. We had the Mormon Tabernacle chair—it was huge—and the army band. We had a beautiful ceremony that was televised nationally. I was there with Rockefeller. We arrived and you know, there's the usual hustle and bustle when the vice president arrives with everybody running around. I'm standing there talking to him. I had known him fairly well. I was the one as secretary of the navy that Nixon personally called—he used to joke and pull my leg. He had a good sense of humor. "Hello, John, the President here. How are you?" "Oh, Mr. President, I'm fine. I'm honored to receive your call." "Well, I'm not so sure you're going to be honored after you hear what I've got to say." (laughs) "Yes, sir," and I settle back in my chair. He said, "You know, the vice president of the United States has absolutely no security to speak of in terms of his residence." Well, I had been to Jerry Ford's house and other vice presidents' houses, and they lived right out in the community.

KOED: That's right. They didn't have a vice presidential residence then.

WARNER: Jerry lived over off of Belhaven Road somewhere. Nixon said, "I've decided that the navy is going to give up the Chief of Naval Operations' mansion."

KOED: Ah, at the Naval Observatory.

WARNER: At the Observatory. I said, "Oohhhhhh?" He said, "Yes, but I thought since you have such a friendly way with all the people, you tell them the news. Bye-bye." Bang, down went the phone. So we started that process.

Now, Mrs. Rockefeller was a character. I had gotten to know her. I had the privilege of going over with the keys to show the Rockefellers this house. I can't remember whether the vice president was with us, or if it was just the two of us with the usual handful of staff, but she turned to me and said, "This needs major renovation!" (laughs) My first reaction is, "Oh, man, I've got to put a line item in the navy budget to clean up this thing." But she said, "You know, I'm going to tell Nelson that we're going to do it at our own personal expense." I said, "Well, Mrs. Rockefeller, that's very nice. I'm honored by that." Well, the renovations took so long that Rockefeller never moved in. (laughs)

KOED: I knew he hadn't lived in it, but I didn't know they paid for the renovations. That's interesting. The vice presidents who came after benefitted from that. Was the renovation truly done at their expense?

WARNER: Oh, it was done mostly at their expense. Very little came from the navy budget. Ford was the first one, I guess, to move in there. I loved that man. He was really a good guy.

I'll digress and tell you a funny story. I'm advance man in the 1960 campaign for Nixon. It really had been a fascinating eye-opener to me. I was a young lawyer in this firm, just made partner, and took a leave of absence for about 18 months to do this job. I was advance man for several major events and I did two of the debates with Kennedy. I had gone to law school with Bobby Kennedy and knew him very well. He was chief advance man for his brother, Senator Kennedy, and I was chief advance man on this particular trip for Nixon—I can't remember where it was, but I think upper Midwest for that particular debate.

As I said, I knew the Kennedys. I knew Jackie because I had grown up in a little neighborhood social group we had out here in Northwest Washington and actually escorted her to dinner parties, and we later knew each other quite well after she was widowed. She moved to Middleburg, Virginia, and I saw her a lot down there. She was a lovely lady. At this time Jackie was pregnant. This particular broadcast set-up was in the middle of town. There was an alleyway that had two parking spaces in it. Of course, being vice president took protocol priority. I turned to Bobby and said, "Bobby, we're putting up a little tent in the studio in case Jackie requires privacy suddenly for whatever reason." I said, "I'm also making arrangements that the vice president will take space two and your limo will get space one so you can get out of Dodge if you've got a problem

with the child." He never forgot that. The president never forgot that. They invited me to dinner several times after that.

KOED: And you were mentioning Gerald Ford.

WARNER: Okay, we were on one of these trips together. I liked the idea of the old whistle-stop tour on a train, speaking from a platform, and I was one of three advance men to set these up. We visited about six states and I had that segment from Indiana through Michigan. I hopped on the train and did all the advance work. We made all our stops and the last stop was at the Walker Office Furniture Manufacturing Company, a small industrial plant. I had been there with the Secret Service and we checked it all out. So the train pulled in. I jumped off, got the Secret Service guy and my deputy working for me, and I said, "Is everything set up as I laid it out?" "It's all ready to go." We got the vice president off the train. The crowd is inside, maybe 500 to 700 people, in a factory set-up. They put tables on the factory floor. I've got the vice president in a holding room while I did the last minute check-up—mic ready, podium ready, band ready, so, "Everybody, on my signal, we go!" They queued up behind me. I went to the aperture, made the signal, the band started, and we walked in. In the balcony above the door coming in were some people and they had three dozen eggs and they pelted Nixon with raw eggs.

KOED: Oh, my gosh.

WARNER: Halfway to the podium, we realize we've got a problem. Well, the eggs stop flying and the police are scrambling around getting these guys. Meantime, we're covered with egg. So, I eased him into another doorway, took out my handkerchief and he had his, the Secret Service guy had his, and we started wiping all of this off. The crowd didn't really pick up on what had happened except that he made an appearance. There were so many people clapping and posters going up. He got up on the platform and gave the speech. I guess a discerning eye could see something was wrong. Then we parade out and get back on the train. I said—I'll put it down here—"Oh, S-H-I-T, this is the end of my career!"

So, I was getting off at the next stop and another guy was taking over. I went back to the Club Car and I'm having a beer. There weren't too many people in there. Another big guy comes back and sits down next to me and orders a beer. The guy turned to me and said, "Too bad what happened." I said, "Yeah. You know, I was the advance guy. I should have seen that liability and had somebody posted up there." He said, "Oh, that was the Secret Service's job." I said, "Well, I think this is probably the end of my career. I really enjoy politics but this was a major breach. That's going to be the story tomorrow—being pelted with eggs." The guy looked at me and said, "Well, I hope it isn't the end of

my career. I'm just in my early term in Congress. I'm Jerry Ford. This is my district." (laughs)

KOED: Maybe he should have seen it coming, too?

WARNER: He never forgot that story. (laughs)

KOED: Did that sort of thing happen a lot in 1960? I wouldn't expect that in 1960.

WARNER: No.

KOED: Little did you know that a few years later you'd be serving with Ford in the White House. When you came into the Senate, in your first term, did you come in with some specific goals or a specific agenda?

WARNER: I was very keen on the U.S.-Soviet relationship and the Cold War. I had worked on it. I had done the Incidents at Sea Agreement. There's a picture of it there. That's a famous picture. I specialized in the Cold War. Old Sam Nunn and I put through the hotline. We finally convinced [Secretary of State] George Schultz, "If you had to call up [Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly F.] Dobrynin tomorrow, you'd have to go through five switchboards to get to him." He said, "Yeah, it's a hell of a set-up." So, we put direct phone contact in.

The Nunn-Lugar resolution—it was going to be Nunn-Warner until the Republicans said, "No, you're not going to partner with Nunn on this." The committee didn't like it. So, I stepped aside and we gave it to Dick Lugar and it's really been a wonderful operation.[6]

KOED: Why didn't they want you to do that?

WARNER: Bitterness. Jealousy. I'm not so sure of the timing, but I think it was after the John Tower nomination when there was a lot of residual animosity against Nunn, who fought Tower's nomination.

KOED: The Tower nomination left a lot of bitter feelings behind.

WARNER: Oh, terrible.

KOED: We'll talk about nominations and that's an important one.

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[6] The Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, also known as the Nunn-Lugar Program, was created in 1991 for the purpose of securing and dismantling weapons of mass destruction in the states formerly associated with the Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan).

WARNER: I know a great deal about that and some of it has never gotten into print.

KOED: Ah, we definitely need to talk about that. As a fairly new senator, how did you approach the foreign policy issues?

WARNER: Well, for five years I had been navy secretary so I was pretty well versed.

KOED: That certainly gave you good preparation.

WARNER: Every morning in the Navy Department I went over at 7:00. First order of business was where were the submarines last night off the Atlantic Coast? They were off my state of Virginia, 500 miles, and they could have thrown a bomb in here in no time flat and cleaned us all out.

KOED: We forget that now, don't we?

WARNER: We do. I brought it up in connection with the Rickover thing. I spoke at the ceremony the other day when they named a submarine the Hyman G. Rickover.

KOED: Yes, enough time has gone by now that we forget the immediacy of the threat.

WARNER: That's right. Had it not been for the advantages that Rickover had built into our naval deterrence system through the nuclear submarine program, it might have been a totally different outcome of that Cold War. The Soviets were fearful that we had superiority with the undersea system and could take their whole fleet down overnight.

KOED: It was naval power that was the most important part of that equation.

WARNER: That's right. I don't mean to shortchange the army that ramped up the tanks and all that, they were all out there, but for the Soviets it was an unknown.

KOED: I think it has taken us a while to understand that.

WARNER: If anybody pays any attention to it anymore.

KOED: Historically, I think we're just now starting to appreciate the importance of that. So, when you came onto the Armed Services Committee, did you take on subcommittees that dealt with these issues? How did you approach that?

WARNER: I was on the strategic committee. I've forgotten what we called that [Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces], but I was ranking or chairman for a number of years. I was ranking on the Naval Affairs Subcommittee. I wrote every [Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)] law—all five of them. I remember that John Tower was ranking member when the first one was written. He said, "None of the senior boys want their fingerprints on it. You write it." I said, "Yes, sir." "And you get a Democrat to be co-sponsor." I got this fellow out of Illinois. He only spent a term in the Senate. He was a likable guy.

KOED: When was this? In the 1980s? Perhaps it was Alan Dixon.

WARNER: Yeah. Then we had one every three or four years and I wrote the last one, which ended up making terrible mistakes.[7]

KOED: I didn't realize that you had authored all of those base-closing laws. That's a difficult task.

WARNER: You know the sequester situation today, resulting in a shortage of money for the military, if they had a parallel going on for base closure—it takes time to reap the savings from base closures—but they could just about erase the sequester damage with what they could save by closing up a lot of these useless places.

KOED: Because there are so many bases that no longer serve their purpose?

WARNER: That's right. We've gone to a defense posture which is so highly technical today that we're not going to see another big army operation. Nobody has the guts to say it, but I'll say it.

KOED: We live in a different world. It's all high-tech.

WARNER: Look at how these three guys turn a whole nation upside down—France—for 72 hours. I think I better stop.

KOED: Are you ready to stop for today?

WARNER: Yes, but I'm having fun so you stick with it as long as you want. We have to create something that's of use to somebody.

KOED: It will be.

WARNER: Do you think so?

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[7] To date, there have been five Base Realignment and Closure laws [BRAC], passed in 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005.

KOED: We don't get a lot of these stories and this type of information unless we do oral history interviews. This isn't information you can find in the *Congressional Record* or such places, you have to talk to people to get these details.

WARNER: Yeah.

KOED: So, we'll just keep going.

[End of interview #2]

BETTY K. KOED: The Armed Services Committee.

JOHN W. WARNER: I have something that's on my mind and I don't want to forget it.

KOED: Okay.

WARNER: You can often evaluate and make judgments about entities like the Senate Armed Services Committee based on what I call the alumni. As I look back on this committee, I was first acquainted with it in February of 1969 after I was appointed by Richard Nixon. I was at the inauguration early in ’69. I actually had an interesting job. I was the head manager of [Nixon's] Washington office, because he wanted to operate in a small office with his closest advisors. He selected the old Mudge, Stern law offices in the Pierre Hotel. He had about 10 or 12 rooms up there. I knew him very well because I had traveled with him for years as his advance man in his ’60 election, and in between ’60 and ’68 I saw him and did odd jobs for him. Whenever he came to Washington, he would call me and say, “John, let's get this thing done. I want you to be with me for two days to help me do this.” So, we were close.

He called me up when he decided to run again and said, “Now look here, John, I need you.” I said, “Well, I'll consult my law firm,” which was this one [Hogan Lovells], “and I'll work out something.” And my wife got into it at that time—lovely lady.[8] We had three children, tiny little children all under the age of six or seven. She turned to me and said, “I'm not going through what you did in ’60, because I never saw you for eight months. You were always on the road. If you weren't, you were getting up at 5:00 and I'm trying to get the kids to bed. You can do it, but you're going to have to stay in this area.” So, I laughed and told Nixon. He laughed and said, “You know, I can understand that.” He said, “I've got just the job for you. I want you to run the Washington office. Now, I'm keeping this up here [in New York]”—basically the power structure—“but I want you to get the biggest space you can get, because we're going to have to jam it full with wannabe politicians and that's going to be your job.”

So, I looked around town at the buildings and the Willard Hotel was in bankruptcy, if you can believe it, and boarded up. I let him know about that and he said, “Good gracious, I'll bet you can deal out of that.” I said, “Yup, I think so,” and I made

[8] John Warner married Catherine Mellon in 1957.

some explorations. He said, “Go for it.” So I rented the entire Willard Hotel for 18 months and agreed to paint it and fix it up and so forth. That I did, and I sat on that empire as the top guy, with one other politician that he was very close to, and he was given chairman of the board status—nice fellow [Maurice Stans]. Unfortunately, he never worked out with Nixon after that.

It went very smoothly, but he would call me up incessantly. A lot of time, the best way for him to relax was to call some associate and chew him out or argue with him or something and that would kind of relieve his tension. So, he would call me up frequently and say, “John, I got more people that need to get into that building.” I said, “You know, Mr. Vice President”—we used to call him Mr. Vice President, even though he was a candidate for president—“I'm full now. I'm up over a thousand, 1400 people, in this thing.” I cleaned up all the rooms, rented all kinds of junky furniture, desks and tables, locked up all the beds on one floor as best I could, because I had no use for the beds—but the kids would break into those rooms and access the beds.

I remember he called and said, “You won't believe it, but Ike wants his son to be active in the campaign. I don't know what I'm going to do with the Colonel, he's a wonderful guy, but he doesn't know anything about politics, but you've got to handle him. Give him a suite.” “Okay, I'll give him a room.”

Then, one day he called me and said, “[Spiro] Agnew's just giving me a pain. I don't want him up here. You take him down there.” (laughs) “Okay, I'll put up a suite for Agnew.” We had Retired Diplomats for Nixon, Bankers for Nixon, Dentists for Nixon, all these different sub-groups. It worked out. All excited, you know, and lo and behold, we won the thing. So then he called me up and said, “Now, I'm asking you and Haldeman and Ehrlichman and one or two others to help do transition.” They didn't have it as well planned in those days.

KOED: It wasn't as formal then.

WARNER: No. And I'm getting to your question. He said, “I didn't even know this, John, but under the law the sitting president is required to give the newly elected president spaces in the old EOB building,” which was that magnificent building that used to house the army, navy, State Department, and just about everybody, but they were very lovely old-fashioned offices. He said, “Go over there and figure out how much space we've got.” I said, “Okay, I'll do it.” I'll never forget this. There was a very disgruntled guy, obviously a good partisan Democrat, and he said, “So you represent the new president?” I said, “Yes, I'm privileged to represent the new president.” “And you're here to get some spaces.” I said, “Yes.” “Well, I'm still licking my wounds from this damned election. Here are the keys.” He had a bunch of keys and he threw them down on a big table. “Go find the damn rooms!” I think he used some other language. He got up and

walked out. Well, I finally found the building engineer and superintendent and got us all moved in. That was another 24/7, all-day, all-night job. It was fascinating.

I was given the Pentagon to screen those candidates and part of the Department of State. In the course of that, I discovered the vacancy of secretary of the navy and undersecretary. I went right for the job of secretary. It's interesting, to fill in a little history. The secretary of defense—Nixon was very broad-minded and he recognized in the area of national security the need for bipartisanship. He drilled that into my head at any early, early age, and it's always been a part of my own professional life—bipartisanship. He picked [Henry] Scoop Jackson, a very eminent senator from the state of Washington, and Jackson accepted the appointment to be secretary of state. Do you remember that?

KOED: I do remember that, yes.

WARNER: And then for reasons which are a little murky—I don't know exactly what happened—about four weeks before the inauguration, Jackson (in a polite way, I guess) said, "No, I can't do it." So, now, Nixon has a very short time in which to get a replacement. He had worked in the Congress with Melvin Laird. While he was in the Senate, he kept in contact with Laird. They were very good and close, trusted friends. For weeks, he was trying to persuade Laird to take it. But Laird had worked his way up on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and was ranking member—a big job. And that was what his love was. He had been a naval officer in World War II. He had a distinguished career, was in a combat operation, and he had a little piece of shrapnel in his left buttock. On rainy days, we'd watch out, because he felt bad on that day. Whatever it was in the department, the word went out, "It's a rainy day!" (laughs)

KOED: "Look out for Laird!" (laughs)

WARNER: He would be grumbling. What a beautiful man. I'm working on having him buried here in Arlington. So I said that I wanted to be secretary. Laird came in and he was now the designated [secretary of defense]. Before he agreed to it—he was on an airplane traveling with the vice president and discussing that. He hadn't committed. He said, "Before I commit, I want a commitment out of you, Mr. Vice President." "What's that, Mel?" "I want absolute veto power on every presidential appointment slot in my building." "Well, I don't know about that." "Well, then I don't know if I'll come with you. Without it, I don't." So, apparently, in the course of the airplane trip, Nixon said, "Okay, if that's your deal, done." They looked around and nobody had a pencil and pad or paper, so he found a napkin on the plane and he made Nixon write on a napkin with a fountain pen, "I commit to the Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, veto power over all seats." And it's written out. That napkin is in Jerry Ford's museum.

KOED: Is it? Interesting.

WARNER: Yes. When this last iteration came around, I told that story to [current Secretary of Defense James] Mattis when he came in. He liked that story.

KOED: I bet he did. I was thinking of him as you were telling the story.

WARNER: He didn't get it though.

KOED: But it looks like he is attempting to gain more control, so perhaps the message is there, even if the agreement wasn't made.

WARNER: But they're having a lot of struggle over there [in the Trump administration]. So, Laird said to me, "Now look, John, I want you to be secretary of the navy, but you've got to wait a while. Number one, you've been a lawyer and an advance man and everything, but you need a little more experience. I'll make you undersecretary." He said, "There's a governor of Rhode Island who's been governor three times, and I want him in there. He wants to run for the Senate, so he'll only stay 18 months and then leave to run for the Senate."

KOED: Oh, that was [John] Chafee.

WARNER: That was Chafee. We had the most beautiful relationship, the two of us. He had had a lifetime of arguing with the press. He had been a 17-year-old or 18-year-old infantryman on Guadalcanal, which is the ultimate battle for all marines, and then he stayed in the reserves like I had. He was called up in Korea like I was called up. He became a company commander in the Korean War with frontline troops. A beautiful man.

So, it all got worked out and I went before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February of 1969 for my confirmation, because the undersecretary is a confirmable post. That was my first real contact with Capitol Hill and the committee. I've got copies of the hearings somewhere. Richard Russell was presiding.

KOED: A long-time chair of the committee. Was it an extensive hearing?

WARNER: No, it was pretty short.

KOED: What were confirmation hearings like in those days?

WARNER: They looked at you and sized you up damned fast. Now, I was a Virginian and Harry Byrd, Jr., had succeeded his father. His father was on the tax committee, but Harry had been a naval officer in World War II. He went on the Armed

Services Committee. He said, “I vouch for this man, a fellow Virginian.” He knew me slightly and knew my family, although we were not political people. My uncle, who knew him best, was an Episcopal minister and my father was an OB-GYN and a very exceptional doctor. Neither meddled in politics. So, I had a smooth entry into that position. I had had modest military experience in World War II in the navy, and they were all very puzzled that I re-upped and joined the marines. I'm not sure why I did that myself sometimes.

KOED: For most people, when they get out of World War II, the last thing they wanted to do was go back into military service.

WARNER: You're not kidding. But I had always wanted to be in the Marine Corps. In those days, if you were under 18, you could enlist and pretty well pick the branch you wanted—that was a big advantage—but you had to have your mama's and your daddy's signature on there saying they approved. Mother said, “No way is he going to be a marine.” She had seen all the bodies wash up on the beaches. That was a very dramatic set of films that repeated all too often. Father said, “I've just sewn up enough people, son, so go in the navy.” But then, on my 21st birthday, I didn't need parental consent, so I joined the marines. I never regretted it. They named a beautiful building for me.

KOED: With your father's experience in World War I, he understood very well what combat was like. I can understand why they wouldn't want you in the marines. I would think that military service and then your time as undersecretary and secretary of the navy must have been perfect preparation for going on the Armed Services Committee.

WARNER: May I drop the word “perfect”? I'm a bit modest on that. I would say that I was well qualified. But, as you found out for me, 75 percent of the Senate [were veterans at that time]. The whole thing is, with the committee, that was my first contact, and so since 1969 I have had relationships with that committee.

I went to the Senate, as excited as I can be, and I'm on the end of that long table in there, and for some reason—Oh, I know what I did. I'm not too dumb. There was a fellow named Bill Scott who had decided that he couldn't run again. He was a disaster. You've read the story. He called a press conference to say he wasn't the dumbest man. Well, I had helped him to get elected to the Senate. For a hundred years, Democrats had held that seat—all the seats—for Virginia. He came along and the Byrd machine had an iron grip on everything. They picked a very bright Democrat, but his intellectual bent did not enable him in his one term in the Senate to get that strong a foothold, so he was weak. He was a very intellectual fellow and Bill Scott was just kind of a stumblebum people guy.

What we did, I'll never forget, the race tightened up to everybody's astonishment, because the Byrd machine was so powerful and also this man was a very able senator, but he just hadn't gotten out to enough people. I came up with the idea that we would buy every available hour on radio for one week. In the last week, when the race was so tight, we had all the radio time bought up. This guy was frantic. He couldn't get anything. We just ran simple ads. "Where was Bill?" Bill Spong was his name.

KOED: Ah, yes, William Spong.

WARNER: "Where was Bill? Have you seen him?" It was almost as bad as that wonderful ad with the hound dogs looking for the other senator.

KOED: The [1984] Mitch McConnell ad.

WARNER: Yes, these are the moments in politics that I just love. So we bought up all that time and by golly the guy won. (laughs) Now, even though he was coming up from the House of Representatives, you would have thought he could have an easy transition, but it was another stumbling procedure. So, I walked into that slot and I'm the second Republican senator in a hundred years, but I stayed.

KOED: Yes, you stayed for 30 years.

WARNER: And for 17 of my 30 years on that committee, it was the last 17, I was either ranking or chairman.

KOED: That is true. I checked into that. You switched back and forth, mostly, with Carl Levin, but there were others along the way. Was it hard to get assignment to the Armed Services Committee when you came in? I would think that would be a much sought-after committee.

WARNER: It was a sought-after committee, but [Howard] Baker was a PT boat guy in World War II and he wanted the right people on that committee. I had gotten to know him. It was a big class that came in. There were four or five of them who had been in Congress. Bill Cohen was one, so he was well qualified.

Oh, I know, here's the rinky-dink. I went to see Scott as the election was going on and I got elected. Now we're in transition and Bill's packing up and leaving. I said, "Bill, you know I really helped you get in." He said, "Oh, I remember that, don't worry." I got about a half million dollars out of one guy to buy up the radio for some reason. He hated Democrats more than he hated anything. I said, "Bill, if you could resign from the Senate early, it would give me seniority." "What? Resign from the Senate. I've got to think about that." So, almost daily, I went to see him. He said, "Well, I'm calculating this. I get one-

tenth of one percent increase in my pension"—(laughs). Finally, he did it, and I got into that Senate seat and became a U.S. senator for four days—

KOED: Four days early? Which gave you four days of seniority.

WARNER: Yes, when the freshman class went in, they did it by alphabetical, but to the top of the list went former members of Congress and I'm already a senator. So, I outranked the whole class, but there were three others who did it, too. Thad Cochran got Eastland to step down—was it Eastland? David Durenberger somehow swung it. There were four of us. But it stuck in the craw.

I'll tell you a funny story. I love talking to you about my favorite chapter in my life, the Senate. I'm holding a hearing for the secretary of defense position and Bill Cohen got named by [President William Jefferson] Clinton. Bill and I sat next to each other and had similar seniority because as a former member of Congress, he came in at the top. I was the only one on the committee who pulled the stunt. He never was easy with that. (laughs) He was always good to me, but he'd scratch his head [about it]. That's when they really began thinking about getting rid of that, but I don't think they got rid of it right away.

So, I moved on up and now I'm chairman of the committee and I'm holding a hearing for my old seat mate, Bill Cohen, and that room was packed. I got one of the bigger rooms over in the Dirksen Building and the press was stacked all over it. I walked in and shook hands and we actually gave each other a bit of a hug. Bill's a funny guy. I went up and took my podium. Carl Levin's to my right—Dems sat on the right and Republicans on the left. I gave him a nice introduction. Cohen's got a wonderful wit. He's really one of the better wits of anybody I've ever known. A bright fellow. He said, "I thank the chairman. I thank him for many things. One, that we sat next to each other for"—I've forgotten how many years, 10, 12—"and we've gotten along, but he was senior by number to me. And, you know, had it not been for that one bit of seniority, I would have been there today, where he's sitting." (laughs) Then he said, "I would have been there, but I'm not so sure that he would be in this seat, seeking to be secretary of defense." (laughs) So, he finally got a little dig into the old boy.

KOED: Tell me about the first time you met Senator Stennis as chairman of the committee.

WARNER: Well, I can't recall with any specificity what was the first day I saw him. I'm pretty sure that I testified before Richard Russell [in 1969].

KOED: That would make sense. Russell died in '71.

WARNER: Okay, he died in ’71. I went up there in ’69. I remember that he was nearer to God than anybody. A wonderful man. Stennis came in right behind him. When I was secretary of the navy, Stennis confirmed me as secretary, because that was ’72, I think. He died in office?

KOED: Russell? Yes.

WARNER: In what year?

KOED: Seventy-one. He had cancer or something like that. He was in and out of the hospital for a while and he died in office. In fact, there was a brief time, in ’69 I think, right before Everett Dirksen died, when those two men were in the hospital at the same time. Dirksen died in ’69 and Russell died in ’71.

WARNER: Well, I don't remember the first time I saw John Stennis, but I saw him all the time in the Senate. I need a careful selection of words. There was always a quiet but unspoken and unwritten, let's say understanding, among southern senators. We were very careful never to play the card in the open, but there was definitely a cohesion there. At that time, the southern Democrats ran the Senate. They controlled the committees, although you had old Magnuson from Washington.

KOED: Did Stennis become a mentor figure for you?

WARNER: Oh, very much so. He was very fond of me. I had absolute access to his office at all times. I did a lot of his legwork on little tasks and it was just a beautiful father-son relationship. Extraordinary.

KOED: How did you decide what focus you would take on Armed Services? You went onto the Strategic Subcommittee. Did you choose that, or is that something that he assigned you to?

WARNER: Well, I had more experience than most, having been for five years in the Navy Department. That whole concept of missiles and strategic, I had had extensive exposure to those issues, because the navy was very much a part of the nuclear triad with its submarine force. Also, I had the good fortune that Laird kind of liked me. Along came a period when Nixon was understandably, and Laird and others, very concerned about the Soviet Union and their surveillance of our warships. Our ships were scraping the paint off of each other trying to get cameras to look down on these things. Aircraft were flying so low that, if anything happened to the engine or something, it would go right into the ship. Very wisely, Nixon said to Laird, “We've got to stop this. Let's initiate the highest-level talks between the two militaries, the Department of the Navy and the chairman and navy secretary,” who was an admiral, of Russia, “to see what we can do.” Now, Laird was a

smart politician, the way he dealt with these guys. He had a wonderful team of people. He looked around and a lot of people heard about this thing cooking and knew that there would be chairmen of the delegation to negotiate directly with the Soviet Union. Keep in mind, nobody is going to the Soviet Union.

KOED: Not at that time.

WARNER: Not at all. But, by necessity, you had to work with them. There was a wonderful guy—I loved him dearly—named Larry Eagleburger. He was in there. He really wanted this and he had some diplomatic background. It came down to Warner and Eagleburger, Warner because Laird was a sailor and this was basically a naval issue and how to get an understanding about what we call "rules of the road," that's a phrase applicable since the time of sail as to how you maneuver your ship in the proximity of other ships and the protocol to give way. In the old days of wind, if you didn't give way, the guy lost control who came into you and there was no backing the engines up. So there were a lot of complicated things and I had a pretty good understanding. It came down that I got it. It was highly enviable in the building and I plugged away for—I'd have to check the dates—I know for at least two years. I know there were three trips to the Soviet Union, but I think there were more and I think it was closer to three years. I have to tell you, they were intransigent and hard to deal with.

KOED: I would imagine so.

WARNER: Oh, yes. But then, I had gotten to know [Henry] Kissinger, because Kissinger, upon Larry picking me, said, [imitating Kissinger's voice] "Well, there's Warner and myself. Is he going to be over there speaking for the United States behind the Iron Curtain?" (laughs) "I want to make sure—"

So, now, I'm elevated to where Henry is recognizing me, and to be recognized by Henry was a big deal in those days. It was a marvelous setup. I was given a whole team and a staff of about a dozen actual officers of the United States Navy, two admirals, captains, and then the State Department had a full-time delegation, one with ambassadorial rank, and that constituted the team. But it was clear, I was the chairman, and Defense was running it with concurrence of State. State was then under the aegis of Bill Rogers and I had known Bill Rogers in the '60s. Uh, yes, it was Rogers, because Henry eased Rogers out and that ascended him to the throne. Rogers was a beautiful man. He knew me. So, I had a nice set of contacts with which to take on this assignment and it was fantastic.

I can remember our first trip. On our first trip, we went commercial and were picked up by Soviet aircraft and then taken in country. Finally, I prevailed upon them to allow me to bring my own plane. That was a big deal. Here were the USA markings and

in she came into the Moscow Airport. It got into the *Pravda* and the whole damn thing. It was fascinating dealing with those people, but we were at logjam. We weren't getting there. Then, all of a sudden. Nixon and Henry—Henry was behind him—decided he would be the first president to go to Moscow. It was a big deal and they took me with them. They made it clear that I was coming, providing we could have a piece of paper and reconcile our differences and have this executive agreement. The Russians really turned to it at that point and we got the paper. You've seen that picture downstairs. It was a fascinating experience. To this day, despite all the things going on elsewhere in the world, the navy and the Russian delegation meet up at the Naval Observatory and go over the incidents that have occurred, the problems, with the full intent to keep this thing as strong as possible and still operative.

KOED: At the observatory here in Washington?

WARNER: Uh huh. There are two reasons for it. I selected the spot up there. One, it's high on a hill and they're big on that. The other thing, bringing the Soviets down into other government buildings in those days was not very easy.

KOED: Oh, that's interesting.

WARNER: I dealt with the War College. We used to rent their spaces to do hearings. This is before I got the observatory. Once the agreement was in place, the Soviets liked the idea of going to the observatory. They have pretty good housing. And there it is, and it's still going today.

KOED: So, that agreement has held fast all these years?

WARNER: Yes, all these years.

KOED: That's remarkable, considering all the stuff that has come and gone in that time period.

WARNER: It's amazing.

KOED: In the late ’70s and early ’80s, as you're joining the Armed Services Committee, I would imagine the U.S.-Soviet relationship was the top concern at that point. This was very much in the middle of the Cold War.

WARNER: Absolutely.

KOED: What were some of the major issues you were dealing with at that time?

WARNER: The main thing was the strategic weapons, that is, land-based. Sea-based, that's another reason that I had a major problem here. The U.S. Navy did not want to share, nor should we have. All the surface fleets and the naval air, it's all open book. We were able to do that. But Rickover sat on me like an iron man. “You will not even breathe a word about submarines.”

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: No kidding. Submarines. Well, they were spying on each other, but they were out of sight. They had sense enough not to scrape the paint off of each other. They didn't have the close proximity in most instances. The navy approached the whole idea of talks very gingerly. They kind of said, “Well, we can handle it. We don't need talks.” The president said, “No, I want rules of the road.” Rickover really came in strong. He was at the zenith of his power then, and he said, “Not one word about submarines.”

KOED: Is that still part of the agreement today, that submarines are not discussed?

WARNER: Yes, I think so. But that opens up another vista to me, the friendship with Rickover, which was very strong through the rest of my career. He really respected me and trusted me. We had a lot of fun. He would come over and see me twice a month, to have the Rickover hearings. He laid the rules down. I was secretary, but he laid the rules down. (laughs) “When I come, I want nobody else in your office except the two of us, so you come after your office is locked up for the night.” At that time, I had an executive assistant, a navy captain, who was a Rickover-trained man. “Captain will see that the room's locked up and nobody is there but you and me.” He would come in screaming and hollering at me, and I would scream and holler at him. One night, he came to see me. Everything was wrong. After giving me a litany of all the things that I had to fix, he said, “The last thing, Mr. Secretary, is that I have a personal favor to ask of you.” I said, “Well, what's that?” I'm exhausted after the hour or two of hollering and yelling. (laughs) He said, “You know, remember when I was terribly ill and my first wife died and I was alone in the world, there was this navy nurse that stayed by me night and day and really pulled me through.” I said, “Yes, I'm familiar with her. I used to visit you in the hospital and I remember her slightly.” He said, “Well, I want to marry her!” (laughs) I said to him, “Well, Admiral, I don't think there's anything in the navy books about my performing a marriage ceremony.” (laughs) “Oh, no, no,” he said, “but those damn Brits” —he cussed out the British—”those damn Brits.”

At that time, the new Naval Courts and Boards, which is the new legal regime of all the military services, hadn't been put in place. We were still dealing with many—all through World War II, Korea, and so forth—a lot of archaic, patchwork rules and regs about the navy and naval officers that emanated from the British Royal Navy, because

that was the world. We patterned much of our navy after it. Well, there was a phrase in there, dating back to the days of sail, that two naval officers could not cohabit together unless the First Sea Lord approved it. Well, in effect, that was binding on our navy and I'm now the First Sea Lord, so I finally got the old boy! I said, “Well, I'll think about it.” (laughs)

To digress, I worked with [then-secretary of the navy] John Lehmann—I was in the Senate then—trying to get [Rickover] to retire with dignity and the whole thing sort of blew up in our face. To see that great man just shatter to pieces. Well, I'm far afield of answering your questions.

KOED: That's all right. These are good stories, and they're good background stories for talking about your time on the Armed Services Committee.

WARNER: Yes. Back to missiles. You asked me what were the main issues? It was that, and the fact that I had had that experience with the Soviet Union which no other person in the building had had, namely going back and forth behind the Iron Curtain and dealing with them. It was of material benefit to the arms control that Laird made me the Department of Defense representative, one of several, to attend all of the arms control talks taking place in Geneva. I used to shuttle back and forth to Geneva. You can be damned sure that the Soviets had a full dossier on me when I sat in the room. They knew who was there.

KOED: Is that what resulted in the SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] Treaty?

WARNER: Yes, this is one of the treaties, and I was part of the delegation that went over there when Nixon signed the ABM Treaty [Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty].

KOED: Okay. Were those typically bipartisan efforts?

WARNER: Yes, we had pretty good bipartisanship. We had Scoop Jackson—he was a powerhouse—to help Nixon get these agreements. Stennis was very strongly supportive of the president. I'd say that, again, Stennis’s experience and then Bill Fulbright—who used to be a partner in this law firm, we have a room somewhere in this building named the Fulbright room—

KOED: Oh, I didn't know that. This was after he left the Senate?

WARNER: After he left the Senate, he came here.

KOED: By the time you come into office, we are also dealing with things like the Iranian Hostage Crisis in the late ’70s, so Middle Eastern politics—

WARNER: That Iranian hostage issue, I was heavily involved in that.

KOED: Oh, in what way?

WARNER: Well, it was recognized that I had a lot of experience in the diplomatic area, so I was in on the planning of that thing from beginning to end. We had to get those helicopters in there and load up the hostages and get them out. I've forgotten whether we had a carrier offshore—my mind is not clear on that now—but the navy was heavily involved. The navy had all kinds of contingent plans ready to back it up. We had Seal teams ready to go in. I'll never forget that. I was in the command post when we pulled the trigger and started the operation.

What happened was those helicopters, in getting into their first pre-position flight for the jump-off to go in and get people, they went through a hell of a sandstorm and a lot of sand got into the machinery. Now, we're on the jump-off site—I've forgotten the exact number—but a number of the helicopters became non-operative. The mathematics was simple. We didn't have enough helicopters to get the military needed for the operation in and all the hostages out, so we cancelled.

KOED: And that was the only attempt at rescue, right?

WARNER: The only attempt, yeah.

KOED: I want to talk in a minute about a couple of the other people you worked with, but I'm wondering about the transition from the Cold War with the Soviet Union being the priority issue—

WARNER: The War in Vietnam was still an issue in the ’70s. I made a number of trips to Vietnam, as did other military secretaries. I had a lot of special assignments that other secretaries didn't have, but all of us had about the same responsibilities. The three services had their respective roles in Vietnam. A lot of trips to Vietnam.

I'll go back and tell you one thing about the Russian situation. The complexity of Vietnam was awesome and the casualty rates, and finally Laird decided the best thing to do is to begin to train the Vietnamese to have their own military. Just leave all our equipment right there. He pretty well drove that equation and got it done, but in the end it fell down.

KOED: It took years.

WARNER: Yeah. But one thing about the wonderful job of going in with the Russians, being the only high-ranking official in the U.S. as well as high-ranking in other

countries to get behind the Iron Curtain, the rest of the world needed to know what the hell I had learned, all the way from what they eat and drink to—

KOED: Yes, it was a closed world.

WARNER: Quietly, under the rules, when I would exit, I would go to the American Embassy in Paris. NATO had just pulled out of Paris, but a lot of remnants of it was still around. It was a quieter place to do some quiet diplomacy rather than going up to Belgium to the new NATO headquarters where people would wonder, "What's this all about?" I used to be put up by the ambassador, whoever it was at that time, in a private room on the top floor of the embassy, which is a gorgeous room, looking out over beautiful gardens and you could see the Champs-Élysées in the background. Oh, it was a heady experience. I've been in and out of that room so many times. I'm the last member of Congress to occupy the room as guest of Mrs. [Pamela] Harriman, because she asked me to come over and do some things to help her. I was in the Senate then. I stayed up in those rooms. I remember going down to have breakfast with her, and 10 days later she died. That's just a little vignette. Ken Rush, who had been deputy secretary of defense, was one of the ambassadors who hosted me, because he knew something about the operations I had done. We would have a quiet meeting in the embassy with the military attachés of NATO

KOED: It was like a debriefing.

WARNER: Yes, but it enabled me to rest for a week in Paris. I stretched it out as best I could. (laughs)

KOED: I don't blame you. I would have done that, too.

WARNER: My wife didn't look with any pleasure on another week in Paris. (laughs)

KOED: Not a bad place to be stuck for a week. Having spent so much time in the executive branch and being navy secretary, was it a big change to come to the legislative branch?

WARNER: No, it really wasn't that big of a change, because both of them are demanding jobs, hard jobs. I made that transition pretty easily. You see, as secretary of the navy, when I got that job, the main job is dealing with Congress, getting the budget through, and answering all the complaints and demands of Congress. "You are going to build a base in my state or you're not going to get anything."

KOED: As you mentioned, you had already gotten to know some of the people quite well. No doubt, that was useful as well.

WARNER: Uh huh.

KOED: We talked a little bit about John Stennis. What about John Tower? You worked with Tower quite a bit.

WARNER: Very closely. That's a sad thing, but I think it's important to cover it. John Tower was a very able politician. Very tough. He was very partisan, more so than I, but he had been in party politics and I think Texas politics is tougher than Virginia politics. We still are Virginia gentlemen first, politicians second. But he liked me.

One day, the marine barracks blew up and he called me. He said, "Are you watching this thing on TV?"

KOED: Was this the [1983] incident in Beirut?

WARNER: Yes, Beirut. He said, "This is serious business and the president's very agitated about it, because it's such a calamitous thing to the major military power in the world and we didn't take proper steps, obviously, to avoid this thing. It was nothing but a truck that drove in and blew the thing up." He called me twice and then said, "The president's on the phone. Get on the phone." The president got on the phone and we had a conversation. The president said, "My greatest fear, of course, is for the families of the lost men, but the world's going to think that we're going to pick up everything we've got in Europe and come home. Send Warner over there right away and reassure them that we're not and find out, by the way, how the hell this happened." This was about 4:00 in the afternoon.

I called up the Marine Corps liaison office. I had just met the new major who had just came in. I said to him, "Get your ass up here." He ran up to the office. I said, "Here's what I want to do. I want to be airborne by 8:00 tonight. At sunrise, I want to be on the steps of the bombed-out area. We want to cover Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria." We went in to see old man [Hafez al-]Assad. All of this in five days. Then I had to get back here and report to the president. John Tower was just wonderful about the whole thing.

KOED: Did that result in a committee investigation of the Beirut bombing?

WARNER: I suspect we looked into that, but John was very good about it. He and I went together. I remember we were in Syria. None of us had been sleeping at all, we were just up and down, and this young major ran the whole trip beautifully. That was Jim Jones, who later became commandant of the Marine Corps. That bonded us to this day. I watched John, then the tragic process of his confirmation came up.

KOED: Yes, tell me about that.

WARNER: Well, you could tell that there was enough unrest in the Senate, particularly on the Republican side, and the Democrats were trying to look into all these accusations. The Senate appointed Nunn and myself to do an inquiry, quietly, and then come back to both sides of the Senate. A lot of partisanship began to creep into the thing. I remember that I met with Sam Nunn, who is a very wonderful man. He and I had worked together. He was chairman and I was ranking for a number of years. We used to play golf together, travel together, and were very close. We tried as best we could and we succeeded in large measure to do bipartisan work with the committee.

We investigated this thing and we decided that we would go into every nook and cranny, wouldn't overlook anything, and make a bipartisan assessment of the facts. We may have a difference of opinion and would state that difference of opinion, but we were not going to try in any way to deceive—the two of us together or the wonderful staff we had working for us. No partisanship. And then an incident occurred. A fellow named [Larry] Combest, who had been a staffer to John Tower, unexpectedly appeared in the Senate Armed Services Committee on a Saturday morning. I was in the Senate, in my office, and Sam was in his office. The committee staff was taking notes from this guy telling his story and the story was really very damning. He had been an assistant to Tower.

Tower's thesis was that he had had a problem when we knew him, but he doesn't have it now. This was mainly the question of alcohol. Sam came over to the office and told me about what they had found. He said, “You know, John, at this point, I think we've got to finish up our report and then go our separate ways, because I'm very troubled about this.” I said, “Well, I'm troubled, but I still think John should be given a chance.” He understood. So, we parted ways and then submitted our reports.

A God-awful fight went on in the Senate. I remember that Tower asked, as this thing was being fought, if he could meet with the two of us, just the three people. We said, “Sure, we would do it.” Sam and I went down and listened to him. The essence of that conversation was, “Well, I may have had a problem at some point, but I don't anymore. All I do now is drink a little wine.” I had an uncle who was an alcoholic and my mother and her mother struggled with him, he was my mother's brother, and at an early age I was exposed to alcoholism. My father, of course, was a medical doctor and he didn't drink to speak of, but I had had some background with it. By that time, I had been around enough people who had alcohol problems and it's just a fundamental rule, drinking is drinking, and alcohol is alcohol. Whether you're drinking straight gin or drinking wine, it doesn't matter. Sam and I walked out of the office and went to his office and sat down and talked about it. We said, “He has, in a sense, confirmed that he still takes alcohol,” and the rest is history.

Sam Nunn, to his credit, was dead straight with me and with the committee staff as we drew up those reports. He did vote against John whereas I voted for John, but he often had fingers pointed at him that he was the one who brought Tower down. Well, he did his job. He told the Senate. He did it fairly. And that other guy who used to work for Tower came in and spilled his guts.

KOED: That puts you in a very uncomfortable position, doesn't it?

WARNER: Yes, but Sam and I maintained our friendship and continued to do our committee work. My, this is interesting to go back through this.

KOED: Yes, and we need to check the time frame.

WARNER: The time frame is right here. It's 2:20. Maybe we better pull the plug.

KOED: Okay.

WARNER: But I really want to concentrate on doing this with you.

KOED: Wonderful.

[End of interview #3]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #4: April 20, 2017

BETTY K. KOED: Thank you for meeting with me again today. I appreciate it.

JOHN W. WARNER: What did I say? You're enshrining me in history.

KOED: I appreciate the continuing attention you're giving to this project. I want to focus today again on your service on the Armed Services Committee, then we'll move onto other topics.

WARNER: Absolutely. I feel very strongly about that service. Somebody ran a calculation. Of my 30 years in the Senate, for 17 years I was either chairman or ranking member of the committee.

KOED: Yes, a remarkable record.

WARNER: Well, it's all by chance. If [Trent] Lott hadn't pulled that silly flip-flop and kicked [James] Jeffords out—[9]

KOED: We might talk about that. That was a crazy year.

WARNER: It was a crazy year. We all knew Jim. How do I say it? He had some stresses—I think that's the easiest way to say it—which he was dealing with, but they ran out of patience with him. I was the last guy, [Pete] Domenici and I, to sit with him on that afternoon, pleading that he not do it. He said, "Let me think about it overnight." We got a call the next morning. His wife called. She, I think, was trying to help us. She said, "He's going over."

KOED: Was there any particular issue that pushed him over?

WARNER: Well, the man had some stresses. I think some of it was emotion and some of it was a matter of firm principle. He was clearly a liberal and our party was not very understanding of liberals. They persecuted [Mark] Hatfield. I could go through a number of people who were really treated pretty roughly—[John] Chafee, Hatfield—I can't remember, but there were about six moderates. They had a bloc. If that bloc swung into action, it was six solid votes and that would stop the leader in his tracks.

[9] On May 24, 2001, Senator James Jeffords of Vermont announced that he would switch from Republican to Independent status, effective June 6, 2001, and would caucus with the Democrats, giving the Democrats a one-seat advantage and changing control of the Senate from the Republicans to the Democrats.

KOED: That would. Do you think it was—this is a strong word to use—do you think it was a purge of the liberals?

WARNER: No, I would use the word "intolerant." We went straight off into that. Should we go back to your orderly questions?

KOED: Yes, let's go back in time a bit, to when you joined the Armed Services Committee. At the time, Mississippi senator John Stennis was chairman and Texas senator John Tower was ranking member. Could you describe for me what it was like working on the committee at that time—the people, the atmosphere, and the cooperation?

WARNER: You've got to understand—pardon me for saying that, since I'm preaching to you and you know more than I do—the Senate of that time was largely under control of long-serving Democrats who were chairmen of the basic committees. You started with Robert Byrd, Jim Eastland, John Stennis. Now, Warren Magnuson was a coastal man, but he played with those guys. I'm trying to think of the funny old guy out of Louisiana, "Don't tax me, tax the guy behind the tree"—

KOED: Russell Long.

WARNER: Yeah, Russell Long. Fritz Hollings was one. Let's go through the states. In Virginia, young [Harry] Byrd was not that senior. He was wired into it very strongly, but he wasn't that senior. South Carolina was Fritz. You've got Jesse Helms. In Georgia, you had [Herman] Talmadge. Some were Democrats and some were Republicans. Then Nunn came along. In Florida, you had old George Smathers. Coastal, you had Russell Long. In Texas, of course Lyndon [Johnson] had left. Texas was Tower, but he was not that tied into the southern guys. He was sort of a man unto himself. Working on up, Goldwater wasn't a southerner, but he played to the band music. Missouri, I don't remember the old timers from Missouri.

KOED: Yes, we had people like [J. Stuart] Symington, but they were gone by then.

WARNER: They had gone, yes. Old Symington had left. We had that wonderful guy, the Episcopal minister from Missouri.

KOED: Oh, Danforth, John Danforth.

WARNER: Danforth. Let's see, in Kentucky we had Wendell Ford. What other states in there am I missing?

KOED: Tennessee?

WARNER: In Tennessee, we had [James] Sasser, but he was younger. West Virginia had Byrd and the older, colorful guy who was senior to Byrd.

KOED: Jennings Randolph.

WARNER: Jennings Randolph. I guess that pretty well covers it. Okay. Quietly, among the youngsters, we called them the "ring clickers." That's a military phrase. The Naval Academy guys, wherever they are, have the Navy Academy ring. They were but a small fraction of the whole navy, but in meetings you would see them rolling the ring [indicating how they would twist the rings on their fingers]. (laughs) Are you recording this?

KOED: Uh huh.

WARNER: They would roll their rings. Well, those guys, they would just pick up the phone and say, "Hey, I've got him in the office. Let's do this," and bang, boom!

I'm working on a report for the Peace Institute. I've gone back and researched extensively the records and I've taken oral histories from four or five of the—everyone is dead but me that put it together. They are going to honor me here soon. I'm accepting this on behalf of all of them. Two others, Ted Stevens and Dan Inouye, are being honored. Don't let me drift off. Where was I?

KOED: We were talking about southern control of the committees in the late 1970s.

WARNER: Right, I talked to a staff guy this morning. He was really funny. He said, "Well, Senator, I don't want to read this in print, but I tell you what I'll never forget. Bill Young who was House chairman of Appropriations, and Ted Stevens who was either ranking member or chairman of Senate Appropriations, these two guys turned to the staff and said, 'The bill's closed. The bill's signed. It's locked. But open it and find us $100 million because we're going to build this thing [the Peace Institute].'" The House member and the senator walked out of the room and left the staff. And they found it. This staff guy, an old-time staff guy, staff director of the House Ways and Means Committee, said, "You know, Senator, people talk about earmarks. That was probably the last and biggest earmark." I said, "No, I can think of one other." I was chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works subcommittee on highways. I'm in the office with [Representative] Bud Shuster, who was by rotation chairman of the conference. John Chafee, myself, and one other guy, a House member—two House, two Senate—we worked on that bill all night long, four guys with staff running in and out. Finally, the sun is coming up, and we were weary, and Chairman Shuster said, "Okay, that's it. Bill's closed, but I want to give a project to each one of you guys."

KOED: Oh?

WARNER: We went around the room. Shuster used to carry a little nondescript pad of inexpensive paper, nothing fancy, and he carried little stubs of pencils in his pocket. You would see him on the House floor with that little pad. He was writing in the pad, "John Chafee wanted bike trails." Bike trails? *Bike trails?* Well, he put quite a few bike trails in across the United States, but one of them is beautiful, it's the bike trail from the Memorial Bridge to Mount Vernon.

KOED: Oh, sure, I've been on that trail.

WARNER: And the other guy wanted something. Then, he said, "Okay, Warner, you're the last guy, last item, bottom of the totem pole, junior man, what do you want?" I said, "A bridge." "A bridge? Okay. Where does the bridge go?" I said, "It goes from Virginia to Maryland, or Maryland to Virginia, but I call it Virginia to Maryland." He turned his head sharply and said, "You got those two senators in Maryland gonna back it?" I said, "They're gonna back it." "How much do you need?" I said, "$900 million." He didn't move. Pencil didn't move. I sat there—breathing—and then I saw the pencil move. He said, "Okay. Meeting's over." That was the beginning of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

KOED: That was the Woodrow Wilson Bridge? Wow.

WARNER: That was a huge piece of earmark.

KOED: Right. That might be the last, biggest earmark.

WARNER: I was known, briefly, as the "King of Earmarks." (laughs) It's wonderful to hear you laugh. You love the institution.

KOED: I do. I have great respect for the Senate and its members and its history.

WARNER: And it shows. What was interesting were all the things that we did, which, I think, were very constructive. Oh, okay, so the point is, those senior senators were teachers and facilitators, because there wasn't anything that they hadn't experienced many times. There was a certainty that if they made a decision, that it was warranted, it was going to be done. Their fellow senators, chairmen, ring-clickers, would see that it got backing.

So, there we are in the Armed Services Committee with the great bill that goes through and everything is hanging on it, and Stennis was a master at how to put on, take off, put on, and take off. Was he collaborative? The committee was very collaborative, because he ruled.

Now, the ranking were Tower and Goldwater—I guess it was Goldwater first. Of course, Goldwater and Stennis had a very close, personal relationship. Tower had a good relationship. It was very collaborative and quite nonpartisan, but the nonpartisan was attributable to the fact that 75 percent of the Senate were veterans. You and I have gone over that. I find that to be, in my opinion, the root of so much that the Senate did in those days. These men—there were no women, Nancy Kassebaum was the first woman in years—and she was a feisty woman who did very well as a senator. We got it done.

KOED: I wonder, too, thinking about Stennis and his ability to get things done, I think about collaboration but also I think of the chairmen of those days as master legislators. They really understood the process of legislation.

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: Is that still true today?

WARNER: Well, I don't know the longevity of so many of the chairmen now, but most all of them have a minimum of about 20 years.

KOED: For the Republicans, they have term limits on chairmanships now.

WARNER: That was the dumbest decision, and the Democrats never accepted it. That was the product of really one man, that wild-ass guy who was always fighting for homeschoolers, the Pennsylvania guy. He still pops up on talk shows.

KOED: Was he leader?

WARNER: No, but he worked his way up.

KOED: Was this Rick Santorum?

WARNER: That's it.

KOED: He was behind term limits?

WARNER: Oh, he was the driver. He was the driver. I remember that I resisted it. Grammatically, he had his language all screwed up. I sat there in that room thinking to myself, "Do I let him go public with this screwed up language?" He had squinting modifiers and all these things that I learned in grammar courses that could screw up the interpretation. Finally, I cleaned it up, and I've regretted to this day that I cleaned it up. We should have left the ambiguities in there. He slowly got booted out of everything.

KOED: He does still show up from time to time on talk shows.

WARNER: Well, he's a safe bet for the far right and that gang.

KOED: It's hard for members today to build the kind of experience and expertise that John Stennis did or Richard Russell did, because they don't have the ability to chair a committee for so long.

WARNER: I'd approach it in a slightly different way. You don't fault them. They have a different deck of playing cards. Things have changed. Frankly, things have changed in America. These fellows have got to go with change. You look at the rest of the problems. With Brexit, you look at the fascinating stories about this woman, [Marie] Le Pen, in France. Well, our guys read these papers and they see this stuff going on. It's changed.

Well, the old Senate really worked well, and I'm just not that close to figure out what the current Senate is doing.

KOED: Well, I'm around it all the time, but I'm still not sure what's going on sometimes. (laughs)

We were talking a minute ago about the power of the southern bloc in the Senate. In 1981, the Republicans took control of the Senate for the first time in nearly 30 years. Senators like yourself found themselves chairing committees and subcommittees, and I'm wondering what that transition was like? How different did it feel to be in the majority? Also, did you meet with resistance from some of the old Democratic bulls who had been around for so many years?

WARNER: It clearly, shall we say, "trimmed their beards," and they realized—all of a sudden, to their disbelief—things had changed. It wasn't any revolutionary type of rollover. It was seamlessly smooth when I became chairman of the committee. I think Sam Nunn had left the same year that I became chairman. We had worked together all those years. I think that's true, because I don't think he was ranking on the committee. [10] Jesse Helms took the reins at Foreign Relations Committee and he drove it like a team of four horses with no joking around.

KOED: No kidding.

WARNER: You didn't get any ambassadors through unless Jesse personally okayed it. Oh, yes, he was a very forceful senator. He was misunderstood in a lot of ways. I knew him quite well, again through the southern connection. He liked me and we got along quite well together. I think it was a fairly smooth transition when the Republicans took over.

[10] Sam Nunn (D-GA) retired from the Senate on January 3, 1997.

KOED: Do you think that was due in part to Howard Baker?

WARNER: Oh, yes, he was much beloved and respected on both sides of the aisle. He had a calming influence over the body. His voice and the lightness, always a very calming influence. A gifted man. A gifted man. Was it you who told me that Baker was going to be the vice presidential candidate until, I guess it was Ford? Ford had struggled so much in his life with alcoholism and Howard had the same problem. You're aware of that, aren't you?

KOED: I've heard that.

WARNER: He would have made a hell of a good vice-presidential candidate.

KOED: Yes, he was a brilliant man.

WARNER: I think that he and Ford could have pulled it off and nailed it, but so much damage had been done by Nixon hanging on to the last minute. There was only so much that Jerry Ford could do to put it back together again. Well, that's the life you live.

KOED: You know, something that we haven't talked about and we should talk about, we've talked a lot about your years with Nixon, but we didn't really talk about the end of the Nixon career. When Nixon decided to resign—backing up in time here—when Nixon decided to resign in '74, what were your thoughts about that?

WARNER: Let me trace back what happened to me. I was very close to him. I had been his advance man.

KOED: And on both campaigns.

WARNER: I was manager of his Washington office in the winning campaign of '68. You're bonded with people in various ways. In that first campaign [in 1960], when I was just one of six or eight top advance men, I was sent to New York City to set up a four-day visit to New York City in September of that year. [Nixon] had just experienced a very unfortunate accident with a car door that hospitalized him with a bad cut on his knee or something that required minor surgery, and we suddenly began to see this dip coming. The decision was made to reverse his earlier decision not to bring Eisenhower in, so now we're going to showcase Eisenhower. I'll dwell on this, because this is an interesting chapter in my life. Another fellow and I were the two top advance men—I'll think of his name in a minute [Thomas G. Pownall], he went on to be CEO of a big aerospace company, we were close friends but he's been dead about ten years—we planned several major events. One was to have Eisenhower land, and I went out to meet him, and we had a ticker-tape parade with 100 motorcycle policemen with the big V. It

was a regular ticker-tape parade. I was not in the lead car, but in the car behind with Secret Service guys, and it was unbelievable. The outpouring for Ike. *"We like Ike!"*

The big problem I had was that [Nelson] Rockefeller was governor. Rockefeller and Nixon had had, along the way, a very serious falling out. I think Rockefeller thought about challenging Nixon at that time. They were not friends. We were in Rockefeller's backyard. He's the governor, so he controls everything—police. To hell with Secret Service, he said what was going to happen. So, the first thing that was kind of amusing is the traditional Al Smith dinner—have you heard of that?

KOED: Yes, I have.

WARNER: Well, in planning as advance man, I took a week up in New York planning everything. I went to see the monsignor who was a very respected Catholic bishop. After I went over all the details—Haldeman and I knew Nixon's habits—I said, "Would it be all right if the president didn't come in white tie, because it stirs up the elegant feature of life versus the less elegant?" The monsignor was very collected. He looked at me and said, "We've had it white tie since the first one. We're going to have white tie until the last one. Now, if you don't want to come, just drop out." I said, "Yes, sir." (laughs) So now, you go to the old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, in the main ballroom, and I'm flurrying around. In the Waldorf—people don't know this, but the government used to have about a half of the floor on the top floor for special visitors. It was known as a hideaway to bring special people from abroad for special meetings.

KOED: Hmm, I didn't know that.

WARNER: Yeah. So I'm now, with this other fellow, living in the hideaway. Pretty good for two shabby kids! (laughs) We had a special elevator that went down to the lobby. So, picture me. I'm getting dressed and Nixon once again inquires, "Are you sure I have to—?" "Oh, yes, Mr. Vice President."

Now, protocol is that [as vice president] he is senior, so he arrives after Senator [John F.] Kennedy. And Bobby Kennedy and I had known each other, because we were in law school together. I used to go over to his house, which was famous for always having cold beer. We would play football and all those things, so we were friendly. I don't claim to have been an intimate friend, but we were friendly. We encountered each other. He was head advance man for his brother and he went on most of these trips with his brother, whereas the rest of us used to do a trip, then go and do other plans and then rejoin them. There was a lot of tension in the hallway. The race is down to a gnat's ass. No idea who's going to win this race. I'm downstairs, checking out the room and people are coming and the guests are there in white tie. I look down the hall as I hear the Secret Service say, "Kennedy coming." That means clean out the hallway. I looked up and

there's Bobby coming with a black tie on and he just passed me with a big—I have to express it exactly as I did to him—shit-eating grin on his face. He said, "Gotcha!" And, sure enough, the senator was in black tie. Nixon walked into that room and saw that. The scolding he gave me that night! (laughs) And the tabloids the next day said, "Black vs. White, Rich vs. Poor." Hit him right between the eyeballs.

KOED: The very thing he wanted to avoid.

WARNER: The next thing—it wasn't my fault, but it was a screw-up on my watch. As any good military man knows, if something screws up on your watch, you're responsible. We rented 30 minutes nationwide, 50-state TV, 30 minutes live for Ike to speak to the country. The routine was that Rockefeller—he's the host state—would introduce the president, and the president would yield the floor and have Nixon get up.

KOED: Yes, that had a lot of symbolism to it.

WARNER: Well, Rockefeller—I don't think this was intentional—he brought in a whole lot of kids with big placards, "I like Ike!" At the stroke of our 30 minutes, we went nationwide. We're now on everybody's TV sets, coast to coast, and the kids are yelling, "I like Ike!" Well, the kids got going and I'm looking at my watch. We had this planned to the micro-second and we're getting into Eisenhower's time. He's squirming and Nixon is beginning to sweat and that's the sign that you are in trouble. (laughs) We had a hell of a time stopping these kids with their "I like Ike." The rest of the program flowed, but Ike had only two-thirds of his time and Nixon two-thirds of his time. All the money we spent on that! I got chewed out for that!

KOED: You certainly had a close, working relationship with him.

WARNER: Right, so now I'll get back to your question. He put me in the transition office [in 1968] and my job was to work with Mel Laird and Bill Rogers in staffing Defense and State respectively. It was a wonderful job. I met lots of very interesting people. I wanted to be secretary of the navy and Laird said to me, "Look, John Chafee was governor three times, he's older than you, he's senior to you in the Marine Corps, and he wants to run for the Senate in 18 months, so I'm going to make him secretary for 18 months and then turn it over to you." That was a very reasonable thing to do. Chafee got defeated but he came back in the next cycle and won his seat. But Laird walked into the Pentagon—I was then kind of an aide to him, as undersecretary of the navy, and had worked with him closely for six or eight weeks. We had a nice bonded relationship. He held a meeting one day with all these new appointees and some holdover appointees. He said, "Gentlemen and Ladies, I'm going to lay down one rule to which there will be no exception. I, and I alone with my immediate staff, will have sole responsibility for all meetings with the White House, with all dealings with the White

House." He said, "I cannot experience, no matter how well intentioned, for all of you to go and cut your own deals." Suddenly, here I am, very close to Haldeman and Ehrlichman. He said, "Warner, I'm particularly watching you because you were an advance man." So, that saved my ass.

KOED: No kidding.

WARNER: Well, I would have gotten sucked into something. I was so close to all those guys. I just finished up my work squeaky clean. I hardly ever saw Nixon again. I occasionally saw Haldeman or Ehrlichman, but just connected with business or something. I used to accompany Laird to the White House quite a bit.

KOED: By the time Nixon resigned, did you feel that it was needed?

WARNER: Oh, yes. I didn't have any inside information.

KOED: Interesting. All right, let's go back to the committee. In 1985, Barry Goldwater became chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I'd like to hear about him. Also, in my research, I realized that he was the sponsor behind a major defense reorganization plan [Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986]. Do you have memories of that to share?

WARNER: Yeah, I was sort of a conservative and felt that they were trying to change too many of the well-established principles that governed the relationship between the services and the service secretaries and the uniform people, so I did hold back on the early phases of the writing of that bill. I think I made some changes to it. I soon saw the overall merit to the bill. In the end, I was a strong supporter, but not in the beginning. The military came to me, pleaded with me to not sell them out.

KOED: So, the military opposed the idea of this reorganization plan?

WARNER: Just portions of it. They just wanted to reshape it.

KOED: Did this affect the Joint Chiefs of Staff and that type of thing?

WARNER: Everything!

KOED: So, it was an extensive reorganization.

WARNER: Yes. I've talked with Sam Nunn and a lot of others since then, and I think it needs to be done again, just to go back over to see how many bolts and screws should be tightened up.

KOED: I would think—in the 1980s it was a real time of transition in military stuff, moving towards much higher-tech weapons, towards unmanned vehicles. It must have been a time when there was a need for reorganization.

WARNER: I'll tell you one other thing. I hate to be braggadocios, but I was always the technical, geeky guy. When I was 15 or 16, I built radios and motorized airplanes. My father used to just shake his head. "He's got to do more reading of the classics!" He was probably right and I was wrong, but I had a pretty good technical understanding of weapons systems. I had been a radar and radio man in World War II. We had been taught in school. We went through so much schooling that all of a sudden I turned around, the war was over, and all I had ever done was go to school. That's why I went into the marines. It would be terrible to go through the rest of my life and never have really gotten into the rough and tumble part of military life. Well, the marines straightened that out.

So, I was always interested. I remember one time I said, "This unmanned systems business is going to be big." The military guys were not interested in it. Air force fought it, because they saw down the road less pilot seats. The army was, "Yeah, not a bad idea. Anything we can do to stop getting our guys to go out of the foxhole and over the top to try to find out what's going on, if we can look up with some machine," so they were supportive. Air force fought it hard. Navy was, "Oh, we'll figure it out. There must be something good in it." I was really in on that.

Then I became very close, almost to the point of being a confidant, to Admiral Rickover. I'm not sure exactly the origin of it, but we had a transition from Admiral [Thomas H.] Moore, chief of navy, to [Elmo] Bud Zumwalt. Believe me, he had his problems with Moore, but Moore was an old World War II bulldozer of an admiral and he wasn't going to take it off anyone. When Zumwalt came along, Rickover just decided, "I'm not going to have anything to do with that man."

You're talking about one-third of the navy budget in these strategic nuclear submarines and all that stuff was a huge amount of money, with a lot of emphasis being shifted away from the old gunships. Clearly, looking back, no matter how romantic they are, they were totally outdated in terms of delivery of armament and stuff like that. Their last role in World War II was basically ship-to-shore bombardment of the islands and those big battleships stood offshore 10 to 12 miles and lobbed in those shells which did a lot of damage, but the other guys had a warm bed, coffee when they wanted, and plenty to eat. The life aboard those ships was pretty good until we went into Okinawa. Then the kamikaze battle started and we lost 70 ships in the Battle of Okinawa. A lot of the sailors were badly wounded, with torn up ships, as those suicide planes crashed into the ships. But much of the navy was turning around then and changing, so I saw that evolution.

Now, you asked about the Republicans, and I say it was a smooth transition. It really was. In retrospect, the decade of the 1980s was transformative in many ways. I want to add that I sort of saw this cyber thing coming along. I had done, in the military, a lot of deciphering, cartography, listening devices, code-breaking, and I actually set up a scholarship program that was resisted for an individual with a selected university to study the subject of cyber in its broader context. Then they got full tuition and bread and butter and had to commit to four years in the navy doing that cyber work. That program took off. Same way with the unmanned systems. I passed the law, against the will of a lot of people, and within two years they left it in a cloud of dust, it went by so fast. They adopted everything they could get their hands on.

KOED: Everything was changing so rapidly at that time.

WARNER: Uh huh. Technology.

KOED: Staying in the 1980s, let's talk a bit about Barry Goldwater.

WARNER: He was a very interesting man. You know, you have moments in life with men that you never forget. We had a close, personal relationship. I spent a lot of time with him. In a way, he was sort of a lonely man in the sense that his wife stayed out in Arizona most of the time. He lived by himself. He was a Ham radio operator. There were days in the committee hearings when he'd be yawning. I knew he had spent all night listening to Ham radio.

KOED: I know he was a great enthusiast.

WARNER: I saw a lot of him. We'd have dinner at night together. Then, one day, he was packing up in his office and he called me, "Please come up." I walked in and saw a man who really wasn't happy and wasn't sure exactly where his bread and butter would be tomorrow. Not economically, but having been such a powerful man, a big voice, suddenly—you know, he didn't run again [in 1986]—the reality was that he had to move out of the Senate and go.

The room was like this one, packing boxes and disheveled. He said, "John, these are possessions I've had all my life and I love them. You pick out whatever you want and it's yours." I said, "Well, there's a bust over there of a famous man and I've always idolized him. I never knew him—he was before my time." Barry said, "Oh, I knew him. As a matter of fact, he gave me that bust." I said, "Well, could I have that?" He said, "I want you to have that. I feel good about you having that, because you have a future ahead of you. You should have it. Put it where you can always see it as an inspiration." It was a bust of Winston Churchill, life-size, he posed for it. It sits in my library. It stayed in my Senate office through my 30 years.

KOED: Goldwater personally knew Churchill?

WARNER: Yeah. And Churchill personally gave him the bust. Young Barry Goldwater [Jr.] is a nice guy, but he never measured up to his father.

KOED: It's hard to follow in such footsteps.

WARNER: Sure is.

KOED: When Goldwater retired in '87, then Sam Nunn became chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I know you had a good working relationship with Sam Nunn.

WARNER: Couldn't have been better.

KOED: You were ranking member with him. What's it like to be ranking member on a major committee like that?

WARNER: You have a lot of authority on that committee. You have a lot of authority and we pulled our workload. Sam Nunn and I had an absolutely seamless working relationship, based on mutual respect and trust. He only voted against me one time and he said it was the worst mistake he ever made.

KOED: What was that on, do you remember?

WARNER: Uh huh. War broke out when Saddam Hussein—crazy man—invaded Kuwait.

KOED: Nineteen-ninety, yes.

WARNER: We were all running around and thinking, "What the hell do we do?" Finally, George Herbert Walker Bush, the president, said, "Here's what we're going to do. We're going to form a coalition with at least 10 or 12 nations, each of us put in troops, and we're going in there to bust his ass." Everybody said, "Well, all right." Dole was minority leader. We were in the minority. For reasons I'm not sure of, he was not into George Mitchell, but I really liked him. I still do. He was a very good, firm leader. He came from nowhere and suddenly took control of the Senate. I've never figured out exactly how he managed to do all of that, but he did. He made it clear that he was not going to support our using force in this situation. Dole was astonished. I sat with President Bush and Bob Dole, because I was ranking on Armed Services. Bush was determined. He turned to Dole and said, "Bob, I want a resolution out of the Senate supporting the use of force against Saddam Hussein" Dole said, "I think you're right. I'm 100 percent with you." He said, "The Senate will pass a resolution doing just that." He

noted that it would be an uphill climb because of Mitchell. At some point with the two men—the president and Dole—Dole turned to me and said, "I want you to draw up the resolution and file it with your name on top." I said, "Okay." And he said, "Oh, by the way, find a Democrat to co-sponsor." I said, "That's going to be tough!" "Well, that's your job."

Finally, in the end I peeled off two, but in the beginning I couldn't get one of them. Sam Nunn was against it, very strongly against any use of force. I will never understand it. So, a young man who had just joined the Senate and had come on the Armed Services Committee had caught my eye. I had begun to work with him to help him out. He was a Democrat. So I approached this guy and said, "Look, this is going to happen and you want to be a part of it." He was a Jewish fellow by background. I said, "The repercussions on Israel surmount all politics." He didn't have a military background, but was a very bright fellow—Joe Lieberman. Joe said, "Well, John, I need to think this thing through." I pounded on him day after day. Meanwhile, I'm getting votes, watching the votes tally. I came to see Bob Dole and I said, "Bob, this is going to be a squeaker." Bob said, "Don't tell me, it's your responsibility."

So, lo and behold, Joe agreed to it. It became the Warner-Lieberman bill. The original is in the National Archives somewhere, I mean the original copy that was my desk copy in the Senate, and the one I held in my hand that night as the vote was being taken. The presiding officer was Dan Quayle and I got him to sign it. Dick Cheney was [secretary of defense] and I got all of them to sign it, including Norman Schwarzkopf—not that night, but later—who led the forces. We won that vote—by how many votes, do you think?

KOED: Two, three?

WARNER: Five.[11]

KOED: Wow.

WARNER: The whole world was watching this Rape of Nanking all over again. These village guys were tearing up the city, raping the women in public, everything, and we're sitting back in the Senate. The whole world was anxious to go with us. They had no problem—Great Britain, France, Germany, all of them.

KOED: The allies were on board.

[11] The Senate passed S.J. Res. 2, authorization for use of force, then accepted the language of H.J. Res. 77, voting 52 to 47 to pass the House version, which became P.L. 102-1 (105 Stat. 3, January 14, 1991). John Warner was chief Senate sponsor.

WARNER: Allies were on board. I remember that I was calling Bush every five minutes. "We're getting there. We're getting there." Finally, bingo, we hit it.

KOED: Did you ever get a sense of what was the core of the opposition?

WARNER: George Mitchell's hard leadership position.

KOED: Interesting. He had his caucus united, in other words.

WARNER: That's right. Byrd used to bounce you along a bit, but George was tough. He demanded a high degree of loyalty. He was a good leader. I'm not criticizing him at all.

KOED: No, that's part of what good leaders do. Well, that led to Operation Desert Storm under George H. W. Bush.

WARNER: Yes.

KOED: When that activity ended, there was a lot of talk at the time about whether we should have stayed in to get Saddam Hussein. What were your thoughts about that at the time?

WARNER: I felt that he, George H. W. Bush, made the right decision. I supported him on the floor. It was a 100-hour operation. Then the cry went out, "Follow the bastard right up into Iraq and kill 'em all along the way." It had been a savage killing of them. I went back to the battlefield 48 hours after it was over. The smoke was still rising. Dead bodies as far as you could see. They dropped their arms and ran, and we were literally mowing them down. But an old soldier told me one time, "A guy who fights for his nation will fight one way beyond the shores, but you put his back against his wife and children and his house and he's a different fighter."

KOED: Make it personal and it's a whole different thing.

WARNER: So, Bush was right. And, furthermore, we were operating under a U.N. resolution which is very specific, and it called only for action "in country" in Kuwait. Somebody may have been thinking about it and wrote it in, but it was very clear.

KOED: Oh, I didn't realize that.

WARNER: Those are interesting chapters in life.

KOED: You know, when I think back on Operation Desert Storm, the image that sticks in my head is the image of all those oil wells burning for days.

WARNER: Oh, ghastly. Somewhere in there—I guess I could find the dates—Ted Stevens and Sam Nunn and myself—Sam Nunn was chairman, I was ranking, Ted Stevens, and I think [Daniel] Inouye, the four of us were sent on a special mission to Israel to reassure them of what we were going to do.

KOED: This was in the wake of the Persian Gulf War?

WARNER: I think it was just before we jumped off, or it was after we won. It was somewhere in there. They sent us on a quick mission to Tel Aviv, where we met with the prime minister and the defense minister in their headquarters. It was at night, about 8:00 or 10:00, and I thought it was funny. We walked into this room and it was nothing but cement—it was one of their bunkers—and everybody had a gas mask under his seat. I thought, "These guys are playing for keeps over here." Well, about halfway through the meeting, all these sirens went off and the defense minister said, "Gentlemen, everybody, keep your seat. This is the safest structure we've got. You might be interested, because I'm going to put up on this big screen, the operation. We're going to track it." They had gotten word that Saddam Hussein was going to send in buzz bombs to Tel Aviv. Sure enough, we're tracking it. I found out months later that all the data was being collected right here in Washington and transmitted by satellite into this bunker in Israel. All of a sudden, one bomb shook everything. He said, "Put the gas masks on." The building shook, rattled, and rolled, and one of them hit within about a mile from where we were. He took every precaution to see that we were protected.

KOED: Thank goodness he did.

WARNER: Yeah. I can't remember who the prime minister was or the defense minister.[12] It was one of the old-timers and he was good. Then, I remember that I took the first codel of senators—there was a House codel, I think, that followed us by a couple of days, but we were the first in—and old Schwarzkopf met us. He was very cordial. He said, "Okay, I have a lot on my platter trying to secure this thing, but you select from your men who goes there and there and there and you're going to see one face of the battle." Well, the battle is over now. I got to go on two phases. Phase one was to go up and look at the—it's called a Trail of Tears, all the dead bodies and equipment strewn up to the border. Then I also went out on the battleship *Wisconsin*, which was offshore and had been using a 16-inch battery to pound it, so I got to see a good bit of it. All the other guys got a sector, then we wrapped up the codel and got out of there. It was maybe 48 hours. He had a lot on his hands, but the leadership wanted us to show a presence. The Senate had given the authority.

[12] Yitzhak Shamir was Israeli prime minister from 1986 to 1992. Moshe Arens was minister of defense in 1991 and 1992.

The trouble is, I had no sooner got home when the pressure was on me to lead another codel, then another one, rapid fire, which was okay. In those days, I didn't lose any sleep at all. I'll never forget the third codel. The damage internally in the capitol in Kuwait was just terrible. We got to see all the people and had meetings. It was a very good codel structure. They were very grateful for what the United States had done and it capitalized on that. But I'm packing up the third codel. Schwarzkopf is out there dutifully saying goodbye to all of us, and he said, "I want to talk to you a minute." We walked into a room. He grabbed me by the jacket and said—I can't use the language he used—"I don't ever want to see you again, or any other senators, for weeks. I've got a lot of work to do. No more damn codels! Is that understood? NO MORE DAMN CODELS, or I'm going to call up the president and quit this damn job!" (both laugh)

KOED: I can see him doing that. "Stormin' Norman!"

WARNER: Stormin' Norman! Later, he came in and signed this document for me. A wonderful guy. Then he very quietly receded into the woodwork of life, never to be seen again.

KOED: He really did. There was talk for a while that he might run for president, but he just went away.

WARNER: Oh, yeah.

KOED: Codels like that—what do you think are the real benefits of codels like that?

WARNER: Oh, I think there is a lot of benefit. You'd be surprised. Many people who come to the Senate come from relatively simple backgrounds and they've never had the chance to leave the shores of the United States, and yet they are entrusted with taking votes on very serious foreign policies. So, the sooner they kind of get up to speed on what's "Gay Paris" like? Okay, you can figure that out pretty quickly. What's London like? Then you get into the tougher spots like Vietnam or the Middle East, where it is blood, sweat, and tears to get out of those places. I'm a strong supporter of them. Also, it really developed personal ties that played out on the floor.

KOED: You mean between senators?

WARNER: Yes. You had a couple of drinks, you bonded together, you sat on that old plane for eight hours, going and coming, playing cards. You got to know them, and you could call on them for a little vote support.

KOED: It's that bonding that is the source of the deals that get made on the floor.

WARNER: Occasionally, we'd take wives. I remember that we pleaded with Bob Byrd to always take his wife, because she'd take the pressure off. "Now, Bob, these men are going to take a little time." She always stocked the airplane with all the ice cream we could eat. Bob Byrd would have a seat and eat dry bread and crackers, going and coming.

KOED: He was not an ice cream eater, eh? (laughs)

WARNER: He just didn't want a lot of lollygagging.

KOED: She was a tempering factor?

WARNER: He was a wonderful guy. I knew him so well. I told you the story about his summoning me the day after I got in the Senate. "Now, see that old map of Virginia? Half is yours and half is mine. Now we're not going to reunite the two states, we're going to represent them." That was the institution that I knew and loved and miss to this day.

Now, let me check a few more notes I made here. Looking at some of your questions, which are very well phrased, I see the Base Closure Act. I remember Tower was chairman, or Goldwater—one of them—and I didn't know a damn thing about base closure. We had never seen them, never had one. I am the emerging heir apparent and one of them said, "What do you know about base closures?" I said, "I don't know a damn thing." He said, "Well, learn it and learn it fast, because you're going to write the bill." So I wrote the first base closure bill that had happened in 10 or 15 years. Whichever one it was, Goldwater or Tower, turned to me and said, "We want it to be bipartisan. You've got to get a Democrat." Well, the Democrats are smart enough to see the evils of base closure. You have a little bit of a winner, but a lot of losers. What you are doing is taking it back. I can't think of his name, but he was a very likable guy. He was a senator out of Illinois who hadn't been in the Senate more than a year or two.

KOED: Paul Simon?

WARNER: No.

KOED: Alan Dixon?

WARNER: Yeah, Alan Dixon. So I called him and he co-sponsored the bill with me. We wrote one each year. We had a series of them and we were clicking along. When I was chairman, we did the last one. Boy, to this day, it has impacted negatively on my lifestyle. There was a man who was on staff of the Armed Services Committee who was the field director of the whole thing. Of course, no members of Congress served on the commission. But, my God, they closed down all of the bits and pieces of military installations in Northern Virginia and consolidated them down in the fort near Mt.

Vernon. They never thought about the transportation—ingress, egress—and if you look at the net money, there were no savings. You pull them all out of leases, etc. They stayed empty. You had to build new buildings, new mess halls, new barracks, whole new road system, and once you got outside the base you were jammed into narrow channels—Richmond Highway, Route 1, and a lot of it began to go down by Mt. Vernon via the GW Parkway and little Fort Hunt Road, which runs just a block from my house. These roads are totally jammed. You can't move. What's the name of that fort?

KOED: Fort Belvoir?

WARNER: Fort Belvoir. It's a palace down there. And that was the last one. It soured so many people that they've never had another one get anywhere near it.

KOED: I expect you faced a lot of opposition from the people who had lots of military bases in their states?

WARNER: Well, Virginia was ranked high. The five top states—Virginia, Texas, and others rotating in and out. But that was the end of it. Even in my final years as chairman, I tried to resurrect it, but the committee said, "You're not getting our vote."

KOED: Was the goal an economic goal or was it more complicated than that?

WARNER: It was driven by economics, but it makes sense because it is property that isn't fully utilized. Functions change in the military. Things changed and they no longer needed a whole separate building to do this or that. A lot of base structure changed. We're drifting more and more away from infantry bases, but air bases are growing, and high tech locations, but not the old infantry. Naval was on the ports, which is understandable, east and west coasts, but the military had a lot of those old cavalry posts.

I'll never forget—Ronald Reagan and I got to be great friends. He would call me up and say, "I'm going crazy. Can I come down and ride horses with you?" I had a big farm and a whole lot of horses. He'd come down, bring his own saddle, and he'd say, "John, I don't want any of your stable guys touching it. I'll put that saddle on, because if that saddle comes off or slips, I'm not blaming anybody but me." He'd been an old cowboy. We had the best times.

I remember one day when he rode out into the fields with me. It was a hot day in August, flies all over the place with horses jiggering around, and the Secret Service guys were going crazy. They didn't know how to ride, but they hung on. Nancy would occasionally go with us. He said, "That's a valley of Virginia. Stonewall Jackson." We sat there and he gave me a rendition on Jackson that was equivalent to any professor in

any leading school. He had done his homework. Then he said, "You know, I loved that old cavalry. Jackson was a great cavalry man." He said, "I remember when World War II broke out, I had previously joined the National Guard in California and I was in the cavalry of the National Guard in California, Second Lieutenant. On Pearl Harbor day, I put that lieutenant's uniform on and went down to military headquarters and said, 'I want to go in tonight. Sign me up and take me.'" They said to him, "Well, lieutenant, we have to work out a few things, but we'll get back to you." Another week or 10 days passed, and he got madder and madder. Finally, they said they would send him orders within 10 days. Sure enough, orders come. "Second Lieutenant Ronald Reagan, you are to report to Fort so and so," somewhere down in Arizona.

The president gets all his gear on, gets in his old jalopy car, and drives down there. He says, "God, this is in the middle of nowhere!" It was an old Indian fighters' cavalry post, but he was cavalry going down there. In the old days of covered wagons, the people assigned to those posts, when they got there, were exhausted. They were hungry and tired. The culture recognized that. So, for the first 48 hours, a young officer or enlisted man and his wife would blow the dust off his headquarters, get some sleep, plenty of food, rest, and then the commanding officer would give a cocktail party and invite him over for the party. So, Reagan went through that routine, putting on his lieutenant's uniform. He said, "I was there in my pressed up uniform. The commander of the post, a short sawed-off guy, an old cavalry boy, walked up and said, 'Reagan? Where have I met you before?' 'Sir, we've never met.' 'What do you mean we've never met? I don't make mistakes. Lieutenant, I'm Colonel so and so and I'm telling you—.'"

Well, it didn't get anywhere, so another 10 minutes passed and by this time Reagan had taken a couple of stiff drinks, wondering, "How the hell am I going to get out of this?" The colonel circles around back. "Reagan, let's settle this. I know I've seen you. You say we've never met in person. Hmm. What do you do?'' Reagan said, "Well, I make movies." "That's it! That's it. I saw you in that movie 'Brother Rat.' That movie was written about VMI [Virginia Military Institute] and it degraded VMI. I am a graduate of 1916 VMI, then I went into World War I. I've been a VMI man all my life. I've ridden to the ranks on VMI." He scolded Reagan! He turned around and said, "Lieutenant, that film disgusted me. You're off this post tomorrow morning." The next morning, Reagan gets up and the adjutant says, "What the hell did you do, lieutenant?" Reagan said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, here are your orders. You report to another place. Gone!"

KOED: And all he did was play a role in a movie. (laughs)

WARNER: A movie! Maybe we ought to end on this story.

[End of interview #4]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #5: April 26, 2017

JOHN W. WARNER: Winston Churchill once said, "What is the first duty of every member of Parliament?" Pause. "To get reelected." It's one thing in Great Britain, which you can traverse in almost a day. It's another thing in a vast nation like this.

BETTY K KOED: Yes, it's a different story here.

WARNER: I don't know what the multiple of populations it is, and not only our legislature, but legislatures throughout the world are faced with comparable challenges to get elected and remain elected.

KOED: The process of getting elected and reelected is becoming more and more complicated and more expensive.

WARNER: I'm thoroughly enjoying this, so you'll have to be the heavy hand to keep us on track, to keep me from pontificating more than necessary. We have got to provoke the Senate into considering where we are today, compared to where we have been. Can we keep going at this rate of change, or do we have to make some fundamental changes to the concept of the way this country is governed. Maybe that's too pontifical. So why don't you lead off.

KOED: Well, we're continuing today with your time on the Armed Services Committee. When we left off last time, we had moved into the early 1990s time period. I thought I would start by asking you about when Strom Thurmond returned to the committee. You got displaced as ranking member and then chairman. Is there a story behind there that I should know about?

WARNER: Well, the number one thing to draw from that is the rigid compliance with the Republican Conference's rules of seniority. Seniority prevailed throughout my 30 years in the Senate and was modified only by the Santorum group effort, whereby they term-limited the ranking and chair positions. You got to serve six in each. In other words, if you served six in the chair and went to ranking, you could hold it, but you could not go beyond that six.

Now at the time that switch came about with Thurmond, he had been chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the persons on that committee were becoming quite restive. They convinced him that he ought to shift. I don't pretend to know all of the intrigue, but he made a quick shift because he knew he was senior man on that committee. When he made the shift, he very courteously sent for me to come to his office, and that was all

right. He said, “I’m going to exercise my rights. I’m shifting from the chairmanship of Judiciary to chairmanship of Armed Services.” I stepped down. Then we encountered the first period of his inability, for various reasons—largely aging—he would show up promptly every morning when hearings were convened, he would take the chair and read a statement. He’d say, “I’ve got to leave. I’m going to turn it over to Senator Warner, next in line to seniority,” and then I would run the hearing. He would not return, as a rule.

He asked me to do a number of functions which were normally handled by the chairman, which I did, but we were all very respectful. I never tried to move into the seat of the chair. It just stayed vacant. My seat was next to him, and I would conduct the hearing from that seat, not knowing when he might suddenly stroll back into the room. The members of the committee just realized that, de facto, I was doing the best I could to work with each of them. They were very cooperative. There was no effort to try to oust him. I’ve forgotten exactly what transpired—I’d have to go back to trace all the ins and outs—but I did come back in as chairman and finish, I think, six straight years.

KOED: You were essentially acting chairman during these years.

WARNER: I didn’t give myself any title at all. I just stood in for the chairman. We all had our criticism of Strom Thurmond and there were jokes about him, but we respected him. He was an iconic figure.

KOED: Long term of service in the Senate.

WARNER: Oh good Lord, he stayed through his 100th year, didn’t he?

KOED: Yes, he turned 100 in the Senate.

WARNER: Yes, but the last few years he was not fully with it, so to speak.

KOED: No, I remember him in the later years being shuffled around from place to place, and staff ran a good deal of his business. I have a photograph of those years (showing photo of Armed Services Committee members), if you’d like to see it. There you are, sitting next to him.

WARNER: See, he had just gaveled.

KOED: So, he would gavel in the meeting, then you would take over and preside.

WARNER: Yes, and we always left his seat vacant.

KOED: That’s a very senatorial thing to do, to leave the seat vacant.

WARNER: Yes, we never filled it. There were occasions when I would get the word that he would not be there that day, and then I would preside in the chairman's seat. We were very careful, however, because some days he would just wander in. His staff helped him. It was better to just leave his seat open. I would read his statement and put it in the record, then give my own.

KOED: With Senator Thurmond and Senator Byrd, they both stayed in the Senate for a long time, well into old age.

WARNER: Oh, yeah.

KOED: For both of them, it seemed like their staff did a lot.

WARNER: The staff had to be protective, but you see, you did not have a fraction of those things we have today which are so invasive into the private lives of Congress. Frankly, the press were very good about it. They saw it, but they didn't tear him apart. Today, it would be different. He was not good on television, so you'd try to avoid that, but today you couldn't avoid that. They would be forceful in jamming that microphone at you. So his constituents didn't know a lot about what was going on.

KOED: Today, it seems to me that there is no such thing as a private moment for someone in office.

WARNER: Yes, dwell on that phrase. You've coined a very interesting phrase. There's no such thing as a private moment. I suppose when you got into the office and close the door.

KOED: I suppose, but those moments are rare. The demands on time are extreme.

WARNER: I saw in the press the other day—I'll step back. When I was in the Senate, and I say this with a deep sense of humility, I had the respect and trust of every member of the House of Representatives, be they Democrat or Republican, because they all knew that I tried to play it fair. If I had a good project coming in, I tried to share it with them and not say, "I got this bridge or subway," which I materially did in two instances, but I brought them all in, Republican or Democrat. I had a good understanding of the state. I don't know you could do that today.

KOED: Really? Even within the state delegation? It seems that we've reached a point where party trumps everything. Party loyalty trumps everything at this point.

WARNER: Well, it ebbs and flows. I'm writing a piece for the Peace Institute. I was instrumental in getting funds for that. I'm writing in the context that I was but a

member of the team, and this is what the team did. Do you realize that that Peace Institute is the last and largest piece of pork ever?

KOED: I didn't know that.

WARNER: We called it an earmark. I'm going to put it in the publication. It was the last one. I remember how it went. It reached a high point—I was part of a team—of bipartisanship. You couldn't get a whisker between Chairman Inouye and Chairman Stevens, and they rocked back and forth during that period on Appropriations. Jennings Randolph, the old West Virginian, senior to Byrd, was helpful. [Spark] Matsunaga, he was a Democrat. That wonderful guy from Washington, Mark Hatfield. They all got along. But the key to it, and you helped me find that keyhole, was that 75 percent of the Senate were veterans. You could not put a new government agency with that type of funding, the cost of that building, through the Senate today. The whole concept of doing something to establish the nebulous dream of peace—we've got something that's working.

KOED: That's interesting. Not only did you have a successful bipartisan process, but because of the shared wartime experience, you had a different concept of peace and what that would mean.

WARNER: Absolutely.

KOED: That's interesting. I hadn't thought about that before, but the wars we fight today are so different than they were in World War II or Korea or even Vietnam. It's not the shared experience it was.

Well, let's step back a little bit. I want to follow up on two things. First of all, the concept of an earmark. It's gone today—and I think that's unfortunate.

WARNER: Betty, it's interesting. There are pros and cons. You'll find that most of the significant earmarks were attributable to the more senior senators and House members. They controlled them, those chairmen of the committees. That meant that everyone was at the mercy of their committee chair—not the caucus, but that committee chair. Oftentimes, the committee chairs were at odds with the caucus. So that chairman was all important. That's no longer the case. So I think there were some beautiful things, that being an example, but there were also some silly things done [through earmarks].

KOED: Do you think that getting rid of earmarks was due to complaints from junior members who were not in power, or was it mostly a public relations thing?

WARNER: When I was there, it was an understood process by all levels, but only those with a certain amount of seniority really got to benefit from the fruits. I'll put

it that way. Even when you went there, you heard, "Well, you're just a junior senator in your first year. My gosh, the guy you replaced, he brought us a lot of things." He delivered and you knew it. That's why, frankly, I felt so strongly that my first loyalty was to the overall benefit and welfare of the nation. That was a priority above party. I put the nation's interest above party, particularly since I was heavily involved in national security issues, which is where maximum bipartisanship is needed. That controlled my judgment.

I experienced sharing Virginia Senate seats with partners that mostly lasted only one term. You've got to be in the Senate a term or two to really begin to command the respect and trust of constituents, because they know who is getting things done in Washington. When Mark Warner was up for reelection in 2014, his opponent at the time was a fellow who is now running for governor [Ed Gillespie]. I thought to myself, "If he gets in and we lose the seniority," and [Tim] Kaine had just come in, "we'd go to number 90."

KOED: Yes, you'd go from the top of the list in seniority to the bottom.

WARNER: I was not received well in the party for [endorsing Warner], but I did what I thought was best for the state and for the country.

KOED: That's an interesting comment, too. I've often wondered about something. When you are a senator, you have first of all a responsibility to your state, but as U.S. senator you also have a responsibility to the nation at large.

WARNER: That's right.

KOED: At times, those two things must be difficult to reconcile.

WARNER: They are, but remember your title is not senator from Virginia, it's *United States senator from Virginia*. That's the U.S. that proceeds your state.

KOED: I hadn't made that distinction before. That gives me a different perspective.

WARNER: That old constitutional gang, they had some innate wisdom, almost as if a providential hand rested on their shoulder while they conceived this republic.

KOED: Yes, and 200-some years later, we're still here. That says a lot of about them.

WARNER: And it's still functioning as the longest, continuously operating republic in existence. Did I tell you about the guy in Switzerland?

KOED: No.

WARNER: I used to say, "We are custodians and trustees of the oldest, continuously functioning republic." I'd say that to audiences. It happened to me more than once that people would jump up and say, "You're wrong. Switzerland!" I'd say, "Go back and you'll see that in the early 1800s, Napoleon invaded and took Switzerland and reduced it." There was a break of two years.

KOED: Yes, there was a constitutional break.

WARNER: There was a break of two years. Then he turned around and said to them, "It's too damn cold. You can have it back. I'm out of here."

KOED: That gives us the honor.

WARNER: For me to hear you say, "That's interesting," that blows up my ego.

KOED: Well, to hear you make that distinction about the United States senator from Virginia—no one made that distinction clear to me before, and that's very useful for me.

Looking back to that time period of the late 1980s and 1990s, it was such a transitional period in so many ways, particularly in issues of security and defense. We had been in the Cold War with the Soviet Union but saw the fall of the Berlin Wall. But as the Cold War was ending, we had new crises arising in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

WARNER: Primarily in the Middle East.

KOED: Tell me a little bit about that time period, in terms of defense and security.

WARNER: The Cold War was properly given, as the French would say, *nom de guerre*, the name of war, because we were dealing with the Soviet Union. I had an opportunity to have a special insight into it because they picked me to negotiate the executive agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, providing rules of the road for our respective navies, the Soviet navy having quadrupled in size. We were banging into each other, trying to steal secrets and pictures off the other guy. Nixon, to his credit, said, "This could trigger a war. Get in there and solve it." We did. They followed the rules, and they still follow them to this day. There have been infractions here and there, but generally speaking they do it. It avoided a hot war.

A succession of leadership in the Soviet Union crumbled when they gave up communism. [Boris] Yeltsin and [Mikhail] Gorbachev did remarkable things, but there was a period when the Soviet Union—coinciding with the rise in tensions in the Middle East—was operating introspectively to try to put their new form of government together and let Russia again become a world power. There was a real dip for a while. During that trough period, we were having to face up to the problems with Saddam Hussein and in Afghanistan and so forth. Fortunately, we didn't have both at the same time. But now [Vladimir] Putin is trying to put Mother Russia back together again. You'll never see those little nations—Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, and all those countries—they're not going to flip back over. He's got part of the Crimea, and there may be a stronger case for that than any other, but that's about it. He's going to put the screws to us.

KOED: He's trying.

WARNER: He's trying.

KOED: One of the major foreign policy crises of the early Clinton years was the Bosnian conflict.

WARNER: I remember it very well.

KOED: Didn't you lead the codel there?

WARNER: Yes, many times.

KOED: Tell me about that.

WARNER: Well, in the first place, it was a part of the world that never really attracted much attention. You remember that old, rigid ruler that lasted so long over that part of the world—

KOED: Tito?

WARNER: [Josip Broz] Tito. I met him once. I made many trips into that region. But once he fell, then the Slavs and the others really began to go back to their roots and their jealousies and hatreds.

KOED: Their pre-World War I roots.

WARNER: That's correct, because he amalgamated all of them under his Communist regime. When he went, the regime went, and they all fractured and split up and began to be individualistic. A certain part of the Slavic world had no military. Anyway, we had a lot of tensions there. Clinton, to his credit, recognized that he had no

experience in this area and he relied heavily on consultations with the chairmen and ranking members of the major Senate committees—Armed Services, Foreign Relations, Appropriations, and Intelligence. He would have us over for informal meals. You kind of knew it would be informal if the meal was going to be on the second floor, sitting around little tables and balancing a plate on your knee, or downstairs among the more formal areas. Clinton liked informality. He sat and listened. And Hillary Clinton often sat and listened. She never tried to invade, but you knew she was studying. That was an interesting period.

KOED: When you led the codel over there, what was its purpose?

WARNER: Our armed forces were badly needed. NATO was trying to struggle with it and our armed forces were needed as part of the NATO force. I'll never forget my first trip in there. The plane landed and I noticed the pilot was really bringing this thing down at an enormous speed. I knew enough about aviation—I flew a lot of in the military, but I was never a pilot—but he practically crashed this plane coming in. He got on the microphone and said, "You've got to get off the plane very quickly. I've got to turn around and get out of here." He said, "They're shooting at us from every direction."

They were bopping away with small arms fire, just small arms and an occasional mortar round came in. I remember he dropped the back door of this C-130 and we rolled out with our duffle bags. He never stopped the engines. He turned that thing around and got the hell out of there. He was afraid they'd hit a gas tank and blow him up. I remember sitting there and there was this funny little guy, State Department guy, sitting there. He said, "Come on, follow me, we've got to get out of here." He heard the bullets banging around on the tin roofs and things like that. But it goes on all the time. In order for me to see the city, they had to get a tank. I got in a heavy armored tank and we drove the city, looking through peepholes, and going to another part of the city where a fragment of government was still trying to hold together to attend their meeting. I remember that we got out of the tank and ran into a building. There was one light bulb hanging by a thread from the ceiling of the room with remnants of this political organization that was trying to run the government. We met with them.

KOED: Was it a successful mission?

WARNER: Yes, eventually. The Serbs were being decimated. I went on several codels. One time, I went with Bob Dole when he was codel leader. You know Bob, always the soldier. "So, they're having a little warfare over here. I've ducked bullets before." The codel was going on and finally we were somewhere when we heard a terrible noise. There was a large crowd screaming and running. Our State Department people said, "Gentlemen, get back on the bus. We've got to get out of here." We were in the "Field of Blackbirds," which goes back I think hundreds of years to when either the

Serbs beat the Mongrels or the Mongrels beat the Serbs. It's a battle they argue and fight over on the anniversary. They were half celebrating and half fighting it all over again and old Dole jumped on that bus, we turned that bus around, and we got out of there.

Another time I went over there, the Soviet Union was trying to push in and force its hand and sent in some heavy tanks. The Brits wanted to stop the tanks, and they almost started a tank warfare. Our commander, General [Wesley] Clark, was NATO commander and he damn near had a fistfight with General [Mike] Jackson who was commander of the British forces. He was an old-time Brit and he wanted to bring the tanks in and let them bang at each other. I said, "This is no place for a senator trying to arbitrate two hot-headed generals." I just sat back at 25 yards and let them scream at each other.

KOED: Let them go at it!

WARNER: Let them solve it.

[interview interrupted by phone call]

WARNER: I always take calls from my wife and children.

KOED: Those are important calls to take. We were talking about Bosnia and your codels there. After you go on one of these codels, when you come back do you do a briefing with the president?

WARNER: That's done, but it's irregular. For example, one of the most memorable codels in my life was to the marine barracks in Lebanon—

KOED: Ah, in Beirut.

WARNER: Yes, they were in Beirut, and they were blown up by terrorists driving a truck full of explosives. Reagan had only been in office a short time. I knew Reagan pretty well. I don't say this in a bragging context, but I had worked with him when he was governor, had hosted him here in Washington. I'll never forget the night he came to address the Republican Party at a big gathering at the Mayflower ballroom. He was in the reception line and he pulled me aside and said, "I want to make sure I see that podium before I go in that room." I said, "All right. We'll take a break here." I took him and he looked at the podium. He said, "I've got to jack it up this much and I need something to hold my cards here," these little three-by-five flip cards, and we did it all. A waiter came in with a whole tray full of glasses of ice water. He turned and somehow, bang, the table was knocked over and all these flip cards went on the floor. I panicked. He had to get them back in order again so he could deliver his speech. Through little

incidents like that we got to be friends. He used to come down to my farm to ride horses, to get out of Washington. I got to know him. And where were we going with this?

KOED: You were talking about one of your most memorable codels, the Beirut story.

WARNER: Oh, yes, he called me up. "John," he said, "what in the world happened here? This is terrible symbolism that we lost so many." I've forgotten the figures, but the casualty count was over 30 or 40 marines killed or wounded. He said, "Can you get over there right away. I'll have John Tower go with you. Try to figure this thing out." I said, "Okay, Mr. President."

On the way over, we continued to plan the trip. We went to the barracks that morning at sunrise. We were there when they were still taking bodies out, the thing was still smoldering, but the main thing that we could do was to quickly see the site, make an assessment, and then we visited Egypt, Israel, and we actually went into Syria and saw old man Assad, not the son but old man Assad, Lebanon, and there may have been another country. We always went to Jordan. We saw all of those countries in less than 72 hours is my recollection and then flew straight back. We landed at Andrews [Air Force Base] and went straight to the White House. Reagan was so worried. He said, "Just give them the message that we're there to stay. We're not pulling out." The press was saying that after this, the United States should get out of here. So that was one extreme of where we went back to the president. Other cases, more normally, a president would see some of the members of the codel, depending upon the size of the codel, but it was not the norm to go right back to the White House. It was a select number of cases.

KOED: Did you file a report with the Senate?

WARNER: Yes, we used to write that up. We didn't want to put it so that it could get out, because it was classified. I think codels served a very valuable purpose. One of them was the ability of Republicans and Democrats to experience the joys and the hardships and the inconveniences of fast travel and get to know each other. Occasionally, we brought wives and they were invariably valuable.

I will tell you one funny story. I was heading a codel to go to Afghanistan and I don't know where else we went, but you didn't take wives into Afghanistan because your meetings were strictly with heads of state and protocol in their culture was that women were not part of it. So Carl Levin and I, and our wives, and we maybe had one or two other senators, a very small group, went. I said let's put our wives in Kuwait, because the Kuwait people were so grateful, and Carl said that was okay. We told them that we would be gone for 48 hours, "but the embassy is going to take care of you." It was 110 degrees outside, hot and sweaty, so we told our wives, "Don't bring a lot of stuff, just light stuff."

So our wives dutifully were sparsely trousseau'd, if that's a word. When Carl and I got back, we were greeted by two very unhappy wives. "What happened?" "Well, the head of the embassy's wife gave us a dinner, and the first ladies of Kuwait came, the Arab Emirates, they all came wearing their best finery from Paris and adorned with jewelry, and we're in 110-degree sweat pants." (laughs)

KOED: You told them to pack light! (laughs)

WARNER: Oh, wow, did we get chewed out. My wife tells that story so much better. You know you need to include a little bit of color in these writings, and not be too stiff all the time.

KOED: Oh, definitely. And, you know, those types of experiences are all part of the Senate experience.

WARNER: It was then. I don't know just how much of that goes on now.

KOED: In 1991, you became chairman of the Armed Services Committee. You went back and forth with Carl Levin, but '91 was the first one. Tell me what it means to be chairman of the Armed Services Committee. What sort of responsibilities does that come with?

WARNER: Well, in those days, and I'm trying to avoid comparing too much to today because I'm not right there on the front lines anymore. In those days, the chairmanship had the respect and trust and confidence of both sides of the committee and they had a lot of power. I succeeded Sam Nunn and Sam was an excellent chairman, in my judgment—others may differ. We should put in that chapter when Sam was chairman and the Senate was faced with the nomination of John Tower. Make sure that's in there.

KOED: Okay.

WARNER: You ruled with a great deal of authority, because you had so much within your power. You had assignment to subcommittees. Basically, you could do that based on seniority among the members. They would get choices, but you wanted to make sure the freshmen weren't ending up with nothing. I always wanted to make sure that they had one subcommittee of their choice. You were tested by members from time to time, but on the whole I found the membership to be very compliant and respectful.

But one of the keys to the Armed Services Committee, and that's still true today, is that they had a long tradition of professional staff members, staff members that stayed in their positions. Now, the chief of staff of course would change with the party, but a lot of the other senior people would have their same portfolio of duties irrespective of which party controlled the committee. They were extremely experienced individuals.

You also have to remember that we have one of the largest, if not the largest, single money bills, the annual armed services bill, and it probably has more provisions than most bills. It isn't like a highway bill that comes every six years. During that period of time, many of the necessities of the Foreign Relations Committee couldn't get through the committee. For some reason, you couldn't get foreign aid reported out of that committee, or you might get it reported out but you couldn't get it through the floor. So, therefore, the Foreign Relations Committee—and they didn't do it hat-in-hand on bended knee, but the chairman knew, from precedent, that the armed services bill had to have a last-minute amendment put in and it was a little package from the Foreign Relations Committee. We carried their water, so to speak, because our bill had to get through.

KOED: Because you had an annual defense authorization bill to pass.

WARNER: Annual.

KOED: Is that something that the chairman and the ranking member would collaborate on?

WARNER: Oh, yes. Traditionally, that committee ranked at the top of bipartisanship as it existed at that time in the overall body. We would be the most bipartisan by far.

KOED: I didn't realize that you would sneak in the foreign relations part of it, because they couldn't get it through their own committee.

WARNER: Yeah, and it never appeared until just before the vote was taken. The chairman had the right to put that in quickly.

KOED: I had no idea.

WARNER: The members realized the necessity for foreign assistance, but it was not something that you could sell back home. "Hey, my road is full of potholes and my bridge is falling down and you're shipping money over there to build their bridges and fill their potholes. Well, senator, that dog don't hunt! Don't let me see you voting for that!" But now the senator could go back and say, "I didn't have anything to do with it. Another committee did it. I didn't vote on the committee, but I had to vote on the overall bill because our military base needed its money." So you skirted around some pretty tough situations.

KOED: I can see why that would be necessary. Today, there are tremendously contentious arguments about foreign aid.

WARNER: I have to tell you, any chairman of Armed Services or ranking worth his or her salt—no hers yet, but anyway—used that in trading.

KOED: Oh, really?

WARNER: Oh, yes. "Don't you forget, Senator, I got your foreign relations through, so give me your vote on this amendment." "All right, Senator, yes."

KOED: Well, that's the nature of the business.

WARNER: You had to be experienced. There was a succession of very able individuals. We started with Richard Russell, who set the high water mark. He was chairman. Stennis followed. Goldwater had a turn at the wheel, Nunn had a turn at the wheel, and I had a turn. And Tower had a short turn at the wheel.

Let me digress on the Tower thing. Sam was chairman and the president had nominated Tower to be secretary of defense. In many ways, he was ideally qualified because he had spent his life in defense. He had been a sailor, a chief petty officer in World War II. He was in the ranks, but a very skilled sailor. He knew the military and knew the aches and pains of service. He had been on that committee forever and had traveled extensively all over the world. But he had acquired, rightly or wrongly and I'm not one to chronicle the authenticity, a history of not being respectful of females. I never realized the depth of that feeling until we got into a bind.

The Senate leadership at that time, I think it was probably George Mitchell and Bob Dole, said, "Well, let's just let the Armed Services Committee see what they can discover about these allegations." Well, we didn't need that hot potato. He was one of our own. Sam was chairman and I was ranking. I remember that we sat down together. Nunn and I were very close personal friends. I said, "Sam, this is going to be a challenge for us." He said, "I pledge to you, even though we're in the majority, we're going to see that you, as a Republican ranking member, are going to have every bit of authority to summon witnesses and it's going to be a completely open hearing."

Nunn lived up to the letter of his commitments. I think this is written up in some books, but not many people realize it. Tower was concerned about how we were going to come out with our report, and I would have done the same thing if I had been in his spot. He asked to see us, without staff, just the three of us—Nunn, myself, and Tower. We met in Sam's office and John Tower sat there. The case had taken a turn for the worse because one of his former staff members who was a state worker, unannounced, walked into the Armed Services Committee, thinking he could help Tower by telling us the story of his dealings with Tower. Only staff were there to hear him. This guy proceeded to explain that he saw Tower use excessive alcohol, had to take certain measures to help

him, but that he had gotten over it. It was a thing of the past. We brought it up when the three of us were talking, and Tower—I'll never forget it because it was just like a firehouse horn blew—Tower turned to us and said, "Oh, I've given up that. I've given it up, all I drink now is wine." Well, my uncle was an alcoholic and my wife—I wasn't married to Jeanne then, but she had alcohol in her family. In my family, with my father being a surgeon and a doctor, he never touched it and mother was very strict about it. But it's proven in medical annals that alcohol is alcohol.

KOED: Yes, it doesn't matter what form it's in.

WARNER: It doesn't make any difference. I remember Sam was dead silent when he said that. The meeting adjourned. The next morning, Sam called me up and said, "You know, we've been going at this thing with equal responsibility and equal power. I think we've got enough now and so we have to go our separate ways." He said, "I don't think I can support him." He never asked what I was going to do. I felt that somehow Tower had done so much for the country and everything, and having been in the building myself for over five years as undersecretary and secretary of the navy, I felt he could do the job. I served under three secretaries of defense, so I really knew the institution quite well and I knew Tower very well. He leaned on me a lot when he was chairman. So, Sam and I split, and then we had to go to the floor to wage war. What I had underestimated was the depth in the general Senate of where Tower had left too many scars. I think if you go back and look at the female vote, it was very heavily against him.[13]

KOED: I remember it being a combination of the women's issues and the alcohol that did him in.

WARNER: But to the point of my story. I live and swear to the dying breath that the committee did its work, did its report, analyzed the evidence, and Sam Nunn in his leadership and I in mine made sure that neither side didn't have every opportunity to put what they wanted into the record.

KOED: Everyone had a chance to be heard.

WARNER: Yeah.

KOED: A year or so ago, we had a day in the Senate when a senator invited Bob Packwood back, and there was a big to-do about whether Bob Packwood should be allowed to speak. The female senators spoke against that. I realized at that point how long those scars do last. I guess that was the case with Tower as well.

[13] On March 9, 1989, the Senate rejected the nomination of Senator John Tower as secretary of defense, 47–53. The two female senators in office at the time, Nancy Kassebaum and Barbara Mikulski, both voted against the nominee.

WARNER: I hope I'm not going too far on this, but these are junctures of history that might be looked at for precedent. For instance, the other day President Trump appointed an active duty military man to a cabinet position. The law is explicit that active duty can't do that, but Sam and I were faced with that decision when Colin Powell came up. We went into it very carefully and wrote a bipartisan report, both of us signed the report, saying that Congress had the right to make exceptions in cases which it felt were absolutely in the interest of our national security. That's what Trump used, the Nunn-Warner Report, to justify this.

KOED: So that put a waiver in place, and that set the precedent.

WARNER: Those little vignettes are important.

KOED: Particularly in the Senate, where precedent is so important.

WARNER: One thing we left off on is, and I'm not sure if we left it dragging, is this base closure thing.

KOED: Yes, we talked about it a bit.

WARNER: I think I got to joking about writing the first base-closure bill and drafting that poor Democrat out of Illinois—

KOED: Oh, Alan Dixon.

WARNER: Alan Dixon. Alan was one of those guys for whom the Senate life was an exciting challenge. "Oh, boy, I get to write a report." He just loved to be front and center as a freshman. (laughs) It's sort of the way in which I drafted Lieberman to do the first bill to invade Iraq and turn back Saddam Hussein. But that thing is absolutely essential, and I wrote every one of the bills afterwards, even though I took heat for it. I was experienced and the committee was grateful. I actually wrote the last one, which I can tell, incidentally, has caused a negative twist to my current lifestyle. The Base Closure Commission proceeded to close down a whole lot of government offices that were being leased by the government in Crystal City and Arlington and consolidate them down in Fort Belvoir without recognizing that the road network was insufficient to carry the projected concentration of people they were pushing into that one base. Today, one of the two major arteries is George Washington Parkway which is now bumper to bumper.

KOED: Unintended consequences.

WARNER: The military is an ever-changing institution. The days of big standing armies are no longer in our future.

KOED: No, we're in the high tech age.

WARNER: Weapons have changed. The instantaneous nature of warfare has changed. Whatever war we get into tomorrow, we're going to fight with the weapons we got. We don't have the luxury of a year, like in World War II, to start up the industrial base and crank up the weapons we desperately need. Therefore, there are a lot of army barracks that are no longer needed. The services are very jealous of every square inch of real estate they own, and I don't say that in a pejorative sense. "You never know, Senator, when we might be in a big war." Take the air force. We used to take the old F-16 or F-14 airplane. We bought hundreds and hundreds of those planes. The F-35 now is a multimillion dollar aircraft, but we only buy 100-plus, so we don't have the need for all of these bases.

KOED: If you look at the conflicts we're in right now in various parts of the world, it's mostly drones and unarmed vehicles and things like that, not boots on the ground.

WARNER: That's right.

KOED: We have so much talk today about sequestration. Is there a connection between the base closing and sequestration?

WARNER: Well, a base closing is hard for any senator, because it's usually state-wide, but the congressman, he or she who has the military base, it's hard for them, too, if that thing closes. They move the soldiers out, and sailors, to wherever they go. Virginia has a ranking of four or five among the top states in terms of number of military bases. We have Norfolk Naval Base, and there's no way to replace that because of the configuration of the harbors. We've got very fixed base structures in our state.

Did I tell you the Reagan [cavalry] story? That's part of the base closure story. That place should have been closed long ago, but the army was hanging onto it.

KOED: And there are a lot of those old bases in Kansas and Nebraska and Oklahoma and so forth.

WARNER: Yes, by and large, they try to put them to proper training and so forth. I'm not faulting the military. Remember, they are at the mercy of the civil control of the military. The uniqueness of that is two-fold. One, it functions and serves the country well, because you can bring in a fresh mind and suddenly he's boss. He doesn't have to wait 25 or 30 years, moving up the ranks, to get into position to run the military. Those guys, by the time they climb that ladder, are so beholden to so many people for giving them a push up the ladder that the intrigue is unbelievable for the professional

military. But it has its pluses and minuses, whereas the politician coming in is all-powerful and he can make tough decisions which are needed in the military. That's the theory. I want to see base closure again, and I hope they can live up to it. Currently, I think they have an excellent leadership in that committee. You're going to be reading a chapter about me and the committee soon that will interest you. It's top secret now.

KOED: Top secret? Will I hear about it soon?

WARNER: You'll hear about it soon. Well, I'll tip you off and you can come to the hearing and see me in action. That's tipping my hat a bit.

KOED: I would like to do that. Let me know when that's going to happen.

WARNER: I will. You're my biggest fan.

KOED: Let's move a little ahead in time from where we were to talk about the fateful day of September 11, 2001. You were on the Armed Services Committee at the time, of course, you and Carl Levin. First of all, share with me a little bit about your memories of that day? But more importantly, let's talk about how that day was a turning point in defense and security.

WARNER: Oh, yes, there was a realization that quickly spread across America that they were totally having to rely upon the U.S. military. I'm not belittling the intelligence services, but if you needed to counter-attack, who would you counter-attack? The military was essential, but all the infrastructure. The intelligence departments. Although the CIA is separate from the Pentagon, it's tightly woven in terms of the reliance that the Pentagon has on the CIA and the CIA on the Pentagon, and all the other things that go with it.

I started about 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning. I was giving a typical fundraising speech for a colleague. I was on the top floor in a beautiful glass atrium in the building that is right across from the White House, so the White House was in full view. It's still up there, the atrium. There were probably 30 or 40 people in there. I was waxing and waning and I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, the tempo of the secretarial staff and other people outside. They were not part of the meeting, but I could see them running around in an irrational way. Finally, the door opened and this woman came in and very politely said, "You better call your office, because there's been some crisis. You'll want to know about it." They showed us to the television. I think it had happened, the number one plane. I quickly went in and told people, "We got to go back to our places." Got in the elevator and went down. My staffer, fortunately, was out there in the car. He turned the car radio on. He said, "This is serious business." I said, "Yeah, let's head straight back to the Capitol."

We got back to the Capitol without any—well, traffic was crazy, and a couple of people were going through red lights to get out of the city. I remember looking down at the White House and I saw they locked the gates, so I knew something was going on. Then we saw this horrible picture on the television and didn't know where the next plane would hit. I remember as I pulled up on the Capitol grounds, they were literally running out of the Senate Chamber. I said, "Where the hell is everybody going?" He said, "Leadership has announced that everybody should take their staff, close their offices, and go home." I went back to my office and talked to them. I said, "Good luck and go home." A couple of them wanted to stay with me.

Then old Carl Levin, bless his heart, gave me a call and said, "You know, we ought to see what we can do. Some members are still around. We need to get somebody down here. We're the military committee." I said, "I agree with you." I called the attorney general, John Ashcroft, whom I knew very well. I called the FBI director [Robert Mueller] whom I knew very well. I got them down there. There were about seven of our committee members still trying to sort out what they were going to do. I'll never forget, those two men came down and they couldn't have been more polite. They said, "Gentlemen and ladies, we'll tell you everything we know, but it's very little." I said to Carl, "I guess we might as well go back up." I went back to my office and I could see the smoke coming up from the Pentagon. I spent years of my life in that building and it's in my state. I said, "I'm going over there." I called up [Secretary of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld. He took the call right away. He said, "Hey John, come on over. I could use you." I said, "Okay, how about if I bring Carl Levin?" He said, "All the better, shows bipartisanship." I went over to Carl's office right around the corner. He said, "You know, I think you're right. Bipartisanship is needed. Let's go." We jumped in his old car for some reason.

KOED: Carl Levin's old car?

WARNER: Yeah, he had a dumpy old car. We drove over the 14th Street Bridge and it was absolutely vacant. Nobody was on the bridge. As we approached the Pentagon, we could still see the flames leaping and the smoke bellowing. We got there. Rumsfeld met us and took us around. They were still bringing bodies out on stretchers. You really got the feeling that everybody was doing his job and they knew what they were trying to do, but it was so complex, the magnitude was so large, that the local fire departments—which were primarily the response teams—worked together with such indigenous help that we had attached to the Department of Defense. They were a seamless team, working together. There seemed to be one chief fireman that they all respected. He said they were fighting the fire and still trying to get bodies out, not knowing if some of these people might have a thread of life left in them. They had a temporary morgue set up there under the tent where they were stacking them. So, it was a site to behold.

We went back to Rumsfeld's office and now he was down several floors below his office in the deep subterranean base which had been built specifically to withstand some type of attack on the building. We sat there. It was just Rumsfeld. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was in an airplane, circling. The Secret Service wouldn't give him clearance to land. The president of the United States was circling. They wouldn't give him clearance. I remember after he had been in the air an hour or two—all we had was the tube, the television was our main source—they gathered the information from the military and the deputy chief of staff, an air force general who later became chief, was running back and forth contributing whatever the military was generating about this incident. That went on for about three or four hours and it was around 9:00 or 10:00 at night and Rumsfeld said, "You know, the press is still down there, asking that we come down and talk to the nation." And he said, "I'm going down. I'd like to have you two gentlemen come down, and if you would, I'd like each of you to speak." We said, "Okay."

We went down and Rumsfeld, in a very strong and confident voice and manner, delivered his remarks. We alternated. Carl delivered his remarks and I was wrap-up. It's interesting. We had no text, no writing, just spoke our hearts, and we just said, to give people confidence, "Our military is intact. All of our systems are intact. This one site of tragedy is the focus of our attention and our prayers, but the rest of America is fully intact." By this time, you see, there had been the abortive attack. Rumsfeld was very clear. Few people realize that he went into that thing and risked his own personal safety to help to get people out.

KOED: Into the Pentagon?

WARNER: Yeah. By the time I got there, that wasn't an option. They had explored all the cavities that they could get into, so Carl and I didn't go in, but we stood right by Rumsfeld and he showed tremendous strength and wisdom. He's had his problems in life, but those are moments that I'll remember. I can see my face on that tape, it's still played from time to time.

KOED: It was a remarkable day in so many ways.

WARNER: Yes.

KOED: That might be a good place to stop for today.

WARNER: I'll tell you, I'm enjoying this fully.

KOED: I am, too, and I'm learning so much.

WARNER: I have an inkling that you're getting something that's of value. That's what our jobs are.

KOED: I think this is extremely valuable.

WARNER: Did you interview Carl Levin?

KOED: My colleague, Kate Scott, interviewed Carl Levin. She did many interviews with him.

WARNER: Good, so that's comparable to what we're doing.

KOED: Yes, an extensive interview.

WARNER: He's a reservoir of solid knowledge.

KOED: It's a wonderful oral history. His oral history and your oral history will give us a record of 30 years in the Senate, but also 30 years of Armed Services, defense, and security. Eventually, we'll get into other parts of your Senate career as well, beyond Armed Services, but this is a good place to start. This gives you a chance to share your very unique experiences and memories that you can't get from any other source. Unless we go to you, we won't get them.

WARNER: You want to inject in here the constitutional aspect of how much important decision-making is entrusted to 100 individuals, and that number has not changed—only with the addition of states—over 228 years. The value of continuing—What is it that Ben Franklin said? "Either we hang together"—

KOED: "Or we hang separately." And he said, "We've got a Republic, if we can keep it." I also see this as extremely valuable because the Senate is in a period of rapid change right now.

WARNER: Do you mean in membership?

KOED: In membership—we have a very young membership right now. About 60 percent of the senators are in their first term right now. The seniority we've had for so many years is disappearing. Also, they're changing things institutionally. We can now approve nominations by simple majority vote—it doesn't require a 60 vote—so the bipartisan nature of the Senate is changing, perhaps disappearing.

WARNER: Disappearing. Bipartisan legislation tends to stand the test of time. What better example than Obamacare. And yet, we turn around as a party and try to do a second Obamacare. It defies all judgment.

KOED: We seem to be in a period when bipartisanship has broken down, but also when the constitutional role of the Senate is starting to erode.

WARNER: Well, is there anything left if the constitutional role disappears?

KOED: The responsibility of those 100 people is immense.

WARNER: Bear in mind the confluence of that direction in which we're moving with the direction of the world today, with Turkey abandoning a lot of its democratic principles, with Germany trying to reexamine it, and the French—I think they might pull a hat trick with this woman—but, worldwide, to kind of withdraw and go back to the rigidity of one man, one vote, one power, so to speak—

KOED: We may be in a transitional moment in history. It's interesting, but also a bit scary.

WARNER: It is scary for the reason that we and we alone—I don't say this as a braggart—have the armament to maintain peace worldwide. It's that over-arching strength, militarily, that we have that makes these people think twice.

KOED: I guess then the question is, do we have the will to use it?

WARNER: Congress has abandoned the "we only can declare war" rule.

KOED: We have a lot of things to talk about yet.

WARNER: I'm so pleased that Carl is one [who has done an interview.] I admire him, although he is more partisan than I am. I'm more or less *C'est la guerre*. But he was raised in the Michigan system of rough and tumble politics. He was on the city council and worked his way up through all that fist fighting. I parachuted in from the top. I'm the only one in Virginia history, in contemporary history, who wasn't on city council, in the House of Representatives, in state legislature, governor, or lieutenant governor. The only one.

KOED: Yes, that's right, when you came into the Senate, you had never held an elected position. You came from the secretary of navy job.

WARNER: My highest rank was that I was elected boys' school patrol captain at one time. (laughs)

KOED: That was your background. (laughs) But your experience in the military took its place.

WARNER: I gave a little speech last night at my club, introducing a film about young men who went in the military in World War I at age 17, relating to my own going into the military [in World War II] at age 17. I was taught a lot by the military. I've always wanted to give them full credit for teaching me so much.

KOED: Yes, I would think so. My father was in World War II, in the army in World War II.

WARNER: Did he get into combat?

WARNER: Yes, he was in Italy and North Africa.

WARNER: That was tough fighting.

KOED: He spent weeks in a foxhole, I think in Italy. When I was young, he never really wanted to talk about his World War II experience.

WARNER: Most of them don't.

KOED: As he got older, the last few years of his life, he started to talk about it a lot more. I learned a lot about what his experience was like and how difficult it was. He said to me one time, and I've never forgotten this, he told me that when he went into the war—he was about 21 at the time—when he left to go into the service in 1942, he said that he never thought he would come home. He never expected to come home. He just assumed that he would be lost in the war.

WARNER: Is that right? Isn't that something? Well, we were on the short end of the stick in '42. I went in in the spring of '45. The Battle of the Bulge, where the Germans had that last assault and trapped all of the troops, they had the largest number of casualties that we had taken in any conflict in the history of the country, even bigger than some the casualties of the Civil War. The country had been lulled into thinking we had the Germans on the run, but we didn't. It was just bedlam. They were scooping up every kid who was 17 years old and I said, "I want to go." I quit school and headed out of Dodge. I never regretted it, but I remember the turbulence of those times. Right after that—Battle of the Bulge was Christmas of 1944, a sad Christmas for America—and then Iwo Jima hit us, and the marines bravely went in on that one. That was a bloody battle. I remember my mother and father struggling with the decision, because you couldn't join at 17 unless you had parental consent. Then, when you were 18, you were locked under

the draft board and they took you whenever they wanted. I always wanted to have V behind my name, volunteer, and never regretted that.

Well, I've enjoyed this. We'll pick it up again.

[End of interview #5]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #6: May 3, 2017

JOHN W. WARNER: All right, I'm ready to launch into immediate participation. One of my projects right now—have I told you about my eagle project?

BETTY K. KOED: You're working to save the bald eagles. Wonderful.

WARNER: What's the old Senate doing?

KOED: They're working on getting the appropriations bills passed to avoid a government shutdown.

WARNER: Well, that's just one of those things. It's funny, but I just finished a talk that I gave yesterday. One person came and said, "Senator, you will always be remembered as one of the few people who fought for the government employees." I said, "Well, hell, I was one of them when I was assistant U.S. attorney." They've always been the kicking boys, because it sells back home. "That damn big government." Well, the government is too big and too much into everybody's business, I generally feel that well, but there's no use taking it out on the folks like yourself who are government employees.

KOED: Yes, we tend to be good, hardworking people and we don't necessarily deserve the criticism. I also appreciated—for the first 15 years I was here in this area, I lived in the District of Columbia, in an apartment right on Connecticut Avenue, and I always appreciated that you were a great champion of the District of Columbia.

WARNER: Oh, yes, I was sort of a *de facto* senator. I'm not in favor of giving D.C. a senator. I think the less we meddle with the Constitution and try to change it, the better, but I did a lot for D.C.

KOED: I always appreciated that.

WARNER: Well, lead off.

KOED: I thought we would continue on and maybe finish up with your time on the Armed Services Committee today.

WARNER: We'll never finish up with that. We'll begin and end with that.

KOED: That's possible, but eventually we'll move onto other topics, too.

WARNER: I've put in here the thing about the Peace Institute. Well, I'm finishing up a little piece that I'm writing about the Peace Institute. It was the biggest earmark, practically $100 million, one of the biggest of its time. The biggest is the Wilson Bridge—I told you that story.

KOED: Yes, that's a great story.

WARNER: I'm putting together the story of that now. The Peace Institute was an earmark. A lot of people curse them. Some of them are not good for the general country, but others, like this one, are very good. This is an interesting institution. But let's get back to the committee itself. Had I been at any particular juncture with the committee?

KOED: Yes, when we left off last time, we ended with September 11, 2001, so we were right on the verge of a new escalation of military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I thought that would be a good place to start today. Within days of the terrorist attack of September 11, Congress passed an authorization for use of force in Afghanistan, use of force against those involved in the 9/11 terrorist attack. Tell me about that authorization, but also—in general—the decision to authorize military force. How does the committee go about doing that type of work?

WARNER: Well, it was a constant struggle. You had the classical senators—and I felt that I was a part of that group—the Constitution is the guideline that we must follow, and the Constitution is very explicit in that only Congress can declare war. But, you see, that was put in during a framework of time when we were living in isolation of the world here in the United States, an island behind big oceans and far away from potential enemies, and we had time to make preparations for war. It would have been exceedingly difficult for any nation to invade us. With the advancement of all types of transportation, whether it be by sea or air, presidents took on more and more responsibility about the national security. They had to act and act with some swiftness and speed, whereas Congress is not known for that. Bob Byrd was the leader. He felt that Congress and Congress alone should declare war. Slowly, bit by bit—Well, George Herbert Walker Bush did get an explicit resolution for the Kuwait action. I'd have to go back and do my research on who sponsored that one in 1991. Do we have a copy of it?

KOED: I don't have a copy of it here.

WARNER: Let's check on that. I was the sponsor of the 2001 resolution, and I may have been a sponsor of this one, too.

KOED: You were the sponsor of the 1991 resolution as well.

WARNER: Yes, I think so, because Bob Dole often looked to me. Sam Nunn was very strongly against the Gulf operation, as was George Mitchell. As a matter of fact, it was a real struggle to get that authorization through. We only got it through by a five-vote margin.

KOED: For the Persian Gulf War?

WARNER: For the Persian Gulf War, five votes. I have a copy of that resolution around here and we'll find it.

We come to this situation. Of course Osama bin Laden had done his training in Afghanistan and went to other locations to perpetrate his mischief. The president had to move with some speed. We had had that famous push-pull struggle, which ended up in the famous [compromise] resolution that Bob Byrd authored about when a president acts within 60 days or a period of time—

KOED: Are you referring to the War Powers Resolution?

WARNER: Yes, War Powers Resolution.[14] I felt that we should have that. You don't infringe in any way the exclusivity of declaring war by the Congress, but Congress was beginning to support presidents who through various appropriations and otherwise got the money and then made the decision to use force. They kept saying, we'll just use a small amount of force so it's not tantamount to war, as one describes war, but those things tend to start small and grow big very quickly. That will be a perpetual struggle.

I'm pleased to see that Tim Kaine today is sort of the John Warner of yesterday in preserving the exclusivity of Congress to act, but it's going to have to remain a nebulous thing because a president has to put the armed forces into harm's way at a moment's notice to protect the country.

KOED: Once that happens, for example in 2001 when you passed the resolution for use of force, what is the role of Congress at that point? What is the role of the Armed Services Committee?

WARNER: The commander in chief has now got his train ticket and he can begin to drive that train as he or she pretty well sees it and as necessity requires. Now, Congress has to—hopefully—be supportive of the president. Of course, there will always be elements that won't be supportive, but you hope the majority will be supportive of the president as he exercises his constitutional authority to conduct war in such ways as to

[14] In 1987, in the midst of U.S. action against Iran to protect Kuwaiti shipping during the Iran-Iraq War, the Senate debated a compromise resolution, co-sponsored by Robert C. Byrd and John Warner, to express support for the War Powers Resolution and assure a congressional role in the use of military force.

achieve the goals. That's always a push-pull struggle. It comes to sort of a summit at least once a year with the annual authorization bill put out by the Armed Services Committee, which is referred to as the "biggest freight train that emanates from any committee," because it is a must-pass bill to maintain the security of the country. As such, colleagues will do anything they can to load their baggage on that train and get some vestige of necessity or tie to national security. The bottom line for the bill is to strengthen our national security. But, oh boy, there is a lot of stuff that goes on that freight train!

KOED: So they get a lot of riders, which must make it difficult to pass.

WARNER: And, you know, it puts the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, who first and foremost have to reconcile differences on the committee and then reconcile differences within their own caucus and at the same time fend off the petitions and pleas from all his colleagues. "Please, just add my little bill which I can't get passed to the General Provisions section of the bill."

KOED: The section that grows and grows.

WARNER: It's a wonderful job and very fulfilling. I admire our leadership, with [Joh] McCain and Jack Reed, who are carrying on strong traditions in the committee.

KOED: Good bipartisan cooperation.

WARNER: The committee—statistically and certainly in image—is one that attains the highest level of bipartisanship during the fluctuations within the Congresses as they come and go. That committee is always looked upon as getting the highest level of bipartisanship.

KOED: It's a committee that has to have a strong working relationship among its members.

WARNER: That's correct, and you generally have the support of the American public.

KOED: People recognize the need for defense and security, so it's hard to get around that. When the decision was made in 2001 to carry the forces into Afghanistan, was that the intention when you passed the resolution? Was it the intention of the resolution to target Afghanistan?

WARNER: I think the resolution must have been directed at Afghanistan.

KOED: The resolution, technically, was directed against the "nations, organizations, or persons behind the terrorist attack," so it didn't specify Afghanistan.

WARNER: No.

KOED: It quickly was interpreted to mean Afghanistan.

WARNER: That's correct.

KOED: Was that part of the discussion at the time?

WARNER: Oh, yes, very much so. Afghanistan was right at the top of our list, because Osama bin Laden had used the geography of Afghanistan to train his subordinates in terrorist activities, although I don't have any recollection that the actual perpetrators of 9/11 individually or collectively did any training or had anything to do with Afghanistan.

KOED: Those individuals might not have, but Osama bin Laden certainly did.

WARNER: He used it as his training ground and as his headquarters, but the actual people were drawn from strange sources.

KOED: A lot of them were Saudi.

WARNER: Predominantly, they were Saudi, which was astonishing because we had such close ties with Saudi Arabia.

KOED: That's still a bit of a puzzle to this day.

WARNER: To this day.

KOED: A year after that, we authorized use of military force in Iraq. It was expanded to Iraq. What was that decision-making process like? What were your thoughts about that?

WARNER: It was clear that the war in Iraq, without our intervention, was not going anywhere. We came to that conclusion. A number of our allies were going to join us. Actually, NATO put forces into Afghanistan and the forces in Iraq were under the umbrage of a UN resolution, too. Presidents were consistent in putting our combat activities within a framework of UN authorization, which was very wise.

KOED: Did it have widespread support in the committee to take those steps?

WARNER: I wouldn't say we had widespread support. We had enough support to get them through. The American public in all of those chapters, except for 9/11, were really wary of having our forces go into these various places in the world, very wary of it. Now, the first Iraq Gulf War was highly successful, and that was a persuasive reason to

get their continued support for further use of forces in Iraq. We had done it and done it brilliantly, but that did not happen again.

KOED: Yes, it was a very different war this time.

WARNER: A very different war, very different war.

KOED: Do you think that's in part because the goals were so different? There was a finite goal in the first one?

WARNER: There was a finite goal in the first one. There was a clear—I keep remembering from when I was a small boy, the famous Rape of Nanking. There, the whole world was astonished at the conduct of the Japanese soldiers as they took over those pitiless areas of China. It's never to be forgotten. This was a repetition of it—on a smaller scale but nevertheless the conduct of Saddam Hussein's forces in Kuwait was just one of absolute wildness and human suffering inflicted on innocent civilians who had nothing to do with the war. Kuwait was not a belligerent or well-equipped military in that part of the world. They had always kept their little kingdoms to themselves. I remember the Sabah family, they ran everything. The king was of the Sabah family, and his first cousin was head of armed services committee, and the second cousin was head of the foreign affairs. I dealt a lot with them through those years and made many trips back and forth to Kuwait. I think I reviewed running the codels and how Schwarzkopf told me, "If you bring another one, I'll behead you!" (laughs)

KOED: As activity in Iraq and Afghanistan continued, I believe the Armed Services Committee held regular oversight hearings.

WARNER: Regular oversight. We'd have all the military commanders up. We always had an open session, and then we'd have a closed session. War was a public matter. The sons and daughters of the American people were in there doing their duty in the military. By golly, nothing should be concealed, so we would keep it out there. It was a fascinating period of time.

KOED: And a complicated period of time.

WARNER: Very complicated. You saw the vestiges of it from the first Gulf War resolution and the consequences of the narrowness of that vote. Just five votes! I've never really figured out what we were going to do if we lost the damn vote. I guess Bush felt that he had to go forward without it, and probably he would have, but it would have drawn the scorn of the American public.

KOED: I'm not sure how they would have managed that.

WARNER: I'm not sure. We probably couldn't have been as dominant. We were the general managers of the whole thing. But 9/11 unified us right down to the street corners of Main Street America. They entrusted the president and the Congress to do what was necessary to not let that happen again. If that required sending our boys and daughters over to far parts of the world to fight, that's it. We don't want the homeland hit like that again.

KOED: Now we're here, 16 years, later and we're still involved in Iraq and Afghanistan.

WARNER: Oh, heavily, and we're really not making much progress. Well, everybody defines that term. Progress is being made, but it's a very slow situation. Bush was confronted with that in the second phase of the Iraq war, and he just pulled together a team—I was part of it—to say we've got to have a surge. We've got to send in considerably more U.S. forces.

KOED: Which wasn't a popular option.

WARNER: No, not at all. Well, there were two surges. The initial surge was to go in. Once we were in, he made his famous speech to "Bring 'em on" and then we were in a stalemate. We're teetering in there, what do we do? Pull out, like we did in Vietnam? We saw what happened in Vietnam when we pulled out? "No, we're going to stay and we're going to fight it out." He felt that if we're going to fight it out, by golly he was going to do it with maximum use of force and that was employed.

KOED: At the time that those decisions were being made, did you expect it to be such a long process?

WARNER: None of us envisioned it. We always felt, given the enormity of the natural resources in Iraq, primarily oil, and the fact that those resources could provide an immediate cash flow for Iraq as a nation—that cash flow could be used to bring up the lifestyle and structural accommodations for the government and the people—it would come together very quickly. They would see the wisdom of putting aside the differences between the Shia and the Sunni and manage somehow so we could restore Iraq to its very preeminent position in the Middle East. It didn't happen. It all got snarled up in the fight between the Shia and the Sunni.

KOED: Do you see an end?

WARNER: I don't see any end to it. Sad situation.

KOED: We may be a presence there for years to come?

WARNER: It's going to be a challenge to get the people of this country to let it go on and on and on, like the Hundred Years War.

KOED: Funding as well as public support, I don't know how it will end. It's a tremendous cost.

WARNER: None of us do. The Middle East situation is going to be continuously a cauldron of dissent and disruption and displeasure to all of us.

KOED: I don't have your foreign policy knowledge and experience, and I hate to invoke the old idea of domino theory, but it seems as though it just keeps spreading from one Middle East country to another. Syria is now center stage. Give it a year and it will move to another country. Is there no solution to be had?

WARNER: No, and much of it goes back to the religious differences that they have. It's surprising because you see the UAE [United Arab Emirates]. I remember my trip to the UAE with John Glenn. Have I covered that?

KOED: No, tell me about that.

WARNER: Well, an Iraqi airplane was heavily loaded with the brand new missile system for aviation put out by the French military called the Exocet Missile. It had just been sold by France to Iraq. Well, one airplane—to this day this has been hushed up, not by our government but by the Iraq government—one Iraqi plane was flying around with a load of these missiles and saw an American destroyer off the waters around UAE. For some reason, this guy just rolled over and came right on down and fired several of these missiles broadside right into this ship. The ship wasn't even returning fire or anything. It was just sitting there, patrolling international waters. It couldn't have been militarily a more perfect strike by an aircraft with a new missile. The missiles tore up the ship substantially and killed an inordinate amount of sailors. It got in and started internal fires in the ship—special kind of missile—and the fire quickly filled up the ventilation system, air conditioning and heat. People were just falling over and you couldn't get to them. About 30 or 40 were killed or wounded.

KOED: This was a U.S. ship?

WARNER: Yes, U.S. ship, brand new ship. I'll think of the ship in a minute.[15] The President—it was Reagan at that time, and I was on the committee and Glenn was on the committee—we were picked by the president. We've talked about the blowing up of the Lebanon barracks before. Well, along comes this and the president picked me

[15] The *USS Stark* incident, May 17, 1987, when an Iraqi aircraft fired Exocet Missiles at the U.S. ship, killing 37 and wounding 21 naval personnel.

because: A) it's a naval ship and I'm former secretary of the navy, and B) he picked Glenn because of his very extensive knowledge about aviation. He said, "Please, get over there as fast as you can and figure out what happened." So John and I mounted up and went over. The president said, "Reassure all the governments of these various countries that we're not pulling out. This appears to be an accident."

Shortly afterwards, an investigation disclosed that no foreign government had ordered this guy to do it, he just somehow decided to do it. He was whisked away by the country, never to be seen again. The whole thing was kind of hushed up. It had tremendous ramifications here at home. The UAE was just a modest little country in those days, very little development, but they took the ship into one of their ports, allowed our repair teams to come over to do what had to be done to make it sea worthy—it was so badly damaged that we weren't sure it could be towed home. They fixed it up so it could be towed back to America. Over the course of that, the feeling in America towards this UAE—no one even knew what it was—they were the heroes. Other Arabs were blowing up and they were helping us. On that platform, Sheik Zayed started it, but he was very old and his son and others took it over. Now, it's one of the most flourishing, most advanced and developed countries in the world. You see, before we condemn too strenuously all the Arab world, here's a clear example of a county that can get its act together, has gotten its act together, and remains now, economically, a big force in the world economy.

KOED: There are some success stories.

WARNER: Sheik Zayed was a very firm ruler. That country is divided up geographically with islands here and there, bits and pieces, but it's an example of what the Arab culture can do to pull it together. He was not known as a repressive leader like the Egyptian leader, Hosni Mubarak, who was fairly repressive and persecuted a lot of his own people. We got behind the effort to kick Mubarak out, and what happens in the void? There's been a continuous lack of strong direction by the various persons who tried to rule the country.

KOED: Yes, when the "Arab Spring" happened a few years ago in Egypt, there was all this rejoicing, but it's been chaos since then.

WARNER: I say with some hesitancy that democracy is not the solution for every country. I'm not so sure that it ever will be for Iraq. Through generations of time, centuries of time, strong, vicious, rough, repressive leaders have taken over and run the country.

KOED: And will they ever be able to get past the Sunni-Shiite division, which has also been there for centuries?

When you talk about the Reagan years and the bombing in Beirut and so forth, it sounds as though, as a committee member—and at that time you were not chairman—you had a strong working relationship with the Reagan administration.

WARNER: Very.

KOED: Compare that with the relationship you had with, say, the George W. Bush administration during the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict.

WARNER: We had a strong relationship then, too. Personally, I was fortunate to serve in the leadership position on Armed Services at a time when the presidents worked closely with that committee. Reagan used to have us down to the White House. Carter had us down and Bush brought us down. We were down there quite a bit during those days.

KOED: And with Clinton?

WARNER: Oh, Clinton has us down regularly. Oh, yes. There was a cadre of us that were either chairmen or ranking of Foreign Relations, Armed Services, and Appropriations, primarily. Those are the three committees, with six of us, who went down for private dinners and private meetings constantly, both Democrats and Republicans.

KOED: And at such a time, what is the role of party leadership? When you have a meeting with the White House, do the senators come back and talk to their party leader about the meeting?

WARNER: There is no strict guidelines or precedents. Each meeting is different. You try to keep the members of your committee fully informed, but pragmatically some things are of such high classification that committee members just have to trust their chair and ranking to do what's best.

KOED: You have to take it case by case, I guess.

WARNER: Case by case.

KOED: In 2004, in the midst of this conflict and while you were chairman of the committee, we faced the terrible incidents at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

WARNER: I'll never forget that.

KOED: I know that you and Senator McCain did a lot of joint work on that. Tell me about that.

WARNER: It was a clear example of when a group of enlisted men were not being properly supervised by the senior noncommissioned or commissioned officers, but they were basically prison guards. We were so busily engaged in the war that you didn't have your top commanders with time to go down and examine things. They sort of lived in isolation, a law unto themselves. They began to exploit and do things to the prisoners which are antithetical to our sense of morality, sense of decency. This is not the way the military should be doing things. It blew up on them, and a good thing it did and that it came out at that time, because apparently it was beginning to proliferate. If you can play around this prison, you can play around that prison. So the whole thing burst on the scene and the American public was appalled, absolutely appalled. It was not the image of their soldier who went off to war. Congress, quite properly, began to have extensive hearings. I can remember, painfully, the hearings that we had. We promulgated new regulations and rules, and I don't think we've had an occurrence of the magnitude again.

KOED: Did that result in legislation that would govern that?

WARNER: It was clarifying legislation.

KOED: Did that require travel to Iraq?

WARNER: No, but as chairman I said, "We're going to do public hearings." "Oh, well, there may be a lot of dirt" and I said, "*Public Hearings!* It may be distasteful, but I'm not going to sit there and preclude the American people from looking at the facts and the American people making up their own minds about the right and wrong of this." We brought in all the senior military and grilled them before the committee.

KOED: Did you get a lot of fighting back from the defense community?

WARNER: Oh, yeah, because it was detracting from their effort to conduct the war. But people have an image of their America, fortunately, that we should be just as good abroad as we are at home, and we should be just as respectful as we can—this is the enemy, of course. This was unbelievable. And they were just dumb tricks.

KOED: I remember that it led to a broader conversation about the role of torture.

WARNER: That it did. That went back and forth. There, I give a lot of credit to other senators, notably McCain and Lindsey Graham. They really intensively studied that. McCain, of course, drawing to some extent on his own personal experience, and he was the perfect fellow to get behind the new rules and regs.

KOED: He became a forceful voice, I remember.

WARNER: Yes he did, and continues to be to this day. He's a courageous man. I know him like a brother.

KOED: When you're in a situation like that, and you're chairman of the Armed Services Committee during a time of war and the president—in this case George W. Bush—is of the same party, is it difficult to be a voice of dissent in times like that?

WARNER: I think when it comes to national security, you do what you feel is best for the country. Call it dissent or whatever you want, but if you are conscientiously opposed to something, I think it is better to speak out and fight our way through it. Give every fair opportunity to the dissenters to express their views. I've never been one to suppress information, unless that information was really affecting the lives of our service persons abroad and if it got out would put them in greater jeopardy. The key is, would it put them into greater jeopardy?

KOED: You are a person who has had a long-time experience with the military, from World War II on—

WARNER: I want to make clear that my achievements in uniform were very modest, just like all the rest of them. In World War II, I was in the training command. We were all trained and ready to be part of the next generation who was going to go in on the invasion of Japan. The whole focus of my training—everything—was to learn about Japan. We studied the geography, the streets, the street lamps, the beaches, everything.

KOED: Really?

WARNER: Well, you didn't know where you would go in. We had, of course, vivid evidence of how tenaciously they fight. Okinawa was a bloody damn fight, and Iwo Jima was a bloody fight. We anticipated that the bloodiest of all would be the invasion of Japan. An old military guy told me years and years ago, "A soldier will fight professionally very hard in his assignments overseas, but you drive him back into his country, and put his back against his door with his wife and kids behind the door, and he's different. He's ten times the fighter." And we saw that. So, I trained as a sailor in World War II, trained as a marine communicator. I wanted to be an infantry officer but since I had been in communications and beautifully trained in the navy for over a year, I knew a lot about radar, radio, and all sorts of electronic communications. That was my job. My rating was Electronic Technician's Mate. We knew everything about maintaining equipment through which electrons flow.

The war abruptly ended. We were ready with a ship, ready to go out, but that was it. The orders came in, "We're sending no one overseas. Everybody go home." I felt that I hadn't fulfilled my duties, but I personally, enormously benefitted by the training, the

discipline, and the camaraderie. I was as much a part of the armed forces as anybody, even though I was in a training command, and trained to do all kinds of things. I was in a frame of mind, recognizing that if we had gone in, it would have been the bloodiest of all battles. I don't know what my assignment would have been on the ships, in electronics, but we saw what happened in Okinawa to our ships, so it would have been terrible. So, military training for me was A-plus, what it did for me as an individual.

When I came out, I was always restless in college. The Marine Corps offered former enlisted men—if you had two years of enlisted service or a major part of two years during World War II—they sent you to an officers training camp for a concentrated period. Then, at the time you graduated from college, you were handed your college degree and a marine would step forward and hand you a second lieutenant's commission. It was very colorful. I got that. Then, I launched back again into weekend warrior activities at the local reserve depots here.

Then, the war started unexpectedly over in Korea and we were sort of dragged into it. I was called up right away, put back and retrained. This time, I was in a squadron that was put into an air group in a little, remote part of Korea, South Korea of course, and we lived just in tents in all that bitter cold and ice and snow and wind, on a coastline which made it doubly chilly. In my tent, we had three or four pilots who slept in the tent. At the end of the day, sometimes the bunks were empty, never to be filled again. Guys you had dinner with the night before would just be gone—killed. I did some observation work and flying around in the airplanes. We did what we called "bomb damage assessment" when the planes flew in and did the mission. We were largely bombing logistic targets. There was not much air-to-air in the Korean War, because the North Koreans had no air force. We were basically just in support of the ground forces. We would go in and take out a bridge, then you would have to take another plane to come in right after the air or wind removed the smoke to see whether you hit it. We had photographers on these planes. We'd swoop down and take pictures. I had field glasses. You would write your notes. You'd put down a bomb damage assessment of what percentage of the target was hit, hopefully all of it.

KOED: And if it was not completed, they would go back and repeat?

WARNER: Yes. I was never a rated naval aviator, but I did do some of that work. We were just in a remote airfield. Everybody wanted to pitch in and do their job. The saddest experience I had was one day when I was monitoring the radios and strikes and the bomber planes and one guy came up and said, "Skipper, you're on fire." I listened to the traffic real quick. Our commanding officer was a wonderful man who had befriended me. I was the only one who was a communicator and they kind of rely on communicators. The wing man said, "Get out of that plane as fast as you can." Well, then

the traffic went off the air but I got the coordinates, thinking that he had parachuted in. We got together a small armored unit, because once you got off-base you were out in Never Neverland and you didn't know who was out there running around. We found the crash site. Unfortunately, he had jumped out of the plane but it looked as if his chute had not fully opened and he was crushed and had died. I wrapped him up, what was left of him, in his parachute and took him back. So I experienced, through others, the horrors of the war.

And I used to go up on the front lines to visit up there, because my pilots were able to talk with you, tell you if the equipment was working. I was given a free hand. The only thing they said to me was, "We want to make sure those airplane radios are working, make sure everything is up. What do you need? Let us know." It was a good job. It didn't last that long because I was on a rotational base. I was in the first group of reserve officers not in units. In other words, the reserve structure in those days were active duty reservists who were in units. They got called up first, then they called up the inactive reservists like me. Even though I was going to reserve unit training, I wasn't a fully activated reservist. I was in the first group. When the war turned down and things began to calm down, it began the first-come, first-out. So, I had a wonderful experience. Coming back, I lost two years in terms of my law classes. I had hoped to get one semester in with my group before they graduated, but I didn't get back in time.

KOED: When you think about all that experience, how would you compare our military forces of that time with our military forces today?

WARNER: Well, that's an interesting question. The quality of the people, the spirit of the people, remains the same. I have watched with great interest how the American public views the military. It's kind of been cyclical. At the end of World War II, we came home and everyone was a hero. If you had a uniform, you were a hero. Then I went into the Korean War and then came home, and it was, "Where was that? Where have you been?" America was so fully absorbed in World War II. Mind you, it was only five years after the last shot was fired in World War II and we were back in a shooting war.

KOED: It was a war-weary nation.

WARNER: Well, it was a war-recovering nation. The weariness had gone. The memories were there. The symbol of the recovery was the first of the new cars. You've got to remember that all civilian automotive was shut down and all your car plants were totally mechanized and turning out military equipment. When I enlisted in December of 1944, went on active duty in early '45, we were in the middle of Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Germany had just inflicted casualties at the Battle of the Bulge where they trapped our forces in Europe. We had no idea when this war was going to end. Then, suddenly, with

advancing Soviet forces and allied forces putting Germany in the squeeze, they quit. Japan was going to fight to the bitter end. That would have gone on for a long time. They've often said—not me, but other well-informed people—George Marshall is alleged to have told Harry Truman, "You'll probably have a million casualties."

But back to your question, what's different? I would say that the average person wearing a uniform today is so highly respected and the all-volunteer forces have worked far beyond our wildest dreams. It really has. I was in the Pentagon when that decision was made. It was the biggest gamble of all, but we had to make it. The country was just rebelling during Vietnam. As it turned out, they weren't wrong. That Vietnamese war had no quick indicators as to how to bring it to the end. We've still never signed a treaty, you know. So the military today is highly and deservedly revered. A little dust of that brushes off on all of us old veterans today. People stop us, "Oh, thank you for your service." I'd have to say that the men and women today, in terms of commitment and patriotism, is strong. The public is respectful of them, but the public is growing weary of the quizzical, unexpected twists and turns of the Middle East.

KOED: I wonder—even though the all-volunteer army has been so successful, we're putting great tension on that.

WARNER: Yes. Of course, people forget that in World War II, when you got your orders to go overseas, there was no, "Well, you'll be back in six months." You were gone.

KOED: Yes, you were in for the duration.

WARNER: Many soldiers and sailors realized when they got on that ship that they were not going to be coming back unless they came back wounded. I remember the bitterness, understandably the bitterness, when the war ended in Europe. Those soldiers got on those ships and did the ships start? They went through the Panama Canal and right out to the Pacific, and many of the guys never got home for a week's leave.

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: Oh, yes, there were riots. Oh, yes. Well, it was understandable. President Truman and the rest of them wanted to finish up that war in Japan. You've had the good fortune in Europe and it came to an abrupt end. We didn't realize that Germany would fold its tent. There was no end in sight in Japan. We had to take the guys straight from Europe to the Pacific.

KOED: I didn't realize that.

WARNER: Not many people do.

KOED: I didn't realize that they took the troops from Europe and just shifted them towards the Japanese war front.

WARNER: There were pictures in our paper of kids going through the canal waving at America. "They won't let us stop for a day."

KOED: That would be awful. You think you're finally coming home.

WARNER: Or coming home to retrain, get into a new unit, but boom! And they were air-freighting them over, too.

KOED: Let's shift gears a little bit. I want to talk about, for the last 16 or 17 years that you were on the committee, you worked so closely with Carl Levin. I'd like to hear some of your thoughts about that partnership with Carl Levin.

WARNER: Well, we both believed that we've got to do what's best for the United States. I hate to use the word "patriot," because I think all Americans are basically patriots to different degrees, but he was truly a patriot. He came from modest means in Michigan. He served on the town council, which is a wonderful way to start politics.

He used to tease me that he worked from town council to this, and this, and this, "whereas you came in at 10,000 feet in your flight jacket and parachuted right down and won a Senate seat." He called it not going "through the chairs." He said, "You weren't your political precinct chairman. You weren't in the state legislature or governor's office. You weren't anything, then all of a sudden you have one of the two most coveted seats in the Senate."

KOED: But with Levin you had such a strong partnership.

WARNER: Yes, we did. We basically trusted each other. He had no military training and wasn't shy about the fact. He said, "I am what I am."

KOED: He didn't have military service?

WARNER: No. He was one of the very few. Interesting man. You didn't do his interview?

KOED: My colleague Kate Scott did that interview.

WARNER: Have you read through it?

KOED: I've read through most of it. It's a very good interview.

WARNER: Do you think you'll be able to do half as well for me?

KOED: Oh, yes, I'm sure we will. (laughs)

WARNER: Well, I have more color in mine.

KOED: You have a lot of great stories to tell. Did you have a lot of conversations just between the two of you?

WARNER: Constantly. But he never tried to end-run me, nor did Sam Nunn. Sam was very straightforward. I had two successive Democratic chairmen—and of course, before that, Stennis was the father figure of that committee. We all worshipped him. We all had powerful members and good teachers. You had Stennis and Goldwater, Tower, and a lot of World War II veterans on the committee. Glenn was on the committee. Young senators coming on had access to tried, true, tested old hands.

KOED: I brought a photo of the committee at the time that you and Levin were in charge.

WARNER: I'm in charge here. That's a famous picture, but it's very early because I don't see Hillary [Clinton]. I think this is my first picture as chairman. Here's Mrs. Dole and the Texas senator. These are all my guys—old John McCain, Lindsey Graham, but Hillary is not here.

KOED: So this is before she came into the Senate in 2001. Were there any times when you and Senator Levin found yourselves at loggerheads?

WARNER: Oh, definitely, very much so. Not many, but a few times. Nunn and I had that classic confrontation. We had two classic confrontations. One was the first Gulf War resolution, where he followed George Mitchell who was majority leader and was bitterly against the war. He did his duty and he regrets it now. He's said that publicly. And, of course, we had the Tower nomination, but we worked our way through that. Carl and I, I'm hard put to figure out what we were at odds at, of the magnitude of those things.

KOED: That's probably a good testament to the fact that you worked so well together.

WARNER: And the staffs worked beautifully together. This Friday night, I'm giving a party for all my Senate staff and a few others in the Bicentennial. A hundred and fifty are coming. It's huge.

KOED: That's wonderful. You'll get to see a lot of the staffers you had at the Senate.

WARNER: My wife and I—she's worked like a tiger to put it together—I just wanted to say thank you, because truly the staffs are so important to the measure of success or lack of success a member has.

KOED: I think that's something that people don't understand very well. It's not the public face of the Senate.

WARNER: You were always the boss. They were always good. But when we went on trips, they were wonderful. We had meals together. We sat in our meetings with the principals in the foreign countries. I always had good staff. It'll be a very moving experience for me. People always ask me how I got into politics. I tell them about my first encounter with Harry Byrd.

KOED: That's a wonderful story.

WARNER: He would tear that book up like this and make it like a snowball and roll it out. The young people would scramble to get the snowball. He would be in a white linen suit with 100 degree temperature and a 100 percent humidity.

KOED: That's the old Senate image, with the white linen suit.

WARNER: So many of them lived at the old Wardman Park Hotel, the Shoreham.

KOED: Those hotels in that Woodley Park area. Well, let's finish up today with one last question. Over the course of your 30 years on the Armed Services Committee, you worked with five different presidential administrations: Carter, Reagan, Bush the first, Clinton, and Bush the second. As I name those off, share with me some thoughts about, for instance, the Reagan administration.

WARNER: Well, I was privileged to have quite a personal relationship with Reagan. It started in two ways. One, he loved to ride horses and I used to ride horses, so he came to the farm to ride horses with me, just he and I and Nancy—there's a famous picture of that. Secondly, he and Elizabeth had known each other. Elizabeth was always very high on his stock, and even though she was only with me five years, two years consumed in the campaign and three years in the Senate, they were pals. And she knew Nancy. So I had a bit of an entrée that others didn't have. I got along with him beautifully. We had a lot of fun. I had met him years before when I had been active in the Republican circles around here in Northern Virginia and in the District of Columbia. There were so few of us in those days that we would get together and draw on Maryland and Virginia.

Have I told you about the night at the Mayflower Hotel when I was organizing a big Republican dinner and he was governor? He was a master [speaker]. I learned from him. Your eye contact is your messaging. Speakers who get up and look down at their speeches and occasionally look up, they don't have any fun. He told me, "Pick out one or two people over here on the left who are smiling, and a couple of people over here on the right who are smiling, and maybe one in the center, then just gracefully move your head between the smiles, don't look at the ones frowning, and let your speech roll." (laughs) He was funny. Someone once told me, "Senator, sometimes you'll be called upon when you've had no chance whatsoever to prepare. Don't worry about that. You're a United States senator. Get up and start talking and eventually you'll think of something to say." (laughs) To the extent that I had any success in politics, I learned by understudying the old masters. It's kind of like painting. I paint a bit now. You learn by studying the old masters. Nothing has changed since the old masters. So, I had fun experiences with him and knew him very well.

KOED: How about George Herbert Walker Bush?

WARNER: Well, I had known him, because he had campaigned for me ever since I had a confrontation with the party of Virginia. I said, "I put the interests of the nation ahead of the party," and that riveted all over the state and he loved it. And so I got to know him. One time, as president, he came down and helped me when I got into a snitch within the party against Oliver North. People had a lot of bitterness about that. So, we had gotten to know each other. When he was vice president and I did some things with him, we just gravitated together. It was very natural. And we had the navy connection.

KOED: Yes, you had a lot of common experiences.

WARNER: Yeah. He was an extraordinary aviator and a heroic man. I was just a sailor boy in bell-bottom trousers. So we had no problems with each other.

KOED: How about Jimmy Carter. He's very early in your time period in the Senate.

WARNER: Interestingly, when I was chairman of the Bicentennial, I visited every state—all 50 states—and the governors and they were anxious to see me, not because I am John Warner but because I had a lot of money (laughs) and I was giving it to the states.

KOED: And Jimmy Carter was governor at that time.

WARNER: Carter was very good. We talked a little bit about the navy. He had been a submariner. I'm not so sure that somewhere, when I was secretary of the navy, that I may have befriended him. Later we put a submarine base in Georgia. So, I had a nice relationship, never a close one, with Carter. I suppose I went to one or two of his dinners, but I did have a close relationship with Clinton. He honestly and admittedly said that he had a lot to learn about armed services. He had not had much military experience.

KOED: So Clinton sought out you and your advice.

WARNER: Oh, yes. Me and others, not just John Warner. He used to give private dinners, not down on the first floor but up in the living quarters. He had all the Balkans war. That was a messy war. People back in this country said, "Where is Slovenia? Slovenia? What's that? What is Croatia? What happened to Tito?"

KOED: Now that you mention it, I've heard from other people on the Hill about the close relationship they had with Clinton, so that seems to be a pattern.

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: How about George W. Bush?

WARNER: I was close to George W. His father gave me high marks. I was probably more intensely working with him because we went all through the attack on America, the build-up.

KOED: And by this time you're in leadership on the committee.

WARNER: By the way, once upon a time you prepared for me and sent to me a little memo about interesting things I did during my Senate career. Have you got a copy of that?

KOED: I'm sure I do.

WARNER: When they introduce me at this dinner Friday night, I thought my chief of staff might read that. I'm one of only 30 or so senators who ever cast more than 10,000 votes.

KOED: Yes, I have a list of such things. To complete this thought for today, you left the Senate in 2009 just as Barack Obama was becoming president, so you didn't serve during his presidency, but have you had any interaction with him on foreign policy or armed services issues?

WARNER: No, I really didn't. I knew him in the Senate, slightly. I always had a comfortable relationship with him. I was elected in 1978. He was elected president in 2008, as Bush was going out of office.

KOED: Yes, just as you were leaving office. Well, that's probably a good place to stop today and we'll pick it up there next time.

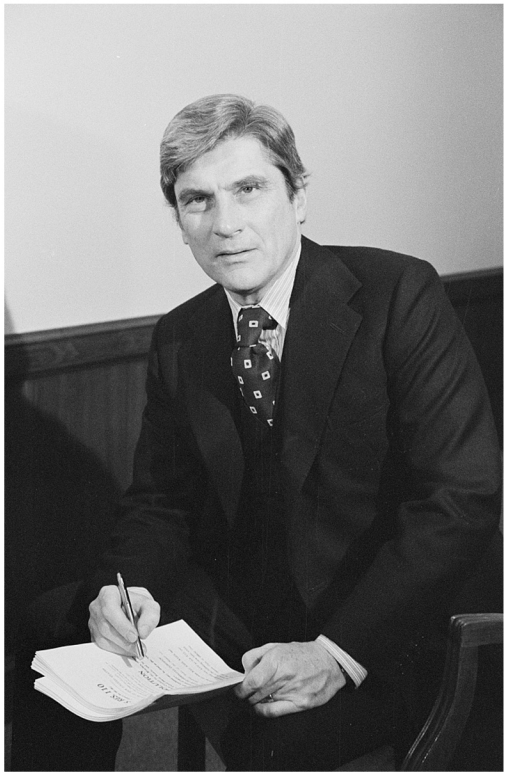
WARNER: It's a joy to me and I thank you ever so much.

[End of interview #6]

Navy Secretary John Warner receives the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal from Defense Secretary Melvin Laird during a Pentagon ceremony. January 10, 1973. Credit: Department of Defense Photo by Frank Hall, National Archives.

Vice President Gerald Ford and Navy Secretary John Warner. April 11, 1974. Credit: U.S. Senate Historical Office.

(l-r) President Richard Nixon, Navy Secretary John Warner, Representative Carl Vinson, and Defense Secretary Melvin Laird. November 18, 1973. Credit: Nixon White House Photo, National Archives.



Portrait of Senator John Warner. 1979.
Credit: Library of Congress.

Senator John Warner with Alfred M. Landon.
Credit: Senator John Warner.

John Warner, far right, rides with presidential candidate Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy Reagan. 1980.
Credit: AP Photo by Walt Zeboski.

Senator John Warner, chair of the 1997 Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, speaks at the Swearing-in of President William Jefferson Clinton. January 20, 1997. Credit: U.S. Senate Photographic Studio.

Senator John Warner addresses attendees of the Inaugural Luncheon held in the Capitol's Statuary Hall following the 1997 inauguration of President William Jefferson Clinton. January 20, 1997.
Credit: U.S. Senate Photographic Studio.

Senate Armed Services Committee members Barry Goldwater, chairman, and John Warner. Circa 1986. Credit: U.S. Senate Historical Office.

Senate Armed Services Committee, chaired by Senator John Warner. 2004. Credit: U.S. Senate Photographic Studio.

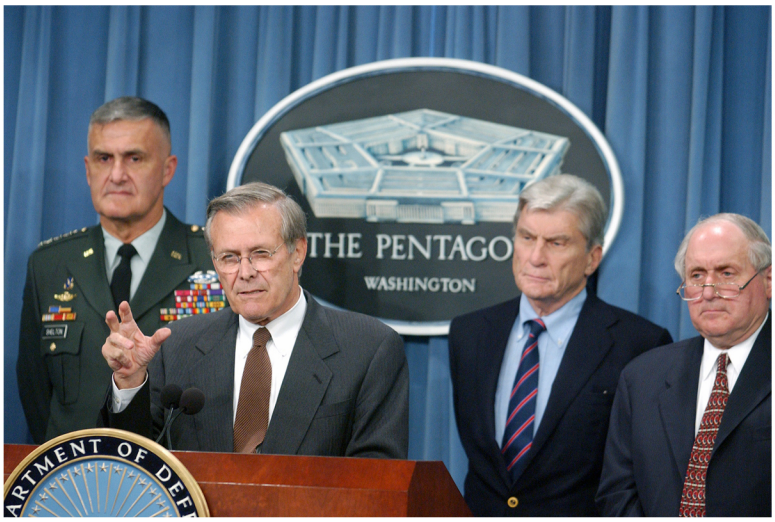
(l-r) Senators Robert Dole, Alfonso D'Amato, and John Warner talk with troops in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield. January 23, 1991. Credit: Department of Defense Photo, National Archives.

Senators John Warner and Carl Levin pose with members of the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division, Mogadishu, Somalia. December 1, 1993. Credit: Department of Defense Photo, National Archives.

(l-r) Senate Armed Services Committee members John Warner, Carl Levin, and Joseph Lieberman. February 10, 2004. Credit: U.S. Navy Photo by PHC Johnny Bivera, National Archives.

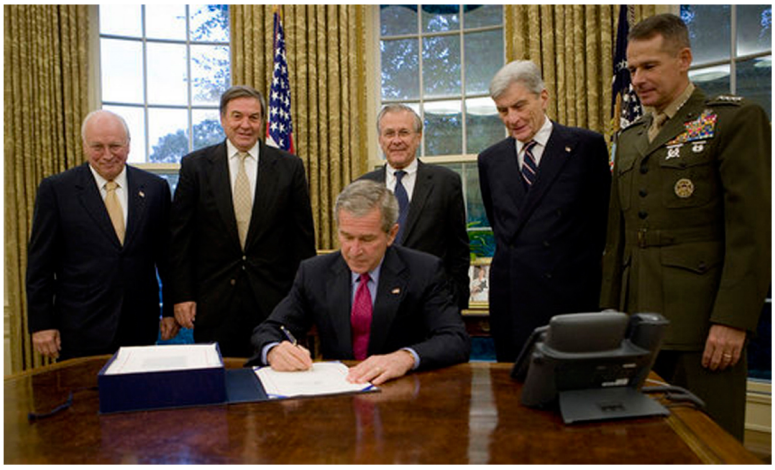
(l-r) Senate Armed Services Committee members Carl Levin, John Warner, and John McCain applaud service members in the audience during a hearing. February 10, 2005. Credit: U.S. Air Force Photo by MSGT Jim Varyeghi, National Archives.

Senate Armed Services Committee members Carl Levin and John Warner question Navy Secretary Donald Winter. March 9, 2006. Credit: Senate Armed Services Committee.



Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld addresses reporters in the Pentagon Press Room shortly after the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon, accompanied by (l-r) Joint Chiefs of Staff Army General Henry Shelton, Senator John Warner and Senator Carl Levin. September 11, 2001. Credit: U.S. Navy Photo by PH2 Robert Houlihan, National Archives.

President George W. Bush signs the 2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act. Watching are (l-r) Vice President Richard Cheney, Representative Duncan Hunter, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Senator John Warner, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Peter Pace. October 17, 2006. Credit: Bush White House Photo by Eric Draper.



John Warner, accompanied by his wife Mrs. Jeanne Vander Myde Warner, announces his retirement from the Senate. August 31, 2007. Credit: University of Virginia.

John Warner is greeted by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, who presented Warner with an Honorary Knight Commander for his work strengthening the American-British military alliance. March 17, 2009. Credit: Photo by Katie Collins, Alamy Stock Photo.

John Warner and his wife Mrs. Jeanne Vander Myde Warner stand in front of the USS John Warner (SSN-785), a nuclear powered Virginia-class attack submarine of the U.S. Navy. September 2014. Credit: U.S. Navy Photo.

BETTY K. KOED: Friday is pretty much a non-work day in the Senate.

JOHN W. WARNER: We used to do mornings and our votes weren't after 12:00 noon.

KOED: But you would be there on Friday morning, right?

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: Now, they come in around 5:00 on Mondays and are usually out by Thursday night to go home to fundraise and so forth.

WARNER: Betty, it's an arduous, tough job these days. I commiserate with these guys. We didn't have it quite so hard. Their families are not with them. I just can't visualize being without my wife, constantly getting on a plane.

KOED: They've become weekly commuters. They come here for three and a half days, then they go back home. They spend two days a week on a plane. It's not a good system.

WARNER: But it's the best we've got for the moment, and you and I have to do our little bit to make it work. So, carry on there, mighty one!

KOED: Okay. Today, I thought we would talk about your time as chairman of the Rules Committee.

WARNER: Yes, I saw that and I'm happy to do that. Howard Baker was the leader and lo and behold we became the majority party. I was on the Rules Committee for quite a while, because Wendell Ford was chairman. He was a very likeable fellow and we got along quite well, but he always reminded me that he was the chairman.

KOED: Is that right?

WARNER: Oh, yes. *Oh, yes!* I'm trying to think, where was he from? West Virginia?

KOED: He was from Kentucky.

WARNER: Kentucky, that's right. He was, quite frankly, part of the old South, but he was good. He was fair and we got along well. I was a Virginian and he was a Kentuckian and we had lots of things together. He hosted me and others several times for the Derby. Then, all of a sudden, it flipped and I became chairman and it took him a period to adjust, I recall that, but he did. I enjoyed it.

Baker became majority leader. He established a ritual. We had the lunches on Tuesday and he had a firm—and I underline firm—rule that he would meet with his committee chairmen before the luncheon. We used to refer to it, jokingly, as the College of Cardinals. (laughs) He was very fair in his leadership and very firm. He was a navy man. It was sort of like being aboard ship when you'd hear the internal communication system that blasted all through the hallways of the ship, "Now hear this, the Captain is about to speak!" Well, wherever you were on the ship, you would snap to it and listen to the captain. Well, he started the meeting with, "Now hear this." (laughs) He laid down the fair but firm rules of what he wanted to achieve, and you were expected, as committee chairman, to do your part. But he was quite respectful of your own independent authority to run your committee. So long as you comported with the rules with reasonable fairness, you were given a free hand. I recite that without knowing exactly how Mitch [McConnell] runs his group today. The other members would go in for that luncheon and suddenly realize that the leader wasn't there nor were the chairmen, then Bingo they would all come running in for the meal.

KOED: Today, every Tuesday at the Republican policy luncheon, I open the luncheon with a little history talk.

WARNER: Do you? That's a good thing.

KOED: I do so at Senator McConnell's invitation. When I get there, they are all streaming in one by one, but I don't see anything to suggest the chairs are coming from a meeting. I don't think that tradition has continued.

WARNER: Those were the days. Dole followed pretty much the same thing, but to a lesser extent. He had a little different management style than Howard, and that's expected.

KOED: With Howard Baker in these meetings, was it a discussion or did he pretty much say here's our agenda for this week?

WARNER: No, it was a discussion. He called on every one to speak. I think there were 15 of us. My first chair was Rules, so I delivered a report. Now, Rules chairman, to put it in the vernacular, is a grandiose housekeeper. You had the police, the food, and all the amenities that let the institution function. It is in sharp contrast to the House Rules

Committee, because that committee has a lot of power because it does the scheduling and the culling of the legislative process, to pick out what should go first and second.

KOED: Yes, it has a lot of power over the calendar and so forth, which is not the case for the Senate Rules Committee.

WARNER: None of that, but it has its perks. One of them you put in your list for today and that is becoming chairman of the Inaugural Committee. Once again, for the previous inaugural, Wendell Ford was chairman, but he very graciously set a seat for me very near the presidential podium. I didn't sit with the senators.

KOED: Oh, that would have been '93, Clinton's first inaugural.

WARNER: Yes, and that was nice of him. But all of a sudden, no matter what you had done heretofore in your career and life, when you walk up and open the ceremony and are looking down that Mall at the tens of thousands of people, and full knowing that every television set in America is carrying you—

KOED: And around the world.

WARNER: It can be, if not controlled, a heady experience. I prepared for it in that I didn't have to rely on notes. I had memorized pretty much what I wanted to say. I can't recall that I was ever quoted by anyone. (laughs)

KOED: Well, they are focused on the president rather than others.

WARNER: That's right, but there I was. I had known President Clinton because in his first term he was all embroiled in the Balkan War and as one of the seniors on Armed Services I was in his office regularly. He wanted to learn, learn, learn. He had us up and when we were there it was very informal at the White House. He didn't sit in the Oval Office. He took us up to the living quarters where they had the dining room, and we sat around tables up there.

KOED: Interesting, very casual.

WARNER: Yeah, but he limited it to the chair and ranking of Armed Services, Foreign Relations, and Appropriations, and maybe another.

KOED: Maybe Intelligence.

WARNER: Maybe Intelligence, but I don't recall that.

KOED: It must be a tremendous organizational job to pull the inaugural together?

WARNER: It really was, but I had a marvelous chief of staff then—Susan Magill—and I had absolute confidence and trust in her judgment. She had been with me, I think, 10 to 12 years. I just said, "Hey, you've got a leave of absence, you go down and take on the daily ministerial functions under my auspices. As chairman, rule number one is to share with the Democrat, your counterpart, fully in everything." So that was it.

KOED: Did it go off pretty much as planned? No upsets or anything?

WARNER: Uh huh. She was given the privilege—I saw to it—of escorting President Clinton down to the rostrum. As that famous door opens, you know, with everybody seated. The president comes down. I remember that she had a special dress made.

KOED: It's a pretty exciting moment. I've helped out with a couple of inaugurations and it's an exciting moment.

WARNER: Yes, it is.

KOED: I would also think that all the work you did for the Bicentennial back in the '70s must have been good preparation for the inaugural ceremony.

WARNER: It was, but I also picked a fellow named Grayson Winterling who I plucked out of the Army Congressional Liaison Office. He retired from the army and took the job. He was just superb. I said, "I remember as a young officer in the Marine Corps, the punishment that the battalion commander used to have for second lieutenants was that the first one who got out of line, he put him in charge of the mess facilities." That is an unforgiving responsibility in the military, because a classic habit of all soldiers is to gripe about the chow. I don't care if you give them steak morning, noon, and night, they're going to gripe about the chow. So I just let them gripe to the colonel, because we had quite a few big dining rooms. We had the Senate Dining Room, all the feeding facilities in the Capitol, and then your big facilities in the Dirksen Building.

KOED: This was all before they built the Capitol Visitor Center, so it was all inside the Capitol.

WARNER: The Capitol Visitor Center did get started when I was there.

KOED: Yes, I came to the Senate in 1998 and it was just soon after that they started to dig the hole in the ground.

WARNER: Before the hole was dug, I used to walk a lot around the Capitol grounds when I was chairman of the committee. I would put on dark glasses and just see what was going on, to make sure the cops were not sleeping and the gardeners were not

running lawn mowers all over everything. I liked the idea of "Keep it Beautiful." I remember the statue for the suffragettes. It was my class that came in and took the oath of office in '79, we had Nancy Kassebaum, who was the first woman in years. Margaret Chase Smith had been the only woman in the Senate for years and she had retired. There was a gap with no women, then slowly the women began to build up. The women were always very respectful to me and we had two challenges. One, slightly out of sequence, I was politely reminded as Rules chair that they had to descend two floors to go to the bathroom, because the men had taken all the space there. We even had our shoe-shine man, full time, in the bathroom.

KOED: In the bathroom right off the Senate Chamber?

WARNER: Right off the Senate Chamber. You'd jump up into the chair and he took care of you. Well, we finally designed it to cut it in half. We gave up the shoe stand—there was a lot of grumbling there—and wedged in a small facility next to ours for the ladies. It was a challenge, but the gripes from the guys got passed on. Then we had the usual restaurant turnover. But I remember vividly walking the whole distance around the Capitol. Even though I had jurisdiction, there was this indiscernible line between House and Senate, somebody knows where it is. The Architect of the Capitol pointed it out. He had etched something in the marble.

KOED: Here's the line.

WARNER: Here's the line. There were the people huddled outside in the rain and the snow, waiting to get in the building, and once they were in, they were hustled swiftly. I had come up as secretary of navy where we had all kinds of training films. Most meetings with the men started with a film. What has transpired? What is going on? I thought, here they [visitors] come into the building, the masses are huddled, they're herded in, and suddenly they run through [the Capitol] with some guy screaming every step of the way, "This is this and this." I said, "Wouldn't it be better to have a short film?" "Well, where are we going to show the film?" I began to press—and I keep saying I, but I think it was on my watch when we first put something into the budget to study it. You could probably verify that.[16] It would help to get it accurate, but we studied it, I became convinced, and then we took an affirmative step to commission the Architect of the Capitol to do some preliminary planning.

[16] Secretary of the Senate Kelly Johnston completed a study of Senate tourism obstacles for the Rules Committee, mandated by the 1995 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, just as Warner assumed chairmanship of the Rules Committee. Under Chairman Warner, the committee began hearings to study the issues and make recommendations to improve the visitor experience. See "Confusion, Frustration Greet Capitol Visitors," *Roll Call*, October 5, 1995.

Now, somewhere along the line, I'm now jerked out to be vice chairman of the Intel Committee so I had to give up Rules, and then went to Armed Services, so I never went back. It was taken over, but I remember the original estimates that we were working on were probably $5 million to do some construction. The most costly part was that we had to stay underground. I don't know where it ended up, maybe $150 million.

KOED: In the end it was more than $500 million.

WARNER: Whatever the figure was, it was a small addition to get a space into which people could get out of the bad weather, collect themselves, go to the bathroom, wash their hands, and then watch a 15-minute film before going into the building. That's all I wanted. But then the barons took over for the Rules Committee, both House and Senate, and the leadership offices ran it.

KOED: It got grander and grander?

WARNER: Oh, yeah. And everything that one chamber did, the other tried to do better. It was one-upmanship. I used to say to myself, "Damn good idea you had, John, but aren't you glad you're not there to implement it." (laughs) It was a moving target. Is it fully utilized now?

KOED: It is used very much, I'm happy to say. I think it's a tremendous success. The visitors who come in enjoy the film. They did a good job on the film. We have that small exhibit hall there, where they can look at historical exhibits. As you suggest, it gets them out of the rain and snow and into a place where they can have lunch, use restrooms. I was down there yesterday to meet with a group of people and it was jam-packed with people. I think it's been a great success.

WARNER: Well, the building belongs to them, and only a small fraction ever gets a chance to access it, so let the visit be productive—particularly for the school children. Now, we may have gone astray of your agenda.

KOED: That's all right. I hadn't thought of asking you about the Capitol Visitor Center, but that did come into play during your time on the Rules Committee.

WARNER: The embryonic phase.

KOED: It's going strong, I'm happy to say. One of the things I noticed as I was looking at this time period of the late '90s when you were chairman of the Rules Committee, this was also a time of tremendous technological development. The Internet was launched. The computer age was fully established. As a Rules Committee chairman, you must have had to make a lot of decisions about things like the creation of the Senate website.

WARNER: Well, one incident I remember as if it happened yesterday is that the members very politely began to want to take their laptops to the floor. Well, that led to a lot of back-hall chatter among members.

KOED: Did it?

WARNER: Oh, yes. I think that every story, now and then, needs a little spice. Jokingly, they would say, "By golly, if my wife is calling me up, I don't want everybody in town to be able to look over my shoulder and read what she's chewing me out about now, or worse yet, you might have a friend who had caught your eye and you're writing some kind notes." It ran all the way from that to you wouldn't want your opponent to be in the chamber, going by, and be able to look over your shoulder and spot something. So the privacy was all-dominant, but it was weighed against a member's ability to come in, and those who quickly learned to record with it could pick out and record what they wanted. That was an important thing. Well, the leadership finally lifted that from the Rules Committee and said, "Okay, guys, you've done your hearings on it, but now the decision will be made in the leaders' offices, on both sides, with all due respect to your committee." So, that got into a wrangle. Of course, the chairman of the Rules Committee had a role in it, in the wrangling in the leader's office, but the final wrangle was that the leaders took a hand. There was so much dissention, so they decided to have a closed-door session, one of those rare sessions, when everybody leaves the chamber. There isn't even a security personnel in the chamber. None of the clerks are there.

KOED: No clerks?

WARNER: There may have been a reporter [of debate], or maybe it was unreported. We had a hell of a screaming fight. Finally, they took a vote somehow and the vote was no, no computers or laptops. Whew! I can remember the leadership saying, "I'm getting these guys the hell out of this chamber as fast as I can." I can't give you the actual date. So, the doors of the chamber flew open and the press were out there. There wasn't a single absentee in the press corps. They were all out there. The leaders went out and in a very cryptic, guarded manner said, "We've had a full debate on this and we've decided not to do it." In other words, "We would stay in the archaic, past traditions of the Senate, the sanctity of the chamber" and so forth. [17] They were giving speeches. They were doing some questions and the thing was about to be over when one member—I shall not identify him—came roaring out. He said, [raising voice] "Well, we made one

[17] By early 1997 there were growing calls for use of laptop computers in the Senate Chamber. Senator Mike Enzi of Wyoming wrote to Rules Chairman Warner requesting the use of a laptop computer in the chamber, bringing attention to the issue. Warner created a study group, led by Sergeant at Arms Greg Casey and including the Senate parliamentarian and historian, to consider the issue and inform the committee. The group issued its report in August of 1997. In the fall of 1997 the Senate agreed to maintain the ban on laptops in the chamber.

decision, and we made it fair and square, and I disagree with it, but anyway we made it." And he's carrying a spittoon and he raised the spittoon above his head, "Just think, no modern advancement with computers in the chamber, but the archaic spittoon was voted to stay forever!" And he dropped the damn thing, bang!

KOED: And he said this to the press?

WARNER: Yes!

KOED: You know, this argument comes up every year or two with someone wanting to bring laptops into the chamber.

WARNER: It would be a mistake.

KOED: Do you think it would be a mistake because of the privacy issue, or just because it doesn't fit into the Senate Chamber?

WARNER: Well, let's face it, the attendance in the chamber, absent a vote, is very sparse. Those that come are kind of listening with one ear and a notepad on a knee because they're working on something else. If you bring computers in, some will bring a computer there to get rid of their staff and get free. The staff can't get to them, and they'll do their work over there. Let me tell you, any Senate chief of staff is not worth his or her salt unless he or she can get in there and pound on that member. "You've got to do this!"

KOED: They lose their influence.

WARNER: That's right.

KOED: They do go into the chamber now with their cell phones. I will see them texting sometimes, but it's small and discrete.

WARNER: You couldn't eliminate that.

KOED: What about things like Internet technology? I remember back in 1999, soon after I came to the Senate, we were so worried about the Y2K transfer, going to year 2000. Did you have to deal with any of that on the Rules Committee?

WARNER: Oh, yeah, but let me go back to one other thing, technologically, and that was the brief period between the cell phone as we know it today and the first departure from the regular phone. It was a big heavy thing, and the Senate got some of the first models. They were big things! There is a picture of me, as chairman of Rules—I think I was chairman of Rules then—carrying this damn thing around the halls, to my glee, and everybody is saying, "Oh, is that what it looks like? When will I get mine?" We

had to decide if we were going to buy all these expensive things. I think we finally got them.

KOED: You probably did. It was the new technology. They were gigantic with long antennas on them.

WARNER: Also around this period of time—this story is so well known—George Mitchell came to the Senate. There was a famous senator whose name I can't remember. Was it Smathers?

KOED: George Smathers?

WARNER: No, it was the one who resigned to become secretary of state. He was out of Maine [Edmund Muskie]. I think he regretted that he ever did it, but he left the Senate to become secretary of state. Mitchell got a state appointment by the governor to the U.S. Senate to fill the unexpired term of this senator. So George came and no one knew much about him, but we all accepted him. One night, we were in a filibuster. It was his first experience with the filibuster. They explained, "Senator, you've got to stay in the environs of the Capitol. You can sleep in your office, or you can sleep in the sitting room behind the chamber."

KOED: In the Marble Room.

WARNER: "But when the bell rings, you are expected to appear." Well, George is excited because he is a new member. When the time came, the floor was called into a quorum and constituted to hold the floor open, and he said, "I think I'll go into the back room." So, he opens the door [to the Marble Room] and he's confronted with, first, it didn't really have a pleasant odor because there were so many people packed in there, sleeping on cots and in a few roll-back chairs. A few of the lucky ones had those, but the rest of them had army cots and army blankets. George says, "Well, this is interesting." He stumbled around and he found an empty cot and lay down. The clerk had put a blanket on there. And they purposely let these blankets get pretty ripe.

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: Oh, yes, that was more of a deterrent. If you want to [filibuster], we're not going to give you a perfumed blanket. The army cot, for those of us who had been in the military, we knew about them. So George pulled his blanket over him. The next thing of which he suddenly became conscious was the inordinate number of people snoring. (laughs) He just couldn't go to sleep. Now, mind you, he told this story to a black-tie dinner of a thousand people at the Waldorf-Astoria about his first month in the Senate. I first heard about it when the New York press called me the next morning. So, he

said, “There I am, staring at the ceiling, saying, ‘George old boy, why oh why did you resign from the federal bench to come down to this demeaning lifestyle, sitting in this room, which is not only odorous but it’s noisy.’” He couldn’t go to sleep. Finally, he rolled over on his side and he saw the guy next to him, sound asleep, with a smile on his face. He said to himself, “My God. Just think. That guy could be home in bed with Elizabeth Taylor and here he is in this mess.” And he said, “With that, I rolled over and went to sleep.” (laughs)

KOED: He figured that he didn’t have it so bad after all!

WARNER: He didn’t have it so bad after all.

KOED: And you know, that type of activity doesn’t happen much anymore. They don’t have that type of filibuster anymore.

WARNER: Well, we ended the filibuster and we all scattered. He was up in the office and just let it go. You think he might have called me up or something.

KOED: He could have asked you ahead of time.

WARNER: He still giggles about it.

KOED: He got a good story out of it. Well, there were other issues you dealt with as chairman of the Rules Committee. One of them was the contested election case with Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. I’d like to hear about that.

WARNER: We proceeded on that very carefully. Actually, I got a written permission of the majority and the minority to take the unusual step of having Senate hearings in Louisiana.

KOED: I noticed that, in New Orleans.

WARNER: It required me to go down and live in New Orleans for a week at a time. I remember a federal judge down there very graciously gave me his chambers. I’m not quite sure if he was on leave, or maybe they had a spare chamber at the courthouse. I brought down the staff. We worked very hard and conscientiously on that problem.

KOED: Why did you think it was necessary to go to Louisiana?

WARNER: There were so many witnesses that we needed to question. We brought down our regular Senate stenographer. I had quite a family down there, compiling the record because eventually we had to get back and sort it out in the Senate. We were more or less—the Rules Committee—fact finders.

KOED: When I was reading about this, I realized a couple of things. One is that it really was a big deal at the time. This went on for nine or ten months. Also, as chairman of the Rules Committee, it must have put you in a difficult spot because it became very partisan and you were stuck in the middle of it.

WARNER: It did. I think the division between the Dems and the Republicans in the Senate was fairly narrow.

KOED: And it was right in the wake of the shift in power after the 1994 election. This was the 1996 election, so there was a lot of sensitivity about partisan divisions.

WARNER: You know, I was very much involved in several things in the Senate. I don't mean to be boastful, but I helped Bill Frist get elected majority leader and Bob Dole. I was very close to both of them.

KOED: Tell me first about Dole. How did you help him to get elected?

WARNER: Dole was a very self-effacing man. Despite his brusqueness and a bit of haughtiness now and then, he's really a decent human being at heart. A wonderful, beautiful man. He kept saying, "John, I'm not going to do this. They're not going to elect me." I said, "Bob, I know they will." Finally, I was a bit of a pest and a nuisance and there were other senators pulling at his coattails. He turned on his heel one day and snapped at me. He said, "I'll tell you what. You put together a team. You show me the votes and I'll make the decision." So, Packwood was helpful. The Wyoming senator—

KOED: Alan Simpson?

WARNER: Simpson. That fellow out of Idaho was really close to pushing me. He wanted the post. I can't think of his name. He was a nice man, head of the Energy Committee I think.

KOED: James McClure.

WARNER: Also, Dole was perceived, I think fairly accurately, as being in the more progressive wing of the Republican Party, whereas the other man was very solidly entrenched in the conservative elements, sort of unofficially dominated by Jesse Helms. He was a lovely man. I was on committee with him. We had quite a few of the—I don't want to call them liberals, they weren't liberals—

KOED: The moderates?

WARNER: Moderates. You had Chafee, Packwood, Domenici. Finally, we put together a bloc and we had solid commitments. Did we elect him majority leader or did we elect him party leader and then he jumped to majority leader?

KOED: He became majority leader in 1985.

WARNER: Was he already ranking Republican?

KOED: He became leader and majority leader after Howard Baker in 1985.

WARNER: Anyway, I convinced Dole that I had the votes. He said, "Okay, but I'm not going to campaign." He really didn't, but we fanned out and he got it. Frist was a different case. There, the void was created by, what was it?

KOED: Because Trent Lott had to resign his leadership post, so they were without a leader.

WARNER: That's correct. And McConnell was restless. I'm trying to think who the hell the whip was. I don't think it was Bill Frist.

KOED: No, he was further down in leadership.

WARNER: Oh, he was Republican campaign committee chairman.

KOED: I think Don Nickles was whip.

WARNER: Nickles was very active, right. Nickles and I were really close friends, but this cracked it. He never got past this crack when I pushed Frist for leader. To this day, we have run a big golf tournament, Warner-Nickles. I picked him as my partner. But I really thought that Bill Frist had some remarkable traits. I won't go into his term.

On Dole, we were sitting over in the Republican chairman's office and I was saying, "Bob, minute by minute, hour by hour, this thing is slipping away from us. I guarantee you I've got the votes, the commitments, but they are being peeled off by active campaigns of others." He said, "Ah, I don't think so." He finally turned and snapped at me. "Well, write me out a statement." So I sat down in the corner and wrote out a statement. He read it. He said, "You walk out in the hall and you give the statement yourself that I'm running for leadership." I said, "Bob, come on, get over your ass." I was pretty rough with him. He said, "No, do it!" So I went out and did it.

KOED: Wow.

WARNER: Where am I leading up to in this story?

KOED: I don't know, but it's a good story.

WARNER: So I was close to these men. I never desired anything more than chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which I got, but there was some reason I started this. Oh, I know. Lott. Lott was party leader. He had this problem with Jeffords and Jeffords was not well. He's passed on now, so I can say that. He was not functioning, but he didn't want to be pushed around.

KOED: Jeffords didn't?

WARNER: Jeffords. He recognized his deterioration of health, but he wasn't going to acknowledge that. He was independent. I just couldn't believe the fact that the Senate was divided by one seat and that if he quit, I was losing my chairmanship on Armed Services.

KOED: It was a 50-50 split.

WARNER: The other chairmen, too. Domenici helped me, but I became sort of the *de facto* guy to go against Lott and to beg him not to do this thing. Finally, Lott gave me a dispensation. "I'll give you 24 hours to bring this guy around." And I sat with him—

KOED: With Jeffords?

WARNER: With Jeffords, way into the night. His wife was in the room, a lovely woman. He said, "Okay, John, I'll let you know in the morning. Thanks." I don't know whether Domenici was in there with me. Maybe I was by myself. I sort of breathed a sigh of relief. His wife was not for his jumping. She was very definitely supporting me. She sort of smiled and gave me a warm grip in the hands and I got home late at night. I got a call at 8:00 in the morning from his wife. She said, "John, he's going Democrat."

KOED: You know, I always assumed, not knowing the behind the scenes stuff, I always assumed that he just got enticed over by promises from the Democrats, but that's not really the case.

WARNER: No, he was philosophically quite bipartisan in his approach. Lott was a hardliner.

KOED: So Lott just wasn't able to convince him.

WARNER: I couldn't convince Lott of the magnitude of the impact on the Republican Party of losing the majority.

KOED: I know Lott took a lot of heat for the decision. It had an impact.

WARNER: Now, we started out with an agenda and I've led you into a lot of other stuff.

KOED: That's okay. That reminds me to ask you something else I've been wondering about. You don't seem to have had ambition to move into leadership in the Senate. Why is that?

WARNER: Because I was absolutely, totally absorbed in the seriousness of the world situation. I felt that, yes, taxes are important and health is important, but if we don't have good national security, we have nothing. I really enjoyed doing a lot of travel overseas with the troops and so forth. I didn't want to be tied down.

KOED: It's a different lifestyle. If you're leader, you're in the chamber all the time. I can understand that. You mentioned, too, with the Bill Frist case—of course that came when Senator Lott had to resign his leadership post and there had to be a decision about who would become the Republican leader—it came as a surprise to a lot of people when it was Bill Frist. You saw something in Bill Frist that made you think he would be a good leader.

WARNER: He was a fresh face, very bright. He had engendered no animosities. We marveled at him. He was a brilliant surgeon. He would disappear on the weekend and think nothing of doing two or three operations and come back. The rest of us went out and played golf on the weekend. I still see him today.

KOED: Let me finish up with a few questions about the Landrieu contested election case that we drifted away from. While you were investigating the Landrieu contested election case, you were still chairman of the Rules Committee and Wendell Ford was still ranking member. Did the partisanship of that have any impact on your partnership with Wendell Ford?

WARNER: No. He was a hard pragmatist. He died, didn't he?

KOED: Yes, fairly recently [2015].

WARNER: He was a cigarettes guy. He never left a cigarette unlit.

KOED: Yes, I'll get to that, too. At one point during this process, the Democrats just walked out of the committee, in protest. Do you remember that?

WARNER: Was I presiding?

KOED: You were chair at the time

WARNER: What were they protesting?

KOED: They were protesting the fact that the Landrieu election investigation was still continuing into the summer of '97.

WARNER: Well, I wanted to make sure that I had the full record.

KOED: Did the New Orleans hearings give you the information you needed?

WARNER: Yes, but to dial back a little bit. When I was secretary of the navy, a guy named Eddie [F. Edward] Hebert [of Louisiana] was chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Eddie was classic of the old school of power and flaunted it. He was a good chairman, but he was tough and rough. You know, "I'm the chairman, I'm the chairman." I had made trips to New Orleans as secretary of the navy. He would call me, "Come over to my office," and slam the phone down. As a service secretary with a war going on, I had a tight budget and I was so dependent upon Congress to keep us going. So, I had been introduced to him. In the course of that, Moon Landrieu was the mayor. That was her father. Moon was Eddie Hebert's hand-picked politician. And remember old Russell Long, who I got to know and liked him. He was the one who said, "Hey, hey, don't tax me, tax the man behind the tree." (laughs) He was Huey Long's son. He was something. I had to deal with him a lot and went to New Orleans. So, New Orleans was not a surprise to me, but I had a lot of trouble getting people to tell their side of the story. There was an African American fellow, I can't think of his name, he controlled his people. They would come to testify, but you knew damn well that he pretty well screened that testimony. What was his name? He was a local leader in a wing of the Democratic Party. I think he got elected to be mayor eventually. There were certain segments of the population that you could put on the stand and swear to tell the truth, and they just didn't say much.

KOED: Pretty hard to get information that way.

WARNER: I wanted to make sure that I couldn't be accused of not soliciting the African American perspective, so I kept it going. I did not like the idea of all the travel and being away from home, but it was my job and I had to do it.

KOED: How did that case come out? In the end, she was seated. And didn't you also have a bit of tussle at the end about compensation for legal fees and that kind of stuff.

WARNER: I don't remember that. Now, my staff director was Colonel Grayson Winterling. He's got a memory that's second to none. He handled that thing brilliantly.

KOED: Another thing you were dealing with during your years on the Rules Committee was the smoking ban. I know Wendell Ford was a great tobacco man.

WARNER: User and advocate.

KOED: So how did you manage to get that smoking ban through?

WARNER: It really went through pretty easy.

KOED: Really? Despite Wendell Ford?

WARNER: I'm not sure that he was an obstructionist. He probably fought the good fight, knowing he couldn't win. There was too much health information out there. It's always been the habit of politicians to smoke for some reason, particularly the southern orientation of the Senate. I smoked cigars. I was guilty. I can remember the small hearing room of the Armed Services Committee. The fog would be so great in there that you could hardly see. They were really smoke-filled rooms.

KOED: It was a danger to everybody.

WARNER: We were dealing with the public, and a lot of people were turning against smoking in those days. I say a lot, because nobody ever thought of banning it. When they started to say it, then people came out of the woodwork.

KOED: But I would think there was still a lot of smokers around in the '90s who would have opposed a ban. You had to create smoking and non-smoking areas, but you couldn't do that in hearings, so you banned smoking in hearings?

WARNER: Uh huh. A man could do what he wanted in his office.

KOED: So you focused on public spaces.

WARNER: Yeah.

KOED: They banned smoking in the chamber in the early 20th century, but it had not been banned in any of the committee offices, hearing rooms, and so forth.

WARNER: But they still let them chew tobacco in the chambers.

KOED: Yes, they did that well into the 20th century.

WARNER: They were doing it when I was there. Oh, sure. Herman Talmadge. I'll tell you a story. I don't think I had been in the Senate more than a couple of months. Talmadge was a big, long, lanky figure. It was well known that he used to drink quite a

bit. There were certain senators, after 5:00 it was problematic whether you could find them, even though they were on the Hill. Warren Magnuson, Talmdage. They did their jobs. Jim Eastland. When you went over to see Jim Eastland about a judge, and he made every member come to him, I don't care if he was Republican or Democrat or what. Jim had a little book and he'd take notes. [Pretending to smoke a cigar] "Well, let's see about that judgeship." You had your appointment at 5:00. That's when the whiskey would come out in his office, and you were expected to have a drink with Jim Eastland. There wasn't any sitting there with a cup of coffee or Coca Cola. So, you wanted a judge, you had a drink. It was very convivial.

One day, there was a vote called. The vote had ended and we were all running back to our offices. Harry Byrd, Jr., was the other senator from Virginia. He treated me with great dignity and respect. I went down in the elevator and went over to the escalator going down to the subway to the Russell Building, but I walked. Harry Byrd always walked. I never saw him in a car. I'm walking along and this lumbering figure came plodding along and grabbed me by the arm. "Warner, welcome to the Senate. You know, boy"—he called me boy—"certain things around here, some of us, we hang together, doesn't make any difference if you're a Republican or a Democrat." I said, "Yes." He said, "One of 'em is tobacco." He represented Georgia. So we walked along. Suddenly, he stopped and reached into his pocket and pulled out a plug of chewing tobacco. He was down to the last inch—chewing tobacco used to crack all to pieces—he was down to the last inch. He said, "You chew?" I said, "Yeah, when I'm on the farm working cattle." He said, "Well, there ain't no damn cattle here but I want you to have a chew with me." He was a big powerhouse and chair of the Ag Committee. I said, "Okay, fine, Senator." He took the last piece of cracked tobacco and gave me half and he took half. He took the wrapper and threw it on the floor. I thought a senator shouldn't just throw trash on the floor. He said, "Don't worry about that. Somebody's got to pick that up." I was speechless. He said, "That's jobs! Picking it up. Those jobs are under my tutelage here." He had some deal and he controlled the patronage or something of the guys working on picking up the trash. He was a character.

KOED: He would be one that would use the spittoons in the chamber.

WARNER: Oh, yeah.

KOED: Sometimes, when I speak to people in the chamber, I get asked about how long the spittoons were used. I usually say that I know they were in use as late as the 1970s, but evidently it was even later than that.

WARNER: When I was chairman of the Rules Committee, there were certain things that were kind of disappearing. One of them was a spittoon. I got it for myself, sequestered it from the floor, and brought it over to my office—much to the disdain of

my chief of staff, Susan Magill (a wonderful woman)—and I had it in my office. People would come in say, "Oh, you've got a spittoon." I'd say, "Yup, that's been here since Reconstruction time." (laughs) I think I have it at home.

KOED: Well, I have a couple more topics for today. This is one of our most difficult topics in a way and that is campaign finance issues. This is something that you held hearings on when you were Rules Committee chairman. There were attempts to bring control to campaign finance in those days. Let's talk about that a little bit.

WARNER: I'll be honest with you. I'm more concerned day by day of how there is just too much money in the political system, but I don't know how you stop it. So much of it is just doing battle in the media, the competitive means of communicating with the people. You are hard-pressed on what to do. The Supreme Court case [*Citizens United vs. FEC*], I wish it hadn't happened because we had some pretty good control until that suddenly came along. I don't know that during the time I was there that we made much progress.

KOED: I know there were hearings, but I don't think it resulted in legislation. It's an issue that has just been steadily growing through the years. During the time that you were in the Senate, from 1979 to 2009, how did issues of campaign finance change during those 30 years? Was there a tremendous change?

WARNER: To tell you the honest truth, I don't have many recollections on that issue. I just don't.

KOED: That seems to suggest that it didn't rise up to be a major issue for you.

WARNER: It was always a carefully guarded issue by the majority or minority leader, because he—I say he, someday she—it's like Winston Churchill's response when once asked, "What is the primary responsibility of a member of Parliament?" He leaned back, took a draw on his cigar, and said, "The primary responsibility is to get reelected."

KOED: Let's talk about the final topic for today, another big issue—the Clinton impeachment trial. This comes at the end of your Rules Committee chairmanship, 1998 and 1999. The trial happens in early 1999. Of course, it was the first presidential impeachment trial we had had since 1868, but it was also the first impeachment trial of any type since the 1980s. It was a somewhat new experience for senators in 1999.

WARNER: Oh, yes, huge. I didn't know what the frequency was of impeachment trials in the Senate.

KOED: Doesn't happen very often. Since 1789, we have a total of about 20.

WARNER: Of the presidency?

KOED: No, only two were presidential.

WARNER: What were the other trials?

KOED: Most of them were federal judges. There was one secretary of war, William Belknap in the 1870s, and there was one Supreme Court justice in the early 1800s.

WARNER: Who was the other president?

KOED: Andrew Johnson, 1868, during Reconstruction.

WARNER: So from 1868 all the way through to Clinton, because Nixon side-stepped it.

KOED: That's right. They were heading in that direction but Nixon resigned. With Clinton, it was the first presidential impeachment trial since 1868. When you saw that coming, when the House voted articles of impeachment, what was your reaction to that? You were still chairman of Rules as this process began. I assume you might have dealt with impeachment rules.

WARNER: Probably, but I think it was pretty quickly taken out of my hands.

KOED: They created an impeachment committee to deal with that. What was your reaction to the impeachment process?

WARNER: It was mixed. I've always been interested, primarily because so much of it involves Virginia history, in the Constitutional Convention and the formation of it and Madison and Jefferson and Monroe and all those chapters of history. I just eat it up. I was looking at this thing as an exciting experience, constitutionally. Then I looked at it with sorrow that the rest of the world was watching the United States, a great country, trying to do a *coup d'état*. It was a tough vote. I had been in the U.S. attorney's office for five years, tried lots of criminal cases, and this one was predicated so heavily around Clinton's character weaknesses, primarily influenced by sexual motivations. I said, "This is a hell of a way to topple a Republic." As I grew up, my father was very strict on morals. We knew there was infidelity, but what the hell, don't topple the greatest democracy in the world.

KOED: Was that enough to warrant impeachment?

WARNER: Yes, that's where I had the real struggle. It was his failure to be forthright with the judicial process and not tell the truth, at least I thought so. It came down to—and I had nothing to do with it rather than just participating as a member—we divided it into two votes. I felt pretty clearly that he had violated the one on truthfulness in the grand jury, but I wasn't going to convict him on infidelity. So it was a struggle.

KOED: It was a struggle to know which way to vote?

WARNER: Uh huh.

KOED: I remember that early in the process, after the House voted articles of impeachment and the Senate had to decide how to proceed with the trial, there was a closed-door session held in the Old Senate Chamber. Do you remember that session?

WARNER: Not really. I do know—a lot of members felt this way—when you went into the Old Senate Chamber, the former members of the Senate were sort of looking down at you.

KOED: You could feel the history.

WARNER: You could feel it. It was a surreal feeling. You, the current generation, would screw it up or abrogate some of the hard-fought provisions that they put in. That's a strange answer, but that's the truth. Many a time I sat in that room—remember we are really scrunched in there—

KOED: Yes, there are only 64 desks in there.

WARNER: Yes, you had to sort of wedge yourself in there. I don't know if that's enlightening you at all.

KOED: I've heard comments from others that when they had meetings in the Old Senate Chamber, that it has a kind of atmosphere to it, and it has an impact.

WARNER: Psychological. Yes.

KOED: At the end of the impeachment process, were you satisfied with how it ended?

WARNER: More relieved than anything. And remember at the time all that was going on, you were conducting your regular political activities and meeting your constituents as you traveled about, giving your local speeches.

KOED: So you were hearing from constituents.

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: Was it mostly from one side or the other?

WARNER: Crossfire, in every direction.

KOED: When you've gone through a process like that, and the Senate has to move forward, and the president has to move forward, and that system of checks and balances has to continue, was it difficult to work with Clinton after that?

WARNER: You were glad to go forward. It goes on.

KOED: Any other thoughts from this time period that you would like to share before we quit today?

WARNER: I'll mull it over between now and next time. You very adroitly and patiently let me go back. I like to tell stories.

[End of interview #7]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #8: June 29, 2017

JOHN W. WARNER: I've been sitting in a meeting for two and a half hours, but this is so relaxing to speak with you. John Kerry is interesting. When I was chief of navy during Vietnam—five years, four months, and three days—he was a young lieutenant J.G. in what they called the swift boats down in the delta. They had a very dangerous mission. What they were trying to do was to keep supplies flowing through a large river that penetrated from the sea. We could offload ships, cargo, and get it up the river easier than trying to go through the bad road systems in the jungle. The swift boats patrolled the river and it was just a constant warfare. It was a very dangerous mission. He was wounded three times and decorated highly for his work. For some reason, when he ran for president, some of these old sailors, old veterans—they're cantankerous damn people, these old veterans, believe me because you're looking at one of them, although I'm not too cantankerous—they took after him. I said, "Hey, wait, I didn't meet this guy down there, but I met guys like him." For all I know, I did meet him, but I was the top guy and they're just young sailors, and you always had two or three admirals with you. It was "Get back, boy, get back, the Secretary is coming through." I always stopped and talked to them because I was just a kid in the navy myself. But, boy, I hit back on those guys hard, right on the floor of the Senate. I said, "You're wrong! I can testify. I saw with my own eyes what these guys were doing." Well, he's never forgotten it. Anytime I call, he takes my call.

BETTY K. KOED: That shows a level of respect, back and forth between you and Kerry. Frankly, we don't see as much of that as we used to see.

WARNER: You know, I turned 90. I'm not trying to brag or anything, but I must have gotten 200 nice communications from people. This inconsequential, hand-written card comes across and is in my stack at the library at home. I open it up and here is a hand-written note from John McCain. It went all the way back to when we met each other, when he came out of the war. Let me back up a little bit.

During the war, when I would go to Vietnam, his father was commander in chief of All Forces Pacific—army, navy, air force. He had a beautiful big home in Hawaii, which was his headquarters. We'd have the old four-engine planes to go to Vietnam—a long way—and we'd take off at Andrews and land in Hawaii and spend a day there so the crew could get some sleep. I used to spend the day with his father. We would go over all the things going on in Vietnam, then I'd go in country for four or five days and spend

another night with his father. We would discuss all the top intelligence on John and everything.

KOED: This was while he was a prisoner of war.

WARNER: Yes. So, I'm still head of the navy and John is coming home, so I went with his father down to where they landed. I can see him getting down off that plane, hobbling with a cane, and his mother and father greeting him. I stood back a pace or two. They introduced me as secretary of the navy. I had a brief conversation with him. I said, "Commander, if there's anything you want, you call me. Anything!" Of course, he was jetlagged and emotional, but he pulled himself together and said, "Mr. Secretary, I'll remember that. Thank you." He took my card and put it in his pocket.

He called me up. I've forgotten where I saw him. I suspect that I was here at the Pentagon, but maybe I saw him at my home. I lived in a big house in Georgetown in those days. He sat down and talked to me. He said, "The navy wants to do everything in the world for me, but this is what they want me to do. They want me to travel across America." At that time, there was tremendous rebellion against the war—huge. As a matter of fact, we told the sailors when they got home, "Don't go home in your uniform. Get some old blue jeans. Roll your stuff up and put it in your footlocker."

KOED: For their own safety, you were telling them that.

WARNER: Yes. He said, "They are desperately trying to recruit people." I said, "Well, that's important, but what do you want to do?" There was a long pause, then he said, "You know, the emotions of being reunited with my family are just beautiful. On top of that" —and he said this, I remember—"I don't know what the hell has been going on for four or five years. I want to sit down and read all the back newspapers and study." I sent him to the War College for two years.

KOED: Perfect spot.

WARNER: He got to read all the back newspapers.

KOED: I have to admit that I haven't thought about this before, the difficulty of recruiting new troops in light of the protests. I never thought about that.

WARNER: Oh, awesome. And then we had done a complete reversal and stopped the draft, so it was all volunteers. The rubber hit the road.

KOED: Did you and John McCain stay in touch, even before he came to the Senate?

WARNER: Well, in the sense that he was assigned, he was promoted to captain, and he went back for a while to flying status. He went to the college, went into flying, but he realized that with his injuries he couldn't deal with heavy flying. The navy very wisely put him into his father's old job, which was navy liaison to Capitol Hill.

Jack McCain, his father—we called him Jumpin' Jack—was an obscure captain in the navy, like all the captains, but he had his World War II career as a submariner. But [as liaison] he got to know senators and next thing you know, it's admiral. He got his first admiral title, and he kept those contacts right straight through four stars. The biggest job in the navy, next to being chief of navy, is the wartime commander of the whole thing.

KOED: Interesting.

WARNER: Jumpin' Jack. And his mother is over 100 years old.

KOED: Yes, I saw a newspaper article about her just recently.

WARNER: What did it say?

KOED: It was noting her age, 105 I think. Good genes in that family, I guess. I have much respect for him. During the election, when then-candidate Donald Trump made negative comments about Senator McCain, did that anger you?

WARNER: Oh, yeah, but back to John McCain. You can put in another story about him that's quite interesting. We were on the Armed Services Committee and now I'm chairman or ranking. I guess I must have been ranking at this time, because I had done ranking for six years and I couldn't continue, so he's next in seniority. He became ranking member and I stepped back, because when it flipped to chairman, I hadn't done six as chairman and so therefore I popped up again. But it was during that period when I was ranking and stepped down that he became my successor, and now he had decided to run for the presidency. We had become fast friends, working on the committee together, and very tightly bonded. The depth of the bond is enormous. He's going to run for president. We were in a committee hearing room and he was sitting in a ranking seat, and this has broken out in the news when the committee recessed and we walked out into the hall. My office used to be right across from the committee's office. He is in my office now. So, he turned on his heels and said, "John, I'm going to run for president." I said, "Yeah!" He said, "Take the bridge of this committee. Goodbye."

KOED: Really?

WARNER: Well, he was gone. It was just, "John, take the bridge."

KOED: You're in charge.

WARNER: "You're in charge."

KOED: Yes, when you run for president, that's a full-time job. You don't have time to run the Armed Services Committee.

WARNER: A full-time job. He didn't sit down and say, "Now, this is what I'm thinking." He knew me that well and he just said, "Take the bridge."

KOED: He had total trust in you.

WARNER: Yeah. Well, you picked up a few vignettes there.

KOED: Those are great. Since we've talked a lot about the Armed Services Committee in the past, I thought that today we would talk a little bit about your time on the Intelligence Committee and perhaps on the Environmental Committee as well. Let's start with the Intelligence Committee.

WARNER: Right.

KOED: I've always been a little puzzled about the relationship between Armed Services and Intelligence.

WARNER: I had quite a bit to do with that and let's go back. In the first place, when you're the secretary of the navy, you have all the classifications save the very few the president has, because you're responsible for day-to-day operations all over the world, together with your colleagues in the building. I started every morning, and it's still being done, with intelligence briefings at 7:30 every morning. You got in at 7:00 to have time for your coffee and shake off your lack of sleep and everything. We used to do six days a week in the building and knock off a little bit on Saturday afternoons, but we were at full wartime speed. The doors were locked at about 8:00 at night. It was an exciting period of history. We had had not only the extraordinary developments daily happening in Vietnam but we had a Cold War. So, I began to develop a deep respect for intelligence and got interested in it. Now, I came out of that and popped into the Senate and I'm on the Armed Services Committee, so I've got the same clearances and so forth. The Intelligence Committee was embryonic. Frankly, leadership had to really push and pull to get people on it.

KOED: Really?

WARNER: Uh huh. You'll grasp exactly what I mean when I say it. There is no correlation between Intel and Churchill's words, "What is the first responsibility of every member of Parliament? To get reelected." Intelligence is not something that is going to help you get reelected, because you can't talk about it.

KOED: No constituent services there.

WARNER: No constituent services! So members coming to the House and Senate, particularly during that first term, and you've got to start right away being busily engaged in reelection. [On the Intelligence Committee], you literally went behind doors for long periods of time. You did good work and came out and the press wouldn't be there. It's a dry hole and they're out mining the fertile fields. You'd just walk on back to your office. You'd get in the office and they'd ask, "Hey, boss, what's up?" "I can't tell you." You can't say anything in the office. You can't say anything at home. Your wife would say, "Why are you late?" "Well, I had an Intel meeting." You can't say anything. It was tough. And there had been the famous committee that ripped up so much of the intelligence community.

KOED: The Church Committee, the Frank Church Committee?

WARNER: What was his name?

KOED: Frank Church of Idaho.

WARNER: Frank Church. Yes, I knew him. He was well intentioned but it got out from under him and you had trouble getting people on the committee. I purposely wrote into the law, with the concurrence of Sam Nunn and others but I pushed it, that the chairmen and ranking members of Armed Services are *ex officio* members of the committee. All committees are jealous of each other—turf—and these poor starving Intel guys, if they could steal a little turf then maybe they could talk about it. There was grit in the grinding axle. I did everything I could to straighten that out and to stop friction between Armed Services and Intel, because the staff was grousing. "Those Intel guys are coming around asking for this, and we're not going to give them this."

KOED: So there was competition between the two.

WARNER: Competition, yes, and they were the lame duck. They needed a sponsor. So, lo and behold, yours truly—I'm not patting myself on the back but I saw the merits of it. I saw how essential it was for those in the Pentagon, and the Armed Services Committee is as important as the Pentagon. That's the history. Done without a vote, I think is my recollection. You can't fool around with that. That's the origin of that and I was the one who pushed it through.

KOED: I wondered if, being on Armed Services, you wanted to know what was going on in Intelligence.

WARNER: Yeah, but we could have the same briefers who go to Intel come to our committee, so you could go through all of that, but you wanted to mix and mingle

with the members at the Intel Committee. What's their work product after they've been briefed, and is that going to cross our bow in the Armed Services Committee, or in any way impede the operations militarily, or something like that?

KOED: Did you get any pushback from Intel about putting *ex officio* members in there?

WARNER: Oh, the usual camaraderie and all that stuff among senators. There was plenty of it. They thought it was a crazy idea. (laughs) There was some sort of invasion. I don't want to be pompous, but the chairman and ranking of Armed Services were big figures in the Congress, if only because their pocket was stuffed full of special amendments each year. It was the only bill that was a must-pass bill, and therefore you had a little stature over and above the title. You judiciously used that for the best interest of the country. Let's put it that way.

KOED: We've had a lot of talk in recent weeks about intelligence leaks to the press and that type of thing. Did you have to deal with that?

WARNER: We did not. No, we did not. I cannot recall that and I'm in disbelief about leaks to the press. That's tough.

KOED: It strikes me that when you have a problem of leaks to the press, whether it be in the executive branch or anywhere else, it strikes me that it's a symptom of a larger problem.

I believe that you were on both Armed Services and the Intelligence Committee at the time of the Iran-Contra investigation. When you're in a place like we're in right now, with lots of investigations going on, like the Trump-Russia investigation—

WARNER: Unbelievable. And the thing that I find absolutely off the charts, everybody has to go and hire their own lawyer to protect themselves. We had none of that. None of that. It's a crisis moment.

KOED: Yes, everyone is lawyering up.

WARNER: They're lawyering up. And that's big money. I sit back here and I know what these guys charge. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

KOED: When you're in a time of investigations, and there is a special prosecutor or something like that at work, and also there is a congressional investigation going on—

WARNER: Correct, because you had the Iran-Contra Committee and that was a very sensible thing.

KOED: Tell me about that. Is there a conflict there?

WARNER: There is a conflict only in the sense that they are really doing the work that Congress felt it could not do within its own four corners of constitutional responsibility. Legally, the Constitution allows us to do it, but practically the internal jealousies and the inherent fact that you have to continue to think of your own reelection—should I get on that committee and get in the middle of this and look at all the time it will take away from campaigning? It's good to have that separate committee.

KOED: So the separate investigation isn't necessarily a deterrent to a congressional investigation? It's a good thing.

WARNER: Yes, I think so, from my perspective.

KOED: Now, you didn't serve on the Iran-Contra Committee.

WARNER: I didn't want to.

KOED: And why didn't you want to?

WARNER: Because I was on Armed Services and I had my hands full. There was also another factor to it. Politically, I had been very close to Richard Nixon. Fortunately, I had gotten to know Ronald Reagan quite well. He used to come to my farm and go horseback riding with me.

KOED: So you had a personal relationship with him. Was that another reason why you didn't want to go on the Iran-Contra committee?

WARNER: Yeah, I didn't want to. And then, the Oliver North thing. I was somewhat involved, indirectly, in that, although it looks as if I was a mastermind—I wasn't a mastermind—in plotting to get rid of him. I just did what I wanted to do. He was running for the Senate and I felt that somebody was a hell of a lot better qualified than he was, but he's always blamed me for that.[18]

KOED: You took a lot of heat at that time, didn't you?

WARNER: Oh, huge.

[18]In 1994 Oliver North, running as the Republican candidate, challenged Virginia senator Charles Robb in his bid for reelection. Warner endorsed Independent candidate Marshall Coleman. Robb won the election with 46 percent of the vote, edging out North's 43 percent and easily defeating Coleman's 11 percent of the vote.

KOED: But I know people, friends who are Virginians, who tell me that from that moment on, they were your greatest fans.

WARNER: Betty, it solidified in the undecided column. When it was identified that a Democrat was supporting me and their friends would say, "What the hell are you doing supporting a Republican?" "Well, he's different." To this day they come up and tell me, "I never voted for a Republican, but you're the only one I ever voted for."

KOED: I've heard that from a number of people.

WARNER: Oh, yeah.

KOED: I want to take a little side trip here. The Republican caucus meets on a regular basis, every Tuesday, and now on Wednesdays and Thursdays, but what was the caucus like at that time? Were they a unified caucus? Did they work well together?

WARNER: I'd say they had a very high level of unity. I think I told you earlier that when Howard Baker was the leader, and Dole continued it although not as vigorously, Baker would have all the committee chairmen—only committee chairmen—into his office for a 15-minute meeting before the luncheon.

KOED: Yes, you did mention that.

WARNER: You knew very well that he was structuring points to walk into that luncheon and say, "All the chairmen agree to this." That sort of dissuaded you from jumping up like a jack-in-the-box to take on the whole system in the caucus. I thought the caucuses were effective, as effective as they could be. Remember, a leader in the Congress—be it majority leader or committee leader—he is always dealing with that mightily independent person, a U.S. senator, who tomorrow morning can order up an airplane, go across the world, sit on a box in a town square and pronounce, "This is what America should be doing." Anywhere in the country. He or she is such a free agent and has such a reputation. Old Stennis used to say [imitating Stennis], "Warner, don't be afraid to get up there and speak. My God, most of the people have never even seen a senator. They're so excited that they don't pay any attention to what you say. They're just excited to see a senator and then go tell a neighbor, 'You'll never believe it, I saw that senator.'" (laughs) He was funny.

KOED: That reminds me of the story you told about talking, "If you just start talking, soon you'll think of something to say." Was that Stennis?

WARNER: "You just start talking and eventually you'll think of something to say." That was Stennis.

KOED: It sounds as though there was the ability for the caucus to speak in a unified voice. I'm not sure that exists today. That's been puzzling me.

When you were on the Intelligence Committee from 1987 to 1995, and then again from 2000 on, so about 18 years total on the committee, what were your principal concerns on that committee?

WARNER: My concerns were primarily the Middle East and the Soviet Union. We were not that obsessed with China. The Pacific was relatively calm. North Korea had not emerged as real threat to the world.

KOED: Has that come as a surprise to you, the rise of North Korea?

WARNER: Yeah, it has.

KOED: In a way, the Middle East was in the beginning stages of becoming a real issue at that time.

WARNER: That's correct. There was always the friction aspect with Israel. That's been there forever, since it was established, but the rest of the problems really started when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and we had the first Gulf War.

KOED: So, 1991-92 was when it really became an issue for us.

WARNER: One of the high-water marks of my life was when Dole turned to me and said, "You're the senior man on the military committee, write it. Get a Democrat to join you." I said, "Bob, you don't understand. Nunn's against it. Mitchell's against it. I don't think I can get a Democrat." He just said, "I said get a Democrat!"

KOED: This was the authorization for use of force. You got Lieberman to co-sponsor it. Did he do so eagerly?

WARNER: I persuaded him, but his leader—George Mitchell—was against it. He was on the Armed Services Committee and Sam Nunn was against it. It was a lonely, courageous path that he took. We only won by five votes.

KOED: Was it mostly a party-line vote?

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: How do you go about writing that kind of resolution?

WARNER: The resolution is relatively simple. The whereas clauses, now this thing has happened, now therefore the UN having acted, pursuant to a request by the United States, whereas, whereas, now therefore.

KOED: There must be concern, when you do this, about what you're opening the door for? For instance, I think of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which many argued went in directions not intended at the time. Did you worry about things like that?

WARNER: I tell you, subliminally, there was a strong Israeli factor. You are now in a hot war next door. Uncle Sam, you better get in there and put this fire out.

KOED: Ah, interesting.

WARNER: That's how I got Joe [Lieberman]. I jiggered the wheel.

KOED: His Israeli connections. Interesting.

WARNER: I would put it differently. His magnificent obsession with the importance of an independent and free Israel, and here is a man who could rip it away from them if he became that powerful. If he could tear up one Gulf state, he could tear up another.

KOED: The way the Gulf War ended, is that what you anticipated?

WARNER: That Gulf War we thought would be fought harder, and they just dropped their arms and fled. There is a clear story of the magnificence of air power. That air power was unleased unreservedly. We bombed and bombed and bombed, and his troops had never ever experienced—Remember, the Gulf states had been fighting and Iran and Iraq fought a bloody war before this started. A long war. A million men were allegedly killed in that war. Nobody paid much attention, but it went on and on. It was trench warfare, hand to hand, small arms. Nobody had brought in heavy huge bombers like we did and just bombed the hell out of everything. Those poor troops, they were pretty well shaken up when we introduced the ground forces, and they just dropped their weapons and fled. That is one thing that is emblazoned in my mind.

I took four codels to the region within 30 days after the war ended, maybe five weeks. Every senator wanted to go over there. This was victory! We really crushed it. This is one of those things—every senator's duty is to get reelected—and they would come back from the war zone and go right to their district or state. "Forty-eight hours ago, I was in—" There was a road system that went through central Kuwait and right up into Iraq, and he used that as his avenue of approach, coming down with his heavy armor and then going into the city. The Kuwaiti people had almost no military whatsoever, because they had always been under the umbrella of their neighbors or something. It was

the Rape of Nanking all over again. So, all of a sudden, after the bombings, we literally invaded and those soldiers said, “Hey, I’m going home.”

Betty, I don’t know of anything quite like it. The damaged military equipment, the rifles, the artillery pieces, they just dropped everything and ran with their flip flops and whatever shirt they had on their back as fast as they could to get home. Bodies were everywhere. The stench of human decomposition, still a week or 10 days later when I got there, was everywhere. The flies! I never saw so many flies in my life. It almost darkened the sky, the flies feasting on the cadavers. People say, “Why didn’t George Bush go after them?” Well, one, the resolution never provided for that and he would have been held accountable for departing from the parameters of the resolution. And, second, some of the wise old soldiers, and I was in on the discussions, said, “You know, Mr. President, a soldier is a fighter in foreign lands, but if you get his back against his own front door and his wife and children, he is twice, three times the fighter he was in the foreign land.”

KOED: He’s got something to fight for.

WARNER: These were things said around the table when everyone was trying to beat up on Bush. I was steadfast with Bush, “Don’t go.”

KOED: It seems that time has shown the wisdom of that decision.

WARNER: Oh, yeah, but at that time, everyone tasted blood. The Israelis thought, too, that you ought to just go in and take him now.

KOED: You were also involved in the resolution for the use of force in Afghanistan and Iraq, weren’t you?

WARNER: Yes.

KOED: How did that effort differ from what you had done with the Persian Gulf War?

WARNER: Well, we didn’t have the clarity of fact that we had in the Gulf. The Gulf War was a clear, open case. It was right before your eyes. You had the oil wells burning like Fourth of July rockets going off. The footage that got back to America, all over the world, was very explicit. He went without any warning. Now, you’re in this Iraqi situation and it was a different story. Once again, that soldier had his back against his front door, but they were lousy soldiers. That’s why George W. Bush got carried away. “Bring ’em on!” They were not particularly good fighters. You see the same thing in Afghanistan today. It puzzles me. In my earlier visits to Afghanistan, and I was one of the first to take a codel in there—To crawl into the mind of an Iraqi soldier, you’ve got to

start with the chief, the chief of their area, and the area is simply decided by thousands of years of time when this valley belonged to this tribe.

KOED: It's tribal.

WARNER: Tribal, and you can size up from the chief that their loyalty is not to any central government, not to anybody but that chief. If he says fight, you fight. If he says do what you want to do, you do what you want to do. If you misbehave, he's judge and jury. That's the chief. The loyalty to those chiefs, and the chiefs always wore that bloody dagger right in the front of their robes. One of them pulled that thing out one time and gave it to me. I was the first American he had ever seen, I think, and I was over there in his valley. I got it and gave it to the Marine Corps Museum.

Maybe, someday, when you're driving around—we'll set it up for you—you can go to Quantico and see the magnificent building that's named for me [John W. Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia] and the museum they have for me there. I gave all the money to pay for the museum—I didn't want taxpayers doing it—but they wanted my personal history. They've got my old uniform that I wore in the Korean War. They've got the number one copy of the [Gulf War] resolution. They've got all the bits and pieces of memorabilia.

KOED: I would like to do that.

WARNER: It should be part of this story. In that context, I'm sitting at my desk in this law firm and my secretary, Paulette [French], says, "The Commandant of the Marine Corps is on the phone." Really? I got on the phone and talked to him. He said, "I want to come to see you, it's about a very important matter." I said, "Commandant, my calendar is your calendar. Come ahead." He came over and sat down and said, "We're expanding the university for the Marine Corps," which is there [at Quantico]—Higher Education in Marine Matters, they call it university—"and we're going to build this new building with classrooms and all the modern equipment. We can take it to any part of the world, put it on the screen, put it in front of students, relate to marines in the field and the students in the classroom. The electronics are awesome. They've got two auditoriums that can seat more than 700 people and three auditoriums that seat 250 and classrooms with instantaneous communications. You can sit on the battlefield, wherever the marines are." I said, "Well, Commandant, that's really something." He said, "Yeah, and I've made the decision that the Corps is going to name it the John W. Warner Building." I said, "Oh, come on, you're not going to do that! No." He was taken aback. I said, "Now, look, I had a small tour in the Marine Corps, did my duty and went to Korea, and came back home, went to law school." I said, "No, we're not going to do it." He was taken aback and said, "I understand," then left. I said, "I don't want any publicity." I took it off my mind. A year passed and he called back and said, "I want to come see you." It started

all over again. I said, "Really?" He said, "The Corps wants you. That's it." I said, "Okay." People are always trying to get their name on everything. I didn't try to do that. I think you got the story of the submarine. Bush called me up. "Stop arguing, it's my phone, it's my nickel, goodnight."[19]

KOED: It's going to happen.

WARNER: It's an important point in this biographical thing. I didn't ask for any of these things. Strom Thurmond put his name on every light post in South Carolina. You've got to go down there sometime. It's really something. I fought everything successfully until one little county supervisor down in Charlottesville was determined to build a new highway to take congestion off traffic that was affecting university life. That's a long story. He needed some money to build a rotary, where four roads come in. Well, one day, I was in a position to give him about $35 million. I put it in an escrow account and said, "Okay, you've got your money to build your rotary." I didn't pay much attention to it. He said, "I want to name the thing for you." I said, "No, get this straight, I don't want to do that." Then the city quarreled over which county or which city was going to pay for this, and the argument went on for three years. This poor guy called me and said, "Have you still got the money?" I said, "Yeah, but these, what they called scraper-uppers, after a bill is finished, they go around and find money in these escrow accounts." I said, "I don't think I can hold it another year." He said, "Will you call the chairman of the Board of Supervisors and just explain the money situation." So I called the guy up. I said, "This is the way we do business in Congress. You've got $35 million, it's in your account, earmarked Charlottesville, but it's going to disappear in another month or two unless you guys decide." He said, "Senator, I got your message." They made a decision, deciding what they wanted to do, then this supervisor said, "You ought to name it for the old boy." So, he went around me and put in the John Warner Memorial Parkway in Charlottesville. That was the first thing. Then Bush got the submarine. Then came the building. Now, there's a third thing. The Peace Institute here in Washington is going to name a piece of it for me, because I helped them get the $100 million.

KOED: You were in on the founding of that. Now that you mention it, as I drive around Virginia I don't see the John Warner this or the John Warner that. If you go to West Virginia, it's Robert Byrd everywhere.

WARNER: The bordering states—the Carolinas.

KOED: I haven't spent as much time in the Carolinas, but in West Virginia I see Robert C. Byrd on everything, and I haven't seen any John W. Warners around.

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[19] The USS *John Warner*, a nuclear-powered Virginia-class attack submarine of the U.S. Navy, was awarded in December 2008 and christened on September 6, 2014.

WARNER: Purposely. I didn't want it. But when they leaked out, they were big ones.

KOED: Good ones.

WARNER: Well, I want to keep going with this.

KOED: We have more ground to cover, so we'll keep going.

[End of interview #8]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #9: August 23, 2017

JOHN W. WARNER: It's so nice to see you. I really enjoy our sessions. Let's start off, because I don't like to take advantage. I want you to finish it.

BETTY K. KOED: We'll finish it. I promise we'll finish it. (Discussion of process.)

WARNER: Let me tell you a very interesting thing that has come along since we started. I don't know that I mentioned this to you. I was very involved, with Ted Stevens and [Daniel] Inouye and to a lesser extent that marvelous senator, Matsunaga and the other one who took such a beating from his colleagues because he was kind of liberal. I'll think of his name.

KOED: Might it be Hatfield?

WARNER: Hatfield, yeah. Old Mark. I liked him. Did you ever interview him?

KOED: We did not do an interview with him, unfortunately.

WARNER: It's too bad. He never concealed it, but he never talked about it, and he was always pushed back on military operations. I made it my business to try to work with him. I said that every senator is a human being and somewhere in there is a basis for a common and constructive working relationship on some things. I made it work with him, even though I was chairman of the committee. I eased him back off of some tough votes and filibusters and stuff. One night, we were together and I had done some research. I said, "You, sir, were in the navy during the war." Then he launched into what he did. He was a young naval officer in charge of the Higgins boats that took the men off of the big boats and drove them into the beach. He said, "I brought them in during Iwo Jima, then carried the bodies back and the wounded back, hour after hour, under heavy shell fire." He knew I was a fellow military guy. It's a glorious story what that man did. I can put in this book my depth of respect for him. I'm working on this United States Institute for Peace. They're going to name new buildings after President Bush, President Clinton, Stevens, Inouye, and Warner, all at the same time.

KOED: When is that going to happen?

WARNER: It'll probably be in the next 90 to 100 days. They're working on it now.

KOED: They're catching the people who were involved in the creation of it.

WARNER: Yes. It was the cohesiveness—I wrote this into a final draft yesterday—we reached an all-time high of bipartisanship derivative from our mutual respect as veterans in that conflict or in a series of conflicts. We pork-rolled several hundred million dollars to build this thing, but there was a nucleus of World War II guys who finally pushed the button. The House to a lesser extent, but there were some in the House that helped us, too.

KOED: You've mentioned several times the importance of the fact that there were so many veterans in the Senate at the time and how that led to bipartisanship. I'm wondering, since we're in a Senate today that is not bipartisan at all, and we're down to 19 to 20 percent who are veterans, it's very low, is there any other common experience [other than wartime service] that you can think of that might help to promote bipartisanship?

WARNER: Candidly, no, because that—certainly World War II—was a very clear struggle to preserve mankind and democracy, not just the United States but the UK, France, and other countries. In the Pacific to a lesser extent—the Philippines and so forth—because they were losing total sovereignty. The casualties of those conflicts were just enormous. That, unfortunately, is the cement in the whole thing—the casualties—and not only those who were killed but those who were wounded and forced to live with that afterwards in life.

KOED: And those who were lucky enough to escape the wounds, but lived with the experience for the rest of their lives. It never goes away.

WARNER: That's right.

KOED: And it was an all-encompassing event nationally, the home front as well as the war front. I don't think we've had anything else of that experience.

WARNER: That's right. I have vivid memories of World War II in the sense that my little community right here in northwest Washington, our home was one block from the National Cathedral—my uncle was a deacon at the Cathedral—but our communities were so much behind the war. Almost half of the doors, the front doors, in all the houses around us and throughout America had a sticker on it. "We have a boy or a daughter in the marines" or whatever, and others had a gold star. We were all rationed food, gasoline, sugar, and butter. I can remember the theatrics at the dinner table where we rationed butter. (laughs)

KOED: "You took too much!"

WARNER: My father always said, "These kids, give them just a little dab." Dad loved his butter. He was an old farmer boy. Ice cream and sugar. Those are bonding experiences. Anyway, we're going around here with too many stories. To answer your question, I have pondered this myself and I don't know of anything.

KOED: As historian for the Senate, I keep looking for ways to bring a focus to bipartisan cooperation. How it's worked in the past, when it's worked in the past, with the hope that from that might come something to help the Senate regain that cooperation. It's a rare event, like World War II, when you have something that is so all-encompassing that it is truly a national event. I don't wish for another world war, so I'm not sure where to look.

WARNER: World War II—I kind of went through all of the wars—because I was just a kid in World War II. I was in training, but I was on the ships and the trains with all the guys coming back from overseas. I was deluged with all their stories and trained by them. They were brought right into the camp to train the kids. They reminded us time and time again how bloody it is, and they constantly showed us the movies to keep us sobered up. It just can't be replicated. But the Korean War, which I went back into, was called the "Forgotten War" because it hardly ever touched the home front. When I came back to law school after two years, people would say, "Well, where have you been?"

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: And my law class of 250 men—no women in those days in that school—there were only five who were killed during the war. I remember that vividly. And there were maybe 12 others who had to leave school, making it less than a total of 20 or less that were pulled back into the fighting. The rest got draft deferments, student deferments, so they didn't touch it. Back home, there was no rationing, no war bonds. Kids saved quarters and the denominational war bonds went all the way down to 25 cents. You would buy war bond stamps—not stamps for mailing—and you kept them in a book and then cash them in eventually. Every kid saved. My mother and father had a regimen that from your allowance—I did little jobs around the house—you put some into stamps.

KOED: It was never the same experience after that.

WARNER: It was a beautiful experience in the way that America united, and oh did they burst out of that thing when it was all over. It was so joyous and happy and the economy was strong. Now, we've just had fun, but back to it.

KOED: Now to the agenda. We've talked a lot about your period on the Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee and I'd like to move on today, but I would like to talk for a minute about the role of the Senate in oversight. One of the things that I think is least understood by the public is the important role that the House and the Senate play in overseeing the presidency, the executive branch, the military. As chair or ranking member of Armed Services and also in your role on the Intelligence Committee, you were often involved in the oversight process.

WARNER: Well, in the first place, there is no definition of a senator's responsibilities or limitations on what he or she can do. They can do all kinds of things, other than violation of criminal laws and things like that. You start with the premise that there are coequal branches of government, coequal is always a good word to work in, but the Senate has the purse strings of the Congress, together with the House, and all the functioning of the executive branch and its agencies and departments are totally dependent on that function.

[Interview interrupted]

WARNER: Where were we?

KOED: You were talking about oversight.

WARNER: Okay. We control the purse and expenditure of funds. It's like in a family—fortunately, my wife takes oversight on our expenditures—somebody should monitor the funds to see whether or not they've been used as designated and for the purpose. That's the fundamental oversight. Then you get to the question of when they execute their own judgment on what the country should do or not do. I think they are an independent branch and to the extent that we can repress or check their exercise of judgment on decisions, I don't think we have any business there. It should always be tied to the appropriations, in my judgment. That's your key to turn the lock on the subject. You take it from there and then it begins to get into the gray area to the extent where Congress can reverse decisions. Now, of course, you could pass laws to do it, so oversight gives Congress the right to look at it. If they don't like it, they can do that.

KOED: They can legislate. In your years on the Intelligence Committee, what do you remember as some of the most important issues you had to deal with?

WARNER: The most important issue of that period when I was there was the presence or absence of weapons of mass destruction possessed by Iraq. We spent endless hours, days, months, and years on that subject. I remember we were in a long series of hearings by the committee—I was now chairman of the Armed Services Committee—and I brought in George Tenet, who was the director of the CIA [Central Intelligence

Agency]. Now, I'm wearing both my hats—Armed Services and Intelligence. George had been the staff director of the Intel Committee for the Republicans. I think it was the Republicans. There were no politics on the committee at that time. I asked him, "We're about to decide whether or not to authorize for the president the use of force to go into Iraq." The room was packed, with television cameras as far as you could see. "In my judgment, as chairman of this committee, this committee's vote will have a considerable impact on the thinking process of every member of the Senate and the American public, so we are going to weigh it carefully. We need to know from you, Mr. Director, what is your best judgment as to whether or not, when our forces go in and have access to all the territories they're going into, they will find them [weapons of mass destruction]." His answer was very short. "Senator, they're everywhere." Not necessarily on the street corners, but he [Saddam Hussein] had allegedly distributed them so that if anything happened he wouldn't be dependent upon a single cache, he had pockets. And we never really found them. They did not exist.

KOED: They were so well hidden that they didn't find them, or—

WARNER: *They did not exist.*

KOED: So George Tenet's assessment was just incorrect.

WARNER: Incorrect. And that was predicated on a lot of hard work by a lot of people.

KOED: Based on the committee's own investigation, did that come as a surprise or not?

WARNER: Well, we had been dealing with a lot of people. Remember, we had people in Iraq, our own intelligence officers, feeding us a lot of information. We then had a framework of outside experts looking in as best they could into all the facts. That was a mixed bag as to whether or not they felt there was anything.

KOED: So it gets to the point when you're deciding whether or not to pursue a resolution for force, you sort of have to take a leap of faith at that point.

WARNER: We all took a leap of faith, a leap of faith predicated on the [word of the] director of the agency that had the major responsibility.

KOED: How long did it take for you and the committee to realize that those weapons did not exist?

WARNER: Well, I've forgotten the day we went in, and then there was that famous moment when George [W.] Bush, I think mistakenly, declared victory, but we

lost focus on the weapons because they weren't there. Now, all of a sudden, we owned the territory so to speak—not legally, but we were the conquering heroes. "Bring it on!"

KOED: What were your thoughts when you saw the pictures of President Bush with the "Mission Accomplished" sign?

WARNER: Well, I sort of felt that the military had made great strides, but the rest of it was hard slogging and we never really got it done. So it was weapons of mass destruction. I'm trying to re-roll the Intel Committee now, but I can't think of anything that even approached the seriousness of that. That was the pivotal framework of facts that tilted the Senate by a very narrow vote.

KOED: That, in essence, set the stage for everything that came after.

WARNER: That's right. Don't think that I don't still sit up at night thinking about that.

KOED: You know, you often hear that it's a lot easier to get into a war than it is to get out of a war. Here we are, 15 or 16 years later—

WARNER: Well, we witnessed the night before last when Trump gave his carefully-crafted speech saying we would go back in to some extent and augment our forces. What he failed to bring up—there were a lot of things that he failed to do, but he set that against the context—This is a fascinating story. No one has ever conquered Iraq. No one. Not even Alexander the Great or even the Huns that roared down on him. The Russians paid a heavy penny. I'll admit that our Stinger missiles brought the aircraft down to where they were paralyzed, but—

KOED: They fought in Afghanistan for years.

WARNER: The British finally wrapped it up and went home.

KOED: Yes, that's not a lesson from history that we've learned very well, is it?

WARNER: No. No.

KOED: Time will tell.

WARNER: Time will tell, but your generation—there's hardly anything left of my generation—but your generation is saddled with it. Think of the veterans' hospitals that are still being augmented with wounded and all the other—life, limb, money. The types of money that we have spread abroad on military operations, had it been applied to our own infrastructure, education, road building, all of the things we need to do, we'd be

so further down the road as a country. Now, maybe not much of the world would be in good shape.

KOED: Well, I'm not sure it's in that great a shape even after all the work we've done.

WARNER: Even with all the work we've done. You're absolutely right. Absolutely right.

KOED: Well, let's shift gears a bit to go away from the Armed Services and Intelligence committees and talk about the 22 years you served on the Environment and Public Works Committee.

WARNER: I enjoyed that.

KOED: This is a different part of your career. It has been interesting for me to research this. What attracted you to the environmental committee?

WARNER: Well, number one, I'd have to confess this. When I was working for Nixon for many years—you've got all of that in the tank—I got to know a lot of people, because I traveled extensively and had a portfolio of responsibilities that enabled me to meet an awful lot of people. Among them was a guy named John Chafee who was governor of Rhode Island. Chafee had been a Rockefeller man, not a Nixon man, back when he and Rockefeller were scrambling to see who would get the presidency. [Nixon] eventually prevailed over Rockefeller. Now, Laird is putting together the Department of Defense and he picks me. I wanted to be secretary. He came to me and said, "You know, there's one guy we've got to help get elected to the Senate, so we want to give him the job for a while. He moves on and then you move up." I said, "Okay," and John Chafee and I suddenly were put together. Never in history had two marines suddenly taken charge of the navy. Now, I had been a sailor in World War II. Laird banged his head against the wall—"I wasn't thinking when I did this"—because the navy took great umbrage at having two marines. The navy always treated marines as second-class citizens. But, anyway, we had a wonderful relationship together. He went out and Pastore—

KOED: John Pastore.

WARNER: John Pastore said, "Get out of my way, Governor Chafee," and Pastore whipped him. But he went fighting back, back into the arena, and Chafee won. I can't remember what happened to Pastore, but the opening was there and Chafee won.[20]

[20] In 1976 John Pastore chose not to run for reelection. John Chafee won election to the open seat in November for the term beginning January 3, 1977.

So we became very good friends. Chafee was sort of an outcast in the Senate because he was so liberal and the Republican Senate was pretty conservative. There was old Jesse Helms and McClure and those guys. So Chafee used to say to me, "Please join my committee!"[21] I had always been an outdoorsman. At that time, I still had a big farm and was very close to agriculture and the outdoors. I have always been a gardener. I just liked the environment and I'm one of these people that believed in it. I had been married to Cathy Mellon and she was very much a liberal environmentalist, so I finally relented one day and said, "Okay, I'll join the committee, but mind you, I have a real problem over here at Armed Services." He was overjoyed. I was by his side all this time. That's how it started.

Then Joe Lieberman came along. To this day—others can better articulate it than I—no legislation of the magnitude of the Lieberman-Warner bill [America's Climate Security Act of 2007] has ever made it out of committee and onto the floor for a five-day filibuster.[22] I think [George] Mitchell was the boss. He said to us very respectfully, "It's just not going anywhere. I've got to pull this bill."

KOED: It got to the floor but failed to gain passage. It's interesting to me, as I was reading about that bill and others, that you were an early voice on climate change. How did that come to be? What got you focused on the issue of climate change?

WARNER: I think that much of my experience in the outdoors, and then with the navy, if they don't understand weather patterns, they've got problems. We put a lot of emphasis on studying meteorology in the navy, so the two came together.

KOED: That makes sense.

WARNER: Oh, yes, so I made sure when I was secretary of the navy that all of our meteorologists didn't go for want and that the ships had the best information they could possibly get. What's that song? "We pray to God for those in peril on the sea." Do you know the history of why women christen ships?

KOED: No.

WARNER: The Phoenicians suffered huge losses in their fishing fleets and commercial transit vessels in the early days in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean, meteorologically, is known well for squalls that come up. In 20 minutes, these things suddenly swirl around and your boat is casting itself about the waves and the bottom of

[21] Chafee served on the Committee on Environment and Public Works from 1977 until his death in 1999, serving as ranking member or chairman after 1989.
[22] America's Climate Security Act of 2007, better known as the Lieberman-Warner Climate Bill, was designed to create a cap-and-trade system of limiting greenhouse gas emissions. The bill enjoyed bipartisan support and was reported out of committee, but the Senate rejected it with a vote of 48 to 36.

the ocean is strewn with wreckages of ships. It probably has the greatest concentration of ship debris of any place in the world.

KOED: In the Mediterranean?

WARNER: Uh huh, and so in lore and religion, they recognize the importance of the woman giving birth and only a woman can give birth. After birth, a woman's spirit is always with her offspring, so let women christen our ship to take the concept that they bless this ship and all who serve on it as if they were their children and protect them from the perils of the sea.

KOED: Protect them with a maternal instinct.

WARNER: That's it.

KOED: That's lovely. I had never heard that. Tell me about what became that Warner-Lieberman bill. Did Lieberman come to you and ask you to co-sponsor? Was it the other way around?

WARNER: It was partly both. One of the most famous bills is the one that I put in for George Herbert Walker Bush whereby the Congress eventually, by a narrow vote, authorized him to use force to go to the aid of Kuwait. Dole was then Republican leader and said, "You draw the bill up." I drew up the bill. He said, "I like the bill, now go find a Democrat." I convinced [Lieberman] that it was a genuine case of a threat to Israel, and being of that faith he was very loyal to Israel.

[Interview interrupted]

KOED: You were talking about partnering with Lieberman on the Kuwait resolution, which leads to the environmental bill.

WARNER: Yes, he came in on the bill. He turned to me and said, "What the hell have you gotten me into?" (laughs)

KOED: "I'm new in the Senate and you've gotten me into this!" (laughs)

WARNER: "Half the guys I don't even know and they're mad at me!"

KOED: When it came time to address the climate change issue and you partnered with Lieberman again, did he come to you?

WARNER: He came to me to pick up his chits.

KOED: It was time to collect on the debt. When you partnered with Lieberman on that bill, which comes to the floor in 2008 but you were working on it in 2006 and 2007, it strikes me that you were bucking the party on it, weren't you?

WARNER: Oh, yes, they weren't happy with it. I've always tried to do what I felt was necessary.

KOED: When you are bucking the party, how does that work? Do they come to you and say, "We don't want this bill." Is it quiet or do they yell at you? (laughs)

WARNER: I had one rough instance, only one rough instance, in the history of my Senate career. I liked the man, we were friends, but he was so strong a conservative and he was senior to me. I was ranking on the Armed Services Committee, and he said, "I'll devote the rest of my career to unseat you if you do this." This was a particular thing that I had been working on with Senator Nunn. As it turned out, it was probably the best thing for the country that I stepped aside and [Richard] Lugar stepped in. It became the Nunn-Lugar legislation [Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, 1991].

KOED: He didn't have a problem with Lugar taking it on?

WARNER: He couldn't get to Lugar. Lugar was more senior and he was on another committee.

KOED: What about leadership? Does the leadership bear down on you when you're not toeing the party line?

WARNER: Well, the succession of leaders were men that I knew well. I never had a really strong, personal difference with a leader. They realized that I was one of these guys who was a little liberal for them, but as long as I was there on votes.

KOED: It balanced out in the end.

WARNER: It balanced out. And then, I garnered so much support from the independents in the state. That enabled me to campaign for other senators with their independents. I was able to help other senators because I had such a good record with the moderates who tried to do things with the independents.

KOED: Well, here we are, 10 years after the Lieberman-Warner Climate bill and we still haven't had a substantial climate change bill pass both houses. Why do you think it's been so hard to get that type of legislation through?

WARNER: Let me digress to explain another anomalous situation. I spent a lot of my time fighting to get America to be part of the Law of the Sea Treaty. If you burrow

down, I've spent literally years—in the Senate and in this law firm—working to support it. When it comes down on the conservative side of life, there is almost a feeling that we are surrendering sovereignty, surrendering part of America's sovereignty, if we allow ourselves to be bound by a tribunal—there are certain committees in the Law of the Sea that help to resolve problems, almost like the UN.

KOED: This is an interesting point. There is part of the conservative political philosophy that cannot accept the loss of sovereignty.

WARNER: That's right. And they felt that by acknowledging that there is something to do with climate, that other nations are going to have a voice in and could impact us, that was just a show stopper.

KOED: Which also explains the opposition to the Paris Climate Accord and so forth. Very good. Historically, that takes me back to the debate over the League of Nations in 1919 when Republicans held so strongly against anything that would undermine sovereignty.

WARNER: That's right.

KOED: Interesting.

WARNER: The core of that does emanate from Wilson's struggle.

KOED: You could trace that through all these international agreements through the years.

WARNER: Hey, they could be right.

KOED: Yes, personally, I've reached the conclusion that [Henry Cabot] Lodge was probably right in 1919 in opposing what would have been Article X for the League of Nations, which would have given up part of the national sovereignty.

WARNER: But you've got to take the next step in your history. Lodge finally began to relent, but Wilson was so angered and so sick that he lost the ability to objectively analyze what the Congress was willing to offer him.

KOED: They were ready to compromise and he refused.

WARNER: His bitterness. Too bad.

KOED: There's a whole history behind that.

WARNER: I'd love to be a historian, but I'm not smart enough to be a historian.

KOED: No, I wouldn't agree with that. (laughs) I think you're plenty smart to be a historian. Well, we've talked about climate change, but were there other issues that you dealt with on the environmental committee, issues like water quality or air quality, or was most of that settled by legislation by that time?

WARNER: No, I remember very clearly a weekend when George Mitchell and Chafee—George was on the committee—and the bill on the floor was clean air or clean water and the bill was stagnant. George got [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan and Chafee and me—George kind of liked me—and he said, "Go and write a new bill. I want it on my desk on Monday morning." Mitchell said, "I don't care what it takes, but I want it." Chafee and Moynihan and I looked at each other, and we started writing the bill. I had to stay there for the whole weekend, in the environs of the Senate. Moynihan was clearly one of the brightest men I ever met. Did you get to know him?

KOED: I never met him, but he was a brilliant man.

WARNER: Brilliant man, and he was very self-effacing. He wasn't arrogant about it, except when he spoke, his arrogance was key to his eloquence and his reasoning. He had a little tiny typewriter, slightly larger than this, and only could hunt and peck. (laughs) His hideaway was next to mine. The locus of all this work was in my hideaway and his hideaway, and he sat there and typed the whole damn bill out all weekend long. All three of us, all worn out, handed Mitchell the bill. I don't think he even read it. He said, "Okay, I'm going to go down and pull the bill on the floor and substitute this bill, and it better be right, you jokers!" Sure enough, it passed.

KOED: There are a couple of things you mentioned there. One is that you have three senators there, of both parties, working together to hammer out a bill over the weekend, which I'm not sure happens much anymore. For one thing, you don't get three senators in a room to hammer out a bill anymore. It's all done at staff level, passing things back and forth and emailing. We've lost a part of the Senate that required senators to be in the same room at the same time doing legislative business. I think that's disappeared.

WARNER: We sure worked. But out of that, the bonds between the three of us became very strong. I'll tell you one little colorful chapter that came after that. Moynihan retired from the Senate—I can't pull it all together why. I don't think he was defeated. I think he retired.

KOED: He retired.

WARNER: And 9/11 happened. I remember that the leadership of the Senate put together very quickly a codel to go up the day after, it was literally the day after, and we were taken up on a private train I think.

KOED: To New York?

WARNER: Yeah, to New York. I remember getting off the buses and we were all in tightened security. We were taken right to the site. Smoke was still coming up. They were still dragging out people's remains. Our areas which we visited were carefully roped off and solidly patrolled by security forces. I looked over and there stood Moynihan behind the ropes, his head was bare, he had a little scarf on, and he was just utterly distraught. I broke out of the ranks and said, "Pat, come with us." He said, "The security won't let me come anywhere." I said, "I don't give a rat's ass"—put that in the record—"you're coming." I raised the rope and the policeman saw what I was doing. I scooted him under and he joined us. And he never forgot that act of graciousness. I remember that he was with us throughout all the briefings. Everybody wanted him there. He'd only been out of the Senate a short time. This was his land, his home state. It was so sad. He was a truly beautiful human being.

The magnitude of those men—Moynihan had been in the war as a sailor and Chafee had a very heroic career as a marine in World War II and Korea—they were big men, if there is any definition of big men. They were both very unpretentious. Now, when Moynihan took the floor, people came to listen, no doubt about that. He was rough and tumble on the floor, and Chafee was less so but was a strong voice. There were times when Chafee was virtually ostracized by our caucus and he used to have his private luncheon.

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: Yeah. There were about eight or 10 of us that loyally used to go over and have lunch with him on one of the days of the week.

KOED: He was too liberal for the caucus, so they didn't allow him to come to the luncheon, or did he choose not to?

WARNER: I'm not sure about the nuances of not allowing him, but he was totally out of sorts with people like Jesse Helms and Jim McClure and Malcolm Wallop.

KOED: I remember the day Senator Chafee died. I had only been at the Senate a short while. I saw people walking down the hallway crying. It really came through to me just what a beloved figure he was in the Senate. So many staffers were crying.

WARNER: Very much so.

KOED: Well, let's finish up today on this environmental theme but on a slightly different topic, on something that is close to my heart and is probably close to your heart, too, and that is saving the Chesapeake Bay.

WARNER: Oh, yes.

KOED: That must have been on you radar as a Virginia senator, to bring life back to the bay. Tell me about those efforts.

WARNER: Well, I had been very close to it because we had part of our counties bordering the bay, and the problem was the effluent that was coming down from the cities above, much of it out of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They just use those little rivers as their sewage disposals. It is the most magnificent—there's nothing else in the world quite like it—the grandeur, the environment, the crabs and the seaweed and the rockfish and the migration.

KOED: And its history.

WARNER: And its history. Also, the rivers that fed it from Virginia. One of the high points of my career was that it took 10 years to raise the funds to allow the migrating fish that annually come from the ocean—there's a word for it, I think it's anadromous—the fish that live in the ocean would come to the fresh water to spawn.

In the Civil War, there were a lot of battles over Fredericksburg and Fredericksburg really took a beating. After the war, they were desperate for water to develop the city. The city was pretty well damaged. Someone came up with the idea that they could take wood and dam the river up. They built what was known as a cofferdam of huge trees and dammed the river, if you can believe it. Now, when I'm coming along, that dam's functions were replaced with a cement dam, replacing the wood which requires more maintenance. So now we had a cement dam. We had two dams blocking the river. The dams were very close to each other because it was the narrowest part. The environmental community came to me and I began an intense study on these species of fish, most notably the rockfish, the shad, the eel, certain species of what they call blue cat, and other species that come out of the ocean and go all the way to the Blue Ridge Mountains and drop their eggs all along the way. Then they die or go back to the sea. I remember that I used to go down on Saturdays and be part of the bucket brigade during Shad season. We'd net the Shad, put them in water pail size buckets, a fish or two in each bucket, and carry them around and up a steep hill and dump them above the dam so that at least some miniscule number of fish would continue the natural spawning.

KOED: Protecting the species.

WARNER: I don't know what impact we may have had, but these fish—I think it was in 1868 that the cofferdam was built and this is one of the forces of nature that just spirited me—these fish from the 1860s on hadn't dwindled a bit! The fish would come up and hammer their noses against this cement thing and die by the thousands, fighting to try to find an aperture to get up. I said, "Well, this is a bloody damn mess." So, I began to try to get the Environmental Committee to back me, and the committee backed me. Ten years later, and about $8 million later, I've got a picture of my going down and blowing the dam up. It took another two years to study all the silt and it exposed nine miles of the river that had been covered up. Today, it's regarded as the most beautiful piece of white-water canoeing on the east coast. I'm a hero! They nailed a plaque about eight times the size of that TV, a steel plaque against a granite wall, commending Senator John Warner who liberated nature. (laughs)

KOED: Wow, that's a great story.

WARNER: Yes, that was a crowning achievement.

KOED: And that's just one part of the Chesapeake story.

WARNER: Yes, but I don't think any other river had been that severely dammed. Now, Niagara Falls is Mother Nature's dam, and you have that migration up there, but they have now adjusted it to deposit their eggs just below the falls.

KOED: And the Chesapeake is full of all these species that are so unique to that environment. It's such a treasure for us. Well, that's probably a good place to stop for today.

WARNER: I'm glad we came to that. There's a book, it's written up beautifully, and I have it at home, about what I did. I'll tell you a funny story about it. The chief of the engineers, and I worked with a succession of chief engineers, but they brought a three-star general down to watch me blow the thing up. We had Seals from the navy and they helped go down and wire all the bombs.

KOED: It was probably dynamite.

WARNER: Dynamite, yes. And the crowd was a thousand people all on the banks. On a big megaphone they announced, "One, two, three, four, *five*," and I jammed the plunger down. Now, if you want to know the honest truth, it was a wooden box and the plunger went nowhere. There was a guy over here with a switch. (laughs) So, nothing happened! And the chief of the engineers, I thought he was going to die. He said, "Well, hold on, Senator, I have a whole back-up team." He came back to me in about 15 minutes and said, "Obviously, something went wrong. We are going to rewire the whole thing.

It'll take us little less than an hour." So he megaphoned the whole crowd and not a person left. Then, this time around, I said, "Chief, you do the plunger!" (laughs) He did it and it blew up.

KOED: It worked. Wow, what a great moment.

WARNER: It was a great moment.

KOED: About what year was that, do you remember?

WARNER: Oh, 25 years ago.

KOED: I would love to read about that. I'm a great lover of the Chesapeake.

WARNER: Well, that was my contribution. Now, I'm working on Fones Cliffs, which is a narrow section [upriver from] the Chesapeake. There's a beautiful palisade on one side, goes up several hundred feet, and nothing but marshes on the other side. The [Rappahannock] River is at one of its narrowest sections, probably 150 to 200 yards across, and these migrating fish are concentrated there. The eagles, for thousands of years, in their treks from north to south—I didn't realize that in their migration they do that—they come and fish when those poor fish are fighting to get up the stream. They're all squeezed in and the eagles just pluck, pluck, pluck. Now, developers are trying to take this big cliff and build a golf course on top.

KOED: And that will scare all the eagles away.

WARNER: Well, it will, but the eagles are fine and rookeries are now everywhere. It's come back.

I'll tell you one last story about the Chesapeake. We have a naval facility down there where we actually test our guns, big guns, on battleships and so forth. It was in the middle of the war in Vietnam and I'm secretary of the navy. Members of Congress were infuriated about this war going on and we didn't have any battleships. Well, we had them in moth balls. So the president called me up one day and said, "John, we've got to get a battleship out of moth balls. Let's get two out while we're doing it. Let's refurbish them, get them done, and I'll send them over." So we got the New Jersey and the Wisconsin, took them out of moth balls, rebuilt them, and they were months away from going into battle. I get this call from one of the admirals who says, "Mr. Secretary, we've got a problem." "Oh, yeah, what's that?" He said, "We haven't got any fresh ammunition to put in these battleships that are ready to go to sea." (laughs)

KOED: That is a problem.

WARNER: I said, "Oh, God. Let's get a plant and crank it up." We got a plant and cranked it up, but we were to test the ammo down at Dahlgren [Virginia], at our test station. We finally get the first shells to test and they go down there. I get another call. "Mr. Secretary, we've got a problem." "Oh, what's the problem?" "Well, some eagles have nested along the river and they are an endangered species. The environmentalists are really down here by the hundreds, complaining that you can't test those big shells because you'll scare eagles out of their nest."

KOED: You just couldn't win.

WARNER: So, I hired an ornithologist and everything, but nobody had the answer as to what the eagles would do if a 16-inch shell goes off in the proximity of this rookery. So, I made a deal with the enviro guys. I said, "Look, we're at war. There are men dying in this war. This ship is needed." They complained, "You go somewhere else" and so forth. I said, "I'll make you a deal. I'll come down personally. We'll set up a test and we'll bring in photographers and you can be here. Let's see what the eagles do." So we all get there early one morning and the admiral or captain comes to me and says, "We're all set." I said, "Fire at will, Gridley." *Boom, boom, boom, boom!* These huge guns went off. (laughs) The earth shook under our feet, but not an eagle moved. They thought it was a hell of a show. "They finally blew up some fish so we can get out there." (laughs)

KOED: That's probably what they're thinking—food! Good story.

[End of interview #9]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #10: September 14, 2017

JOHN W. WARNER: My family, my children, and others have pleaded with me to write a book and I'm not going to do it. I told them about you and said, "It's a good oral history." With what you're doing, and maybe I'll write a little bit about some personal things that are relevant to my career, that's for my children.

BETTY K. KOED: I'm hoping that what we're creating here is a good record of your life and career in the Senate.

WARNER: I went last night to the swearing in of the new secretary of the navy [Richard V. Spencer]. That was a job that I just loved. Oh, the people around me wanted to take pictures and everything. We were down at the Navy Yard. I just stopped to think, quietly, that in December of 1944, the Battle of the Bulge was raging in Europe, and I walked down there and in my pocket was my father's signature on a waiver. I was 17 and if you had your father's signature, they'd let you join the United States Navy—right where I was last night.

KOED: You've come full circle, in a way. It must be a mixture of emotions to go through that. It's been a wonderful life, but being secretary of the navy and being in the military is not an easy task.

WARNER: Right.

KOED: Were there other secretaries of the navy there?

WARNER: Two others. Bill Middendorf is an interesting guy. He is a very bright man, an intellectual man. He had a nice career. He didn't get into the fighting. The war was over when he got in. We were both in training during the war part of it, but then the bomb dropped and it was over. Anyway, you get to sit there and wade through my stories. I've looked at your questions and I'm ready to go ahead.

KOED: Okay, let's get started.

WARNER: Oh, by the way, I miss Domenici.

KOED: I was going to ask you about him. Pete Domenici passed away. Tell me a bit about him.

WARNER: Well, he was a man of boundless energy. He was like a dog with a raw bone. When he got something that he felt should be done, he just shook his head and gnawed and followed you all over the floor in the Senate. He would call you all the time, night and day. A lovely man. We all really enjoyed him. He had the sweetest wife. You know, wives in those days played a really important role in Senate life because they would often settle the quarrels between us, have dinner with us. His wife, just everybody loved her. That always made it nice. I've forgotten what was the total span of years that he was there—

KOED: More than 30 years.

WARNER: He was plagued with illness quite a bit, periodically, while he was there, but he never let the illness slow him down. But you knew that he had his bad days and had to fight. He loved his work. He really did.

KOED: When I think of Pete Domenici, I think of his expertise in budget issues. He knew those issues inside and out.

WARNER: Oh, which bored me to death! (laughs) I'd say, "Domenici, if you say this is what I have to do, I'll do it! Go away!"

KOED: He loved the details of that. I have interviewed staff members who have told me that when they think of members with expertise in those issues, he is almost always the one they point to.

WARNER: Yes, he and Bob Dole. Bob was more into taxes. Have you interviewed him?

KOED: The Dole Institute in Kansas did a good set of interviews.

WARNER: They did? How many of these are you working on now?

KOED: We have probably seven or eight going at this time and are finishing up some others. A couple of weeks ago, by remote connection, I interviewed Nancy Kassebaum.

WARNER: A lovely human being. I remember when she came to the Senate, she was in my class and was the first woman to occupy a Senate seat for years, Margaret Chase Smith having retired. I had the privilege of knowing Margaret Chase Smith, because she was ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. As secretary and undersecretary of the navy, I had to testify before that committee. She was always gracious, but good and tough and well prepared. All the boys—and I have to put it in that vernacular—respected her.

KOED: Yes, I'm a great fan of Margaret Chase Smith. She seems to have been a very smart person.

WARNER: Is her record made like this?

KOED: No, we didn't do an oral history with her, but she did create the Margaret Chase Smith Library up in Skowhegan, Maine, after she retired, and they did a lot of work with her and collected interviews. But interviewing Nancy Kassebaum was a delight. She is such a delightful person. I hope to get more chances to interview her.

WARNER: Well, I'll tell you what. I owe her a call. I'll call her up and tell her that you're the best. How far along with her are you?

KOED: Actually, we interviewed her as part of another project. We have a Women of the Senate project, and we're interviewing former women senators to talk about their experiences as women in the Senate. I interviewed her for that, but I would like to do a full set of interviews with her. I think she had an interesting career and I'd love to capture that.

WARNER: Of course, her father [Alfred Mossman Landon] was a colorful person.[23] I'll tell you a short story. You have to suffer through these stories! I was married to Elizabeth Taylor. Nancy and Elizabeth got to know each other quite well. She came up to Elizabeth one time and said, "Elizabeth, I've got a favor to ask of you. It would mean an awful lot to me and to someone I love dearly. My father has a crush on you. Someday, would you and John consider coming to Kansas and do a Rotary speech for me or something, and then come have lunch with my father?" Elizabeth said, "You bet I'll do that." She had some vague idea of who Alf Landon was. So fast forward. The three of us traveled out there. I remember that he lived in a Sears Roebuck house. It was a very simple house, but on that style. He was sitting out on the front porch in a rocking chair as we pulled up. He was so excited to meet Elizabeth. He turned to Nancy. "Now, Nancy, you know I asked you to set this up for me, and I'm going to take Miss Taylor into my den and we're going to have a talk. You and John stay on the porch." Nancy said, "Yes, Dad, whatever you want." (laughs) So Nancy and I were out on the porch. It was a sylvan setting, you know, and we're rocking in the chairs. We noticed that the laughter began to get louder and louder and louder. Nancy said to me, "Oh, my God, they've opened a bottle of whiskey!" They *had* opened a bottle of whiskey and Elizabeth was a pretty good drinker. Dad wasn't supposed to have any whiskey, but boy they were at it big time. Nancy had a fit. (laughs)

KOED: Lots of story-telling going on there.

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[23]Alfred Mossman ("Alf") Landon was governor of Kansas and a 1936 Republican presidential candidate.

WARNER: It was just a jovial buzz they had, but it got louder and louder and louder. Finally, Nancy could hear it all out on the porch and said, "I've got to go check on him." (laughs)

KOED: That was a special day for him. Having whiskey with Elizabeth Taylor.

WARNER: You might ask her for her version of that story.

KOED: I bet you got a lot of requests like that when you were married to Elizabeth.

WARNER: Oh, yeah. And she was good about it. But I was a very eager-beaver freshman and I never missed a vote. Everybody couldn't believe that I got elected to the Senate, not because of me personally, but because I had not come through the traditional chairs. You started in city council, and served in state legislature, and then if you were lucky you got to Congress or got to be attorney general or governor and then, bingo, you hit the Senate. I parachuted in from 50,000 feet right into the middle of the whole thing. (laughs) I hit the ground, scared everybody so badly that they elected me.

KOED: It was surprising. When I was doing some research before we started these interviews, I came across some news articles from the 1979 or 1980 time period. The articles ran along the lines of, first, "Who is John Warner?" and then, "Can John Warner really be a U.S. Senator?" But after a year or so, that completely changed.

WARNER: Yes, I dug in. I had a lot of luck, and then the seniority system kind of cracked. The old guy [Harry F. Byrd, Jr.] was moving on and I just slid into committee.

KOED: One of the things I have in my notes is that you were a junior senator for four years only before you became the senior senator from Virginia. Not only at the state level, but at the committee level, you advanced pretty quickly.

WARNER: Very quickly.

KOED: Today, I thought we might talk about a personal side of being a senator, that is, what it's like to be senator from the state of Virginia. What does it mean to be a senator from the state of Virginia?

WARNER: I tell you, I say with a sense of humble pride, it was special. Virginia occupies a unique place in American history. It's the mother of four or five presidents—I've forgotten the exact number. It contains the largest number of battlefields of the Civil War. More conflicts were fought on Virginia soil than any other state. Senators would come here and they would sort of be in awe of Virginia. Quite a few would try to get over

there to live. I think more of them went to Virginia than Maryland. I don't say that to boast, but they did.

KOED: I think that's still true.

WARNER: Well, now they sleep in their offices.

KOED: Well, for those who do have homes here, I think more are in Virginia.

WARNER: It occupied a special place. One thing that was so advantageous to me was that a senator, if invited, would accept for your events, because they liked to come down. We'd treat them with a trip to Williamsburg. "Come down, bring your wife." It was lovely. "Come for a trip down to historic Richmond. We'll have a tour for you." The War Between the States, however you want to call it, still—people stood in awe of that. How did that ever happen? How cruel it was. All of those issues. So I had no trouble getting senators to come down to campaign for me, or come down just to do charitable appearances and things.

KOED: Something that I never thought about, until just now, is that if you are the senator from Virginia, or Maryland, but particularly Virginia, you also have senators who are your constituents because they live in your state.

WARNER: Oh, yes, that's right.

KOED: I never thought about that before.

WARNER: Oh, yes, I got it. "John, I'm out here and this damn sewer. You've got to get this county to help me get this fixed." Oh, yeah, I had quite a few of those, but it was easy enough.

KOED: They had a direct line to their own personal senator.

WARNER: Oh, yeah. I was sort of an ombudsman.

KOED: Were there certain issues that were particularly prevalent in Virginia that you dealt with that were unique to Virginia?

WARNER: Yes, and that was the balanced budget. It was almost like a cheerleader's song. Wherever I walked in, people loved to balance the budget. We had a governor—a very famous man named Harry Byrd. He was the longest serving. He eventually went to the Senate and I think he chaired the Finance Committee.[24] He

[24] Harry Flood Byrd, Sr., served in the U.S. Senate from 1933 to 1965 and chaired the Finance Committee from 1955 to 1965.

established in Virginia's history "pay as you go." If we don't have it in the treasury, we are not obligating ourselves. And Virginia is very frugal. We managed our debt structure closely. Where Byrd wrecked his machine is when he started that absolute, obstinate, and downright illegal objection to President Eisenhower saying everything is co-equal, black and white, in the schools.

KOED: Yes, desegregation.

WARNER: He started that famous program of massive resistance [to desegregation] which is a blot of disgrace on the face of this state. He stepped down largely for ill health and his son was appointed to fill out the term, then his son ran and got elected in his own right. He was a very lovely man, and wasn't a notorious man like his father. He was very gathered-together, settled. He was also on the Finance Committee. His favorite subject was taxation. He cut his niche in the Senate. He never got to be flamboyant. A wonderful man at heart. I'll never forget when I went to see him just before he died. He was in a wheelchair in his living room, but cheerful as ever. The Byrd family had made quite a bit of money in running orchards. If your apple crate had "From the Orchards of Harry F. Byrd," you knew it was good. They really ran a wonderful orchard. I've got to stray to tell you a little story. When I was 15 years old—this was my first introduction to politics—I heard Byrd, Sr. speak. Did I tell you this story?

KOED: I don't think so.

WARNER: Well, it's worth it. My uncle was an Episcopal minister here in the nation's capital at Mount St. Albans. He was connected with the [National] Cathedral, the boys' school, and he ran St. Albans church there for 39 years. His hobby was fishing. He used to take me fishing, as a young boy, down on the Shenandoah River. My family owned quite extensive properties on the river where I grew up as a boy. He said to me one day that every time there was a thunderstorm, there would be no fishing because of the mud in the water, so we'd have to look at other activities. I was 14 or 15 years old when he said, "Today, young man, we are going up to listen to Senator Byrd speak." Huh? What's that all about?

We had a Model A Ford that we called the camp car, because these were all dirt roads down there in these days. I used to have the job of driving that Ford every day to the spring to get the water for the camp to operate on. We pulled up into the orchard and parked the car. There were probably 400 or 500 people there, basically all rural farmers in bib overalls. Their wives had fixed picnics. It was an occasion. They took an apple truck, one of the old apple trucks, and had built out of apple boxes a podium on the back of the truck. Uncle explained all these things to me. I noticed that everybody else was very rural, but under the trees there were four or five guys in dark blue suits. I said,

"Uncle, who are those fellows, they don't look like they're from around here?" He said, "Oh, they're the elders who support the senator. They're the Byrd machine. That's his political machine." They were very fine men who structured that Byrd machine, controlled the state, and for 100 years there was not a Republican senator. That was the Byrd machine. Well, I was ga-ga. It was such fun. Ladies would offer me a piece of cake because I was a kid, you know.

All of a sudden, a guy jumped up on the back of the truck. "Ladies and Gentlemen, will you welcome the Virginia senior senator, Harry Flood Byrd." All the crowd gathered around and clapped. He came out from under the trees in a three-piece—now this is in July, hotter than hell—maybe a two-piece white linen suit. He waved at people. They put a ladder at the back of the truck and he climbed up on his truck and greeted us. He spoke in a high-pitched squeaky little voice. [Imitating Byrd's voice] "Ladies and Gentleman, I come here today to talk about those few dollars you've got in your pocket, and how those fellows down in Washington are doing everything they can to spend those three dollars or four dollars that you have to pay in taxes. I want to talk about that." That was his theme. Balanced budget. He said, "Boy, bring that big book over here. It's right over there." The boy would go over and he'd say, "Oh, boy, I know it's so heavy. It'll take two boys. Two boys." I'm not sure they weren't persons of color, but they lifted the book back on the truck, put it on the apple boxes, and he said, "This is the budget of the United States! Look at that! This is how your money is spent! Do you understand that? Now, let me show you something." He opened the book and he started talking. "This is a waste. This is a waste. And you know what I'd do with it when it gets there, I'm telling you that I'm not wasting your money." And he'd grab the page and rip it out of the book, make a snowball out of it, and throw it down and the kids would catch it. (laughs) No television, maybe one still camera somewhere, and reporters with hats on and pencils.

KOED: Those little flags in their hats. The old-time system.

WARNER: I met Harry F. Byrd.

KOED: Your introduction to state politics.

WARNER: Now, where was I?

KOED: I've forgotten, because that was such a good story. Oh, some of the issues that were always important in Virginia.

WARNER: Right. Balanced budget, which had its origins in the Byrd machine, and I think the machine prior to that. There was another machine and then Byrd got

control of it.[25] Democrats ran that state until Bill Scott. He took Carter Glass's seat. Carter Glass was of Glass-Steagall [Banking Act of 1933]. He had been in the Senate 18 or 20 years. No, he was up there around 25 years, because I remember when I passed Carter Glass, I then became Virginia's second longest-serving senator.

That was a major theme in our state. I was elected to the Senate on two issues, supporting a balanced budget and a strong national defense. Having been secretary of the navy for five and a half years, I had the credentials to speak from and I had a good rapport with people in uniform. Our state, at that time and pretty much as it does now, ranks in the top five states in America in terms of defense spending. Those two issues catapulted me into the Senate.

KOED: That makes sense and one, national defense, became the core of your career in the Senate.

WARNER: It became the core of my career, but throughout my career in the Senate, more and more senators were becoming interested in national security.

KOED: Oh?

WARNER: Well, they thought World War I was the war to end all wars, and it didn't turn out that way. World War II, we all thought, pretty well wrapped up everything. So many in the Senate, more than 70 percent were veterans, had an interest in keeping America strong. We had a good, healthy military budget then. I worked on it religiously for endless hours.

KOED: That was true even post-Vietnam?

WARNER: That's right, and post-Korea.

So you asked, were there qualities that my state had that helped me and the answer is yes, very definitely. There is no more beautiful weekend than to drive down in the fall with the colors of the Blue Ridge Mountains, or you can get to the ocean. Wonderful.

KOED: There are some things that you did for the state of Virginia while you were in office that I'd like to hear a little more about. One is, you told me the story of how you got the earmark to start the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, you told me that in another interview, but I know that was a long and complicated project to get that completed.

[25] Prior to the Byrd machine, Virginia state politics were controlled by the Thomas S. Martin Democratic political machine, known as the "Martin Organization."

WARNER: Yes.

KOED: Tell me about that.

WARNER: Well, first and foremost, in those days—I think it was every six years, we had a highway bill. Because of my dear friend, John Chafee, who had been my boss in the Pentagon, he was either ranking or chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee. We had this very strong personal tie, having gone through years of Vietnam together and in the secretary of the navy's office, he being the secretary and I his principal deputy. We were conscious of things. He was big on the environment. Somebody put roads and automobiles in that committee. I don't know how it got there, but it was there. As a member of that committee, you got treated generously in your state. And the Wilson Bridge, I picked away at it. First, I got steady money and then finally the bill came along, you know every six years, and I said, "This is the chance to make the big push." I think I told you that I was sitting in Bud Schuster's office.

KOED: Yes, that is a great story.

WARNER: I was sitting with him all night long as one of five conferees. He was chairman and he had two from the Senate and two from the House, one Democrat and one Republican. I think maybe we had three, because Chafee was there. He was a Republican and I was a Republican, but we had some Democrats in there. We had probably five preliminary conferences with all participants, you know how loose they are. Then, there's the tradition where the two managers, the chairman of the conference and the ranking, would simply say, "Alright, there are a few issues left." They always say few when they have pockets full of them. (laughs) "Trust us to do the right thing. Bye, bye, boys." We were having a "Bye, bye boys" final session in Schuster's office at 5:00 in the morning. We finally reached agreement. He said [impersonating Schuster's voice], "You boys have worked hard, worked hard on this, you boys." Everything in the Senate was boys!

KOED: It was mostly boys in those days.

WARNER: Yeah. Anyway, he said, "I want each of you to have a nice program." He had a little pad and he went around the room. He was a big seniority guy, so he went in order of seniority. I was the bottom guy. He turned to me and said, "All right there, young John. How are you, John? You've enjoyed this, haven't you?" "Oh, yes sir, I have." "Well, what would you like?" My partner, John Chafee, wanted bike trails and outdoor hiking trails. That puzzled Schuster to no end. (laughs)

KOED: He didn't understand that at all.

WARNER: "I've never seen the politics in damn bike trails. I don't know how the hell you get any votes for that!" So, he got those. It came to my turn. I said, "I want a bridge." "All right, where does the bridge go?" I said, "It goes to Maryland." "Oh, those two senators with you?" "Yes, sir, they're with me!" "Oh, we'll pick up two senators, too, right. They'll vote for the highway bill?" "Yes, sir, if we can get this bridge in." "All right, how much do you want?" I said, "$900 million!" His pencil stopped. The little pad quivered. I thought, "Oh, dear Lord." Then his pencil moved and he said, "Okay." It was probably one of the largest, single pork grants in the history of the Senate, but it was for a good cause. A lot of members of Congress and staff used that bridge. It was very important to me. We built a beautiful bridge.

KOED: Did you have to go back for more appropriations or did that cover it?

WARNER: Oh, no, we had to go back and get more appropriations, because of the ramp-up and connecting highway system, but much of that was borne by the states. You see, the federal bridge owned by the federal government is from the high-water mark on either side of the river. There is an established high-water mark, and that's where Virginia picks up.

KOED: I didn't know that. It's one of those interesting little things that you never think about. You know, with Virginia—you mentioned before some of the battlefields and such—Virginia has this rich historical heritage. I'm wondering, as a senator from Virginia, how you played a role in that? For instance, in preserving the battlefields of the Civil War or in the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, that type of thing? Were you involved in any of those projects?

WARNER: Oh, very active. I think I put more land into those systems than almost any other senator, because I was intensely interested. It was during my period that we came up with a formula whereby if a battle was fought on a farmer's land—much of it was in the rural part of the state, maybe 80 percent of it—we didn't have to condemn a whole property. As a matter of fact, we passed a law which enabled him to keep his property and for a stipend from the U.S. Park Service, he got a little money to maintain areas of his farm where the battle was fought and to open it to the public for two or three days a week. There was some formula that we had. That saved the feds a huge amount of money to buy the farm and yet they achieved preservation of that land.

KOED: Well, first of all, it would allow the farmer to maintain his own property, but also preserve the battlefield. That's a wonderful cooperative plan. Did you meet opposition for Manassas and such?

WARNER: Oh, yes, we had a lot of it. I remember when Disney wanted to open one of its main theme parks and man was that a battle! You had the commercial side of

the counties down here. “We’ll have more business and more tax base.” And you had the residents and the Civil War buffs. “We’re not going to let this happen!” That raged on for two or three years. Huge amounts of lobbying money was expended. As senator, I kind of danced a little bit on both sides of the issue, you know, and I pretended like I was facilitating a decision—which I was—and finally, we stipulated such strong provisions to protect the Civil War battlefields that Disney said, “Bye, bye.”

KOED: Oh, they just gave up. I sort of remember reading about that battle with Disney. I would think that trying to preserve battlefield land that has been taken over by business or farms or whatever must be an incredibly difficult task.

WARNER: Very difficult. In those days—I don’t know what the volume is now—thousands of people came from all over America to visit the Civil War battlefields.

KOED: Yes, particularly on anniversary dates and so forth.

WARNER: Yes, reenactments and such.

KOED: I was in Manassas two years ago, I think it was, on the anniversary of that battle and there was a tremendous crowd for that. It was very well run and a beautiful space.

WARNER: No disciplinary problems at all.

KOED: I certainly haven’t seen anything like that. What about Jamestown?

WARNER: That was wonderful. We celebrated the 400th anniversary, a year of celebration.

KOED: A year-long celebration?

WARNER: Uh huh. A series of events. It culminated—I remember it as if it was yesterday—with the Queen of England coming over. We had ceremonies in Williamsburg, ceremonies down in Jamestown, and then she visited the capitol in Richmond. She wanted to see the General Assembly building and some of the buildings designed by Sir Christopher Wren. There is a lot of English history. My daughter—a clever girl and a lovely woman—she discovered an artifact that once belonged to Pocahontas. She’s a woman of considerable wealth and she bought it. As part of the ceremony, she presented that to the queen, because you see Pocahontas was taken to England to live.

KOED: That's very interesting. And how do you go about coordinating all of the different agencies that have to come together to make an event like that? To bring the Queen of England over here?

WARNER: Well, I had run the Bicentennial. The state set up its own organization. A wonderful man and a dear friend of mine who just this past week announced his retirement from a law firm down in Richmond, [Frank B.] Atkinson is his name, we gave him the job. He did a beautiful job of coordinating.

KOED: Was it in connection to that event that you received the Knighthood?

WARNER: The Knighthood? You never know.

KOED: They don't tell you why you're getting it?

WARNER: No, but there were several things that I did along the way. One of them was when I was secretary of the navy and the United States finished the first nuclear submarines. The Soviet Union at that time came along not too long afterwards and introduced their nuclear submarines, but we were the only two nuclear powers. Great Britain said, "Oh, we better do the same thing." The technology was super, super, super secret and very closely held and it remained that way for years. Great Britain wanted to build five of them. Do they start from scratch, spend all of that research money to develop this thing, or do we share with them? Well, I wanted to share, because to the extent that they don't spend and duplicate all of the expenses associated with that, they can put that money elsewhere in defense and build their overall defense posture. They're our most trusted ally. If we can't trust them with a reactor design, who are we ever going to trust? Well, Rickover was not in favor it.

KOED: Oh, no kidding?

WARNER: Oh, yes. It took me quite a time to persuade him, but I was secretary of the navy and it was kind of being in the right place at the right time. It happened. Great Britain quietly took that away and never forgot it. And when I ran the Bicentennial, Nixon said to me, "John, this is an interesting assignment. If you don't screw it up"—he used more forceful words—"I'll bet you get elected to the Senate because people will notice." He gave me a beautiful new agency, a huge Watergate complex office, two private houses on Farragut Square for my formal meetings with foreign dignitaries, and a chauffeur-driven car!" (laughs)

KOED: Not a bad job!

WARNER: Not a bad job. (laughs) It came off very well. I always was careful to not allow any rough edges towards England, and we were pretty successful. At that time,

my father-in-law [Paul Mellon] was a personal friend of the Queen's, and through him I had met her when she came down to visit his farm one time. He had a superlative collection of race horses and that's her first love.

KOED: Yes, she's a lover of horses.

WARNER: I'll never forget. We just had a family luncheon. I think there were 12 of us. The kids were told to sit there, be still, and speak only if spoken to. (laughs) So I had gotten to know her.

And there was another chapter that was rather interesting. When we finished the Bicentennial, I set up a trip for her to come over to the United States. I was working with her ambassador, but I did see her once during the planning when I went to England repeatedly to set up her trip. There was a wonderful ambassador. Sadly, I had had a divorce. It was very painful for me, but at that time I was so immersed in all these jobs. As secretary of the navy I was gone for long times.

So, the ambassador called me up. He said, "Now, John, Her Majesty is coming and we're going to give this dinner at the White House." Jerry Ford was president and he was a good friend of mine. Then, the next night, the rule is that the president goes to what's called the Queen's House. We had a dinner for 100. It was Jerry Ford, Rockefeller as vice president, Henry Kissinger was national security advisor. Bob Hope presided over a table. It was a high-powered dinner. He said to me, "I want you there, John. You've got a seat." Then he called me back and said, "Guess what, the Queen is bringing in her entourage a personal acquaintance, a movie star named Elizabeth Taylor. Do you know her?" I said, "No, I don't know her very well. I think I've seen her in a movie or two." "Well, would you kindly escort her? The Queen wants her to be properly escorted."

I'll never forget this. I had this old, beat-up Lincoln that I used to drive back and forth to my farm. It had a lot of dirt in it. (laughs) I pulled up in front of the hotel here in Washington in a tuxedo. I gave the guy $5 to let me park the car for a short time so I could go and pick up a celebrity. He looked at me and he said, "I think I know who you're getting." I went up and knocked on Elizabeth's door. She came down and said, "Where's your driver?" I said, "You're looking at him?" She said, "What?"

She had a very good relationship with the Queen. As a matter of fact, we had a funny incident. Picture this: Ten tables with ten people at each table. She was picked to preside over one table. I remember that Bob Hope's table was next to us. She knew all of the luminaries. The Queen brought over part of her entourage—or he was shipped over here—a Beefeater. You know, one of those huge six-foot-six guys—

KOED: With the big hats.

WARNER: The big hats and everything. All of a sudden, as we're finishing coffee, he strolls out with this huge staff, goes to the center of the room, and bangs this thing. *Bang!* "My Lords, My Ladies." *Bang!* "Mr. President." *Bang!* "Her Majesty invites you to come into her garden to join her in meeting her constituents." There were a thousand people roped off in a byzantine rope line so she could walk through and as many as possible could see her. The ambassador, the day before when this was getting set up, said to me, "John, what we really want to do here, and I think you're the man to do it, let's make sure the evening goes off and there is only one queen, okay?" (laughs) I said, "Leave it to me!" So here we go. Everybody is scrambling around to get in line. Elizabeth says to me, "You're the head of the Bicentennial. You must be in the front of the line." I said, "No, no." She said, "Really!" And her heel came down and ripped her, uh, what do you wear under your dress?

KOED: Her slip.

WARNER: Slip. And she gave a scream. All the audience turned to see and there she was having a—well, I call it a "shit fit." The Queen came over and said, "Darling, my ladies will care for you. You will join us later in the garden." So they whisked her off and I said, "Wow, that was a close one!" But the old butler said—and the butler knew me because I had been up there so much for planning—he said [imitating an English butler], "What can I do for you, sir?" I said, "Get me a brandy and a cigar and I'll just sit here in the library." So, I'm sitting in the library and I hear Elizabeth screaming. She had a scream. She was screaming at the Secret Service guy. "I don't know where my escort has gone, but I'm going out in the garden." The Secret Service said, "No, we've secured the door." So I ran out and said, "Hey, guys, this is a problem."

Have you ever been up to the embassy? They had built a huge television platform to have about eight cameras up on a big platform so they could pan down into the garden and follow the Queen. Well, they had these big doors open to go out into the garden and then they were locked so the cameras could pan down into the garden. Well, suddenly, the doors opened again and out came Elizabeth Taylor on my arm. (laughs) Damn if the press didn't pick it up. "Ah, the grand entrance by Elizabeth Taylor."

KOED: Here comes the other queen of England.

WARNER: Uh huh. So, Elizabeth had a very pleasant evening. I took her back to her apartment and she said, "You know, I'm going to be in town for a few more days." I had talked about my farm and how it resembled the Cotswolds with the stone walls and everything, and she was born up in the Cotswolds area. She said, "Might I call you and visit you?" I said, "Sure. I'm telling you right now that I'm not going to shave for a week. I'm out there with my horses and my cattle. I've finished my job with the Queen's visit. That was it." She said, "Oh, that's all right." So I got the call. I remember that I was

unshaven and everything. I looked up and here comes an entourage of a couple of Cadillac cars and Secret Service. She was somehow given that because they didn't want any incident with the Queen. I had a picnic there, showed her the farm and the horses. And her love was horses, too.

KOED: Yes, going back to childhood.

WARNER: "National Velvet." That led to another visit and another visit and then, one time, I noticed that she brought quite a few suitcases. (laughs) That was it.

KOED: That was a good clue, wasn't it?

WARNER: That was a good clue. (laughs) She was a great character.

KOED: All of these were stepping stones, then, to getting that Knighthood.[26]

WARNER: Yes, it all kind of came together with that.

KOED: What was that like? I assume that you went to England for it? And was there a question about whether or not you could accept a Knighthood?

WARNER: No, there was none. I was out of the Senate.

KOED: This was right after you retired, announced in February of 2009.

WARNER: You never ask and you're never told. There are two categories of foreign knighthoods, level two and level one. I got level one, which is the higher of the awards. You're invited to come when she does a large room full of people, all at one time. You all gather. I think twice a year she confers knighthoods. The ambassador said, "You know, I think she'd do it private, if you wanted to do it privately." I said, "Private!"

So, we were invited to be at Buckingham Palace at a precise hour. I took my wife—only family allowed—I took my wife Jeanne, who was born in London.[27] She is an English woman, fully Americanized. She was born in London during the Blitz. Her father was over there. He was an industrial man, appointed to head a big American corporation. He had to scoop up his wife and child when the bombs started to drop in London and take them home. So she saw a bit of the Blitz at the age of three months or so. Anyway, we went to Buckingham Palace and reported to a lovely lady, who was a lady in waiting. The lady in waiting was so generous. She said, "We are going to be slightly delayed." The hallmark of royalty is punctuality. It really is. I learned that the

[26] On March 17, 2009, John Warner was named Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.
[27] John Warner married Jeanne Vander Myde in 2003.

hard way. We said, “Oh, we’re all right.” She said, “You know the problem is very amusing. Two Corgi dogs out of her six we can’t find.” Jeanne, my wife, said, “I love dogs. Let ’em stay! Let ’em stay.” “Well, Her Majesty likes to do these things rather formally.” “Oh, let ’em stay!”

So, we walk up. They still can’t find the Corgi dogs. (laughs) We go into the Queen’s bibliotheque, which is a nice private library with comfortable chairs. She had a military equerry. She said, “Let’s have the confirming.” Each of my daughters curtsied, and Jeanne curtsied. The military equerry read the citation and she produced a beautiful medal and draped me in it. The photographers took pictures. Then she said, “Now, let’s sit down and have a little talk together.” The military guy left. I think the lady in waiting stayed. Being a little bit pontifical, as I tended to be in those days, I had prepared a few remarks. I went into my pocket and got this sheet of paper out. I didn’t see it happen, but I had the hotel key and it fell on the floor by my feet. I got up and spoke to the Queen. She very nicely replied. We weren’t pushed, but in 15 minutes, we had had enough light talk and we got ready to leave. She said, “Now, Sir John, I think you’re missing something.” “What’s that?” They key was on the floor. She stooped down, picked the key up and handed it to me.

KOED: That’s a rather rare moment.

WARNER: I was so embarrassed. I didn’t know what to do. So that’s the Queen.

KOED: That’s an amazing experience that not many people get to have.

WARNER: No. I’ve rarely worn it. I think I’ve only worn it to two British functions.

KOED: What a great story.

WARNER: There are four or five guys around town. The former secretary of state, the African American—he’s a wonderful man, a general in the army.

KOED: Colin Powell?

WARNER: Yes, Colin’s got one. My father in law had one. But there are very few.

KOED: It’s a rare honor. I remember reading about it in the paper when you got it and thinking what an honor that was.

WARNER: Well, now you’ve got the details.

KOED: Going back to our topic for today. I mentioned earlier that you were only in the Senate for four years when you became the senior senator from Virginia. I'm wondering if that makes a difference. Does it make a difference to be senior senator rather than junior senator from a state? Are there perks that come with that?

WARNER: Well, it does have a significance, because there is a provision in the Constitution in which the Senate has to give advice and consent on ambassadors, judges, and all those things. That implies that the Senate has to make the nomination. Just yesterday, I dealt with this subject. There was a wonderful man who wants to be a federal judge. We have Democrats [in the Senate], but Trump is the appointer. Routine is that senators send to the president their recommendations. Well, here, we have two Democrats and a Republican president, so what happens is that the Republican congressmen in the state can then help the Democratic senators. It really takes the edge off those senators trying to get a highly politicized member of their party on the bench. So, being a senior senator, you sit in judgment on judicial appointments. You consult with your junior senator. You always treat them well—I do. I had a beautiful relationship with all of my younger guys. I served with six other senators. One of the difficulties of my career was that my junior senator kept rolling over, one after another after another.

KOED: Yes, a lot of turnover. I wrote it down. When you came in, you served alongside Harry Byrd, Jr., and then you became senior senator along with Paul Trible, Chuck Robb, George Allen, Jim Webb, and then Tim Kaine. You were the steadying influence there.

WARNER: That's right.

KOED: Tell me about your relationship with them.

WARNER: I had an excellent relationship with them.

KOED: Regardless of party?

WARNER: That's right. I had a credo that I felt that political parties were essential, and they are. I'm quite concerned that America must have two strong political parties and hopefully won't fracture like Great Britain and Israel and others. But your duty is to your country, to your state, and then to your party. That infuriated the elders of my party.

KOED: Some might see that in the absolute opposite.

WARNER: I stuck to that. I was really confronted with it when they had a very controversial man, Oliver North, who was running for the Senate.

KOED: Yes, tell me about that. We haven't talked about that yet.

WARNER: Well, it was a difficult task for me, because he was a marine. I had known him slightly, although I had not been involved in any of his problems when he was in the White House. He did what he did. Then, of course, he was tried and then convicted, but then the court reversed it. I've forgotten the details.[28] I told him, frankly, that even though he was Republican, I felt that I was going to support someone else for the nomination, which I did, a very fine man. But, boy, that was a rough one. The party just went after me tooth and nail.

KOED: Did they go after you at re-election time?

WARNER: Oh, yes. They ran a guy against me.

KOED: Oh, they tried to primary you out.

WARNER: They tried to primary me out, right, but the law of Virginia said that the sitting senator, when he came up for reelection, that he and he alone determines whether he will be nominated by the party or have an open election. I went around the party, which was not going to give it to me, and had an election. I won handily. They kept that law as long as I was there, because I objected to anybody changing that law. They finally revised it, but I've forgotten the details.

So Oliver North is a very interesting man. He had a distinguished career in the Marine Corps, was wounded and decorated, and he had certain virtues. We had quite a severe split and an open primary. What it did, unbeknownst to me, is that I suddenly became the candidate for the Independents. They said that's the type of people I want. That segment of the group grew and grew and grew to where I was guaranteed by both parties re-election to the Senate if I had gone for a sixth term.

KOED: I know people who were Democrats in Virginia who voted for you every time after that, because they appreciated your independence.

WARNER: Oh, absolutely. They did. They came up to remind me of that. (laughs) As I go around Virginia today, they'll say, "Oh, I'm a Democrat, but I voted for you, Senator. I voted for you." I had tremendous margins.[29] Mark Warner came along to run against me and it cost $11 million of his own money. I've been by his side in many

[28] Lt. Colonel Oliver North was convicted of obstruction of Congress, ordering the destruction of government documents and accepting an illegal gratuity following investigation of the Iran-Contra affair in the 1980s, but his conviction was later vacated. All charges against him were dismissed in 1991.
[29] In 1978, Warner was elected to the Senate with 50.2 percent of the vote. Reelection bids resulted in 70 percent of the vote in 1984; 80.9 percent in 1990; 52.5 percent in 1996; and 82.6 percent in his final election of 2002.

joint appearances. He says, “That man taught me the most expensive political lesson of my life.” We have a good relationship.

KOED: Yes, I’ve seen you at events from time to time. When you say that it’s country, then state, then party, I think one of the problems with our politics today is that the priority is inverted, with party coming first.

WARNER: Well, again, it’s essential to have the two-party system, so you can’t have too many John Warners running around.

KOED: Looking back at some of these people you worked with—Paul Trible, Chuck Robb, George Allen, Jim Webb, Tim Kaine—

WARNER: They’re just fine men, and I established close, personal relations with them. I always tried to see that they got a little bit here and there, even though I was the senior senator and my party was in power, and sometimes their party was in power. To this day, we have close, personal relationships—all but Webb. I’m very fond of Webb and he is fond of me, but he just decided to step out of the spotlight.

KOED: Yes, he just moved out of politics.

WARNER: By curiosity, I was secretary of the navy and the Vietnam War was a period of tremendous turbulence in the country. I went over to those battlefields, so to the extent that anyone can see the fighting, I saw it. I visited the wounded in hospitals. Webb got a terrible wound. I didn’t know him, but I did authorize, as secretary of the navy, the awarding of the Navy Cross to him based upon recommendations of other people. The commandant came to me one day and said, “You know, John, you’ve got so many admirals and generals and marines around here, you need some guy off the battle front who can tell you how it is from the grunt. You need the grunt’s standpoint to know what the hell is going on in this fight.” I said, “You know, you’re right. You find the guy and I’ll take him.” And he produced Jim Webb. He was just getting out of the hospital. We became great friends. He worked for me for about two years. Sadly, his wounds were so severe that he could not pass the rigid physical for an officer to be promoted to the next grade and he had to have a retirement.

KOED: As a senior senator, do you have sort of a mentorship role? Do you look out for them in getting committee assignments and such?

WARNER: Well, I did. To some extent, I did do that. I don’t wish to be boastful, but I had a beautiful big home here at that time. Elizabeth had stayed with me for four years and we had a lovely home. We entertained beautifully. I did a hell of a lot of lobbying in my house. As a matter of fact, the Vietnam veterans came to me and said,

“Senator, we want to build a memorial and we’d like to have your help. Would you help us get the legislation?” I said, “Sure.” And [Charles] Mac Mathias from Maryland was a very close friend of mine. Mac and I put in the legislation to build a memorial. We got that going.

Then, we got this gang of just regular veterans—one or two were officers and the head of it was an enlisted man, a corporal—and they had this vision to build this big memorial. It was a risky game. It really was. They wanted to do it all by raising their own money. They didn’t want the feds in there trying to tell them what to do. We went through the very difficult selection process. A thousand different selections were sent in. But I was able to help them get that done. I had a lot of contacts. I set up endless dinners at Mt. Vernon and elsewhere, so my colleagues could entertain. Again, the Virginia senator has a lot of flexibility.

KOED: Again, being from Virginia, you’re close enough that you can manage those kinds of meetings. There’s a great advantage to that.

WARNER: On the memorial, we got the legislation through, so now we had to start getting money. I offered to do the first fundraiser, and I decided to give a breakfast. I didn’t want to get into a lot of liquor and drinking because this was serious business. I must have had—I know Pete Domenici was one of them—10 senators come to my house. We had the top executives from all the defense industries. We had a big house that could accommodate a lot of people. We were having a breakfast. I think we charged $2,500, which was a lot of money in those days. It was a sell-out. I made all the senators get up and talk a little bit about the importance of this thing to American history and everything else.

So, quickly, the maid came up to me and tugged me on my sleeve and said, “Senator, Mrs. Warner is up.” Well, Elizabeth being the Hollywood type, she never got up until mid-morning. She used to say, “My ambition is to always try to be dressed before lunch.” (laughs) She had a lot of funny sayings. I said, “Well, that’s all right. What’s that got to do with this?” The maid said, “She thinks she’s going to come down to help you raise some money.” I said, “Okay, tell her to come on down. I’ll introduce her.” Well, she came down in her nightgown and bathrobe. (laughs) I thought that these guys were going to go ape. They could not believe it. She sauntered around. Everything was kind of loose and the imagination filled the gaps, if you know what I mean. Oh, all these givers were delighted to see her. She said, [imitating her voice] “Now, fellows, this is really important what you’re doing and I want to thank you, but I’m also telling you that nobody gets to leave this house unless you double the amount you’ve given.” She picked their pockets again for another $2,500. Every one of them had to give another $2,500, or it might have been $5,000 and she got $10,000. That story went all over town.

KOED: I bet that got lots of attention.

WARNER: You poor thing. We started with 10 questions and we got through three!

KOED: Actually, these stories are great. I'll end today with this question. When you look back over your 30 years of serving Virginia in the Senate, is there any one particular accomplishment of which you're most proud?

WARNER: Yes, let me think about it a minute. My father was a doctor and I was always very strong and supportive of health care measures. I was always involved in the national security issues. I enjoyed working on the Environment Committee on the clean water and clean air issues, because I love the outdoors and used to be quite an outdoorsman. Before I got to be partially crippled, I crawled through all the trout streams in the west and traveled extensively. I will tell you what I'm also most grateful for was the honor system in my school and how I never hesitated for a moment in the Senate to do what I thought was right. Consequently, I went through without any serious accusations of wrongdoing. I loved the building of the bridges. I built two of them. We put in the Silver Line. I was big on transportation. I remember working with Governor Tim Kaine to get the Silver Line through.

KOED: I didn't know that you had worked on the Silver Line.

WARNER: Oh, yes. It was quite controversial. We ran up against a huge debate in the community. Do we go above ground or underground? There were advantages to both. It raged on for years. I remember telling these people, "You know, folks, I don't think we can hold the subway [funding] line any longer." We were building it up in an escrow account. Finally, the elders on Appropriations said, "John, you've got this year. If you don't get it through, you lose it."

I'll tell you a funny story. Tim Kaine was governor, and I met with him regularly on this along with Tom Davis, Jim Moran, Frank Wolf, all of the delegation. I was kind of the acknowledged titular head of it because I was senior to them. Finally, I sat down with Tim Kaine one day and said, "You know, Governor, you've got to sit with the secretary of transportation and you've got to cut a deal with her. Having us either clapping or pushing back and saying it won't work, you've got to make up your mind and do it. I'll do everything I can to make sure the congressional delegation supports you. You're chief executive. It's your state." Well, he went to see her and they did strike up a nice relationship. I introduced him to her.

KOED: Was this Elizabeth Dole?

WARNER: No, it was another woman, a wonderful woman from John McCain's state, Arizona.

KOED: Mary Peters.

WARNER: Yes, I got to know her quite well and I said, "Governor, do you know what her hobby is?" Tim said, "No, what is it?" I said, "She likes to ride a motorcycle!" He said, "What?" I said, "Yes, a motorcycle. And do you know where she likes to ride it? In our Blue Ridge Mountains. Each weekend, her husband gets a trailer and ties it to the car. She drives the motorcycle down. They have a picnic lunch, put the motorcycle back in the trailer and drive home. Why don't you offer to go down and take part of the picnic lunch? Show her the Blue Ridge." He said, "Well, all right, John, if you say so." Well, it worked. He got the deal.

KOED: It's those kinds of personal connections that can make the difference.

WARNER: It does. To this day, when I see Governor Tim Kaine, now Senator Kaine, he'll say, "Ah, John, I know you love that Silver Line." (laughs)

KOED: There's probably no issue that connects Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia more closely than transportation.

WARNER: I loved the opportunity in the Senate to be of service to men and women in the armed forces and I made innumerable trips and many codels to take our members over to the war-torn regions of the Middle East. I wrote the resolution [for use of force in Iraq]. I think you've got that.

KOED: Yes.

WARNER: Yeah. I'll never forget that. Finally, when Schwarzkopf came back, he came to the office and I made him sign that resolution. He's dead now.

KOED: I would think that one of the many proud achievements you have as a Virginia senator is all the work you did for veterans and the armed services.

WARNER: Oh, yeah, we did a lot. I teamed up with Sam Nunn. Sam is a very important senator in my life. He was senior man on the committee. He was chairman and I was ranking for many years. Again, because my father was a surgeon in World War I, and then he did endless work for draft boards. He worked all day, delivered babies all night, and then he'd go down and examine draftees *pro bono*. I was in that type of family. I enjoyed it, helping those people. Sam Nunn and I put through a famous piece of legislation called Tricare for Life. It gave a solidified, clear commitment to all who wore

the uniform medical care for life if you finished your retirement honorably. Holy mackerel, wives come up to me from everywhere.

Last story. You know, when you're chairman, you've got to be there all the time. The other members will say, "Mr. Chairman, I gotta go" and so forth.

KOED: You see them come and go.

WARNER: Having had a modest military life—I never want to brag on my military career. I did join at 17. I did have the honor of going into the navy in January of 1945 as war was raging in Europe and war was raging in the Pacific. Iwo Jima was going on. Years later, when I joined the marines, I did go to Korea, but I was with an air wing as a communicator. I wasn't one of those guys carrying a rifle. But I never want to boast on that career. I've always said publicly that the military did more for me than I did for it.

So, now, I'm the grand poohbah on the committee and I got to know the role of the military wife. It really is special. You pack that husband up and he goes off on a mission. You don't know if you're going to see him again. How many times does a housewife send a husband to the office with any qualms about his coming home? It's a different world. Those few, very few, who got to be four-star generals, I would insist at their confirmation hearing that they would bring their wife. These women would come with great pride. The officers would be brought up to sit at the dais. I'd interrupt the hearing and say, "At this juncture of the hearings, I would like to hear from your wife. I want the record of this proceeding to reflect certain facts that she and she alone can provide." The generals would look at me, "What's this?" I'd call out, "Mrs. So and So, would you kindly stand? Are you willing to put into the record the responses to my questions?" "Oh, yes, Senator." "Mrs. So and So, how many times in his career of 25 years did you have to pack and unpack and move?" Oh, those women would explode. "Twenty-five times, Senator! I can remember each of them." The record was full of it. That went all through the services and they honored me for that.

KOED: Well, very seldom do spouses get asked those questions.

WARNER: They don't get asked anything! And yet, they've got to keep these people polished, fed, sober, and out the door, and then bring them back home when things haven't gone so well and take care of them.

KOED: When we started today, you were mentioning Margaret Chase Smith. I'll end by going back to Smith to say that back in the 1950s, Margaret Chase Smith, who had sort of an honorary military position as well as being on the Armed Services Committee, did a study to explore the lives of the spouses.

WARNER: Oh, I didn't know that. I wish I had known that.

KOED: It was interesting. The problem was that they couldn't keep people in the military and she investigated and talked to people to try to improve the lives of the wives and family members in order to motivate the soldiers or sailors to stay in the service. That's an on-going issue. From her time to your time, few people paid attention to the lives of the spouses and families.

WARNER: But when women began to come on the Armed Services Committee—I actually appointed the first woman ever to be staff director of Armed Services, Judy Ansley. She went from that job to be assistant national security advisor to President George W. Bush. Yes, very competent woman.

KOED: You were saying women came onto the Armed Services Committee. Did that make a difference?

WARNER: It did. Boy, they bored down into family issues. Hillary Clinton was among them.

KOED: As you know, Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman to serve on the Armed Services Committee.

WARNER: Yes, and then there was a hiatus of years with no women in the Senate. That's why Nancy Kassebaum was so important.

[End of interview #10]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #11: October 4, 2017

JOHN W. WARNER: [Looking at a list of senators] Let me start off with Richard Russell. Richard Russell was the personification of the southern gentleman as well as a historic leader. I've forgotten what year he came into the Senate.

BETTY K. KOED: Well, let's see, he must have come in during the 1930s, because he was there during World War II, chairing the Armed Services Committee. I would say the early 1930s.[30]

WARNER: He was an iconic chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and he set the high-water mark for all that followed in that revered position, not to equal but to aspire to. I knew him when I was undersecretary and secretary of the navy at times when I had to testify before the committee. When I came to the Senate, he was gone, turning it over to his dear friend John Stennis, who was also a very revered, respected chairman for many years.

KOED: Russell and Stennis had a good, strong relationship?

WARNER: Yes. The two men were bonded by the traditions of the South. It's as simple as that. Together with their peers, they had a very formidable group in the United States Senate, if you stop to look at them all.

KOED: It was a time of great southern power in the Senate, especially at the committee level.

WARNER: Yeah.

KOED: Of course, Russell had died by the time you came into the Senate. He died in 1971.

WARNER: Nineteen seventy-one? I saw him maybe just once or twice. I came into the office of undersecretary in 1969. He died in office?

KOED: He died in office in 1971.

WARNER: That's when I knew him then. I thought he had retired, but I was mistaken.

[30] Richard B. Russell, Jr., of Georgia, served in the Senate from 1933 until his death in 1971.

KOED: Yes, he was in the hospital quite a bit towards the end and was not terribly active by 1971. You would have seen him in the 1969 to 1970 time period.

WARNER: Right. I have copies of my advice and consent hearings as undersecretary and then secretary and those always show the members present, and I came up to testify on behalf of the navy, but I wasn't secretary until 1972. He had died. I testified as undersecretary, too, on occasions.

KOED: As undersecretary and then as secretary, did you have a lot of interaction with the chairmen of the Armed Services Committee, whether it be Russell or anyone else?

WARNER: Well, to answer the question, the war in Vietnam was really on a tear—uphill, downhill, sideways—and then the Cold War in Europe with the Soviet Union commanded our attention likewise so we had an unusual chapter of military history with a hot war and a cold war at the same time. The committee was very much revered and respected and quite active in fulfilling its Senate mandate.

KOED: As we move on in our list, next is Howard Baker.

WARNER: Baker was, well the word is "beloved." He was a good, firm leader, but you just felt like you could stop him and talk to him and he would find the time to hear you out. He formed really close bonds with senators along personal lines, as opposed to, say, Bob Byrd, who was a very formal and slightly withdrawn leader. Howard was there. You could talk to him. He had a little mischief in his pocket at all times. (laughs) I'll tell you the deal he had on me. I was married in my first couple of years to Elizabeth and she became very close friends with Howard Baker's wife, first wife.

KOED: Joy Baker.

WARNER: Joy. Elizabeth would complain to Joy Baker about my making every single vote. It didn't matter what was happening, I was going to get there. I had a 100 percent voting record. I'd get up from the dinner table, run out and jump in my car, and drive back to the Senate. I wouldn't leave on weekends. When the Senate had any business, I would stay, and she loved to travel and do things. It got a little abrasive. Well, through the wives' circuit, from my wife to Howard's wife, they got him to pull off a deal. It occurred under these circumstances. It was around mid-day and the Senate was ripping along on something. Howard came up to me and said, "John, I can't leave the Senate Chamber. There's too much going on. I'm due to give some remarks down at this organization. If you could just go down and possibly ad lib my remarks and hand my speech out for the record down there, it would help me enormously." I said, "Oh, Mr. Leader, I'm honored to do so." I skipped on out. I came back and noticed that the bell

system indicated that they were going to go into recess and all the members said that we just finished several votes. I said, "What?" "Yes, we had two votes. Nothing of any importance, but we had two votes." I said, "Oh, damn, this breaks my record of 100 percent." I'm not sure which year I was in of my service, but I had never missed a vote. Well, as it turns out, I met Baker and he said, [imitating Baker's voice] "John, you know we've got to keep the wives happy, oh boy. The votes mattered not. The relationship between me, my wife, and your wife matters greatly, so bye-bye. You'll survive." (laughs) There were only one or two senators who had a 100 percent voting record. Proxmire was one.

KOED: William Proxmire still holds the record for consecutive votes. That also shows the power of the spouses' network. I'm not sure it's quite as powerful today. It also makes me wonder about the scheduling of votes. Today, the votes are very scheduled, so everybody knows just when a vote is going to happen.

WARNER: They do that so they can spend maximum time on the phone raising dollars.

KOED: So that's very different from the way it was when you came in.

WARNER: Oh, yes, it was catch-as-catch-can. One other Baker chapter. You remember him for certain things. One time, it was the 50th anniversary of the Churchill College in England, and the Churchill College was part of Cambridge, so it was a very prestigious event. I filled in for Howard Baker to give the speech on the 50th anniversary. He dispatched me to Cambridge to give the speech. He said, "Here is my speech. You can use as little or as much of it as you wish, but just make sure you give a damn good speech. You'll be remembered for it." I remember that I spent hours on the plane going over, working on it and working on it. A prestigious event. As a matter of fact, they gave me that cane you see here. So, that's Baker. He was very thoughtful and took me under his wing and let my career prosper.

KOED: Next on our list is Bob Dole.

WARNER: Bob Dole was like the elder brother that I never had. We had the bond of World War II, which I played a very minor role in. He, of course, was a distinguished soldier, severely wounded, leaving him partially crippled for the rest of his life. That accident occurred, I think, three weeks before the war in Europe ended. He was in Italy and fighting the Germans who were retreating out of the boot of Italy. He was badly hit.

I remember that Bob Dole took me and four other senators on a trip to Europe one time. We included a visit to the exact site where he was shot and he showed us the little

stone wall—it's still there today—behind which he was dragged and left by his fellow soldiers. They were fighting so fiercely that they couldn't get a corpsman right away. They were defending their own lives, but they did help him to get behind this little wall. Oh, my, the local townspeople gave a beautiful luncheon with a band and placards and all kinds of festivities.

KOED: How would you compare the leadership style, between Baker and Dole?

WARNER: Well, Bob Dole gave me many things to do, too. Bob didn't have quite the degree of warmth that Baker had, but he had a sense of humor that few in the Senate could match.

KOED: Yes, it's rather legendary.

WARNER: Oh, it was. He could make a crack. On the spur of the moment, he could always think of something funny to say.

KOED: That's a great talent.

WARNER: And he had his mischief in him. One afternoon, a late afternoon in the Senate, he was running around. He said, "I'm recruiting you." I said, "What are you recruiting me for?" "I got a plane at National Airport. We're ready to jump in it and we're flying down to one of the Carolinas to do a campaign speech for this colleague who [might get] elected by a narrow margin. I'm taking A, B, C, and D with me so I thought I would grab you, too." I said, "Leader, whatever your wish is, I'm doing it." So we ran out and jumped on a jet plane and flew at top speed.

I can't remember the race now, but I think the guy was filling an empty seat or something. I remember that we got in police cars and were escorted with sirens running to the event. We barely got there. There are six of us there, and Dole lined us all up like Ducks on a platform. (laughs) No chairs, nothing. We were all standing. He said, "Each one of you men has got four minutes. Tell a story about how it is and why we need this individual to join us in the Senate."

Well, the crowd had been there a long time, waiting, and people were filling in with songs and quick speeches, but they were very enthusiastic. Dole started it off and the others banged along. No one talked for four minutes, but took five or six or seven minutes. He had to whack them off. He did it in order of seniority and I was the most junior, so I was the last speaker. You could tell that the crowd was getting weary, but he turned to me and said, "Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have your last speaker, but guess what? He doesn't have to speak." I'm thinking to myself, "Well, where is this going?" He said, "I wanted to bring him down just so you could look at him! Let's figure

it, he's Elizabeth Taylor's sixth husband!" (laughs) And I waved at the crowd and they roared with laughter. Bob said, "That's the end of our dog-and-pony show. We're heading back to the plane and flying back to Washington." (laughs)

KOED: That made you a novelty of a sort, eh? That sounds like Bob Dole.

WARNER: Just like Bob Dole.

KOED: I don't have this person on your list, but I'd be interested in hearing your thoughts about Strom Thurmond.

WARNER: Okay, let's finish with him. Who's next on your list?

KOED: Robert Byrd.

WARNER: I was very admiring from the early beginnings of Robert Byrd, until the day he died. I'll never forget—I hadn't been in the Senate but two or three days as a freshman senator and I had seen him at a distance but I hadn't met him. The secretary came in and said, "Senator Byrd wants to see you in his office." I thought, "Oh, my God, what the hell have I done now?" So I ran down and with very gracious old-time southern hospitality he said, "Oh, Senator, please be seated here." He had a habit of always going to get a chair and fumbling around with it to give to you. He did that many times. He said to the secretary, "Let's bring our senator a cup of coffee, please." He sat down. He said, "Now, John, I'll tell you, I love this United States Senate. You know, when I first came here I didn't have a degree, but I went to law school at night. My dearly beloved wife"—and he did love that wife—"she would come to the Senate and bring me a little paper bag with a Swiss cheese sandwich and a little bottle of milk in it. That would be my dinner before I left the Senate to go to law school." He told some interesting stories about his childhood.

Here were are, sitting there, two senators, and I'm saying to myself, "This is interesting." Then he said, "Now, let's get down to the point of the matter." He had a big map and he rolled it out. He said, "That's the Blue Ridge Mountains!" I said, "Yes, sir, I spent my boyhood youth in those mountains. I fished on the shore of the Shenandoah River and went to Washington and Lee University, which is at the bottom of the mountain range. My father was a Virginian through and through. He also went to Washington and Lee, graduating in 1903. He taught in a one-room boy's academy up on the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains, right there on the border with West Virginia." He said, "Oh, that's an interesting bit of history. I'll have to research that for you."

Now, he said, "You know, those mountains are just filled with some of the most precious people in the Virginias." He always said "the Virginias." He said, "We were

once one state and we got separated into two because of the stresses of the Civil War." He said, "Now, John, these people by and large are people who don't have very much at all. Very little money. Very meager homes. But they're rich in one way"—I remember he raised his voice—"they're rich as you can possibly be in one way." I'm saying to myself, "Where are we going now?" He said, "They're rich in their love for those hills. Some of those hills are on the Virginia side of the mountain, and some of those hills are on the west side of the mountain." He had a tremendous command of voice. He could raise it, lower it. He punctuated with his voice. He was gifted. His voice would drop. "John, you and I have a duty to care for those people, just care for them as much as we care for yours in the capital of Richmond and I in West Virginia. And what it does for you and me, my friend and our new senator, is that you and I, from this moment on, *on*, are bonded like brothers!" "Yes, sir." Dismissed. Thank you very much.

And we were bonded like brothers, certainly in terms of taking care of those people. We were always together [on that issue]. We had our differences later on, but he loved the Senate so much that he wouldn't go home. I remember that on Friday afternoons, as the last of the bed-check votes were taken and the Senate would collapse, I'd get this call. "Would the Senator kindly come and debate on the floor on this particular issue?" So I used to go down and by the hour debate an issue with him. Most of them were national security related issues. He knew that was where I was on *terra firma*. He said, "I'm always on the learning curve. I can learn from you, Senator. I can learn from you." A lot of senators would come in and sit down to listen to it. Staff would flow over. By the time we got into late afternoon, quite a few people were around. It was a legendary series of debate. And then you'd get the call to his office. You'd go over and have a cup of coffee or a little sandwich with him. I got to know him very well. We settled many a problem in his office. He was a good listener, but an equally forceful speaker.

KOED: Did you ever collaborate on legislative issues that affected the two Virginias?

WARNER: Oh, yes. [Imitating Senator Byrd:] "The Virginias will never be for want, son."

KOED: Sounds just like him. (laughs) He was remarkable in many ways. There were few who had more respect for the Senate than he did.

WARNER: Very few, if any.

KOED: Moving on with our list, we come to George Mitchell.

WARNER: George Mitchell was one of those men who darted in, did a very fine job, and darted out. It was a phenomenal rise to authority, but I got along with him very well. [Elaborating on an earlier story] I remember we were on, I believe it was either clean air or clean water. It was one of the major pieces of legislation that he put up. He made no bones about it. He was an environmentalist. We served together on the Environment and Public Works Committee and he used to say to me, "I know this subject like you know national security, and therefore we can learn from each other." And we did.

Anyway, there was a bill on the floor, one of the landmark bills that had a major legislative advancement on the subject of clean air or clean water, and the bill was bogged down. It wasn't necessarily a filibuster. Everybody was trying to push and pull, make a division, and we had been on it for a week or 10 days. It was Friday afternoon. He sent for John Chafee who was either chairman or ranking of the Environment Committee and I was chairman of one of the subcommittees. He sent for the two of us, and he sent for Pat Moynihan and I think one other senator. He said, "Gentlemen, sit down. It's Friday afternoon. I want you to write a whole new bill. You can take parts of this, but a whole new bill, and one that you believe will get to a full vote on the floor. I'm going to be around, so if you need me I'll be there, but I need you to write that bill. My intention is on Monday to let this bill be argued another day, but I'm pulling it down on Tuesday morning and supplanting it with your bill. I want a bill that could pass."

Well, we looked at each other. We knew what that meant. We were going to spend the whole weekend in the Senate. Pat had a little hideaway up on the third floor. I knew it well because I had the hideaway just down the hall from it. In that hideaway he had a small Remington typewriter, and in the times when I would visit him, he would do only "hunt and peck" with two fingers, but he could move that machine like you wouldn't believe it. We started in and he typed up every word of that bill on that machine. I'm writing, Chafee is writing, and we put together a whole new bill and gave it to George Mitchell.

I remember that I was a director of the Washington Redskins football team. Long story, but I held a piece of land that the owner of the team wanted. I finally sold it, but as a condition he gave me six seats in his box and a parking spot next to his and a pile of cash. I was expected to be in the owner's box for this ballgame and here I was sitting here [in Moynihan's hideaway office]. I scurried around and found an old TV set and set it up. We watched the Redskins with one eye and wrote a bill with the other. That bill went to the floor, was argued for three days, and passed with a strong vote.

I don't know if it was before or after that incident, we had a defense bill on the floor. No, no, it was the resolution. George Herbert Walker Bush, upon the grievous

event of Saddam Hussein invading Kuwait and setting fire to every well he could possibly find, the whole place was smoking, people were being shot and killed, women raped. It was just the return of the Huns, it was so bad. The United States is always thinking, "Let's have a cease fire to talk it over." We didn't get a cease fire. Well, Dole came up to me and said, "John, you're the ranking member of the committee. Write the bill." So I wrote the resolution [for use of force in Iraq], working with President Bush's staff. We put it together. At the end, he came to me and said, "It's good. Very good. But you've just got a handful of Republicans sponsoring this, co-sponsoring it." I said, "Well, there aren't many Democrats out there who are going to give it any support." He said, "Go find one. It's important that we at least give a semblance of bipartisanship."

Well, it was a Sunday afternoon. We had been on this thing Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and I had to wait until the next day when the Senate came back to find people. I had tried Sam Nunn. No. Sam was not only going to vote against me, he was going to fight me on the floor. He was chairman and I was ranking. It was respectful. Sam and I had a very respectful relationship. George Mitchell said, "This bill won't pass. I'm the majority leader of the United States Senate. Good luck, John, but you're not going to get this bill through." Then I had President George H. W. Bush calling me up. "How soon are you going to get started?"

Finally, we got into it. I think we debated that bill for four or five days. I remember that Al Gore was the last one to come and say, "Well, if you give me a little time here, I'll vote for it." Well, I found some time. He did, he voted. But I got Joe Lieberman first. I said, "Joe, look at Kuwait. Saddam may hit Israel next." He was genuinely worried about that. We won that by five votes. Imagine—the right to send U.S. troops to fight Saddam Hussein with an allied coalition that G. H. W. had put together. It was a remarkable several days of debate with a narrow vote. And Nunn, boy, he sweated it out. The eyes of the world were on the Senate and we won. We got the bill through and the president was very grateful and the rest is history. Boy, ol' Joe would come up to me afterwards, wink at me, and say, "Don't call me for any more of these wild votes." (laughs)

KOED: It's quite remarkable when you think about it. George Mitchell was against it. Sam Nunn was against it. So, the majority leader and the chair of the Armed Services Committee was against it, and it still managed to pass.

WARNER: And it was probably some of the most dramatic television you've ever seen, with all these oil wells burning. Prices of gasoline were going up. Photos of the raping and the killing. The pall of smoke over everything.

KOED: It was awful. It burned for days and days.

WARNER: When I took the first codel over, the oil wells were still burning. They hadn't had a chance to put out the fire. Who's next?

KOED: Next in line is Trent Lott.

WARNER: A very interesting man. I was supportive of him, but to this day, I can't understand how, through a rather long relationship with that senator from Vermont—

KOED: Jim Jeffords?

WARNER: Yeah, he got to the point where this senator just didn't come to the Senate anymore. He didn't come to the lunches. He felt he was being drummed out of the party. We only had a one-vote margin. All of a sudden this senator announced that he was going to resign from the party. Trent kept the screws on this guy so hard that he cracked under it. He flipped. I was chairman of Armed Services and I lost my chairmanship. I lost everything. Here were all these Republican chairmen and we allowed Lott to do this thing.

KOED: Is there anything you could have done to stop it? Just to add a little background here, when that weird 107th Congress began in 2001, the Senate was split 50 to 50, so you were just one vote ahead. Lott and [Thomas A.] Daschle had come to this power-sharing agreement that stated if the majority shifted, if one person changed parties in other words, it could change the majority status. So the mechanism was there for it to happen, and then the Jeffords' switch came along. At that point, with Jeffords on the fence, do you think there was anything that you or your colleagues could have done to keep him from switching?

WARNER: Well, in my many conversations—and Domenici I remember was particularly helpful—Jeffords had said to me, "Oh, well, all right, I won't vote today." So we backed him away from the trough a couple of times. I think we had reason to believe that we might be able to back him up again.

KOED: Okay. And you think that Trent Lott was particularly instrumental in him making that switch?

WARNER: If he had given the poor guy some reassurance and shown some measure of understanding. I don't remember the number of things that he and Lott were differing on, but it was more that he felt that Lott was constantly brow-beating him, or ignoring him and not taking his views into consideration. The fellow wasn't really well. We all knew that. It required a special sensitivity, but Lott just drove the truck right into the ocean.

KOED: What was it like in the caucus the day after that happened?

WARNER: I don't remember, but it sure was dismal. We were in such disbelief.

KOED: What about Trent Lott's counterpart, Tom Daschle?

WARNER: Let me go back to Howard Baker for a minute. Howard Baker had what he called the College of Cardinals, and that was all the chairmen. Before the traditional Tuesday luncheon, it was an absolute, 100 percent requirement that each cardinal be in his office for a 10 or 12-minute meeting where he'd summarize issues he was going to bring up and where he needed their support. That was a very effective organizational structure, but I never experienced that level of regularity and depth of sincerity in any other leader since him.

KOED: That went away with Howard Baker.

WARNER: I'm not so sure that the old Schmooze might have done it, too.

KOED: Yes, Everett Dirksen might have done that before him and Baker picked it up.

WARNER: He understudied Dirksen.

KOED: Well, leadership style changes so much over time. What about Tom Daschle? Did you have much interaction with him?

WARNER: I liked him. He seemed to incur an awful lot of wrath on our side and contempt. Each of these majority leaders has his own following on both sides of the aisle, but I liked him. I crossed the aisle to help him once or twice, but there were not many others for some reason.

KOED: This is a time, too, when it was becoming increasingly polarized along party lines. That made it harder for people like you to cross the aisle.

WARNER: I'm trying to think, was Byrd gone?

KOED: Byrd was still there. He died in 2010.

WARNER: He was a leavening agent.

KOED: He was. We lost a lot of the old bulls around that time, like Ted Kennedy. They were all sort of leavening agents, I think. That brings us to our modern leadership. I know this goes beyond your term of service, you left in 2009, but we've had

the pair of Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell. Do you have any thoughts about them that you'd like to share?

WARNER: Let me start with old Mitch. I'll never forget, Bob Dole came to me one day and said, "I need a big favor from you." I said, "What's up, Leader?" He said, "I'm recruiting a new guy to come to the Senate, and he's one of the smartest politicians that I've ever known. I'd like to have him go on the Rules Committee." I was very senior on Rules. I wasn't ranking yet, but I was moving up. In a couple of years, I was going to get either ranking or chairman of that committee. I said, "Bob, this is my first breakthrough out of the pack to be a chairman." "John, this is so important. Take what you want. I'll give you what you want." I said, "Well, we've got a hell of an energy crisis going on right now and I've got coal colliers backed up in Norfolk harbor for as far as you can see. I think I better go on the Energy Committee." He said, "Oh, by the way, you're a local Washingtonian. I'll give you something that you might like and you're cut out for it. I'll make you one of the Smithsonian regents." I thought that was okay. I'm a bachelor now and my whole life was the Senate, so I was doing whatever I wanted to do whenever I wanted to do it. I liked being a regent. The chief justice was chairman of the board. There are only two Senate appointments and two from the House. I enjoyed that. But I lost my seniority on that committee. I should have preserved it, but I didn't. I didn't even know you could do that at the time. Stevens went on as chairman, then I had to wait out Stevens, and then my first chairmanship was Rules. That was delayed a couple of years.

KOED: But Dole wanted to put Mitch McConnell onto Rules?

WARNER: He put him on, because that committee had tentacles that reached into the Senate. We did a lot of things. It's not like the House Rules Committee, but it was a good committee. I enjoyed my three or four years as chairman, along with old Wendell Ford. He had a cigarette in his hand the whole time he was there. I was a young chairman.

Harry Reid? Interesting man. I liked him. I liked all of them.

KOED: Looking at this list of people, all of whom had strong leadership roles as majority or minority leader or as committee chairman, are there one or two that stand out to you as being particularly strong leaders in the Senate?

WARNER: Obviously, Bob Byrd and Howard Baker and Dole. Actually, they were all strong leaders. When you get to Daschle and Lott, I had been there so long that the aura of leadership was gone. I had gotten used to it. You don't have Stennis, but he was never leader.

KOED: Yes, other than Russell, I was focusing mostly on party leaders, but Stennis was important as a mentor and as chairman.

WARNER: At one point, he chaired Armed Services and chaired something on Appropriations.

KOED: Now, we can move onto some of the senators on the list or wait until next time.

WARNER: Chafee was truly the big brother I never had in life. As total strangers, we met each other in ’69 after Nixon won that presidential election. He was a liberal fellow and was a Rockefeller man. Nixon, to the day he went to the grave, never cared for Rockefeller. There are a couple of reasons. Nixon was a self-made man.

KOED: They had very different backgrounds.

WARNER: Yes, and he had all the aura of the patrician. He was a wonderful man. I was privileged to know him quite well. I’ll tell you how I got to know him. I was secretary of the navy and Nixon called me up and said, “You like that Naval Observatory, don’t you?” I said, “Yes, it’s very historic.” He said, “Well, I want the CNO’s house for the vice president. I want you to vacate it, clean it up, and turn it over to Rockefeller.” Oh, God. I had to dump the chief of the navy out of his house. Well, we finally put him over at the old naval hospital where there are some beautiful quarters. Happy—Happy Rockefeller—came by, took one look at it, and is alleged to have said, “I don’t like this paint. I don’t like that.” The Rockefellers proceeded to remodel the whole thing to their tastes. They did so at their own expense. They had the dough. I don’t think he ever moved in.

KOED: I think it took so long to remodel that they never lived in it.

WARNER: Never lived in it. So Chafee was a Rockefeller man. When we were putting together the Pentagon staff, Mel Laird was secretary of defense, and Chafee had a very distinguished military career. Laird said, “Now, John, I know you’re a Nixon man. You worked your tail off for Nixon for years, in ’60 traveling with him all the time, in ’64 when he ran for governor, and in ’68 running the Washington office for him as chairman of Citizens for Nixon/Agnew.” He said, “I’m going to send all the damned wannabe politicians to you. I’m going to have a small staff in New York to run this campaign, but you pretend like you’re running everything.” He put Agnew’s office in with mine. He put Eisenhower’s son next door. I could write the book on that one.

Anyway, believe me, Laird had wisdom. He was a seasoned congressman. He understood the press. He was on the [House] Defense Appropriations committee for

years, in the minority of course. He loved the Pentagon. He was a superb secretary and I stayed with him all four years. He said, "As soon as Chafee gets in—he's going to run for the Senate and it'll be 18 months—then he's out and you're up," and that's the way it was. John Chafee was a big brother. He lost. He ran again and won. Lo and behold, he encouraged me to run and I followed him into the Senate. Once in the Senate, he said, "You've got to come on the Environment Committee. I'm your buddy." I said, "But I'm on the Armed Services Committee." "Well, you can stay on Armed Services." So I joined the Environment Committee and stayed on that for years.

KOED: Another long-time colleague of yours was Carl Levin.

WARNER: Just a truly beautiful man. He was every inch a Democrat, a very partisan Democrat, but partisan-fair. We formed a close, working relationship as chairmen, rocking back and forth, on Armed Services Committee. Carl was on the other side. He and Sam Nunn.

KOED: You must have traveled with them a lot.

WARNER: Yeah. Nunn and I traveled together. We both took our codels. Most codels were tilted towards one party, but we both took our codels. He was a beautiful human being. We never undercut each other. We were perfectly fair with each other.

There is something that I want to add here. Sam Nunn was a special guy. He was partisan, very much a Democrat, but a fair one. He ran the committee with a fair hand. He always gave the Republicans what they needed and their fair share. Then we had the really tragic chapter in Senate history when one of our fellow Armed Services Committee members, a senator named as secretary of defense, John Tower. We made a pact between the two of us that we would do it absolutely devoid of politics. We were both bitterly criticized by our colleagues. "What do you mean? Ram Tower through, for God's sake, he's one of ours!" The other side was just as vicious, because Tower had tread, not lightly, on the toes of many members of the Senate. Also, I don't think he ever aggressively or distastefully treated a female senator, but he was not the most friendly with them. John had been through a couple of wives and played around outside the court, and the women had their antennas up.

KOED: There were quite a few votes against him.

WARNER: But Sam was bitterly criticized by Republicans as really bringing him down. I fought for Tower as vigorously as I could, although others thought that I didn't take out the long knife and bring Nunn down. It was not a happy period in the Senate.

KOED: Especially considering that Tower was a former senator, and usually those are pretty easy confirmation processes, but that was a difficult time. But it didn't test your relationship with Nunn?

WARNER: Well, to finish the story. We made a pact between the two of us that in the investigatory period, we would do it fairly and objectively and collected all the evidence that was relevant, but let the senators make the decision. We didn't write the partisan report. It was a fair and objective analysis, then each of us appended our own opinions—I was for it and he was against. We were called into his office by Tower, as a courtesy, and closed the door on the three of us.

KOED: Nunn, you, and Tower?

WARNER: Yes. One of the accusations against him—and there was a considerable amount of evidence because one of his own staff members in a rather unthinking and unguarded way talked about his work as a field man for Tower. There were periods in there when he saw alcohol used to an excess, but he said the next morning that he was fine and no need to worry about that. Somehow, you got the feeling that with John that the old barley corn got to him now and then, and that worried Sam. It really did. So, here's Tower, he brought us into the office and we sat down. He said, "I'll address this question, all the questions." He said, "The only thing I drink now is a glass of wine. Will you guys join me?" I look at Sam, and Sam looks at me. I'm not sure what we did, but that snapped in Sam.

KOED: That's a telling statement.

WARNER: I'm not sure why he did it. He really let his heart out. "I've made mistakes, but after all, this is Senate tradition." Sam and I went quietly back to my office, I think, and I said, "Sam, I guess we've come to that juncture where we've got to split the sheets. You've got to do what you think is best for the Senate, and I've got to do what I think." We shook hands. Up to that point, and in the fact finding, it was total. Nothing pulled out. He was fair. But he really took it on the chops.

[Looking at a list of senators] Joe Lieberman was just a loveable man. We put in the last, major environment protection bill. I saw a lot of him. It's interesting how he bonded so well with McCain in later years. I saw that coming along.

Charles "Mac" Mathias.

KOED: A neighboring state senator.

WARNER: We worked together very closely, particularly on issues relating to D.C. and the Mall. D.C. had no representation. He was very liberal. I don't remember

him beating the tom-tom for D.C. to have senators, but we would respond to the calls and needs of D.C. I tried to do that throughout my Senate career. The apogee of our working together was when we teamed to put together the legislation to help the Vietnam veterans to put up the memorial. He had been a young naval officer in World War II. I don't know that he saw a lot of action, but he was very proud that he was called the boot ensign of a battleship, the *USS New Jersey*, a brand new battleship. The boot ensign is the most junior in all the members on the ship. He often got from fellow officers a lot of teasing and the dirty jobs.

KOED: He was the bottom of the totem pole.

WARNER: Bottom of the totem pole, but he and I worked as a team to do everything. We went through all those contentious fights. The veterans were penniless and I gave them one of my offices to meet in.

KOED: No kidding?

WARNER: Yes, broke the Senate rules and let them have it. They were fellow veterans. I felt very strongly, having been secretary of the navy for five years, that I owed it to that generation. So I did that. I remember a fellow named Jan Scruggs. I used to say, "You've been sent from Heaven. I don't know who you are, but they sent you here to do this." He was just a corporal in the infantry and had been wounded. It was his idea. Everybody couldn't figure how this little, scraggly guy would pull it off, but he did. He came to me right after Mathias and I got the legislation passed.

KOED: On the Vietnam Memorial, I know there was a lot of opposition to the memorial. Was that because people had such mixed feelings about the war, or was it the design?

WARNER: There were mixed feelings about the war and about how to do it. I remember that Ross Perot was one of the big supporters. Then, when we went through that most difficult task of selecting from, I think, 2,000 or 3,000 submissions, pro bono architectural submissions, here is this 19-year-old girl, Maya Lin, that won it. Ross took one look at that thing—and he had given us quite a bit of money—and said, "That is a black scar on the face of the earth and I'm out of here." There were a lot of people who thought it was just terrible.

KOED: So they hated the design of it.

WARNER: Just terrible! Well, it ended up being the second-most popular site. We got it up, but then there was the argument that there was nothing that showed military. So, quickly, I thought, "What the hell are we going to do?" So we got the guy

who did the Iwo Jima Memorial, he was still around, and we quickly put together three heroic infantry figures and put that there. That knocked down enough the opposition.

KOED: That gave it a touch of the traditional memorial.

WARNER: That's right. I remember that I was one of the speakers at the dedication. With each breath I drew, I'd say, "I'm glad it's over."

KOED: What about Ted Kennedy?

WARNER: Ted was a very dear friend. I had known his brother slightly. He was a year ahead of me in law school. We used to go over to Bobby's house to play football. He had a nice little house somewhere off-campus at UVA. In those days, I was living hand-to-mouth in the University of Virginia Law School on the GI Bill. My mother was widowed. We had little, but I wasn't complaining. I remember going over and Ethel would always say, "Icebox is full, boys!" (laughs) It was full of beer, cold cuts, and so forth. They were lovely people, much liked. Then I got called back into the marines late in my second year in law school, so I didn't see Bobby. He had gone on to graduate. So then I met Teddy through Bobby. I think I first met Teddy down there. He came down to visit his brother. Once I got to the Senate, we became good friends. Elizabeth kind of liked him, and he liked Elizabeth. Boy, that friendship grew and grew and grew. There wasn't anything that we couldn't settle together.

KOED: That's not surprising.

WARNER: I used to go sailing with him. I remember one time going sailing with him—he was a good sailor and he loved his boat called the Mya—and I was married to Jeanne now. There was Jeanne, my son who is a good sailor, my daughter Virginia I think, and one of his children, and we were sailing off of Cape Cod. The hourly steam boat that sped over to Nantucket Island was plowing ahead. Ted said, "Oh, he's got to give way to me." Well, he didn't, under the rules. I mean we almost collided with it. That thing would have ground us to bits.

KOED: Yes, those boats are huge.

WARNER: Poor Jeanne. She was kind of new to the marriage—I think we were married then—she never forgot that. But we lunched with Ted and did parties with him. We had a very close, working relationship. He was on Armed Services and was a perfect member while I was chairman. Marvelous days. I have wonderful memories of him.

KOED: How would you assess him as a legislator?

WARNER: Brilliant. He was iconic in many ways. He didn't trade on his brother—you might say brothers, but mostly the president—but we all knew there was an aura about the Kennedys in those days. Jackie was quite a figure. I knew Jackie very well. When we were young teenagers, we went to a house party one time. I escorted her to a house party, I remember, down at Gibson's Island. I just drove her down and back, but I got to know her. She was an absolutely beautiful girl. We never thought we'd see each other again. In later life, she had a home down there. Her home bordered my property. I sold them some land to make a bigger plot to put a house on, because I knew her well and I had known the president. Anyway, the tragedy happened. They only occupied the house, I think, for two weekends and they never went back. It languished and went on the market and some guy bought it, then I finally got it away from him and sold it to the deputy secretary of defense, Bill Clements. I was working for Bill in the department of defense at that time. And he enjoyed it, loved it, and fixed it up.

KOED: That shows how interconnected this world is.

WARNER: Yes.

[End of interview #11]

JOHN W. WARNER
United States Senator from Virginia, 1979-2009
Interview #12: November 9, 2017

BETTY K. KOED: It's good to see you.

JOHN W. WARNER: It warms my heart to see you.

KOED: This is our 12th interview today, so we've done an even dozen.

WARNER: And every one of them has been a pleasure and a joy.

[Discussion of process]

KOED: A lot of the questions I have today are sort of looking back, looking at how things have changed over time. Before we start with that, to pick up where we left off last time, I wanted to talk a bit about your impressions of some of the presidents that you served with through the years.

WARNER: I'd be happy to do that. I guess it started probably in May of 1960. I was in my fifth year as an assistant U.S. attorney. I was trying a lot of cases. If I may say, I was very skilled. I say with a sense of humility that I enjoyed a lot of success before juries and in trial courts. My boss, the senior U.S. attorney, a tough old guy, called me into the office. He was an old-fashioned military style man. He ran a tough shop and we were doing tough business. We were prosecuting people for murder and dealing with death penalty, serious business. He said to me, "Warner, what have you done now?" I said, "What do you mean? I haven't done anything." He said, "I just got a call from the attorney general of the United States. He wants to see you!" I said, "What? I don't know."

I knew of him, but I'm just a lowly grunt down in the first ranks of his infantry. "Well, I don't know either, but I sure as hell want you to come straight back to see me after you see him." His name was Bill Rogers. He was a long-time personal friend of Richard Nixon's and Eisenhower's. Eisenhower had made him attorney general of the United States and Nixon was vice president then. This man was going to take over a good deal of the management of Vice President Nixon's campaign to become president. So I called him up. We chatted and he said, "I'd like to have you come see me." I said, "Fine, I'll make an appointment." He said, "The appointment is now. Get up here right away." The courthouse is right down there, so I ran across the street to the Justice Department.

I had never been in the attorney general's office, which is a big, huge office with a big desk. He was in there by himself. He said, "Sit down, young man. I'm helping the

vice president put together his campaign staff and I'm looking for men"—it was men, I'm more sensitive about this issue now—"men who can be aids to Nixon and help him in the following way. When he takes his trips out to the states, he takes a very small entourage with him. He always has his Secret Service officer, which is required under law to guard the vice president, and his secretary and an advance man, which is a young person who goes out to the state, plans his visit to the city or cities if he does more than one stop"—usually they did just one stop in each state—"and then the advance man stays there, wraps up the details, thanks the people, then skips over to another state where he'll pick up with the vice president again." They stopped at three states a day, easily. He said, "I'd like to have people who work with security, the FBI, local police." We worked with them all the time, all kinds of security. That's part of the U.S. attorney's job. "I need someone who is good on their feet and can talk." Well, I talk in the courtroom. "We need some military experience, because that helps. I need about 10 of these guys."

Well, I sat there and talked with him quite a bit. He said, "You know, I think you've got the right stuff. We're moving very fast. I'd like you to go see the vice president today. He's up on Capitol Hill." I'm sitting there thinking, "Dear, God, what world am I in?" I'm sitting with the attorney general and he's sending me up to see the vice president.

The vice president has an office right behind the Senate Chamber. I hustled on up there. I identified myself to the guard outside the door. He said, "Let me check." He came back and said, "Yes, they're expecting you." So, I walked in and Nixon was sitting in a chair like that and his feet were on the desk. He was on the telephone. I'm thinking, "Why didn't they have me wait outside?" Over in the corner was his chief of staff, a guy named Bob Finch, who had come from California. He had run Nixon's campaign when Nixon campaigned with Ike for the presidency. I'm sitting there listening to this conversation. Can't believe it. He hung up the phone and very politely introduced himself. We talked and he asked quite a few questions of me. When he finished, he turned to me and said, "I think you've got the right stuff. I hope you'll join me." I said, "Well, I have to sever my connections downtown and talk to my wife and family." He said, "Why don't you come to the White House and work on my team for a while so you can get to know me and get to know the set-up and meet the president, because the president always has a hand in the campaign."

So, within a few weeks I had finished up my trial. My boss was dumbfounded. I took a leave of absence. I don't know if I had to resign. I can't remember that. It wasn't a government appointment, so I think I had to resign. I came back to the U.S. attorney's office when it was over.

KOED: So, that's how you got involved in the Nixon campaign.

WARNER: Yes, and I'll finish up that story. One afternoon, I'll never forget, there's a famous club called the Propeller Club out on the west coast. One of the governors or senators was giving a speech. I wrote a speech on the Propeller Club for Nixon, wrapped it up and gave it to the secretary. I suddenly looked at my watch and realized that I hadn't had much to eat, so I decided to go buy a hot dog. I walked out of the gate of the White House, having turned the speech in to be typed, and literally jaywalked across Pennsylvania Avenue to get over to a little soup and sandwich shop down at 15th and H Street. It was my fault, really, I just wasn't looking, and a pickup truck hit me from behind and flipped me up on the hood and my head smashed his windshield.

KOED: Oh, my gosh!

WARNER: The driver of the truck, understandably—poor fellow—panicked. I'm on the hood of the truck with my head jammed partially through the windshield. It took him moments to come to consciousness and stop the vehicle. He stopped the vehicle right in the middle of the intersection of 15th and New York Avenue. My first consciousness was coming through—this was the first week of June—and seeing all the women looking out of the office buildings, out of their windows, and of this parade of ambulances and rescue squad coming. I just came to for a minute and I heard this old fireman say, "Get the scissors. I've got to cut his pants off. He's bleeding to death." I had a terrible gash in my leg, in an artery down there. I remember saying, "You can't cut my pants off. Look at all the people looking at me!" He said, "Kid, it's either that or you're going to be dead."

So, they patched me up. Next thing I heard was sirens. I said, "Where am I going?" He said, "D.C. General." I said, "Oh, no, I was a U.S. attorney. That's a dump." And it really was a meat factory. "My father was chief of medicine at Doctor's Hospital, which is right here on I Street." I can hear the guy say, "Hey, engine man, turn the damn thing around. We're going up to I Street." So they went up to I Street and the nurse came running out. She said, "Oh, no, don't bring him in here. We don't do emergencies anymore. We've discontinued it." Well, I didn't know that the hospital no longer did emergencies. With that, I passed out. Next thing I remember was coming to and asking the doctor, "Am I all right?" He said, "Yeah, you're all right, but it was a close call." He said, "I was walking out of this hospital, having finished my operations for the day, and I saw you being brought in. I inadvertently looked at the toe tag." He was the chief surgeon at [George Washington] Hospital, which was the next hospital down the road. He said, "You're the son of Dr. John Warner and he was my professor of surgery, so I decided to go back in and sew you up, kid, and not let some intern do it."

KOED: He may have saved your life.

WARNER: So the chief surgeon saved the leg. Small world. I went back to the

White House. Somebody had to take over my job, but they put me on the road. I started traveling with Nixon.

KOED: That's when you started traveling with the campaign. We've talked about that.

WARNER: Yes, and I use this for the following setting. He lost in 1960, but we kept in contact through the years. He put me back on again, but this time my wife said, "I don't want you to get on the road again. You were gone. I have three little children." I told Nixon that and he said, "Okay, I've got the job for you. I'm going to run a big headquarters in Washington, but I'm not going to be in it. I'm going to New York to be in the Pierre Hotel in a small suite of rooms. You go out and rent the biggest office building you can find in Washington.

KOED: This is when you got the Willard.

WARNER: I got the Willard, and I just came from the Willard just now, from a luncheon where I spoke.

So I got to know Eisenhower just slightly, with a little bit of contact there, but then we brought him back, brought Eisenhower back when Nixon was tanking in September. He had an accident and a door smashed his knee and he was hospitalized and we lost momentum. I handled the planning of all the business with Eisenhower. That's where I had an opportunity to meet him and speak with him, so he was the first president I met.

Then, we lost that election, but I had known Bobby Kennedy in law school. He was a year ahead of me. By this time, I had been married into the Mellon family for about eight years and they were friends of President and Mrs. Kennedy. I got to meet the president and Jackie, although I had known Jackie as a teenager. So, in a way, I knew President Kennedy, although not well. I remember this very clearly, that even though I worked hard for Nixon, [Kennedy] invited me and my then wife, Cathy Mellon, to one of his first White House dinners. That was my first White House dinner.

KOED: What about Lyndon Johnson? Did you have much interaction with him?

WARNER: No. I met him once or twice, but I knew very little about him. Who's next?

KOED: Nixon, and we've talked a lot about your time with Nixon and Ford, so why don't we move to Carter. How about Jimmy Carter?

WARNER: By that time, Nixon had made me head of the Bicentennial. I have to

tell you, as I look back, that was one of the most interesting jobs I ever had. Number one, no one had ever had the job before, so I wrote my own ticket. Two, I had a chauffeur-driven car and had the most beautiful offices of anybody in Washington. I had a suite in the Watergate office building with about 400 people in it, and I had a private office. Two of the houses on Farragut Square were given to the Bicentennial to entertain and greet the heads of state and government, and 22 of them came to visit the United States. They sat there fairly empty and inactive, but I occasionally would use the office there. So I met Jimmy Carter when I went down to Georgia, because I visited all 50 states. I would call on the governor.

KOED: Yes, he was governor at that time.

WARNER: He was governor, and he was overjoyed to meet me because I had a check. But through the years, I didn't have much to do with Carter.

KOED: And Carter was near the end of his term when you came to the Senate, so there wasn't that much of a crossover.

WARNER: No, but we had a relationship when Nixon had appointed me as secretary of the navy. I saw him in that context. He was a submariner, you see, and a graduate of the [Naval] Academy, so I can't say that I knew him well, but I did work with him once or twice. And the next one after that was Reagan. I got to know him quite well.

KOED: Yes, you've told me some great stories about that. You no doubt dealt with him on Armed Services issues, too.

WARNER: Oh, yes, he was good. I remember that he called me up one day. "John, I've got the impossible mission." I'm now in the Senate. He said, "You know this new airplane, the AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System]?" which was one of the biggest airplanes ever built. Its sole mission was to containerize a lot of electronic gathering gear. The plane went up to 30,000 feet, circled around, and could literally almost listen to that telephone. It was invasive and it was good. The signals from my phone, so to speak, went up to that plane and they would monitor some of the calls, but the bulk of it was sent back electronically to a headquarters and it went through all this stuff to sort out the wheat from the chaff.

KOED: What did he want you do with the AWACS?

WARNER: He wanted to sell them and Israel went ballistic. But Reagan said, "You know, Israel is Israel, but we've got to begin to let these Arab states—and they've got the money to pay for this thing, which was huge and costly, and it'll help pay some of our bills on this airplane." So Sam Nunn, who was chairman of the committee and I was

ranking at that time, we got that thing through Congress and that was a major legislative accomplishment, because Israel was knocking and kicking the doors down of every member of Congress. "Don't let that thing come into the hands of these Arabs." Well, they containerized it. No other Arabs got their fingers on it and the Saudis were respectful.

You know, with the impeachment of Nixon, which never came to a head—he resigned—but in that context I got to know his successor. Jerry Ford and I had met. Did I tell you the story about meeting on the train, when he turned to me and said, "Well, if you get fired, I get fired"?

KOED: Yes, we have that story.

WARNER: We became great friends. Ford was so interested in my work on the bicentennial that he opted to personally come down to the steps of the Capitol where I took the oath of office in front of the Senate and the House on the Capitol steps. It's a great picture. He and I became good, fast friends. Who's next?

KOED: We've talked quite a bit about Reagan, so what about George H. W. Bush?

WARNER: Well, he was my savior.

KOED: In what way?

WARNER: I'll tell the first story. He was president. I had met him through the years. Of course, he had been vice president and I had called on Reagan in the White House a number of times and met him. He called me up one day when I was ranking on the Armed Services Committee. He said, "Iraq has invaded Kuwait and it's a terrible war. I want to send in the U.S. troops, but I don't want to do it unless Congress approves of it." Under the War Powers Act and the Constitution, only Congress can declare war. I said, "I understand that." He said, "All right, I'm talking to the majority leader of the Senate"—George Mitchell—"and he turned me down." He then called up Bob Dole and Dole and I met with him. He said, "I want to get this thing done." Dole said, "This is going to be tough." I remember Dole turned to me and said, "But this guy next to me is tough, Warner." Bush said yes. And Sam Nunn was against me. So I had the Senate majority leader and my chairman against me. Dole said, "You've got to get a Democrat to support you." I said, "Get a Democrat! The whole place is against us." He said, "Get a Democrat. It's your job!"

KOED: Oh, this is Joe Lieberman.

WARNER: Joe Lieberman. Israel was all for us getting in because they wanted to

containerize this guy, and at the same time they didn't want to start themselves with a war. So we drew up the resolution and it became Warner-Lieberman bill.

KOED: Did President Bush lobby people to support passage of the resolution for use of force?

WARNER: Oh, he did. "Who do you want me to call, John?" We only passed it by five votes. So, that's that story. Next?

KOED: Bill Clinton.

WARNER: Well, Bill Clinton I got to know. You see, I was on Armed Services for 30 years, and for 17 was either ranking or chairman. I would have to look at the dates, but I was in one of those positions during his presidency. Along came the war in the Balkans. I remember going to see him about it. He called us up. Sam and I went up there, along with other chairmen and ranking members of Appropriations. "God," he said, "I didn't even know these places existed!" We chuckled. Except for Tito—Tito ran Yugoslavia—we didn't know anything about them. He used to have all those people with the bit in their mouth.

KOED: So much of it was behind the Iron Curtain for so long, and Americans generally knew very little about the Balkans.

WARNER: They couldn't have cared less. The ethnicities of those countries weren't popular when they came over here, the Serbs and so forth.

KOED: And Bill Clinton, when he became president, had not traveled a lot.

WARNER: The worst was George W. Bush, who had never been out of the country except once.

KOED: Right, to Mexico.

WARNER: But Bill Clinton was a fast learner. He really brought the Congress in, because he was uneasy. He saw the need to send troops and he really weighed in hard to get a full understanding of it. One night, he called the four of us down to the White House. We had been working with him for a half hour or so and he said, "Hey, you guys, stay for dinner with me. Hillary has gone to bed and I'm by myself." We said, "Okay." So we break for supper and they bring in big plates. The entire plate was covered with steak. It was the biggest steak I ever saw in my life. It was dripping off the side of the plate and the vegetables were in little dishes. Clinton tore into that thing. He did everything but pick up the T-bone and chew on it. (laughs)

KOED: He was known for his appetite.

WARNER: We gulped down huge steaks, had a drink. He was actually very easy to work with and it was fun. He's a fun guy.

KOED: That doesn't surprise me to hear that. And he is a very curious guy.

WARNER: We saw Hillary on the sidelines. They had a lot of charm to them.

KOED: It sounds as though, in terms of foreign policy, that he really sought out your expertise.

WARNER: He didn't know anything. He was an Arkansas hick.

KOED: He had not traveled much. It is encouraging to hear that he did seek out expertise.

WARNER: There's no question about it, he had a lot of capabilities, but he had enough smarts to know that he didn't know everything—unlike our current guy [Donald J. Trump] who claims to know everything. Everything.

KOED: How would that contrast, then, with George W. Bush?

WARNER: Well, George W. Bush I had gotten to know because of his father. He knew of my great friendship with his father, George Sr. At some point along there I named an aircraft carrier.

KOED: For George H. W. Bush?

WARNER: Yes, and that solidified us with iron glue, Gorilla Glue. He introduced me a month ago at an event we did for [Republican gubernatorial candidate Ed] Gillespie. He said, "There sits the man who cast the greatest honor on my father, John W. Warner. He had the fortitude to fight off the admiralty and everybody else to name an aircraft carrier for an old junior naval aviator, George Herbert Walker Bush." We became good friends. We remain friends and I see them occasionally.

KOED: Did you have much interaction with President Obama? You left office as he came in as president.

WARNER: I knew him in the Senate. He reminded me of this one time after he became president. He said, "You know, you were one of the few" —I remember he said this—"one of the few southerners who reached out to me." I used to try to chat with him a bit. I was chairman of Armed Services and on the Intel Committee, and I talked to him

about foreign policy on occasions. I just, basically, like the man. I was amazed that he got elected.

KOED: It was such a quick accession to power. He's a very bright person.

WARNER: So, that's all the presidents.

KOED: That brings us up to today. I won't make you comment on today's president.

WARNER: I'll comment on it. I was concerned about Trump from the beginning. I went out and supported Tim Kaine, my friend, [for vice president] and I'd do it again tomorrow. I had the famous line, you know, that I was taught as a sailor, "Loose lips sink ships." I've never seen Trump, but I bet someday we'll bump into each other and he'll say, "Oh, you're that guy"—

KOED: We'll have to wait a while to see how this comes out. Let's talk about your 30 years in the Senate, and how the Senate changed over that 30 years.

WARNER: I tell you that I really believe that one of the reasons it has changed is, understandably, the attrition of the number of veterans. We had a certain common cohesiveness and a mutual respect for each other. That's one of the main reasons. But the question of civility. You know, I went to a funeral service yesterday, right here on Capitol Hill, for Pete Domenici. He was very much liked by fellow senators. He was that sort of guy. There were three or four of us there who had retired.

KOED: Why did you decide to retire?

WARNER: I saw some of those old senators and I looked at them with great compassion. Obviously, Strom was one, but there were several others. John Stennis. The old guy from the west coast, Magnuson.

KOED: Warren Magnuson. Some of them stayed in until their 90s. Robert Byrd.

WARNER: Byrd was, I think, good at his game almost to the end, but there was one guy who really convinced me and that was the old fellow that ran for reelection and never even went home to run. He used all of his previous campaign pictures and got elected. He's from one of those states—Wisconsin, Michigan.

KOED: I'm wondering who that was? So he never really campaigned.

WARNER: No, he didn't have to. He used his old pictures. It was a joke in the Senate. You and I will remember his name.

KOED: We'll figure it out. [Quentin Burdick of North Dakota]

WARNER: He was really the clincher. He's dead now, otherwise I wouldn't talk about him. And, then, I just felt like maybe it was probably the right thing to do. Byrd, Sr., hung on.

KOED: Old Harry Byrd. He hung in there a long time.

WARNER: Harry Byrd died in office. No, he resigned, and they put young Harry in. He was ill. One senator, Carter Glass of Virginia, was bedridden for I think a year or a year and a half, and those stories hung in my mind. I thought it was wrong for the country and it was really wrong for you to do it. I have a terribly strong conscience. I gave a speech this week—I'll tell you about it in a minute. I had this lovely wife, still have her, and we talked about it quietly. She said, "I'm going to do what you want to do." She carefully never tried to weigh in on either side. I said, "You know, we're happy together and I'm kind of tired of fundraising and doing those obligatory things." A lot of my friends were passing on.

I didn't finish the Domenici story. I was going to tell you, there was only Lamar Alexander, the woman from Maine—

KOED: Susan Collins.

WARNER: And the woman from Alaska—

KOED: Lisa Murkowski.

WARNER: And Pat Leahy was there, and that was it.

KOED: That was it? Really?

WARNER: That was it, and four or five retired senators.

KOED: That is surprising to me.

WARNER: I was stunned!

KOED: Senator Domenici was a very respected member of the Senate.

WARNER: He was one of the pillars of the Senate.

KOED: Particularly on budget issues.

WARNER: Stunned! And the church was right next to the Dirksen Building.

KOED: Right on Capitol Hill. That surprises me as well. No one from leadership was there?

WARNER: [Nodding no]

KOED: That goes back to your point of the civility of the past breaking down. At one time, the entire Senate would have been there.

WARNER: Have you ever seen the film of me at Washington and Lee?

KOED: I don't think so.

WARNER: I went to Washington and Lee University this weekend. I hadn't been back since this happened. About five years ago, I was invited by the president to come down and receive the school's highest award to an alumnus. They only give it out maybe once or twice a year. It's a lovely little statue of George Washington called the Washington Award. Well, I was highly flattered. I had retired when I went down. Lee Chapel is a beautiful little chapel named for Robert E. Lee. It seats probably 170 people. The place was packed. A famous professor who had been there 40 or 50 years, in retirement now, was given this award, too. The president said to me, "Now, John, when you get up, don't feel constrained. Just saw a few words."

Well, there are strange instincts in those of us who are in public office. I couldn't define for you what they are, but I know them when I see them. I got up and thanked the president for the award and started talking about—I got to talking about how much the school had done for me, and for my father who had gone there 50 years ahead of me, and how it was a pillar in my life. Suddenly, it came into my mind that I had adopted the honor code. Washington and Lee, not when it was founded, but a 100 years ago adopted it. Through the years, I have tried to promote it for other colleges and it's been very effective.

I got up and I said, "You know, in the life of any senator, there are moments of sadness and none are greater than when you have to sit in judgment of your own." I talked about the impeachment proceedings. Someday, somebody ought to write those things up. It was like the lights went off. It wasn't the friendly, jocular spirit prevailing in the Senate in those days. We all looked at each other and we were very close to the chest. Nobody went around lobbying, "I'm going to do this. Come, vote with me." They took unto themselves their own views and locked them up. I said, "You know, I often think, but for the honor code and Washington and Lee, I might have made a mistake or two."

Suddenly, that audience became electric, as if there was a huge magnet, they just leaned forward in their chairs. That was like throwing gas on a fire for a speaker. Hey,

you got them! They love you! And I ripped into a discourse of some of the interesting chapters of my life in the Senate. I had that audience. There's only one thing like it, a Sunday in a black Baptist church. Unbeknownst to me, some kid had a camera—it was supposed to be off the record—and he recorded the whole damn thing. He leaked it to a few friends and they leaked it, and next thing I know I got a call from the alumni director. "Oh, Senator, we are very saddened to tell you that someone did this and it's just gone viral all over the campus." Well, I didn't say anything but probably would have said in public. "Don't worry about it. Don't sweat about it." They were so apologetic. Two months later, I got a call from the alumni director. "Senator, you wouldn't believe this, but this thing has gone all over the country and people are looking at it."

KOED: I'll have to look this up.

WARNER: He said, "It's out there. Would you give us permission to make CDs? We'd like to sell it to alumni for $100 a copy." (laughs)

KOED: A good fundraising tactic.

WARNER: They fundraised a hell of a lot of money. They did it. It's on Google or whatever.

KOED: I'll have to look that up. It sounds like you pinpointed the impeachment—I assume you mean the Clinton impeachment—as kind of a pivotal moment.

WARNER: Yeah. It's only about eight or nine minutes. I was down at Washington and Lee this weekend for a group of alumni—you had to be in your 80s, men who had been out 50 years—they brought back some of the old-timers. They played it for them. I swear, you've got to see these 70-odd, 80-or-90-year-old men and they loved it. So the alumni director got up and said, "Talk about it a little bit." Well, I got up and I had them swinging on a pole. I added a few more paragraphs to it. It was fun.

KOED: What a good story.

WARNER: My God, you've gone through some suffering.

KOED: No suffering whatsoever. Let's finish with this question. Looking back on all this, when the next Congress begins, if the Senate asked you to come and speak to all the new freshman senators coming in, what sort of advice would you give them? What would you tell them about being a U.S. senator?

WARNER: Well, I have to be candid with you. I'd probably turn down the invitation. I'm quite distantly removed from it. When I meet one of them, they always

say, “Oh, I’ve heard about you.” But beyond that, there’s very little identity. If I did it, I would try to describe the ever-growing pressures of the job. However, in my time, they were offset by the wonderful joys that we had together. The codels—

[Interview interrupted by a knock on the door.]

KOED: Let’s finish up. I asked you what advice you would give to freshman senators. You said, if you did do that talk, and then we were interrupted.

WARNER: I would have to express to them my sadness that they apparently are not getting the joy out of this, a bank to carry them in the lean years ahead of them when they are old-timers and have nothing to do but look back. Something like that.

KOED: You don’t think they have the camaraderie, the joy of the work?

WARNER: And it shows once they get out in the hustings. I had my rough spots on the weekends when I went back home, but by and large I could take an audience and when I walked out of the room, having finished my appearance, have a good feeling about it. I didn’t do that solely for the purpose of trying to get reelected, but to make them feel good about themselves and their participation in politics. They left their suppers to come to the meetings and so forth. There isn’t a square foot of Virginia that I haven’t been on and that I didn’t like. What a beautiful state to represent. In other words, when I walked out of that room, it was a warm feeling. They may have come in there to chew my tail off about not voting strictly one way or the other, on right to life for example, you can’t satisfy some folks. You’re either for it or agin’ it and there’s no in between, but you have to deal with that challenge.

KOED: Do you think it’s a very different Senate now?

WARNER: Yeah.

KOED: And the schedule is very different. You were around a lot more, frankly. Of course, you only had to go home to Virginia, which wasn’t that far way.

WARNER: That has its advantages and disadvantages.

KOED: Now they’re here on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and then they’re gone.

WARNER: When they go back, they’re more on the fiscal side of raising money than they are on the civic side, I guess. You’d have to ask them. But I don’t regret it at all. I constantly turn over in my mind that one more term would have put me in the history books of Virginia forever. But what’s done is done.

KOED: And you've gone on to do other things that you enjoy. You're enjoying your life. Well, thank you. I think that's a good place to stop.

WARNER: We'll never say stop. We might just take a sabbatical.

KOED: We won't say "the end."

WARNER: This is a load off my mind, because my children and others peck at me, "Write a book."

KOED: This will be a good substitute. It doesn't take the place of a book, but it's a good way to get at your views, your thoughts, and your memories.

WARNER: Thank you so much. I don't know what it is that I can do for you.

KOED: You know, I don't think there's anything more you can do than what you've already done with all your years of public service. Thank you.

[End of interview #12]

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