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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, in this quiet moment, may a holy hush come over us, giving us a sense of our dependence on You. May our Senators not trust too much in their abilities to solve problems and meet challenges but continue to seek the eternal and transcendent resources You offer to people of faith.

Lord, give our lawmakers humble and contrite hearts, that they may be channels of light and truth. Uphold them with Your everlasting and uplifting arms. May they persevere with integrity so that they may be presented holy and unblameable in Your sight. Keep our Senators calm and filled with faith in spite of all they must face.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we have recently learned that Dr. James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, who has been with us for almost 30 years, will be retiring in January. He

plans to spend more time with his wife of nearly 58 years, Marjorie. He wants to see more of his 4 children and 12 grandchildren. I am sure he would also like to catch up with his buddy who plays for the Grateful Dead or maybe just sit back with a box or two of the Mallomars he loves so much.

But I don't think Dr. Billington is ready to take his scholar's cap off quite yet, because he is preparing to do a little writing, too, about folks who played an important role in the history of—what else—the Library that means so much to him.

Dr. Billington has called the Library of Congress the "greatest collection of knowledge and copyrighted creativity in human history," and I know how proud he is of the many initiatives he has undertaken to expand its reach and its relevance.

I noted yesterday that we are unlikely to come across many guys who can say they have been a Princeton valedictorian, a Harvard professor, an expert on the Kremlin, a veteran, and a Rhodes Scholar. But that is our Librarian of Congress.

He speaks 7 languages, he has 42 honorary doctorates, and I am hoping he will soon be able to start catching a full 8 hours of sleep every night.

Dr. Billington has certainly earned it, and we wish him the very best in his retirement.

CYBER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a different matter, I think a lot of people were shocked to hear that the Obama administration was unable to prevent the information of 4 million Americans from being compromised by hackers.

Officials in the White House now owe it to every American to let Congress help them get out of the past and up to speed with the cyber security realities of the 21st century. That is just what the measure we will soon consider would help do.

It contains modern tools that cyber security experts tell us could help deter future attacks against both the public and the private sectors. The measure would also help get the word out faster about attacks as soon as they are detected, provide governments and businesses with knowledge they can use to erect stronger defenses, and help strike a critical balance between security and privacy in the process. The bill would do so, for instance, by mandating the creation of guidelines to limit the use, retention, and diffusion of consumers' personal information.

This is more than just a smart measure. It is a transparent one too. It has been carefully scrutinized by Senators from both parties. It has been endorsed overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis by nearly every single Democrat and every single Republican on the Intelligence Committee, and it has been posted online and available for anyone to read for quite some time.

The need for this smart, bipartisan, transparent measure couldn't be clearer. We shouldn't wait for the administration to fumble away another 4 million Social Security numbers or personal addresses before we help them get modernized and up to speed.

That hasn't stopped some Democratic leaders from thinking they should try to score some political points by taking down a bipartisan measure to combat cyber attacks.

I hope they won't do that.

Most Americans would find it awfully cynical for Democratic leaders, in the wake of the administration's inability to stop such a massive cyber attack, to vote against the very same cyber security legislation their own party vetted and overwhelmingly endorsed in committee for the sake of scoring some kind of political point.

We have a smart, transparent, bipartisan, fully vetted measure before us that can help make our country safer.

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



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Senators in both parties have a chance to offer other amendments to the bill and amend it, too.

My hope now is that we can work together to help pass a measure that is in support of the American people and backed by a broad coalition of supporters—everyone from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to the U.S. Telecom Association. The sooner we do, the sooner we can conference it with two similar White House-backed bills that passed the House, and the sooner we can finally get a good cyber security law on the books to help protect Americans.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, that brings me then to the larger debate the Senate is having this week. The bill the cyber measure has been offered to is the annual Defense authorization Act. It is a related issue. It is about protecting our country. It makes sense to consider these issues together.

Now, the Defense bill is another measure that should be sailing to passage with strong bipartisan support. It does so almost every year. But Democratic leaders now seem to have a different idea.

Here is a headline that just appeared in the Washington Post: “Democrats prepare for filibuster summer.”

“Democrats prepare for filibuster summer.” We can already feel Americans just tense up. They don’t even like the sound of it. Who would?

Let me read just a few lines from that story: “After almost six months in the minority . . . Senate Democrats aren’t afraid to be obstructionists, detailing a strategy of blocking appropriations bills and other Republican agenda items until they get what they want”—“until they get what they want.”

“Get ready for filibuster summer,” the Post warned, because despite opening themselves “to charges of hypocrisy,” Democrats have “decided to block all spending bills starting with the defense appropriations measure.”

Putting the obvious hypocrisy aside, one thing is clear: The party leaders opposite seem to think this is all just a game.

Democratic leaders seem to think the pay raise for a soldier who gives everything to protect our country and who would give anything to provide for her kids isn’t something she has earned, but something she can gamble with in a high-stakes game of “Shutdown Roulette.”

Democratic leaders don’t seem the least bit bothered by the dire national security implications of what they are doing. They have packed the car for their filibuster vacation, and they are ready to hit the road, whatever the consequences for our country. They are heading down this road at a time when “the United States has not faced a more diverse and complex array of crises since the end of World War II.”

Those are the words of Henry Kissinger. And he is right. From Beijing, Moscow, and the tribal areas of Pakistan, to Ramadi and Tehran, we see unrest and global threats that threaten American values and American interests.

And what do we see from Democratic leaders? A serious plan?

We hear the President telling us he still doesn’t even have one when it comes to confronting one of our most serious challenges—ISIL.

This is 8 months after he announced his intention to confront this threat. This is 8 months after I and others called on the President to provide us with a comprehensive plan to defeat this menace. And it is 8 months since I pledged that Congress would work with the administration to ensure our forces have the resources they need to carry out their missions.

Republicans have kept up our end of the bargain, even if the President still doesn’t have a serious plan.

The President asked us for \$612 billion in his budget request to Congress. That is what he asked for. So we worked across the aisle to craft a bipartisan Defense authorization bill at precisely that level. He asked. We delivered.

The House version of this bill already passed by a big bipartisan margin. The Senate version sailed out of the Armed Services Committee on a vote of 22 to 4. We were all set to pass the very type of bill President Obama indicated he wanted, but then Democratic leaders started listening to that little partisan pat on their shoulder: Why not take this opportunity to pump up that unrelated government spending we like so much? Just threaten to filibuster pay raises for the troops until they shower more cash on the bureaucrats in Washington.

At a moment of grave and gathering threats, Democrats listened to that partisan voice—that partisan voice.

At a time when our military families need all the support they can get, Democratic leaders reverted to partisan form and are now threatening to blow up a bipartisan bill.

I would think this would be of some concern to commonsense Democrats. They have to be wondering if their leaders have totally lost it—completely lost it—with this filibuster summer and holding our military hostage.

We don’t have to look too far to see the important role the military plays in each of our communities. I mentioned yesterday how important Fort Campbell is to Kentucky. Let me now tell my colleagues a little bit about Fort Knox.

Fort Knox hosts the Army’s Human Resources Command. It is a hub for multiple major commands under the Training and Doctrine Command. Because of its vast array of excellent training grounds and exceptional training facilities, Fort Knox also recently began hosting thousands of cadets for

extensive annual training under the Army Leader’s Training Course. Not only has Fort Knox been leading the Army in energy independence by developing the capability to go off the grid entirely, but it also continues to make an exceptionally important contribution locally, as well.

Fort Knox’s economic impact on Hardin County and the surrounding communities stands at over \$2 billion a year. My constituents in Elizabethtown and across the Commonwealth know how important Fort Knox is to our community and to our country. They also know that passing the bipartisan Defense bill before us would allow for a critical new medical facility to be built at Fort Knox. They don’t want to see Democratic leaders hold that medical facility hostage for unrelated partisan reasons.

Kentuckians and Americans know that supporting our troops is never ever a waste of time. They know that ensuring the military has the tools it needs isn’t a game. Here is something else so many of our constituents know: What America needs right now is not a summer of filibusters but a season of serious bipartisan solutions. That is what the Defense bill before us represents, and that is what this new Congress has been doing all year. We have gotten a lot done. There is a lot more we can do. And if rank-and-file Democrats reject their leader’s partisan games in favor of keeping up the bipartisan work that got us to this point instead—on a bill they joined Republicans to pass in committee 22 to 4—then that is just the kind of productive summer we can keep working toward.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I admire and appreciate very much my friend the Republican leader mentioning Dr. James Billington, a friend of mine.

I had a wonderful conversation with Dr. Billington yesterday. I wrote him a nice letter talking about what we have done together over these past three decades.

It seems only yesterday that I was chairman of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee and a new Senator here. One of the first attacks we got from Republicans at that time was to whack the Library of Congress. They even went after the magazines that were produced in braille. I can remember the debate we had about Playboy magazine. I don’t know what they were trying to eliminate, but they tried. I don’t know what they could do with the braille in a Playboy magazine. But we were able to turn that back.

I so appreciate this good man and what he has done. His academic record