CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

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 seeks ing authority, to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border that do not display a valid Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance inspection decal, by certified Federal or State inspectors, or by State inspectors whose operations are funded in part or in whole by Federal funds, in accordance with the requirements for a Level I Inspection under of Vieques, by the North American Standard Inspection (as defined in section 350.105 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations), including examination of the driver, vehicle exterior and vehicle under-carriage, and

(ii) a Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance decal to be attached to each such commercial vehicle upon completion of the inspection required by clause (i) or a re-inspection if the vehicle has met the criteria for the Level I inspection when no component parts were hidden from view and no evidence of a defect was present, and

(iii) that any such decal, when affixed, expire at the end of a period of not more than 90 days, but nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to preclude the Administration from requiring re-inspection of a vehicle bearing a valid inspection decal or from requiring that such a decal be removed when a certified Federal or State inspector determines that such a vehicle has a safety violation subsequent to the inspection for which the decal was granted.”

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this amendment, I have sent to the desk is offered by Senators SHELBY and myself and it will strengthen the truck safety provisions in the bill as reported by the committee.

It will require the Department of Transportation to implement a rigorous inspection regime under which every Mexican truck seeking to travel beyond the commercial zone will be required to be inspected at least every 90 days.

This inspection system has shown some level of success within the State of California in bringing down the high level of safety noncompliance that has been found in Mexican trucks seeking to cross the border.

We believe that his would improve upon the provisions already in place in the bill as reported by the committee.

I know that Senators MCCAIN and GRAMM have an interest in these provisions. In deference to them, I will not seek adoption of the amendment at this time. I will leave it as the pending amendment to the bill.

If need be, we can temporarily lay the amendment aside and take up amendments on other matters as debate occurs on this bill.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama suggests the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CONRAD. Reserving the right to object, I ask that after Senator Dodd completes his remarks, that it be possible for me to address the Senate for a period not to exceed 30 minutes. I make the request to respond to an attack that was made on me by Mr. Lindsey, the President’s chief economic adviser, tenced to 30 days—in one case, I think 60 days—I think all of these people involved certainly were aware that when you engage in civil disobedience, there will be a price to be paid for that civil disobedience. I will address the underlying issue of Vieques, but my hope is that the authorities will recognize that there is some sense of balance in all of this and that 30 days and 60 days may be a bit excessive, to put it mildly, in light of some of the sentences we see meted out on crimes that are far more serious in our society.

First of all, I say to those who have demonstrated there and have been sentenced to incarceration, I am happy to think he made the right decision. I know it was not an easy one to make, but he did listen to the various sides of this story and decided that, given all the information and facts, that was the right decision to make. Naval training exercises to proceed between then and May of 2003.

That provoked serious voices of dissent within this Chamber. In fact, there were those who were very disappointed by President Bush’s decision. I happen to think he made the right decision. I know he understood fully the implications to the action he would take to express what were not only his views but the views of thousands of others within Puerto Rico and beyond the island over the issue of whether or not Vieques ought to be used as a continued site for targeting practice bombs.

I express my sympathies for Bobby Kennedy, Dennis Rivera, and others who are in prison at this moment for those actions.

There has been a long history here of divergence of interest with respect to the people of Puerto Rico and the Navy’s interest in maintaining the capability for important live training exercises on the island of Vieques. Over the years, efforts have been made to reconcile these different interests. During the Clinton administration, in fact, an agreement was reached with the then-Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rossello, that called for the holding of a referendum November of the year 2001 to allow the residents of Puerto Rico to choose whether to end the military’s use of Vieques by 2003 or to indefinitely permit military exercises to continue after that date.

I am determined at this moment to reduce the tensions over this matter and to provide a way for the people of Puerto Rico to express their views. On the idea of a referendum, I was thinking to myself, living in Connecticut, along Long Island Sound where there are small islands off the coast of Connecticut, that if one of our islands were being used as a target by the military, how long would we allow it to persist if the people of my State felt strongly about it. I see the President’s Office from the State of Florida with a huge coastline. In many cases, of course, people have tolerated and supported it in their jurisdictions or States.

This is a matter which has devolved tremendous interest on the island of Puerto Rico, a part of the United States, of course.

Since the inauguration of Sila Maria Calderon, the new Governor of Puerto Rico, in January of this year, the efforts by President Clinton and Pedro Rossello, it has become clear that the resolution calling for the referendum in November of 2001 has been sort of put aside, that the plan did not resolve these tensions, despite the good efforts of those involved in crafting that particular solution.

On June 14, in response to continued tensions, President Bush, in consultation with the U.S. Navy, announced that all military exercises in Vieques would cease by May 1, 2003.

That provoked serious voices of dissent within this Chamber. In fact, there were those who were very disappointed by President Bush’s decision. I happen to think he made the right decision. I know it was not an easy one to make, but he did listen to the various sides of this story and decided that, given all the information and facts, that was the right decision to make. Naval training exercises to proceed between then and May of 2003.

In addition, in accordance with the earlier agreement, the Navy returned