

vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that, if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, will the Senate advise and consent to the Bailey and Parekh nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO JAN BARAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I want to extend congratulations and best wishes to a friend, a skilled attorney in the areas of campaign finance and election law, and a devoted defender of the First Amendment.

After more than 35 years, Jan Witold Baran is retiring from the law firm Wiley Rein LLP at the end of the month. Throughout his distinguished career, Jan has successfully represented thousands of clients, including me. He has put his brilliance to work defending all Americans' rights to participate in our democracy and express themselves through voluntary contributions to the candidates of their choice, so that a few elite gatekeepers cannot control the public discourse in our country.

When you consider Jan's background, it is no surprise he is committed to preserving freedom. Jan was born in postwar Europe to a Flemish mother and Polish Catholic father. Before Jan was born, his father had survived 2½ years in concentration camps including Auschwitz, before he was liberated by American troops at Dachau. Jan's father was incarcerated because during his tenure as mayor of a small town in Poland, he refused to turn in his rifle to the Gestapo. Clearly a stubborn dedication to freedom under law is in Jan's bloodline.

Next year will mark the 70th anniversary of the Baran family's immigration to America. I am sure his parents would be extremely proud of what their son has accomplished. A decorated scholar from Vanderbilt Law School; general counsel for the National Republican Congressional Committee; a trailblazing attorney at the FEC; general counsel to the 1988 campaign of President George H. W. Bush; counsel to the Republican National Committee.

President Bush appointed him to the Commission on Federal Ethics Law Reform and as Ambassador and Chairman of the U.S. Delegation to the World Administrative Radio Conference.

Jan Baran has been an integral part of legal teams that have defended Americans' political speech rights before the U.S. Supreme Court. He was part of my team when I challenged the constitutionality of the campaign finance law known as McCain-Feingold. From *McConnell v. FEC* to *Citizens United* and beyond, Jan was in the middle of these important battles. Through these episodes and many more, I personally have witnessed and appreciated Jan's candor, sharp legal mind, and strategic thinking.

Washington can be a transient place, but Mr. Baran has stayed in the fray for more than 40 years and given his best every day to uphold free speech and defend the Republic. I am not sure if the people of that small town in Poland know that the son of their wartime mayor's son built such a distinguished career in just one generation. His talent, perseverance, and commitment to his country are a credit to where Jan came from and the life he has led along the way. I extend my warm wishes to him and his wife Kathryn, their four children, sons-in-law, and grandchildren.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to call attention to the rapidly burgeoning Islamist insurgency in northern Mozambique, which is dragging that country into ever-increasing violence and chaos. In the past decade, Mozambique has taken steps to resolve a decades-long civil war and while peace remains elusive, with longstanding support from the United States, there has been progress. This progress, when coupled with the 2010 discovery of enormous natural gas reserves in the remote northern province of Cabo Delgado, could have changed the development course of the country. But a new conflict has emerged in Mozambique that threatens all of the potential gains for the citizens of the province and the entire country.

The origins of this extremist insurgency share traits with many others globally: a marginalized community's grievance against corrupt and distant rulers, fueled and brutally exploited by radical Islamist ideologues, has allowed extremism to take root and gain traction, while the innocent majority of the local population bears the cost. The extremists have proclaimed allegiance to ISIS and have rapidly developed increasingly sophisticated military capabilities; Mozambique's poorly trained security forces have proven unable to vanquish the group. It is an insurgency on the advance. It has seized seizing entire towns and now controls considerable territory.

The insurgents, who have attracted foreign fighters and recently launched

attacks into neighboring Tanzania, have used horrific acts of terror—including systematic use of arson, murder, often including beheadings, and kidnapping—to force compliance with their aims. Their acts have effectively displaced more than 500,000 people in Cabo Delgado, creating a severe humanitarian crisis. In 1 week in November alone, more than 10,000 people fled to the port city of Pemba, many in rickety, unsafe boats. A significant of these internally displaced persons now languish in crowded, unsanitary conditions.

What can be done to solve this crisis? And what should be the role of the United States, which today appears to be retreating from Africa? This year has perhaps taught us more than any in recent memory that stability and security around the world can directly impact the stability and security of the United States. We have a sustained interest in helping to support innocent, suffering people and promoting stability.

The security aspect of the threat requires a security solution. However, the Mozambican security forces have demonstrated that they cannot effectively respond to this threat without assistance. It is clear that they lack proper training and equipment, and a substantial body of reporting has established that elements of these forces have frequently committed serious human rights abuses, as well as engaged in petty corruption targeting the local impoverished population. The Mozambican Government must take steps to ensure that state security forces are not only effective, but that they also engage in such a manner that earns the trust of the population they are charged with protecting.

The good news is that the international community has begun to respond. The U.S.'s counterterrorism coordinator recently visited Maputo to offer our assistance to the government. European countries have also pledged to assist with building Mozambique's security capacities. Any such counterterrorism support must include rigorous human rights training, as well as improvements in civil-military relations and effective intelligence-gathering. The government should also be pressed to reduce its reliance on local militias, who have even less training and accountability than government troops.

The humanitarian crisis also demands immediate action. Of the half million people who have been displaced, 41 percent are children. The provinces of northern Mozambique that host most of these newly displaced people are among the poorest in one of the world's least-developed countries and have little capacity to assist those affected by the crisis. In total, more than 1.3 million people in northern Mozambique are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection, according to the U.N. The international community must step up and fully fund

the modest request of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which has said that it requires \$254 million to provide humanitarian assistance through 2021.

Counterterrorism training and humanitarian assistance alone, however, are not enough to defeat ISIS in Mozambique. They are only tools to respond to the immediate crisis. To effectively address the root causes of the conflict—the social and economic inequalities that have allowed extremism to take hold and flourish—the Mozambican Government and international partners must assist in reaching the country's increasingly-alienated northern communities. The government must engage with its northern citizens and deliver what the majority of the population wants and expects: better governance and critical social services. The international community can help by collaborating and coordinating their engagement with the government on a package of development aid that helps to address poor governance, increases transparency and fights corruption, effectively delivers health and education services, and fosters job opportunities and local entrepreneurship. Mozambique and its international partners also must scale up programs aimed at countering extremist ideology and promoting defections from the insurgency.

Donors must also hold the government's feet to the fire on its obligation to invest in its own citizenry, including by insisting that the government develop its natural resources—notably the gas reserves in Cabo Delgado—in an equitable, transparent, manner that results in that a significant portion of prospective natural gas revenues being invested in the provinces that host Mozambique's gas resources.

As the conflict grows in scope and intensity, the United States will need to further develop a coordinated, inter-agency strategy, one which uses all the levers of American power—diplomatic, development, and defense—to address Cabo Delgado's military, humanitarian, and development crisis and to work with regional partners on to both inform and implement such a strategy.

The situation in Mozambique is dire, and unfortunately it has not attracted an appropriate level of attention from policymakers. It is tragic to see a country that seemed to be on the cusp of transformation dragged back into conflict. The situation is not hopeless. The United States and its partners can together effectively help Mozambique defeat this insurgency and support the Mozambican people's aspirations for a more hopeful future, but the situation is urgent. We must act now.

HONORING COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR BENNIE G. ADKINS (RET.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. President, it is with sadness and humility that I ask this body to pause for a moment to remember and honor a great American and a

citizen of my home State, CSM Bennie G. Adkins, who died of complications related to the COVID-19 virus on April 17, 2020. He was laid to rest with full military honors this morning after a funeral service in the chapel at Arlington National Cemetery.

Command Sergeant Major Adkins, known to friends and family as "Bennie," received the Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony on September 15, 2014, for acts of heroism during the Vietnam war. Although Bennie was recommended for the Medal of Honor at the time, he was instead given the next highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross. In 2002, the Army began reviewing Distinguished Service Cross awards for possible upgrades, and finally, 48 years later, President Obama bestowed a well-deserved Medal of Honor upon Bennie Adkins.

As we know, the Medal of Honor is the Nation's highest medal for valor in combat. According to a statute passed in 1918, the President is authorized to present this award to "each person who, while an officer or enlisted man of the Army, shall hereafter, in action involving actual conflict with an enemy, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." Other legislation authorizes the award within the other military departments as well.

In the history of this country, the Medal of Honor has been awarded to 3,507 individuals. Fewer than 70 of those recipients are still alive today.

I point this out because I believe that when these heroes leave Active Duty and come home to live among us in our communities, their very presence in our midst lifts us all up. They inspire and embolden countless other acts of courage and sacrifice, both great and small, many of which we have seen in the recent weeks and months our Nation and our world have been battling the very virus that took Bennie Adkins' life.

So it is with gratitude and a deep sense of loss that we remember this extraordinary man.

The facts of the events that led to Bennie Adkins' recognition bear mention. However, as President Obama said when presenting Bennie with the Medal, "I have to be honest, in a battle and daring escape that lasted four days, Bennie performed so many acts of bravery we actually don't have time to talk about all of them." I will, therefore, attempt to summarize, combining information from the citation that accompanied the award, media accounts of the events, and quotes from Bennie's memoir.

When Camp A Shau was attacked by a large Viet Cong force early on March 9, 1966, then-Sergeant First Class Adkins rushed through intense hostile fire to man a mortar position. Although wounded himself by incoming fire, Bennie briefly relinquished his mortar to a comrade and ran through

exploding mortar rounds in order to drag several wounded Americans to safety. During the battle, Bennie later recalled, bullets hit and killed one man he was carrying on his back. At another point, Adkins, a former baseball catcher, caught a North Vietnamese hand grenade in midair and flung it back at the enemy.

Over the course of 4 days, Bennie repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire while rescuing and helping evacuate his fellow soldiers, retrieving additional munitions, and repelling repeated waves of attacking enemy soldiers. Bennie suffered 18 wounds—including to an eye and his torso—but managed to kill an estimated 135 to 175 enemy troops.

Because of his efforts to carry a wounded soldier to an extraction point rather than leave him behind, Bennie and his group were unable to reach the last evacuation helicopter. Running extremely low on ammunition, he returned to the mortar pit, gathered additional ammunition, and ran through intense fire back to the communications bunker. After being ordered to evacuate the camp, Adkins and the remaining small group destroyed all signal equipment and classified documents, then fought their way out of the camp and into the jungle, where they evaded the pursuing North Vietnamese Army for 2 days.

Their escape was aided by the sawed-off shotgun Bennie carried as a sidearm and by the unexpected intervention of an Indonesian tiger. Trapped in the jungle, the group's radio damaged in the battle, Adkins managed to rig his shotgun as an antenna, enabling him to communicate their location to friendly forces. As the group endured a second night in the jungle waiting for help to arrive, the tiger, which had been hunting nearby, frightened off the enemy, giving Adkins and the others an opportunity to create a makeshift landing pad for a rescue helicopter the next morning.

The Medal of Honor citation concludes, "Sergeant First Class Adkins' extraordinary heroism in close combat against a numerically superior hostile force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army."

Extraordinary indeed.

Remarkable as those details are, the facts of Bennie's postservice life are equally worthy of note.

Bennie and his wife Mary were married for more than 60 years—until she passed away in 2019. They don't give medals for that, but I know from observing my own parents' 60-plus years together that, no matter who the couple are, that kind of dedication, loyalty, and commitment are special.

After 20 years of service in the Army, Bennie retired and went back to school. He earned three degrees from Troy University—a bachelor's in finance and two master's degrees—and opened his own accounting firm in Auburn. Then, Bennie began deploying his