



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024

No. 64

Senate

(Legislative day of Wednesday, April 10, 2024)

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.

God of our destinies, guide our Senators this day by Your higher wisdom. Watch over them and use their work for Your glory. Lord, replace fear with faith, pessimism with hope, and error with truth. May these lawmakers become Your instruments for enabling justice to thrive. Give them the serenity to accept what they can't change, the courage to change what they can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Lord, we also ask You to comfort the many who mourn the loss of loved ones because of the horrors of war.

We pray in Your merciful 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 15, 2024.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the pending business.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Ramona Villagomez Manglona, of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands for a term of ten years. (Reappointment)

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, in response to Iran's massive attack against Israel over the weekend, we saw two things:

First, we saw a sovereign nation that takes its security seriously mount a successful defense. Israel's defense, with the help of regional and coalition partners and the vigilant support of brave U.S. servicemembers in the region, intercepted and neutralized the bulk of the 300 drones and missiles launched by Iran.

Unfortunately, the second thing we saw was the Commander in Chief sticking to the same playbook—second-guessing the will of the Israeli people and trying to tie the hands of an ally under attack.

President Biden insisted ahead of Iran's attack that America's commit-

ment to Israel was "ironclad." But after 3 years of appeasement and weakness and 6 months of quibbling over Israeli's right to self-defense, I am not really sure whom he expects to believe that assertion. Just saying so, saying our commitment is ironclad, doesn't make it so. Words don't paper over the glaring rifts between the Biden administration and the national unity government in Jerusalem. The public criticism of Israel by senior administration officials undoubtedly influences the decisions of Israel's adversaries.

If the President's commitment to a vital ally were "ironclad," his response to this weekend's attack would not be to lecture her leaders against responding in self-defense.

Would an American Commander in Chief fail to respond if an adversary launched 300 missiles at American soil? The fact that our collective defenses worked in this case doesn't obviate the threat. It doesn't make the need to compel Iran to change its behavior any less urgent.

Make absolutely no mistake, Iran is not deterred; it is actually emboldened.

The regime that attacked Israel this weekend is the same one that green-lit the violent hijacking of a commercial shipping vessel earlier the same day. It is the same Iran that trains, equips, sustains, and expends terrorist proxies from Lebanon to Gaza to Iraq and Syria to Yemen.

It is the same regime that continues to grow an arsenal of long-range ballistic missiles and advance closer and closer to a nuclear weapons capability.

And, of course, it is the same murderous regime that continues to equip Russia's brutal violence in Ukraine. It is no mere coincidence that the mixed barrage of UAVs, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles designed to complicate Israel's air defenses is the same mix Russia uses to launch devastating and frequent long-range attacks against Iranian cities.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S2723

Our adversaries are working together to make America and our friends less safe and less secure.

It is time for the Commander in Chief to lead allies and partners in an international effort to impose meaningful costs on Iran, threatening the things its leaders hold dear, and changing this regime's violent behavior.

We can't afford weakness. We can't afford to be deterred by Iran. The easiest way to hasten escalation and a wider war is to show you are unwilling or unable to meet aggression with strength. There is only one way to stop a bully.

So it is time for the Commander in Chief to stand by our allies and stand up to our adversaries. He can actually begin that today.

But it is also time for Congress to deliver the urgent investments that our industrial base, our forces, and our partners will need to meet and outcompete the growing and linked threats that we face.

The Senate passed an urgent national security supplemental 2 months ago—2 months ago. It would help meet the urgent needs of Ukraine's resistance, equip Indo-Pacific allies to deter PRC aggression, replenish Israel's stocks of critical capabilities, and expand our own capacity to refill and deploy the arsenal of democracy.

Anyone taking the challenges we face seriously knows that these unmet needs are absolutely urgent. So I will once again urge our House colleagues to take up this legislation without delay.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Madam President, on a related matter, in December, the Director of the FBI told our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee that when he surveys threats to the homeland, he saw "blinking lights everywhere."

Iran's efforts to kill Americans, compromise our communications and data, and collect intelligence on U.S. soil are already well-known. At this point, so are the hundreds of known or suspected terrorists encountered along our borders in just the current fiscal year.

At the end of the week, an essential authority America's law enforcement and intelligence professionals rely on to monitor and mitigate serious threats is actually set to expire. The crucial window into the activities of those who wish America harm is set to go dark.

Of course, a few days ago, the House passed legislation that reauthorizes section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act before it lapses. This historic authority should not be controversial, and it should not be conflated with well-known FBI abuses of FISA's title I.

Section 702 provides the authority to collect the communications of foreign nationals located overseas when they are reasonably likely to yield intelligence value. In practice, this means suspected foreign terrorists or foreign intelligence operatives—again, all of them located overseas.

Section 702 both gives us this critical information and places guardrails on how this collection is conducted. Importantly, it does not authorize the surveillance of Americans for which a warrant is already required.

Have there been problems in the FISA process from malfeasance and incompetence? Yes, there have. That is why the bill includes the most significant accountability reforms to the FBI in generations.

The bill includes the most significant reforms to FISA—both section 702 and title I—in a generation. The bill the Senate will receive this week already places firm parameters on the FBI's ability to query the database of lawfully collected foreign intelligence for communications that might involve U.S. persons, either as a target or an asset of a foreign terrorist or intelligence operative.

It creates further new reporting requirements to increase accountability for abuse and misconduct in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court system, including direct reporting to Congress on adverse personnel actions and noncompliance.

And it imposes new, serious criminal consequences for unlawful disclosures of court proceedings.

I say all of this as context for any demands that the Senate place further limits on the use of FISA critical authorities.

Let me be clear: The data collected under section 702 is collected lawfully. It is entirely reasonable under the Constitution. Any incidental collection of communications by or about U.S. persons is also reasonable.

Every court that has looked at that question has said so, and they are right. Misguided efforts to require a criminal law warrant to sort and organize those data on U.S. persons would end—end—the ability of the FBI to keep Americans safe. Frankly, they would forget the lessons of 9/11.

So I will oppose any such efforts and urge my colleagues to do the same. We have until Friday to avoid a dangerous lapse in a critical tool for identifying and stopping espionage and terrorism against the United States. If any of our colleagues believes that now is an appropriate moment to make this mission even more difficult, I would be very interested to hear that rationale.

America is facing the most dangerous combination of national security challenges since the end of the Cold War. I will not be a party to any effort to make it harder to meet these challenges, and the Senate will not allow vital security authorities to go dark.

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. SCHUMER. 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL SECURITY SUPPLEMENTAL

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, Saturday evening, Iran launched over 300 missile and drone strikes against Israel, the first direct attack against Israel from Iranian soil in history. For five harrowing hours, the sounds of explosions and sirens reverberated throughout the night in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and across the country. Tens of thousands of Israeli citizens barricaded themselves and braced for the worst. On that long night, all of us were on tenterhooks as the missiles from Iran came down.

I strongly condemn the attacks by the Iranian Government and urge them to refrain from escalating hostilities. What Iran did was dangerous, unjustifiable, and threatens to plunge the Middle East into a widespread war. So I strongly urge the Iranian regime to cease their reckless behavior from both its forces and those of its proxies.

Now, when the attack came, thank God, Israel was ready. Israel was ready because of the United States' ironclad commitment to its security.

The night of the attack, I was in touch with senior administration officials who told me that, with help from the United States, England, France, and some Arab nations, the overwhelming majority of all Iranian missiles and drone strikes were successfully intercepted.

The damage to Israel, thank God, was minimal. Only one serious casualty was reported. We pray for her recovery.

Today, above all, I breathe a sigh of relief for Israel—relief that injuries were minimal, relief that the damage was not worse. But, of course, it was no accident that Israel endured Iran's attack largely unscathed. On the contrary, Israel endured because America's support for Israel's security is ironclad. The success of Israeli missile defense, developed in cooperation with the United States and with U.S. funding, is a testament to the United States' longstanding security cooperation with Israel. It is why so few of Iran's missiles and drones ultimately hit their targets. So I commend the Israel Defense Forces, I commend President Biden and our military leadership and our brave Armed Forces, and I commend our partners who worked together with Israel to avert calamity.

Iran's reprehensible attack against Israel has made a few things very clear:

First, Israel is surrounded by adversaries who seek its destruction. We saw that on October 7. We saw it again this weekend. We dare not waver in our commitment to help Israel defend itself from these threats.

Second, the fact that so many nations came to Israel's aid, including some Arab nations, shows Iran is becoming more and more isolated. Iran's attack should be swiftly and universally condemned. Their attack risked