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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

THE STARK REALITY OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER ATTACKS

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, in the midst of the disaster we saw in New York, we had a number of images all of us will remember. One that will stick in my mind was as one of those great buildings was collapsing and the smoke and the dust and debris were barreling down the streets and people were running away, one of those people who was running was a fireman. As he got to a certain point, he slowed down, took off his hat and threw it as hard as he possibly could.

That courageous professional at that moment knew hundreds, perhaps thousands, were dying in that building and he could not save them, that many of his friends and brother firemen had been there at the scene closer than he, inside the building, and that they would not make it out.

It was a very poignant scene for me, and having been involved in some of these issues on the Judiciary Committee and as a Member of the Senate, I think it is important for each one of us to remember that in any terrorist attack, any really serious national disaster we have in this country, it will not be the Federal Government that is first on the scene. It will be our police officers and firemen, hundreds of whom we lost in New York City, doing what they were paid to do—respond to the scene, to give aid to those in distress, at the risk of their lives. Certainly the Biblical reference that “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” applies to those people.

We as a nation know we have problems with terrorism. We as a nation have heard people talk for days on television that we could be facing a chemical, a biological attack, or even a nuclear attack.

We need to ask ourselves, and we have been asking ourselves in this Senate for some time, and I have been actively involved in this, how are we training those first responders who are there to react to that event. Each event is different. This event is different from a biological attack, a chemical poison gas attack would be different from a biological attack, and a nuclear attack would be different. And who knows what else could be conjured up in the minds of these diabolical people.

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It is important for this Nation to fulfill our obligation to those people we will be sending out to respond to these events, that they have the very best in equipment and the very best training on how to handle and training on one of these events, each being different from the other.

We have begun to make progress on that. I congratulate Senator Byrd, Senator Jeffords, and the chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Richard Shelby, of Alabama, a member of the Appropriations Committee, and others who have over the past few years taken steps to establish programs to train those first responders, those firemen, those policemen, those emergency medical technicians.

I am particularly interested in the Center for Domestic Preparedness at Anniston, AL, a center developed to train those people they are training 5,000 first responders from all over the country. That center is in the old Fort McClellan, the military base that was a chemical training school for the U.S. Army that had a cadre of people with expertise in chemical and biological issues, and it had live agent training forces for them. They had the barracks from the closed military base, places to stay, exercise rooms, and classrooms available. It was the perfect location to establish this center. It has done well.

Just a few weeks before this tragedy occurred, I was very pleased to see we had a major increase in funding for that center, taking us now to $30 million for the year. Of the total of the perhaps $20 billion we spend on terrorism, maybe more in this country, it is very small. But that will allow us, if it becomes final law this year—and I hope it will, particularly after this tragic event—to train, instead of 5,000 first responders a year, 10,000 first responders a year. They will be able to deploy them around this country. In fact, many have already been trained.

We have received great references from the people who have completed the training. The chiefs of police and firemen who sent their members to the training. The chiefs of police and firemen who sent their members to the school have bragged about the training they received. Indeed, New York has sent a lot of people there; 149 of New York police and firefighters have been trained. In addition, 226 in the Washington, DC, metro area have been so trained. We are making progress. I believe it is the right thing to do.

At a time like this, we don’t need to overreact. We don’t need to do things that are not appropriate. But we need to coalesce all the information we have been gathering for a number of years that relates to the kind of attacks this Nation may face, take that information and about how to be better prepared. One of the most critical things we can say is every first responder, every fireman, every police—men, every emergency medical technician in the country needs to have been given by his or her Federal Government the best information we can give them when they are asked to put their lives on the line and respond to an attack.

We have equipment and we need to make sure we can use the equipment to determine if it is a biological agent or chemical agent that may be distressing people in a certain area of town. We need to know that before we go in there. This is a matter about which I feel strongly.

It is appropriate, as so many have, to pay the highest tribute to those people, particularly in New York City, who are at great risk of their lives, and many of whom lost their lives, responded to the care and protection of American citizens. We give great tribute to them. We give them the tools, the information, the training and equipment so they can be even better at protecting our citizens’ lives and even better at protecting their own lives.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The call will come from the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

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

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, one of our colleagues, Senator McConnell, today offered an amendment. I believe that the amendment deals with what are called unity bonds. That is Senator Johnson from South Dakota. He asked that this be introduced on his behalf, and as manager I will do so.

I ask unanimous consent that we set aside the McConnell amendment.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk offered by Senator Johnson.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota [Mr. DORGAN], for Mr. Johnson, proposes an amendment numbered 1574.

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

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