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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CORY A. BOOKER, a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, as the snow falls gently to the Earth, we are reminded of the shifting seasons of our lives. As we continue to look to You for guidance, guide our lives and inspire our hearts.

Today, strengthen our Senators as they deal with unattended needs and unresolved problems. Make them eager to lift burdens, to bring deliverance to captives, and to give hope to the oppressed. May our lawmakers serve humanity in a way that glorifies Your name. Lord, keep them open to a growing faith and a maturing set of convictions.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 25, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CORY A. BOOKER, a

Senator from the State of New Jersey, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BOOKER thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2124, the Ukraine act. That will be postclosure time.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings and that the time during the recess count postclosure on the Ukraine bill.

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

Mr. REID. Very, very soon we hope to work out an agreement to begin consideration of the bill. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled. I have spoken this morning to Senator MENENDEZ, chairman of the committee, and I spoke last night to Senator CORKER and Senator MCCAIN. I talked to Senator MCCAIN this morning, and he was going to talk to Senator CORKER. Hopefully, we will move forward very quickly on this legislation.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2149

Mr. REID. I am told S. 2149 is due for its second reading and is at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2149) to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

UKRAINE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last night the Senate took the first steps in supporting the people of Ukraine, sending a clear message to Russia. I am pleased the Senate voted overwhelmingly in a bipartisan fashion to consider this bipartisan bill that was reported to the Senate floor. The measure includes a number of provisions: a loan guarantee, sanctions, and security assistance. This certainly is a step in the right direction. It is not everything, but I certainly applaud the efforts of the Members from both sides of the aisle who have labored diligently to get us this far.

I hope the bipartisan support will continue so we can finish the bill this week and provide the people of Ukraine with the critical support they need while imposing strong sanctions against those in Russia and Ukraine who created this crisis. There is no reason why we can't pass the bill today.

According to all reports, the situation regarding Ukraine is getting worse, not better. Russian troops are seizing facilities in the Crimea. All they have to do is make a phone call. They didn't need to have all the brute force, knocking down doors and injuring people in the process. They have

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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done this throughout Crimea. The Government of Russia looks foolish. The world community understands that. They are levying foolish retaliatory sanctions, mocking the efforts of the international community to bring about a peaceful and fair resolution to the illegal invasion and the annexation of Crimea.

Yesterday President Obama and other European leaders meeting in The Hague formed a strong, united front in denouncing Russia's unlawful actions against the people of Ukraine. Under President Obama's leadership, the United States, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom took further action by suspending Russia from the G8—as of today it is the G7—and canceling the planned summit in Sochi this summer.

I mentioned those seven countries, but over in Europe yesterday, the President was there with some 42 other nations, all of them looking with an eye toward what Russia had done that was totally contrary to international law. By excluding Russia from the G8, President Obama and our allies have sent the message loudly and clearly that bullying behavior and rhetoric will not go unchallenged. I applaud the efforts of our allies to take a stand against Russia's aggression and welcome their further commitment to hold accountable President Putin and his cronies—and they really are his cronies. If there were ever a thugocracy, this is it. This is a government that is corrupt, and they need to be held accountable for violating international law. This cannot go unnoticed and unretaliated against.

As for action here in the Senate, I look forward to stabilizing Ukraine and imposing new sanctions against Russia by passing the bill that is before us. We should do that today. One way or the other, we need to get it done as quickly as possible.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to start with a few words about the legislation the Senate is considering this week on Ukraine. It touches on the jurisdiction of many committees and is of high interest to Senators on both sides of the aisle. How the

United States meets the Russian invasion of Crimea matters. It is related to the future vitality of NATO, the negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program, and our own energy policy regarding the export of natural gas.

We have Members on both sides of the aisle working closely, and there is a decent amount of common ground here, which is good. Nearly everyone agrees the Ukrainian people deserve our support. Most of us also agree we should back up that support with meaningful legislation, not just to show our support for an independent, democratic, and free Ukraine but also to show President Putin there will be costs for his actions.

So one would think it wouldn't be that difficult to get a solution here, but roadblocks keep popping up. First, there was a House-passed bill prior to the recess that would have provided loan guarantees to Ukraine. It was blocked by the majority leader. We should have passed that and sent it to the President. Now the majority leader seems determined to blow up the process too. Yesterday he actually came to the floor to effectively blame the Republicans—believe it or not—for the invasion of Crimea. I mean, who writes this stuff? It is not just completely unhelpful, it also injects hyperpartisanship into the process at a time when we should all actually be working together. At this point it is not at all certain the majority leader might not even make things worse by shutting down the amendment process. I hope that is not where we end up. This issue is way too important for that.

Look, this bill in the Senate cannot pass the House or become law in its current form. It has to be amended. Not only have many Members not yet had a chance to offer amendments in committee, but so many developments have unfolded in this crisis in the weeks since the bill was drafted, the legislation has to be at the least modified to take those realities into account. In order for this bill to become law, the controversial IMF provision must be removed.

This simply cannot be a “take it or leave it” situation. That is just nonsensical. The people who sent us here to represent them deserve better. We should give them that. That means allowing a sensible amendment process, and it means dropping the kinds of wild partisan accusations we have seen—attacks that will only make it that much harder to get an effective bipartisan solution.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Illinois.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully to the comments of the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and he is asking for bipartisanship and quick action on the Ukrainian matter before the Senate today. I agree with him completely.

In fact, it was about 10 days ago when Senator JOHN MCCAIN, on the other side of the aisle, joined with me and six of our colleagues, and we took a late-night flight on a Thursday evening, flew all night long to go to Kiev, Ukraine. We spent the whole day on Friday meeting with government leaders. We had one night in a hotel room and then the next day, Saturday, a whole day of meeting with their leaders as well. Late that night we caught a plane back to Washington, arriving at 5 in the morning.

It was a whirlwind trip but an important one because it came just hours before the Russians staged this phony referendum in Crimea—a referendum that had been condemned by the United Nations Security Council, with the exception of Russia's vote. They voted against the condemnation, which was to be expected. China abstained.

So the question before us is, What can and should the Senate do, and when should it do it? Well, we have a measure before us that passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I believe the vote was 14 to 3. I may be mistaken by a vote or two there, but it was a strong bipartisan majority. Senator MENENDEZ then brought it to the floor.

When it came to the floor before our trip to Ukraine, Senator REID offered to bring it to the floor and pass it and do this on a bipartisan basis quickly—just what the Senate minority leader is now asking for—but there was an objection. The objection came from the Senate minority leader's side of the aisle. A Republican Senator objected to moving this bipartisan measure forward quickly. So Senator REID set up the vote that happened yesterday when 78 Members voted in the affirmative to move to this measure. That is a good thing. I hope we can bring it up this week, and if the other side or any Senator has a proposal for an amendment, I hope they won't keep it to themselves and conceal it but bring it forward. Let's talk about it and see if we can amend this measure, change this measure in a constructive fashion, without introducing a lot of amendments which might bog us down in long-term debate.

The Ukrainians are waiting to hear from the United States. What they