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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.

Eternal God, our King, let the Earth rejoice and righteousness and justice strengthen the land we love. Lord, we live in a fugitive earthly scene, but it is permeated by Your eternal presence. Remind us that transiency will not have the last word in our universe. We are grateful that life's changefulness is underlain and penetrated by Your unchanging purposes.

Guide our Senators. In these days of upheaval, show them how to find the permanent amid the impermanent, the durable amid the fragile, and the truth amid the falsehood.

Thank You for continuing to be the rock of our salvation, sustaining us in the best and worst of times.

We pray in Your strong 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. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

CYBER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I recently shared an AP news story with my colleagues, and I think it is worth sharing again.

Here is the headline: "Federal Agencies Are Wide Open to Hackers, Cyberspies."

I will read just a little bit of what it says.

The federal government, which holds secrets and sensitive information ranging from nuclear blueprints to the tax returns of hundreds of millions of Americans, has for years failed to take basic steps to protect data from hackers and thieves, records show. In the latest example, the Office of Personnel Management is under fire for allowing its databases to be plundered by suspected Chinese cyberspies in what is being called one of the worst breaches in U.S. history. OPM repeatedly neglected to implement basic cybersecurity protections, its internal watchdog told Congress.

That story should worry every one of us, Democrats and Republicans alike. The AP referred to the massive cyber attack that recently struck the Obama administration as "one of the worst breaches in U.S. history." But while this massive breach may have been "one of the worst," it certainly—unless the administration can be rescued from the cyber security Dark Ages—will not be the last.

So the Senate will be considering bipartisan cyber security legislation this week that would help the public and private sectors defeat cyber attacks. The modern tools it contains, through the sharing of threat information, would provide for the construction of stronger defenses. The top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee says this bipartisan bill would also protect "individual privacy and civil liberties." She is right. It contains strong measures to limit the use, retention, and diffusion of consumers' personal information. Information sharing with the government would also be voluntary under this bipartisan legislation.

No wonder my colleague from California joined virtually every other Democrat and every other Republican to endorse this bipartisan bill overwhelmingly in committee 14 to 1. No

wonder this bipartisan bill is backed by a diverse coalition of supporters, too—everyone from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to farm supply stores, to your local community bank.

This is a strong bipartisan, transparent bill that has been meticulously vetted by both parties in committee and that has been available online for literally months for anyone to read. My friend the Democratic leader has also publicly declared that the Senate could finish this bill in "a couple of days."

"In a couple of days," he said, "at the most."

So with cooperation, we can pass the bipartisan bill this week. There will also be an opportunity for Members of both parties to offer amendments. I urge colleagues who wish to do so to begin working with the bill managers right now.

This legislation is the work of many Members. I mentioned Ranking Member FEINSTEIN earlier, who has been a key player on this issue. I also wish to thank Chairman BURR for his strong leadership and his hard work across the aisle in developing this bipartisan bill. I urge the Senate to allow us to act and pass it this week.

The House of Representatives has already passed two similar White House-backed cyber security bills. The sooner we pass ours, the sooner we conference with the House to finally get a good cyber security law on the books, and the sooner our country can be better protected from more of these types of attacks.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this September, the Senate will formally weigh in on the nuclear deal struck between the White House and Iran. We will take a vote and answer a simple but powerful question: Will the agreement actually make America and its allies safer? When we do, the Senate, as an institution, will be put to the test.

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



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The first test will come in which answer we arrive at. Some might take the view that releasing billions of dollars to a state sponsor of terrorism while leaving the regime with thousands of nuclear centrifuges, an advanced research and development program, and the means to improve its full-spectrum warfighting capability would represent an acceptable outcome. Those Senators will vote one way.

Others will say that ending Iran's nuclear program is worth the necessary exertion of political leadership—leadership to keep the coalition unified, to reveal Iran's development of ballistic missiles and its support of terrorism, and to resolve the IAEA concerns over Tehran's refusal to allow access to nuclear scientists and facilities—because doing so would be in the best interests of our country and in the best interests of our allies. Those Senators will vote a different way.

In answering this fundamental question, every Senator will reveal his or her view of America's standing, its leadership, and its capabilities in the modern world. They will demonstrate whether they think these things can and should be brought to bear to defend our interests and to defend against Iran's aggressive expansion and its threatening nuclear program.

We know that the next Senate and the next President will continue to be faced with a threat posed by Iran. So we should conduct this debate with our eyes on the future. This is a critical test, but it is not the only one. The other test comes not in which answer we choose but in how we answer the question.

Can we join together to conduct a debate worthy of the importance of this agreement?

Can we call up the resolution and respectfully debate it without employing delay tactics designed specifically to impede the Senate's review of such a weighty matter?

Are Senators willing to focus on a matter of interest to the institution, defer committee activities, and sit in their chairs to truly listen and debate their colleagues on a matter of such significance?

Nearly every Member of both parties voted to have this debate when they passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. Surely, Senators wouldn't then turn around and block a proper debate from even proceeding.

My hope is that the Senate could reach agreement to call up the appropriate resolution, reach agreement to allow ample time for Senators to express their views, and then proceed to a thorough, thoughtful, and respectful debate, because it is hard to overstate the importance of what we are about to consider: our role in the world, our commitment to our allies, the kind of future we will leave our children. It is all wrapped up in this issue.

The debate we will conduct deserves the appropriate and respectful deliberation that this body was designed to

facilitate. Every Senator owes as much to this institution, and every Senator owes as much to this country and to the people we serve.

We may disagree on the first test, but we should all agree on the second one.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I agree with the Republican leader that we should work to come up with a way of proceeding in a dignified manner to this most important piece of legislation. Certainly, I would lend my efforts to try to get that done. It is easier said than done, with the feelings on both sides of the aisle on this issue and other issues.

CLEAN POWER PLAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday President Obama took a very important step in addressing climate change and promoting clean energy. His Clean Power Plan is the strongest action ever taken by our government to fight climate change. The Clean Power Plan would reduce the dangerous amounts of carbon pollution being pumped into the atmosphere. By reducing pollution, the Clean Power Plan would yield significant public health benefits for our entire Nation.

Carbon pollution has many devastating effects on our environment, as well as the health and well-being of all of us. Sadly, pollution from burning fossil fuels disproportionately affects low-income people and families of color. Exposure to air pollution can aggravate preexisting health problems, especially respiratory maladies such as asthma.

For millions of Americans, carbon pollution affects their ability to breathe and exacerbates the problems they have with asthma. Consider these facts. Minority and lower income Americans are far more likely to live near coal-fired powerplants. Statistically, that is terribly accurate. African Americans are three times more likely to be hospitalized from asthma. African-American children have an 80-percent higher rate of asthma and are roughly three times more likely to die from asthma than their White peers. Roughly half of Latinos live in areas that frequently violate clean air rules, and Hispanic children are 40 percent more likely to die from asthma than non-Hispanic Whites.

In Nevada, just a short distance out of Las Vegas, about 35 miles, there is an Indian reservation. Approximately 30 years ago, NV Energy—Nevada Power—built this huge coal-fired generator there. Over the more than three

decades it has been in existence, tens of millions of tons of coal have been burnt in that powerplant. It is a football field away from the reservation. Those Native Americans have been really sick as a result of that. Now there has been a court settlement that gives them a little bit of economic strength as a result of this, and, to its credit, NV Energy's new ownership has decided it is going to phase out that plant very quickly. That is good for the health of those Native Americans.

Today the plant is being decommissioned and solar is being built on the tribe's reservation. It is wonderful to see that. They have a lot of jobs, and it is giving some economic viability, in addition to the court settlement I just talked about.

President Obama put it best yesterday: "If you care about low-income, minority communities, try protecting the air they breathe." That is exactly what the President's plan will do. It will clean the air we breathe, help curb health care costs, and improve the quality of life for all Americans. But that is not all.

As the plan is implemented, we will see even more investment in clean and renewable energy, which is not only good for the planet and our health, but it is good for the economy. The Clean Power Plan will boost renewable energy by 30 percent over the next 15 years, cutting pollution but, of course, creating tens of thousands of jobs for all Americans. President Obama's plan encourages programs and incentives to make American homes more efficient and lower consumers' utility bills.

Under the Clean Energy Incentive Program, a jump start in new jobs is expected from construction and installation of renewable energy and efficiency upgrades. This will incentivize new clean energy development and job creation before the new carbon standards even go into effect.

It has been disappointing, but not surprising, to see Republicans' knee-jerk opposition to addressing climate change. It is all the more frustrating because they have no plan of their own, except to let the smoke keep billowing. Instead, Republicans are clamoring to show special interests such as the oil baron Koch brothers how far they are willing to go to kill commonsense protections for our air and public health because it might hurt the bottom line of their coal and energy barons.

Last month, House Republicans passed legislation that would rescind President Obama's action addressing air pollution and climate change. Senate Republicans, for their part, are trying the same thing with policy riders in the Senate Interior and Environment appropriations bill.

Republicans would leave our children and grandchildren to pay the devastating costs of climate change. The Republicans have no solutions. They are afraid to acknowledge that climate change is a problem. It is.

President Obama's Clean Power Plan is good for this country. It is the