

school. He used that to develop a business that was innovative and creative. There was a need out there to deal with personnel costs by businesses. Frank Lautenberg developed, with his partners, a way in which that service could be provided in the most cost-effective way.

What did that do? That made this country more efficient, more effective. What that did was create a lot of jobs for this country. It also made Frank Lautenberg a fairly wealthy person. That is the American way: innovation to grow our economy, to create jobs, and to benefit by your own innovation. Frank Lautenberg took advantage of that and succeeded in a great way.

But he was not satisfied with that. He wanted to give back to his community. So he served his community. He served his community in many ways. There is a whole host of community organizations to which he provided leadership, his own personal time, in order to help people. He did that. Jewish Federation—he became a national leader there to help communities all over the world. Frank Lautenberg did that as a private citizen because he thought it was the right thing to do.

But then he decided he wanted to serve his community in a different way, so he ran for the Senate, got elected to the Senate, served two different terms in the Senate. He is the only Senator who was both the junior and senior Senator twice from the same State. But he never forgot his roots. He never forgot where he came from. He has a long list of accomplishments, from helping refugees come here to America, to helping keep the air we breathe on airlines safe for our children. The list is voluminous. We have already talked about it. He will be missed by all.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bonnie, who we all know so well, and his entire family. To the people of New Jersey and the people of this Nation, Frank Lautenberg was an extraordinary person who made a lasting mark. He will be missed by all. We all know we are better because of having served with him.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to address two issues this morning, but starting with the issue that is confronting us here on the Senate floor. It is a great challenge, but it is also a great opportunity; that is, immigration. The opportunity we have to come together in the Senate, Democrats and

Republicans, is to fix a broken system and to help our economy.

Along the way, as we are working through the immigration bill over the next days and weeks, I think we can not only get this issue on the right track substantively but we can also send a very strong message to the American people that on major consequential issues for the American people we can come together, work together, and get a good result for them. I think that in and of itself is worthy of a lot of attention.

SYRIA

But even as we are working on immigration, of course we have to concern ourselves with a whole range of other issues. One I will speak to briefly this morning is the issue of our policies as they relate to Syria. We are confronted this morning with a headline in the Washington Post. I will hold it up. It reads: "Iran On Ascent As Syria Churns." The first page of the Post. I will read the first paragraph of this story:

As fighters with Lebanon's Hezbollah movement wage the battles that are helping Syria's regime survive, their chief sponsor, Iran, is emerging as the biggest victor in the wider regional struggle for influence that the Syrian conflict has become.

There is one of the reasons why I and others, for not just weeks but months now, have been urging the administration and the Congress to come together on a more focused and more effective strategy as it relates to Syria. We had a good bipartisan effort in the Foreign Relations Committee. We were able to pass out of the committee legislation that dealt with Syria that would provide a whole range of supports and efforts that will lead to a better result in Syria.

I know the White House has spent the last couple of weeks and will be spending even more time today to come up with a policy that makes sense. But I do not think we can any longer pretend this issue is not an issue that concerns our national security, because every day the Iranian regime and Hezbollah plot against us. Anything that results in the regime in Iran being strengthened, as the Washington Post points to today in this story, is bad for our national security.

We have a lot of work to do. Again, this should be bipartisan. But the administration needs to focus on Syria and come to a conclusion about the way forward that will be in the best interests of our national security and also in the best interests of the people of Syria who are fighting valiantly against the Assad regime.

We all agree the Assad regime should not be in power, but we can't just wish that. We will have to take the steps that will lead to that result in a concerted fashion with allies in the region.

I ask unanimous consent the story entitled "Iran on ascent as Syria churns" from the Washington Post this morning be made part of the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed, in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, June 12, 2013]

IRAN EMERGING AS VICTOR IN SYRIAN CONFLICT

(By Liz Sly)

BEIRUT.—As fighters with Lebanon's Hezbollah movement wage the battles that are helping Syria's regime survive, their chief sponsor, Iran, is emerging as the biggest victor in the wider regional struggle for influence that the Syrian conflict has become.

With top national security aides set to meet at the White House on Wednesday to reassess options in light of recent setbacks for the rebels seeking Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ouster, the long-term outcome of the war remains far from assured, analysts and military experts say.

But after the Assad regime's capture of the small but strategic town of Qusair last week—a battle in which the Iranian-backed Shiite militia played a pivotal role—Iran's supporters and foes alike are mulling a new reality: that the regional balance of power appears to be tilting in favor of Tehran, with potentially profound implications for a Middle East still grappling with the upheaval wrought by the Arab Spring revolts.

"This is an Iranian fight. It is no longer a Syrian one," said Mustafa Alani, director of security and defense at the Dubai-based Gulf Research Council. "The issue is hegemony in the region."

The ramifications extend far beyond the borders of Syria, whose location at the heart of the Middle East puts it astride most of the region's fault lines, from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the disputes left over from the U.S. occupation of Iraq, from the perennial sectarian tensions in Lebanon to Turkey's aspirations to restore its Ottoman-era reach into the Arab world.

An Iran emboldened by the unchecked exertion of its influence in Syria would also be emboldened in other arenas, Alani said, including the negotiations over its nuclear program, as well as its ambitions in Iraq, Lebanon and beyond.

"If Iran wins this conflict and the Syrian regime survives, Iran's interventionist policy will become wider and its credibility will be enhanced," he added.

From Iran's point of view, sustaining Assad's regime also affirms Iran's control over a corridor of influence stretching from Tehran through Baghdad, Damascus and Beirut to Maroun al-Ras, a hilltop town on Lebanon's southern border that offers a commanding view of northern Israel, according to Mohammad Obaid, a Lebanese political analyst with close ties to Hezbollah.

Iran has sought to minimize its visible involvement in Syria so as not to exacerbate sectarian tensions that have been inflamed by a conflict pitting an overwhelmingly Sunni opposition against a regime dominated by Assad's minority Shiite-affiliated sect, Obaid said.

Iran has provided advice, money and arms to Assad's regime, but the manpower needed to bolster his forces, flagging after two years of trying to contain the revolt, has come from Hezbollah, which was founded in the 1980s with help from Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and has become Lebanon's leading military and political force.

"Hezbollah is part of the Iranian strategy," Obaid said. "This counts as a victory for the group of Iran, Syria, Iraq and Hezbollah against the group backed by the United States."

‘IRAN WALKED THE WALK’

Supporters of the Syrian opposition contrast the hesitancy of the U.S. administration in offering arms to the outgunned, poorly trained and deeply divided rebels with the commitment that Iran has shown to its Damascus ally.

The U.S. goal was to pressure Assad into making concessions at the negotiating table, without delivering a resounding military victory to the rebels that might have brought Islamists to power in Damascus, said Amr al-Azm, a history professor at Shawnee State University in Ohio who is Syrian and is active in the opposition. Instead, a proposed peace conference in Geneva seems likely to be held on Assad's terms, should it go ahead.

“Politically we're screwed, and militarily we're taking a pounding,” Azm said. “America talked the talk while Iran walked the walk.”

This would not be the first time that Iran has outmaneuvered the United States since the Iranian revolution brought Shiite clerics to power in Tehran in 1979. But the assertion of Shiite power in Syria rankles Sunnis across the region, compounding the dangers that the Syrian conflict could provoke a wider and even bloodier war than the one currently underway, which is estimated to have killed at least 80,000 people.

Escalating violence in Iraq and growing tensions in Lebanon, whose conflicts are inextricably intertwined with the increasingly sectarian nature of the war in Syria, underscore the risk that centuries-old religious rivalries between Sunnis and Shiites will be aggravated by Iran's role. The leading religious authority in Saudi Arabia and al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri have in the past week called on Sunnis to volunteer to fight in Syria, marking a potentially dangerous convergence that could herald an intensified influx of Sunni jihadis.

SAUDI ARABIA'S ROLE

Saudi Arabia, the leading Sunni power in the region and Washington's closest Arab ally, is unlikely to tolerate an ascendant Iran even if the United States chooses to remain aloof, said Jamal Khashoggi, director of the al-Arab television channel.

“It is a serious blow in the face of Saudi Arabia, and I don't think the Saudis will accept it. They will do something, whether on their own or with America,” he said. “Syria is the heart of the Arab world, and for it to be officially conquered by the Iranians is unacceptable.”

One way in which Saudi Arabia could influence the outcome is by facilitating unchecked supplies of arms to the rebels, analysts say. Although the umbrella Free Syrian Army has received small quantities of weaponry from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar over the past year, the United States has sought to control the flow, vetting the recipients and restricting the caliber of the weapons provided.

After videos surfaced in March of Islamist groups wielding antitank weapons funneled across the Jordanian border by Saudi Arabia, the United States imposed a freeze on all further deliveries, putting the rebels at a disadvantage just as Iran, through Hezbollah, was gearing up to rejuvenate the Assad regime's army with reinforcements, according to rebel leaders.

A SYMBOLIC BATTLE

Military analysts caution against overestimating the impact of the rebel defeat in Qusair on what is likely to be a long and unpredictable war. The obscure western town abutting Hezbollah-controlled territory in Lebanon almost certainly offered an easier conquest than other rebel strongholds, such

as the city of Aleppo, where the regime is touting an imminent offensive.

The rebels are continuing to press attacks in the northern, eastern and southern peripheries of the country even as the government appears to be tightening its grip on the central provinces of Damascus and Homs, raising the specter that the country will be partitioned into enclaves backed by rival Sunni and Shiite regional powers. A suicide bombing in Damascus on Tuesday highlighted the likelihood that the rebels will sustain an insurgency similar to the one that persists in Iraq even if they are defeated militarily.

The chief significance of the battle for Qusair lay in the powerful symbolism of the role played by Hezbollah, which eliminated any doubt that the Syrian conflict has turned into a proxy war for regional influence, said Charles Lister, an analyst with IHS Jane's defense consultancy in London.

“External actors are becoming increasingly decisive and pivotal in terms of where the conflict is going,” he said. And if the United States increased its support for the rebels, Assad's allies would be likely to boost theirs, he added.

“The conflict has regionalized, and, unfortunately, that gives it the potential to drag on longer,” he said. “As long as one side increases its assistance, the other will see the need to do so, too.”

NOMINATIONS

Mr. CASEY. I move to the second part of my remarks, which is to talk about two of our judicial nominees who will be coming before the Senate today. Both of these nominees will be voted on today to be members of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. I wish to give Senators the benefit of a little biographical background on both of them.

I will begin with Nitza Quinones Alejandro. Judge Quinones is recognized by her colleagues as being very well prepared as a judge and a conscientious judicial official who exhibits an outstanding judicial temperament and fairness.

Since 1991, Nitza Quinones Alejandro has served as a trial judge for the First Judicial District of the Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia, working on criminal and civil trials with all of the diversity, difficulty, and challenge that comes with that. She runs a good courtroom, treats lawyers and litigants fairly, and renders thoughtful decisions. She was first nominated for judicial appointment back in May of 1990 by Gov. Robert P. Casey, my father, when he was serving in office in Pennsylvania.

At the time—not quite then a judge—Judge Quinones became the first Latina State court judge in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania back in the early 1990s.

Prior to her judicial appointment, Judge Quinones served as an arbitrator for the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas from 1980 to 1991. She also worked as a staff attorney with the Department of Veterans Affairs and as an attorney-advisor for the Office of Hearings and Appeals at the Department of

Health and Human Services. She was also a staff attorney with Community Legal Services in Philadelphia.

Judge Quinones is a founding member and has been active within the Hispanic Bar Association of Pennsylvania for the past 20 years. She has actively recruited students from local law schools and hired numerous Hispanic attorneys as full-time law clerks and serves as a mentor to countless students and professionals.

A native of Puerto Rico, she graduated from the University of Puerto Rico School of Business Administration cum laude in 1972 and acquired her juris doctor degree from the University of Puerto Rico's School of Law in 1975.

Her commitment to public service and substantial judicial experience will make her an outstanding Federal judge. It is also, I should note, a remarkable American story that Judge Quinones brings to us today.

We look forward to the vote today on her confirmation. We appreciate the work that has been done to bring her nomination to the floor.

I have enjoyed working with Senator TOOMEY on both Judge Quinones' nomination as well as the second nomination.

Judge Jeffrey L. Schmehl, the second nominee, as well will bring an extraordinary record of knowledge, experience, and public service to the Federal bench. He is well regarded by lawyers and litigants who appear before him, as well as the people of Reading in Berks County, PA.

Since 2007 he has served as the president judge for the Berks County Court of Common Pleas, where he has served as a judge since 1998.

Prior to joining the bench, Judge Schmehl was a partner at Rhoda Stoudt & Bradley from 1988 to 1997, where he also worked as an associate since 1986.

He has served as the county solicitor at the Berks County Services Center from 1989 to 1997, and he owned his own law firm from 1981 to 1986. He also served as an assistant district attorney in Berks County, as a prosecutor, and as an assistant public defender for the Berks County Public Defender's Office—a rare combination, both a public defender and a prosecutor.

He received his bachelor of arts degree from Dickinson College in 1977 and a juris doctor from the University of Toledo School of Law in 1980. We look forward to Judge Schmehl's confirmation as well.

Both of these are individuals about whom we can be very proud, vote for, and support with enthusiasm. It always helps when you have two judges who are the result of the working together of a Democratic Senator and a Republican Senator—in this case, Senator TOOMEY and myself—working together to bring their nominations to this point and to get them confirmed on the floor of the Senate.

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