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100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NAVY'S "GREAT WHITE FLEET"

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague in the Senate from Virginia, Senator Jim Webb. I am also pleased to note that Representative Thelma Drake from Virginia is the champion and author of this resolution in the House of Representatives.

Our resolution is introduced for the purpose of commemorating the centennial anniversary of the sailing of the Navy's "Great White Fleet," launched by President Theodore Roosevelt on December 16, 1907, from Hampton Roads, Virginia, and returning there on February 22, 1909.

This major historical event will be commemorated in a Navy ceremony onboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt, at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia on December 15, 2007.

The launching of the Great White Fleet marked the emergence of the United States as a true global seapower, able to dispatch 16 new battleships on a worldwide deployment for 14 months. The battleships, which were painted entirely white, were manned by 14,000 sailors and conducted visits across the world to reinforce friendships and partnerships with other nations. At the same time, the Great White Fleet demonstrated the naval presence of the United States.

This resolution commemorates the wisdom of President Theodore Roosevelt in developing and launching the Great White Fleet, and the resolution indicates that the Congress supports a one-time designation of a day to celebrate the 100th centennial of the Fleet and the special role it played in building enduring friendships with important allies and partner nations.

The resolution also commends efforts by the Department of the Navy to maintain and strengthen our cooperative partnerships with foreign nations and safeguard our Nation's interests in the maritime domain; commends efforts by the Department of the Navy in leading the development of a Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower; and honors the sacrifices made and services rendered by the servicemembers of the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard and the civilians who constitute our maritime services.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.