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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Mighty God, we trust You for protection in a troubled nation and world. You are able to do far more than we can ask or imagine. Provide Your power, presence, and peace to those who feel that the foundation of their world has been shattered. May we remember that in spite of calamity, chaos, and confusion, You still rule from Heaven.

Lord, remind us again that those who do what is right will see Your face. Today, give our lawmakers a greater passion for righteousness, justice, and peace.

Lord, we thank You for the opportunity we had recently to honor our veterans.

We pray in Your strong 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 (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 13, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Ana de Alba, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

CHINA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this week, President Biden will attend the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in San Francisco, where, on Wednesday, he will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Earlier today, I spoke with National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and urged that President Biden should push President Xi on some of the same things my colleagues and I did during

the bipartisan codel I led to China last month. At the top of our list is the fentanyl crisis, which has killed tens of thousands of Americans each year—so many of them young Americans—and which, in large part, originates in China.

For years, Chinese chemical companies have faced little oversight as they have sold chemicals like fentanyl analogs, xylazine, and other substances to Mexican buyers. Mexican cartels then turn these chemicals into fentanyl that they sell in the United States and ultimately into our communities, wreaking havoc, claiming tens of thousands of lives.

So when my colleagues and I met with President Xi, we explained in graphic detail how fentanyl was devastating our communities and that China needs to stop the exportation of these precursor chemicals. We spoke in very strong terms—I did, Senator HASSAN, and Senator CASSIDY. We all told him what havoc this was wreaking in America.

Then, I explained to President Xi that my dad used to be a small business owner and that it would go a very, very long way toward improving China's image for Americans if they took action to crack down on the fentanyl crisis; that the benefits China would get from cracking down on these companies, in terms of American good will, would far more than outweigh the tiny cost it would have on the economy. And I said any businessman knows that would be a good thing to do. President Xi seemed receptive to our concerns about fentanyl and said he would look into it.

So, today, I relayed to Jake Sullivan that President Biden should be really strong on this issue and ask for concrete action from President Xi on this important topic.

It sounds as if there may be a chance for progress with the Chinese Government on cracking down on exporting precursor chemicals used to manufacture fentanyl, so we are eager to hear

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



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more come out of Wednesday's meeting.

If they will crack down on these precursor chemicals that are used to make fentanyl, it would be of huge benefit to this country and save thousands of lives. So we are optimistic and hopeful that our codel and now President Biden pushing the issue will get some real results. It was among the highest priorities for our codel last month.

I also urged Jake Sullivan to make sure that President Biden echoes what we told President Xi about the need for reciprocity between U.S. and Chinese businesses. Time and time again, our best companies are prohibited from competing freely or competing at all in China, while many of their best companies can freely compete here.

So many of our companies are severely disadvantaged when the Chinese Government stacks the deck against them in the form of forced technology transfers, the theft of their intellectual property, and other unfair practices. This is costing countless American jobs and tens of millions—if not more—to our economy every single year.

We listed, roughly, a dozen major companies that right now face a major disadvantage competing in China, and we hope the President will strongly push President Xi on those this week.

We also stressed to President Xi last month that if the United States and China are to improve their economic relations, U.S. companies need to be able to compete freely in China, just as they compete freely here. I expect President Biden will emphasize the same this week.

Finally, I hope President Biden is adamant, as we were, with President Xi that China must lean on Russia and Iran not to exacerbate the military crises happening around the world.

On the Israel-Gaza conflict, in particular, we told President Xi that China needs to use its influence on Iran to stop them from acting in any way that would widen the conflict. China should play a positive, not a negative, role in this delicate crisis.

In fact, during my meeting with President Xi, as you may remember, I criticized the Chinese Government for issuing a statement about October 7 that failed to condemn the killing of civilians, and they ended up issuing a stronger statement the next day. When President Biden is similarly firm that China should play a stabilizing role with Iran and Russia, I think it will make a big difference.

In short, Wednesday's meeting between President Biden and President Xi will be a real test for China to show that they truly want a better relationship with the United States.

When my colleagues and I met with President Xi in person, we were pointed and specific with our questions and issues and found him to be responsive. So I expect President Biden will have the same sort of frank conversation we did a month ago.

When the President hammers home the same things we focused on in Bei-

jing on fentanyl, on reciprocity for U.S. businesses, on ensuring stability on the world stage, then, given what we saw in our conversations, we think it could make significant progress on issues we have long focused on here in the U.S. Senate.

I salute President Biden for meeting with President Xi, and I am very hopeful we will get some real results as a result of that meeting.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Madam President, on avoiding a government shutdown, it is a critical week here in the U.S. Capitol. This Friday, at midnight, the Federal Government is going to shut down unless Congress acts first. The last thing the American people want to see is another unnecessary and painful government shutdown.

Democrats certainly don't want to have a shutdown, and many of our Republican colleagues have likewise claimed they don't want to see one either. Even the mere act of approaching a shutdown is damaging. Last Friday, when Moody's announced they lowered the U.S. credit rating to "negative," citing "continued political polarization" as one of its reasons, that proved to be true.

The answer for avoiding a government shutdown is what I have been saying all along: Bipartisanship is necessary. I have said on multiple occasions that if we are going to work together to keep the government open, Speaker JOHNSON will have to avoid pushing steep cuts or poison pills that Democrats can't support.

For now, I am pleased that Speaker JOHNSON seems to be moving in our direction by advancing a CR that does not include the highly partisan cuts that Democrats have warned against.

The Speaker's proposal is far from perfect, but the most important thing is that it refrains from making steep cuts while also extending funding for defense in the second tranche of bills in February, not the first in January.

Today, the House Rules Committee will take up the Speaker's bill, and that will give us the first indication of how committed Republicans are to keeping the government open.

The next few days will tell all in the House, and I hope the Speaker does not buckle to the loud voices on his hard-right flank to add partisan cuts as the price for keeping the government open.

In divided government, extremists on one side cannot expect to dictate the agenda for the rest of Congress, especially when their views are so out of line with the majority of Congress and the majority of the American people.

I hope Speaker JOHNSON recognizes that he will need support from Democrats in both Chambers if he wants to avoid causing a shutdown. He needs to stay away from poison pills and steep, hard-right cuts for that to happen.

MILITARY PROMOTIONS

Madam President, on military holds, it has now been 9 months since Senator TUBERVILLE began his reckless hold on hundreds of military promotions.

Frankly, patience on both sides—both sides of the aisle—is wearing very, very thin.

Every day Senator TUBERVILLE continues his reckless blockades of military promotions. America's national security pays the price. Our military readiness pays the price. Military families—spouses who need to start new jobs and children who need to start new schools—pay the price.

It is the responsibility of Senate Republican colleagues to importune Senator TUBERVILLE to stand down, let these military nominees go through, and tell him to start putting his hard-right political demands ahead of America's national security.

I know some Republicans have been trying to work with Senator TUBERVILLE over the past week to find some last-ditch solution, but he seems to remain ironclad in his stubbornness. So, tomorrow, the Senate Rules Committee—led by Senator KLOBUCHAR—will mark up a resolution allowing the Senate to quickly confirm the promotions currently blocked by Senator TUBERVILLE. I thank my colleague and chair of the Armed Services Committee, Senator REED, for his work on this resolution.

If Senator TUBERVILLE continues his blanket holds on military nominations—if he won't even listen to Members on his own side of the aisle—I will bring Senator REED's resolution to the floor for a vote as soon as possible; that way we can end Senator TUBERVILLE's farce and quickly confirm the over 350 military promotions—people who have served their country long and well—we can finally move them to their rightful promotions.

I yield the floor.

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. Madam 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 Republican leader is recognized.

HONORING CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 STEPHEN R. DWYER, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 SHANE M. BARNES, STAFF SERGEANT TANNER W. GRONE, SERGEANT ANDREW P. SOUTHARD, AND SERGEANT CADE M. WOLFE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I need to begin today with some tragic news. This weekend, as Americans joined together to salute our heroes, five soldiers deployed out of Fort Campbell, KY, were killed while operating in dangerous conditions in the Mediterranean Sea: CW3 Stephen Dwyer, CW2 Shane Barnes, SSG Tanner Grone, SGT Andrew Southard, and SGT Cade Wolfe.

These fallen warriors were members of Fort Campbell's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, known by their brothers- and sisters-in-arms as Night Stalkers.