

Senate. We would be unnecessarily hurting our transportation community by linking two unrelated issues just to use leverage to get this extension passed.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, will the majority leader yield for one question?

Mr. FRIST. Let me yield to the Senator from Connecticut and then the Senator from Arizona, or either one.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I just have a brief question for the majority leader. In case he missed the morning Washington Post, it says that the independent commission investigating the September 11, 2001, attacks will have to consider scaling back the scope of its inquiry and limiting public hearings unless Congress agrees by next week to give the panel more time to finish its work, its chairman. Governor Keane, a Republican chairman, said that their ability to conduct their investigation will be impaired permanently and severely unless Congress acts by next week.

Mr. FRIST. In response to the Senator's question, I have not read the article today, but I am glad he pointed it out. Let's do it by next week and not hurt 5,000 people with an unrelated issue trying to use leverage that he knows we have no alternative to deal with on the floor of the Senate.

I am glad he pointed it out. Let's deal with it next week. He knows I am working to deal with it, which shows it does not have to be dealt with today and hurt 5,000 people.

Mr. MCCAIN. The majority leader is incorrect. This article was last Friday, talking about this week, the chairman of the panel talking about this week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair and the leader.

My friend from Arizona is right. That is the first thing I wanted to point out that it was February 20, 1 week ago, in the Washington Post that Governor Keane made those statements.

I will give a quote from him:

Every week that goes by makes the extension less valuable. When you have to work toward the earlier deadline, you have to start cancelling things and you can't go over things quite as clearly as you might like.

This is last Friday. He says:

Congress comes back into session next week and we really need to hear something by then.

We all know we would not be here doing this if the leadership in the House at one point had not said quite clearly that they were not going to let this extension pass, notwithstanding the fact that the Commission requested it, the President has accepted the extension, and it is pretty clear to me, Senator FRIST, the leader, the Democratic leadership, all support the extension.

Unfortunately, the nature of the presses that often breaks down here, the only way one can get done what one really thinks is necessary in the national interest is to stand up and say, stop.

Of course, we do not want to put those 5,000 families at a disadvantage even temporarily, but we do not have an alternative.

Mr. FRIST. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Yes.

Mr. FRIST. Is it the contention of both the Senators that the Commission right now has had to shut down this week because we have not allowed this extension?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. No, not at all.

Mr. FRIST. Is that what the Senator from Arizona is basically implying, that the Commission has cut back this week or if it is not settled today that the Commission has been compromised?

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I respond by again repeating what was in last week's Washington Post: The independent Commission will have to consider scaling back the scope of its inquiry, limiting public hearings, unless the Congress agrees by next week—that is this week—to give the panel more time.

They may not have to shut down but certainly their ability to conduct their investigation, according to the chairman of the Commission, Mr. Keane, former Governor of New Jersey, a Republican, says would be impaired.

Every week that goes by makes the extension less valuable, and when they have to work toward the earlier deadline they have to start cancelling things and cannot go over things quite as clearly as they might like. There is a certain urgency, obviously, to Governor Keane's plea that we act this week.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, let me go ahead, because I had asked that we further explore the only option I see, and again I think we ought to at least address that. If we do what the Senator from Arizona has proposed, 4,600 employees cannot show up for work, are not going to be paid and are going to be hurt if we accept their proposal. So I ask that they consider the proposal which I mentioned a few minutes ago. I said we would be hotlining, and to take the bill that was passed out of the Intelligence Committee yesterday, that does exactly what they want, what I want, which is to extend the Commission, and pass that as a free-standing bill. So as majority leader, I am prepared to get this bill done this minute.

#### EXTENSION OF FINAL REPORT DATE OF NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. 2136, a bill to extend the 9/11 Commission. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCAIN. Reserving the right to object, and I will not object, that is the bill that was passed through the Intelligence Committee yesterday; is that correct?

Mr. FRIST. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. I do not object.

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

The bill (S. 2136) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 2136

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES.

(a) FINAL REPORT DATE.—Subsection (b) of section 610 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-306; 6 U.S.C. 101 note; 116 Stat. 2413) is amended by striking “18 months” and inserting “20 months”.

(b) TERMINATION DATE.—Subsection (c) of that section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “60 days” and inserting “30 days”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “60-day period” and inserting “30-day period”.

(c) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—Section 611 of that Act (6 U.S.C. 101 note; 116 Stat. 2413) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c);

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

“(b) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—In addition to the amounts made available to the Commission under subsection (a) and under chapter 2 of title II of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 108-11; 117 Stat. 591), of the amounts appropriated for the programs and activities of the Federal Government for fiscal year 2004 that remain available for obligation, not more than \$1,000,000 shall be available for transfer to the Commission for purposes of the activities of the Commission under this title.”; and

(3) in subsection (c), as so redesignated, by striking “subsection (a)” and inserting “this section”.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as if in morning business for 15 minutes.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to modify my unanimous consent to have the Senator from Missouri proceed for 5 minutes followed by myself for 15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Missouri.

#### EXTENSION OF TEA-21

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from New Hampshire for his request.

Before the distinguished minority assistant leader leaves the Chamber, I want to say I appreciate the good work of the majority leader and the minority to try to resolve this roadblock.

What we have before us is a false choice posited by the Senators from Arizona and Connecticut. It does not matter how much they try to hold hostage the extension of the highway bill to keep these people working, there is no guarantee—and they cannot guarantee—that the House would accept whatever they put on.

They can hold this body hostage, and they have shown their willingness and ability to do so, but should they be able to add an amendment to the highway extension, or now that we have passed the bill on extending the 9/11 Commission, it still has to go to the House.

The action of the Senate Intelligence Committee yesterday was not unanimous. There are many other issues that should be debated about that bill, but I was not here to object and no one objected to passing the bill from this body to extend the 9/11 Commission.

It is important to realize this Commission was set up a long time ago. They knew their deadline was May 27, and if one were to ask the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. LOTT, who appointed members of the Commission, I believe he said at the time that the problem with commissions is we give them a lot of time and a lot of money and they do not always come up with the deadline.

They have had this time. They have had extensive hearings. Now the question is whether the House will accept the proposal that the Senate has adopted to extend the 9/11 Commission for 2 more months.

This body cannot hold hostage the other body. What the Senators from Arizona and Connecticut are doing is seeking to hold hostage the whole highway program in the United States. If they hold that hostage, there is no assurance that even next week there will be agreement by the House to take a bill with the 9/11 Commission.

TEA-21's current extension expires on Sunday. If we fail to extend this, there will be a shutdown of any further contract authority for Federal aid highway projects and a shutdown of payments for work already contracted for by the States and performed by contractors. This means no further projects can be approved or awarded. It also means that not only the Federal Highway Administration but also the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Administration, as well as the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, will cease operation.

The Federal Highway Administration said that 2,925 employees will be furloughed. These are not just employees in Washington but Federal employees in every State office throughout the Nation, including those in the States of Arizona and Connecticut. This also does not even include the many contractors that will be affected by the shutdown.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration employees would also

be furloughed affecting about 630 Federal employees. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration would stop operation. This action would put out of work 1,078 employees, and that does not even include the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

All told, 4,633 people will not be able to report to work on Monday, March 1, if this bill is held hostage to a proposition that may or may not be acceptable sometime or any time by the House of Representatives. Not only are we talking about people's livelihoods, we are shutting down the Federal agencies, which will have an adverse consequence for our Nation's highways, motor carrier safety, and consequentially for the condition and operation of our Nation's surface transportation system.

The Federal Transit Administration will be affected without passage of this extension. This is a time when the States are reaching the most intense quarter of the fiscal year for announcing construction projects.

States, particularly those that have seasonal construction award periods, and others that have work immediately prepared to go to bid, will be effectively stopped from making further awards or bid lettings that have not been previously approved. Construction and other contractors will suffer economic loss with the potential for smaller operators to suffer substantial economic hardship. Many of the businesses and many of the operations involved are small businesses that would effectively be cut off from their ability to be paid for their work if we refuse to do this extension.

Jobs will be lost in the private sector. Immense harm could happen. It is not possible to calculate immediately the actual job impacts for shutdown outside the workforce, but there was a survey, AASHTO's August 2003 survey, which emphasized that perhaps 90,000 jobs could be lost if we went to a short-term extension. An extension is bad enough, but a complete disruption of the program when there are crucial job needs across the country will have an economic impact on the families directly, and on the economy.

Another major problem if we fail to extend it is that further debts will not be paid. In the absence of an extension, the Government will not have authority to continue to reimburse States for projects for which expenditures by States have already been made. This has caused a cashflow crisis, since States are obligated to pay contractors with or without reimbursement from the Federal Highway Administration. Some States depend on Federal aid funds to pay bond debt service, and the highway trust fund will be charged interest under the Cash Management Improvement Act. We need the extension to stop playing politics with people's jobs in this most important legislation.

I thank my colleague from New Hampshire.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### CHARLES TAYLOR

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, in 1989, a little known thief and thug named Charles Taylor set in motion a series of events which have thrown the impoverished nation of Liberia into chaos and its neighboring nations into genocide. From Ivory Coast he launched a successful coup against Liberia's sitting President, Samuel Doe, plunging Liberia into 15 years of civil war. We are still dealing with the fallout of that war today.

The coup, notably, followed after Charles Taylor had escaped from a Massachusetts prison in 1985, where he was about to be extradited for embezzlement.

Groups on all sides of the Liberian conflict have committed atrocities, including widespread rape, massacres, mutilation and torture, and forced labor of children. There are literally hundreds of accounts of villagers having been slaughtered as they tried to flee, women being raped, children being brutally raped. Such atrocities have been part of the deliberate policies of Charles Taylor, his government, and the groups that fought for him.

In the conflict, it is estimated approximately 60,000 to 200,000 people died in the violence, and many more died from hunger, disease, and lack of medical care.

After the end of the civil war in 1996—it really wasn't a civil war; it was more of an attempt by Charles Taylor to use brutality to force his way into Liberia—Charles Taylor became the President of Liberia by winning an election which he won simply by saying if he did not win, he would continue the violence, continue the rape and destruction and plunder of the country. Meanwhile, in 1991, civil war erupted in the neighboring country of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is one of the most impoverished nations in the world, which is particularly tragic in light of the fact that it has some tremendous natural resources. The conflict was primarily between the Government of Sierra Leone and a rebel group known as the Revolutionary United Front. The RUF lacked any discernible political agenda other than violence and plunder. Its main objective was to take control of the Sierra Leone diamond mines.

The RUF became notorious for its use of forced amputations to control the civilian population. The conflict between the government and the RUF and other factions has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people, well over one-third of the population.

The situation in Sierra Leone became so bad in 1999 the United Nations established a peacekeeping mission. This mission was called UNAMSIL and has