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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, Creator of all things, make haste to minister to our needs. Lead us from self-inflicted injuries as You seek to use our lawmakers for Your glory. In all of their labors, guard and guide our Senators until Your will is done on Earth even as it is done in Heaven. May Your peace reign in their hearts, now and always, as they become more aware of the inexhaustible riches of Your mercies.

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. BOOZMAN). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1, S. 21, AND S. 24

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bills by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of

funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 21) making continuing appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event an appropriations act expires prior to the enactment of a new appropriations act.

A bill (S. 24) to provide for the compensation of Federal and other government employees affected by lapses in appropriations.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, later today, I will join President Trump, the Democratic leader, the new Speaker of the House, and our congressional colleagues down at the White House.

The meeting represents the latest in the President's ongoing efforts to persuade Democrats that appropriate funding for border security is a better outcome than persisting in this partial government shutdown. I hope that this time around my friends across the aisle will come prepared to engage much more seriously on the issue at hand.

We may have entered a new Congress since our last meeting, but the basic steps that are needed to end this unfortunate standoff really haven't changed at all. We are in the same place. As I have said on several occasions and as the administration has affirmed, any viable compromise will need to carry the endorsement of the President before it receives a vote in either House of Congress. Under these conditions, the package presented by the House's new Democratic leaders yesterday can only be seen as a time-wasting act of political posturing. It does not carry the support of the President—in fact, the administration indicated yesterday

that the President would actually veto it—and it cannot earn the support of 60 of my colleagues over here in the Senate.

My friends across the aisle understand the ground rules perfectly well. They know that a solution will need to be palatable to House Democrats and Senate Republicans alike. They know that making laws takes a Presidential signature. We all learned that in grade school. In fact, the Democratic leader himself insisted “the President must publicly support and say he will sign an agreement before it gets a vote in either Chamber.” That is the Democratic leader who said that.

Everyone understands what we need to move forward and successfully make policy instead of simply staging political theater. Everyone should understand just how urgently the situation on our Nation's border demands our attention—the situation that has been accurately described by the Commissioner of the CBP—the Border Patrol—as a “border security and humanitarian crisis.” This shouldn't be taken lightly. It should not be viewed as an opportunity for the new House Democratic majority to prioritize political performance as an art form ahead of the public interest.

I urge our Democratic colleagues to approach our meeting today with a willingness to join the administration and the men and women of Customs and Border Protection to work to protect our border and bring this partial shutdown to an end.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, while these discussions continue, the Senate will also be taking up other important work.

Yesterday, the senior Senator from Florida introduced a package of four bills that pertain to U.S. policy in the Middle East. I am a proud cosponsor of

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



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this legislation, along with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to be, Senator RISC, and Senator GARDNER. It speaks directly to some critical American interests in that part of the world—our security cooperation with key partners, Israel and Jordan, and the ongoing humanitarian and security catastrophe of the Syrian civil war.

First, this legislation recognizes the growing threat Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, and other terrorist groups pose to the State of Israel, and it aims to strengthen key elements of our relationship with our closest partner in the Middle East.

It affirms that the United States needs to “walk the walk,” and it authorizes military assistance, cooperative missile defense, as well as loan guarantees.

It encourages closer U.S.-Israel technological cooperation to better address 21st century threats, and it clearly states that it is official U.S. policy to help Israel preserve its qualitative military edge over those who might wish it harm.

The legislation also recognizes the security, economic, and humanitarian challenges the ongoing conflict in Syria poses to the people and Government of Jordan, and it reauthorizes important legislation aimed at deepening our defense cooperation with this important regional partner.

In addition, the bill contains a bipartisan provision from Senators Rubio and Manchin to combat the BDS movement, an aggressive and hostile attempt to delegitimize and economically boycott the State of Israel.

This legislation gives State and local governments across America more flexibility to limit their own business relationships with entities that support this horrible effort to hurt our ally. In effect, this provision allows jurisdictions to boycott the boycotters—let me say that again: “to boycott the boycotters”—and make sure they don’t send taxpayer dollars to companies that embrace this anti-Israel posture.

Now, with respect to the ongoing conflict in Syria, there are, certainly, differing views about the role of the U.S. military with respect to threats emanating from Syria. There is no question that we continue to face serious challenges from al-Qaida and ISIS in Syria, as well as from Iran, Russia, and the Assad regime itself, and I anticipate this body will debate U.S. military strategy toward Syria in the coming weeks, as it conducts oversight over the administration’s, apparently, ongoing review of its Syria policies.

Admittedly, there are no easy solutions in Syria. I hope the administration and Congress will be deliberate and sober as we consider the risks of various approaches to the endgame of the fight against the physical caliphate of ISIS. After all, American lives, critical national security interests, and the future of a turbulent yet critical region are all at stake. The debate is

forthcoming. I imagine it could be contentious.

There should be little debate, however, about the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, which has overwhelming bipartisan support and the endorsement of the administration.

This bill, which is included in this package, speaks to the human tragedy of the Syrian civil war. It provides non-military tools for responding to the atrocities conducted by the regime of Bashar al-Assad. It will hold accountable those responsible for the torture and murder of countless Syrian civilians and provide more leverage for diplomats to end the conflict through peaceful negotiations that are consistent with the demands of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254.

Unless the Syrian regime changes course, ends its brutality against the Syrian people, and negotiates a peaceful end to the civil war, the butchers of Damascus will find their key financial institutions and industries sanctioned by the United States.

This bill will not bring back the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have been murdered or tortured by the regime, but it will be another arrow in the quiver of diplomats who are seeking to end this awful war and stabilize a region of critical importance to the United States and its allies. So I am proud to cosponsor the package of legislation that Senator RUBIO introduced yesterday.

I am clearing the way for the bill, S. 1, to be debated and voted on here on the Senate floor as early as next week, and I look forward to voting to pass this important bill.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

REMEMBERING CHARLES LIN

• Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, it is an honor to remember the selfless and inspirational life of Sifu Charles Lin.

A lifetime master, Sifu Lin began studying the martial arts in his homeland of Taiwan.

He studied under many masters of the martial arts, earning the title “Master” or Sifu.

Sifu Lin moved to New Mexico in 1974 at the age of 23, with only \$200 in his pocket.

For more than 40 years, Sifu Lin taught New Mexicans meditation and self-defense through the martial arts of Ch’i Kung, Tai Chi, and Chuan Kung Fu at Lin’s Martial Arts Academy.

He and his wife also ran the Chinese Culture Center in Albuquerque, a place for the city’s Chinese population to build community, learn Chinese language, and celebrate their culture.

The fireworks, martial arts demonstrations, and dancing dragons in the center’s annual Chinese New Year festival put Chinese culture on display.

My thoughts are with his family during this time of mourning.

The lessons Sifu Lin imparted on all of his students will not be forgotten.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 21. An act making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 1. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2019, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution regarding consent to assemble outside the seat of government.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1. A bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

S. 21. A bill making continuing appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event an appropriations act expires prior to the enactment of a new appropriations act.

S. 24. A bill to provide for compensation of Federal and other government employees affected by lapses in appropriations.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 21. An act making appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

S. 28. A bill to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and for other purposes.

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

H.J. Res. 1. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2019, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first