

The FBI Director has not been able to get reprogramming through OMB that has allowed the office to function effectively. The State and local advisory groups which were supposed to be set up to bring the first responders—the local police, local fire, local health officials who have the knowledge and the expertise to do the job right and do it in a coordinated way with the Federal Government—in to advise the NDPO has not been energized in any effective way. We do not get the standardization on equipment we need. We are not getting the leadership from the top that we need in the area of making the States and local people as knowledgeable as we can.

I will say this: At least in the other areas where we are trying to educate first responders, such as our initiatives across this country in education, we are making progress. But the central management agency has been ignored.

We understand the reprogramming that the NDPO needs in order to fund its activities effectively for this year will not be adequately fulfilled. So this agency has been allowed to simply sit there and has not been energized. In fact, as I understand it, the person named director of the NDPO has recently, within the last week, asked to be transferred out of the job. I do not know why he asked for that, but I certainly can guess. I suspect it is because of the frustration of doing a job where he was not getting the support he needed from the White House and from this administration to do it effectively.

Terrorism is not a political event. It should not be used for the purpose of initiating press conferences or trying to drive poll numbers. This is an extraordinarily serious issue. We as a nation need to have a Government that doesn't approach this issue in a manner which involves something less than a total commitment. Yet that is the way it is being approached by this administration and its failure to fund, organize, and energize the National Domestic Preparedness Office.

This same problem was highlighted in a news story in the Wall Street Journal relative to another issue of terrorism. It was again requested by the subcommittee I Chair in this Congress that there be exercises—much like our military undertakes—to determine our readiness to deal with a terrorist event. During the cold war days, if you were in the Strategic Air Command, every 6 months you knew, if you were on a Strategic Air Command air base, at some point during that 6 months you were going to have a full-scale alert, and you were going to have to act as if you were in a confrontation with the Soviet Union.

That was the way we kept our forces current and that is how we found out the problems in our systems. It is the way it is still done in the military. You have what amounts to war games in order to determine whether or not you are ready to participate in a real, live event. Well, terrorism is war. It is war

on our Nation, and we know there are people out there who intend to exercise their ability to wage war on America. They have already done it. We need to go through the exercises of determining whether or not the agencies that are going to be responsible to protect the American people are ready to respond in the case of a terrorist event.

So we asked the administration, to pursue exercises to determine whether or not we are ready—mock exercises. These were to take place in three different communities across our country. Now, in a recent report in the Wall Street Journal, it was stated that some of the top agencies that are involved in this exercise are basically taking a laissez-fair attitude toward the exercise and are basically saying that they may participate but participate at a very low level of operations, or they are going to participate with very low level personnel—not that they won't be good personnel, but they won't be the personnel who have the final responsibility in the event of a real terrorist event or attack on our country. That would be unfortunate.

The Attorney General, I understand, not directly but indirectly, believes she is getting commitments from the various agencies to fulfill their role of having senior personnel at DOD, DOE, HHS, EPA, FEMA, and State, and obviously the Attorney General and the FBI—senior personnel—involved in these exercises, so that we know when we have a problem, the people who can resolve them are physically there on site and can observe the problem and can participate in resolving and developing a response to the problem.

Now, the Attorney General tells me, indirectly through my staff, that the news story may not have been completely accurate. But the news story quoted some sources and said certain agencies within the administration were not going to be seriously committed to this exercise. That, again, in my opinion, shows the laissez-fair attitude this administration has taken toward preparing this Nation to address a terrorist event.

As I said earlier, terrorism is not a partisan issue, not a political issue; it is a serious threat to our country. It has to be addressed aggressively and professionally by the agencies that are responsible. The Congress can only do so much. We have funded aggressively antiterrorism efforts. We have set up structures, working with the agencies to try to make sure that we have a coordinated response. We have requested that the agencies involved participate in trying to make sure that they are as ready as possible for a horrific event. But all we can do is fund and request. If we don't get cooperation and enthusiasm and commitment from this administration, then we will not have success.

So I have come to the floor today to highlight what I am very concerned about and what I think we should all be concerned about, which is whether

or not there is a sincerity of effort occurring within this administration to get us ready to address a potential terrorism threat to the United States.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LAUNCHING OUR COMMUNITIES' ACCESS TO LOCAL TELEVISION ACT OF 2000—Continued

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee is concerned that some language we took from the Burns amendment, which was in the bill last year, might potentially create some problems.

On Senator HATCH's behalf, I offer an amendment to strike several lines from the bill that have to do with an attempt on our part to guarantee that we weren't changing communication law. But, as often happens, no good deed ever goes unpunished. So we want to strike this.

AMENDMENT NO. 2902

(Purpose: To strike the provisions relating to retransmission of local television broadcast stations)

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendment will be laid aside and the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas (Mr. GRAMM), for Mr. HATCH, proposes an amendment numbered 2902.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 49, strike lines 1 through 13 and insert the following:

SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.

On page 50, line 23, strike "10." and insert "9."

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, this amendment is a very simple amendment. It simply strikes a line in the bill where we were trying to be sure we weren't changing communication law. On further reflection, we simply concluded that silence is often the best answer on these kinds of issues. This amendment would strike that sentence.

I have not had an opportunity to have anyone on the Democrat side of the aisle look at the amendment. I will just leave this amendment pending.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, it is my understanding the leadership plans a cloture vote on the gas tax at some time later today. Is that the understanding of the Chair?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture vote has been set to follow the final passage of the pending legislation but no later than 6 p.m.

THE GASOLINE PRICE SPIKE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to advise my colleagues why I think it is appropriate that we address some relief for the American consumer with regard to the gasoline price spike that has occurred in this country. I am a cosponsor, with the majority leader, Senator LOTT, and a number of others, of this important legislation that will give us an opportunity to take positive action in a meaningful way to put a brake on the ever-rising gasoline prices that American families face each day.

The American people should have a choice, whether they feel the priority is such that they should have relief from the gasoline tax. I emphasize a choice. I emphasize the American people, through their elected representatives on this floor, have to make a determination that this is a priority because there is no free lunch around here. What we are talking about is a combined bill which would waive the Federal gasoline tax of 18.4 cents. That is a considerable tax. It is even larger when you add the State taxes to it.

When I said there is no free ride around here, what I meant was we have agreed if we suspend the Federal gas tax for the balance of this year, we will also make whole the highway trust fund. That alternative will require that we find considerable funds. But if we guarantee we are going to find them, that means they are going to come through the budget process, from surplus and other areas.

Is this a sufficient priority? There are those who feel very strongly this jeopardizes the highway trust fund. In this bill itself, it says we will hold the highway trust fund harmless. That is a mandate, in effect a promise, to hold it harmless. It does not say where the money is going to come from to offset it.

We are suspending it only for the balance of this year. I have been advised by the budgeteers that this will not jeopardize any of the contracts that are presently let for this construction year or next year that propose to use highway trust fund moneys because those have already, in effect, been designated, earmarked, and so forth. I am not on the Budget Committee, but that is the advice I have been given.

I think Members should understand a little background here. It was in 1993

that the Clinton administration proposed a significant tax on Btus. There was going to be a big tax increase on all Btus—British thermal units. It was going to be based on what you use. We debated this issue at length and we voted down the increased Btu tax that the Clinton administration proposed. However, there was a 4.3-cent-a-gallon gas tax that was also proposed at that time. It was hotly debated. That 4.3-cent-a-gallon gas tax was not designated for the highway trust fund. It was designated for the general fund. That is just where it went.

Of interest to the Chair, perhaps, is how this happened. All the Republicans voted against the tax; six Democrats joined us, and we had a tie vote. Vice President Al Gore sat in the Chair as the Presiding Officer of this body, where the Senator from Utah sits, and he broke the tie. The Vice President has to wear the mantle. That is where the 4.3-cent-a-gallon tax came from. He has to wear the mantle. It did designate the tax would go into the general fund. Later, when the Republicans took control of this body, we changed the designation from the general fund and we designated that 4.3 cents into the highway trust fund.

It should again be noted what this legislation specifically provides because there is a lot of confusion over it. It says in order for the 18.4 cents to be suspended, and this is regular gasoline, the price has to average \$2 a gallon. Only then will it be suspended, and only for the balance of this year. And the highway trust fund will be made whole.

I know there are Members who feel uncomfortable about the highway trust fund. But all I can do is make very clear what this bill provides. It provides for full reimbursement of the highway trust fund. But it is not a free ride. The money is going to have to come from someplace else.

The point I want to make, and the appeal to my colleagues and our staffs who are listening, is about the real savings. America's consumers cannot pass on this price increase. If you buy an airline ticket, as my friend from Utah and I do occasionally, to go back to Utah or Alaska, you are paying a surcharge for fuel. You don't know what the tax is on the ticket because the airlines have so many confusing fares you can't figure it out, but a \$40 surcharge is in there.

The trucker who comes to Washington, DC, who has a contract for delivery, maybe he cannot pass it on; and the farmer, it is very unlikely he is going to pass it on; nor the fishermen in my State who fuel up their vessels, it is pretty hard for them to pass it on—but the person who surely cannot pass it on is the American consumer, the moms driving their kids to the soccer game. The family bought a utility sports vehicle for convenience. Maybe the SUV does not get too many miles to the gallon. It might have a 40-gallon gas tank. When mom goes to the gas

station and fills that up at nearly \$2 a gallon, it shoots a pretty good hole in a \$100 bill.

The question before us is: Do we want to do something short term, or do nothing, which is what the administration proposes. My colleagues heard the President yesterday. He said we have to develop more dependence on alternative fuels, we have to develop more resources domestically. He does not tell you he is going to open up low-sulfur, high-Btu coal in Utah. No, he says he has made that wilderness, for all practical purposes.

He does not say he is going to encourage exploration on public lands in the Rocky Mountains so that oil and gas exploration can occur in those States in the overthrust area where there is a tremendous potential for oil and gas in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, North Dakota, Kansas, or Oklahoma, where the small strippers have almost gone out of production because they simply cannot produce at the low prices. They only produce a few barrels a day. My colleague, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, addressed that earlier today.

In our long-term package of proposals, there is relief for the stripper wells. There is relief to encourage exploration in the overthrust Rocky Mountain area. There is relief to provide OCS areas for lease—we heard the Vice President say: If I am elected President, I am going to cancel all the OCS lease programs. He does not say where he is going to get the oil to replace that produced under the leases.

Think about what this administration's policy is on energy. One does not have to think very long because there is none. Clearly, our Secretary was sent over to OPEC almost on his knees to beg for production increases. OPEC said they were going to have a meeting on the 27th. He was over there 3 weeks prior to that. The Secretary said: We have an emergency in the United States. They said: We are going to meet on the 27th. They met on the 27th. They did not do anything until the 28th.

I have a chart which shows what they really did. They did this yesterday. Not many people are aware of the realities associated with what has happened to oil and the demand for oil in this country.

To the left of the chart in the red is the total global demand for oil in the world today. It is about 76.3 million barrels per day. To the right of the chart is the production and where it comes from: 45 percent from non-OPEC, 23 percent from OPEC, 5.6 percent other OPEC.

My point is, actual production is 75.3 million per day, but the demand is 76.3 million per day. There is a 1 million-barrel-a-day difference. There is a greater demand than supply. When there is this kind of situation, we have price spirals.

I want to point out and make sure everybody understands what happened