

**SIMPSON CO-CHAIRS DISASTER
COMMITTEE**

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CHEYENNE, Wyo. – Former Wyoming U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson is co-chairing a new commission to develop procedures for replacing a large number of U.S. senators and representatives in the event of a deadly terrorist attack on Congress.

The Continuity of Government Commission is also chaired by former White House counsel Lloyd Cutler.

"Our task is to come up with a rational solution to how you keep the United States running in the event of madness and evil," Simpson said. The hijacked plane that crashed in Pennsylvania during the Sept. 11 attacks may have been headed for the U.S. Capitol.

State governors can make temporary appointments to fill vacancies in the Senate, but not in the House. And neither the House or the Senate has adequate procedures to deal with large numbers of incapacitated members, according to a news release from the commission.

Simpson said states have various procedures for filling vacancies in the House.

"Our purpose is to see how there can be a fluid transition in the event of such a terrible calamity," he said. "And how to do that so that you wouldn't be administering a government out of a bunker somewhere. Bunkers won't save you. The government has to be run."

Congress, he said, does not like to deal with this type of disaster scenario.

"It's too dramatic for them. It's too intrusive. It's too much disbelief," Simpson said.

The bipartisan commission will work closely with the House and Senate Judiciary committees and may recommend a proposed constitutional amendment, he said.

Other commission members include former House speakers Tom Foley, Newt Gingrich and other members who have served at the highest levels of government.

Honorary co-chairs are former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford.

Staff members from The American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institute, which initiated the project, will work with the commission members.

Simpson, a Republican, said he has known Cutler for about 20 years. Cutler, an attorney, has served in various Democratic administrations. His most recent government job was White House counsel for former President Clinton.