

It's fitting that we pay tribute to the dedication of those who were busily working in the public's interest at the moment of that terrible blast.

#### TRAGEDY IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I rise to speak briefly about the recent tragedy in Oklahoma.

Mr. President, throughout our land, so many have already spoken out so eloquently about this, that I can add but little to what has already been said. The suffering of the victims, the inhumanity and cowardice of the bombers, the compassion and heroism of our community of citizens, and our solemn resolution to exact justice and punishment—all of these have been powerfully attested to already.

I will therefore limit myself to praise a particular aspect of our President's handling of this crisis.

There has been so much of our American democracy which has shown itself to be worthy of praise and of pride in this last week—from the behavior of ordinary citizens in a time of trial, on up through the labors of rescue and medical teams, through to the highest ranks of our law enforcement agencies, and up to the conduct of the President. I trust that terrorists the world over would be rightly awed and cowed by the great skill, energy, and resolution that has been displayed.

In the wake of such a horrible tragedy, there is a terrible feeling of powerlessness, and it exists for all of us, even those of us at the highest levels of government. We had to hope that the perpetrators would be caught. Many had to wait and to hope that loved ones would be found alive. Even those who were actively engaged in bringing relief and justice had to contend with so many factors outside of their control.

When I think of what the President faced, I am reminded in a small way of Dwight Eisenhower's recollection of the Normandy invasion. He had done all he could to plan and to provide, but once he issued the fateful order—"Let's go!"—his subordinates scrambled to carry out their tasks, and he was left alone with a sudden realization: that he was now powerless to do more than to hope that his orders would be carried out successfully.

I can only imagine that a similar anxiety must have gripped the President as he issued orders which he hoped would bring answers—and arrests—in the wake of this tragedy. He must indeed believe himself to be fortunate that law enforcement agents across the country worked so doggedly and so well, and so successfully, even as much remains to be done.

But even with everything the President had to hope for in terms of carrying out an investigation, there still remained a duty that was his, and his alone, as President of the United States. There is no way for a President to delegate the responsibility of speaking for the Nation, and of providing a

voice of resolution and reason when events have gone awry.

This action of the President has served this country so well in the days after the tragic event. Yet now there appears to be some scapegoating by him today. He first voiced the Nation's determination to bring the criminals to justice. He had steadfastly resisted the temptation to blame the tragedy on specific ethnic or ideological groups. And he gave voice to what so many Americans were feeling, the fundamental commitment to law and to peaceful order shared by nearly all Americans, no matter where they stand politically.

It is not a duty to be underestimated. At a time when so many Americans must necessarily feel themselves powerless to fight back against this cowardly attack, the need is great to have their feelings expressed, and to have them channeled into a constructive collective response to this tragedy.

In those first few days, the President, even as he worked to comfort the victims of the attack, succeeded in drawing a clearly understood line as to where this Nation stands. He asserted with great force and clarity that, on the one hand, Americans have a right to be suspicious of government, and to exercise their first amendment rights, their second amendment rights, and every other protected right. But this Nation cannot and will not tolerate the exercise of rights that include violent attacks on Federal officials, on their children, or anyone else.

I pray that none of us, including the President, become vindictive toward any group in America—whether they are Islamic Americans, conservative organizations, talk show hosts, or anyone else—we must remember that virtually all of these people are as horrified by this violence as are we.

The President spoke well soon after the tragedy when he left no doubt that Americans are not divided over these matters, but united in our commitment to law and order, in a way that law-abiding Americans as well as terrorists should be able to understand. And this was an important cathartic process for Americans as we coped with this tragedy.

I close by giving my thanks to those in our government who have worked so hard in these last days to "bind the Nation's wounds."

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I was pleased to join with my colleagues in adopting Senate Resolution 110 which condemns the horrendous violence that happened in Oklahoma City and urges the administration to bring to justice those responsible for committing this evil crime. In addition, the measure expresses our deepest sympathy to the families that have lost so much and conveys our gratitude to all the Americans who have been assisting in rescue efforts.

Today, I would like to recognize those individuals from Nevada who have joined in the heartbreaking struggle to help our friends in Oklahoma.

Dr. Scott Bjerke, a specialist in critical care at University Medical Center's trauma unit, Dave Webb, a fire specialist with the U.S. Forest Service, Metro Police Sgt. Bill Burnett, and Clark County fire paramedic coordinator chief Steve Hanson all are members of Clark County's elite 60 member Urban Search and Rescue Task Force which headed to Oklahoma City to assist rescue workers. In addition, the Clark County American Red Cross has sent Caroline Johnson, officer for the disaster computer operations, to Oklahoma City. In times of tragedy, there are always heroes. All the Americans who have been devoting endless time and emotions to ease the pain of so many are the true heroes of this tragedy. I am proud that Nevadans have united together with the country during this time of such need. I thank these individuals for their commitment to others.

Although we cannot ever heal all the wounds both emotional and physical from this tragedy, I hope that those in Oklahoma will know that Nevadans are praying for them and somehow that will lessen their pain.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

#### COMMONSENSE PRODUCT LIABILITY AND LEGAL REFORM ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 956, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 956) to establish legal standards and procedures for product liability litigation, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Gorton Amendment No. 596, in the nature of a substitute.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise this morning to express my strong support for the Product Liability Fairness Act, which is the pending legislative business before the Senate. Balanced reforms in this measure will help to promote fairness in the product liability system, help injured people get fair compensation for their injuries, allow businesses to get out of unjustified lawsuits, and improve safety conditions for working men and women in this country. With these reforms in place we will help alleviate the problems that undermine the present system.

I want to commend at the outset the principal authors of this legislation, Senator ROCKEFELLER of West Virginia and Senator GORTON of the State of Washington, for their hard work. They have worked tirelessly on this effort for a number of years. I am pleased to have joined them in that effort over