CONGRESSIONAL MEDALS FOR CREW AND PASSENGERS OF FLIGHT 93

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to proceed as if in morning business to discuss legislation I have pending; S. 1434, a bill which has 69 cosponsors, which would seek the Congressional Medal to all of the crew and passengers on flight 93 which crashed in Shanksville, PA, on September 11, 2001.

As we know from cellphone conversations and off captured passengers on that plane, the passengers took over the plane from the terrorists, at least to the extent of depriving the terrorists control where the terrorists, as was widely suspected, were headed for the Capitol of the United States. And the plane crashed in Shanksville, PA, killing all of those on board.

It seems to me this is a unique place for the Congressional Gold Medal, because those passengers saved the Congress. Had that plane reached the Capitol, this chamber would not now be in existence, nor the Rotunda, nor the House of Representatives. It is hard to say in the morning, perhaps mid-morning, how many Members of the Congress of the United States and staff would not be here today. In seeking this recognition, it is a very unique opportunity to acknowledge those passengers.

This bill has languished because it has gotten the taint of its title. It is not uncommon for legislation to be tied up for a variety of other reasons. There are some who want to give medals to everyone who died on September 11, which I think is a fine idea. There are some who want to give medals to all of those who were in the rescue squads from the police precincts or fire stations or the Port Authority. And there, again, I think that is a commendable idea. And all the ideas to recognize other people may be fine, but they can take precedence.

But this legislation ought to be enacted before sunset tomorrow, before September 11, 2002, expires. I am now working with some of my colleagues in the Senate to accomplish that. If we cannot accomplish that, then I am going to ask unanimous consent to call up S. 1434, which has 69 cosponsors. It should have been discharged from committee a long time ago. With 69 cosponsors, that is 18 more votes than necessary to pass legislation in the Senate.

There is a bill in the House of Representatives which approaches the issue slightly differently. The proposal in the House is to leave the decision up to the Attorney General of the United States. Well, that might be a good idea if there was something for the Attorney General to determine that we do not now know. But all of the knowable facts as to what happened on flight 93 are now known.

The Attorney General cannot conduct an investigation and pinpoint any specific individuals. And it is doubtless true that some individuals were more responsible for taking control of the plane away from the terrorists than others. But all were present. And all of those who were present were accessories to heroism. They lent their support by their presence. Of course, they could not do more than what the passengers brought down the plane. And the passengers saved the Capitol of the United States.

Interestingly, just yesterday, The New York Times published a release which originated from key al-Qaida operatives that flight 93 was, in fact, headed for the Capitol. That has been a fairly accepted conclusion, but this is what The New York Times story of yesterday, September 9, says: Yoeri Fouda, correspondent for the satellite station Al-Jazeera, told The Associated Press that he was taken, blindfolded, to a secret location in Pakistan to meet Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and Ramzi Binalshibh in a June interview arranged by al-Qaida operatives.

The thrust of the story is that the al-Qaida operatives said that flight 93 was headed for the Capitol. So, in essence, I think we have waited long enough. I think this action ought to be completed before sunset on September 11, 2002. And I hope we can work out an accommodation from the Members who are now with varying points of view. But, as I say, I will ask unanimous consent that the measure be enacted upon before sunset tomorrow.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of this New York Times report identifying from al-Qaida operatives the fact that this plane, flight 93, was headed for the Capitol, be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[S. 1434]

[CONGRESSional Record - Senate]

September 10, 2002

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is now in recess, pending the call of the Senate.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair and yield the floor.
ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this has been an unusual day. Earlier today, the majority wanted to vote on the Thompson amendment. We were led to believe, not wrongly, that the minority did not want a vote on that today. So we decided we would not vote on that today. We learned, later in the day, that Senator Thompson wanted a vote on his amendment today. By then, people had gone home for September 11 occurrences.

So now we are in a position where Senator Thompson thought there would be nothing happening on his bill today, and he left to do other things. We have learned that the distinguished Senator from South Carolina, Mr. Hollings, now wishes to offer a second-degree amendment to the Thompson amendment. I have been able to speak to Senator Thompson. I have spoken, on a couple of occasions, to the Senator from South Carolina.

It would be my suggestion, therefore, that the Senator from South Carolina speak on his amendment, and that on Thursday, when we come back on this homeland security bill again, the Senator from South Carolina be recognized to offer his amendment.

We would be taking no advantage of the minority because, as everyone knows, the majority leader has the right of first recognition. And we have indicated to the Senator from South Carolina that he would be in order to offer that amendment, unless we can work something out with Senator Thompson that it need not be offered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. So I ask unanimous consent, Mr. President, that we go to a period of morning business, now, until 6 o’clock today, with Senators allowed to speak therein for a period of up to 10 minutes each. I hope that we would have consent that Senator Hollings could offer the amendment; otherwise, we would, of course, have Senator Daschle come and offer that on Thursday.

Is the Senator from South Carolina satisfied with that?

Mr. HOLLINGS. That I be allowed to offer it at what time on Thursday?

Mr. REID. We have not decided what time Thursday, but we do not go to the bill until Thursday afternoon because—

Mr. HOLLINGS. If I could at least get an hour of debate, or whatever it is, on my amendment before we vote on the Thompson?

Mr. REID. Yes. On the Thompson amendment itself, we were planning to do an hour and a half to 2 hours of debate prior to voting on it. That was the plan. Now, with you offering this second-degree amendment, I don’t know what the Senator Thompson thought it would be. But we will work on that today, and tomorrow if necessary, with your staff and his.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I thank the distinguished leader. I think he has certainly accommodated the Senator from South Carolina. I definitely understand Senator Thompson is not here. I wanted to offer it while he is here so we can talk about it. But we will offer it at that particular time Thursday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Nevada?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001. ANNIVERSARY

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to share a few thoughts on the eve of tomorrow’s anniversary of the terrorist attack, September 11, 2001. Tomorrow, a lot of our colleagues, both in this Chamber and the other body, will be expressing themselves, with many Members attending memorial services. The Senate, as a body, plans to come together late tomorrow morning to meet as a body and to share our thoughts with the country about the events of a year ago. I take this opportunity to remember and to honor the nearly 3,000 of our fellow Americans who had the chance to come to this country to work—not all were Americans; the majority were—but lost their lives 1 year ago tomorrow in one of America’s darkest of days.

I also join all of America in paying tribute once again to the countless men and women whose acts of bravery and heroism so inspired us on that day and the days that followed the tragedy of September 11, and continue to serve as a solemn reminder that the American spirit shines as bright as ever despite the events of that day, that horrible day a year ago.

Thousands of families across this great country of ours, including families in my home State of Connecticut—families in my State lost some 149 people, most of whom lost their lives in the World Trade Center—these families and their loved ones have endured a year of unimaginable grief and unimaginable bravery. Every American grieves with them as many of our fellow citizens the world over from thousands of miles away.

I join all of America in paying tribute once again to the countless men and women whose acts of bravery and heroism so inspired us on that day and the days that followed the tragedy of September 11, and continue to serve as a solemn reminder that the American spirit shines as bright as ever despite the events of that day, that horrible day a year ago.

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