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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, at 1 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JULY 29, 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.

Eternal Spirit, thank You for the continuous blessings of Your handiwork. From the first blush of dawn to the wonders of the starry heavens, we are daily made aware of Your creative might.

Lord, bless our Senators to see the wonder of Your presence on Capitol Hill. In the hands of the many workers who enable them to do their work, give our lawmakers the wisdom to catch a glimpse of the unity and cooperation You desire for them. Make our legislators willing to both receive and give forgiveness as they manifest Your spirit in deeds of kindness. As our lives intertwine through common task, remind us all that, ultimately, we are accountable to You.

We pray in Your mighty 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, July 29, 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.

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 executive session to resume the nomination which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Stacey D. Neumann, of Maine, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maine.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

TERRORISM

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, the partners, puppets, and proxies of America's biggest adversaries spent a busy weekend repressing and killing innocent people.

On Saturday, in the Golan Heights, Israeli Druze children were playing soccer when Hezbollah launched a rocket made in Iran and killed 12 of them. On Sunday, Venezuela's communist dictator hijacked an election, promising the suffering people of his country even more brutal days to come.

We live in a world where thuggish repression and terrorist violence are increasingly common. Tragically, the slaughter of innocent children by terrorists is not surprising. Neither, unfortunately, is a stooge of the world's most powerful authoritarian's tightening his own chokehold on power.

But one thing doesn't ever get less shocking or alarming: the continued naivete with which our leaders respond. The Secretary of State says the Biden-Harris administration has "serious concerns that the result announced does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people."

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



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Well, many of us have serious and longstanding concerns that the administration does not know how to credibly change the calculus of America's adversaries. Autocrats don't care about disapproving looks from Western diplomats.

Don't believe me? Ask the mullahs in Tehran how worried they were about stern condemnations of their ongoing nuclear enrichment efforts.

We certainly don't have to wonder whether promises of sanction relief from Washington succeeded in convincing Nicolas Maduro to permit a free and fair election.

"Concern" is not a strategy. And speeches, for that matter, are not policy, especially when they are not backed by facts and by force.

Last week, President Biden tooted the horn of his own foreign policy and declared proudly that "the United States is not at war anywhere in the world." Well, that was news to America's servicemembers deployed in harm's way.

The very next day, Iran-backed terrorists attacked U.S. personnel in Iraq and in Syria again. For months, at his orders, U.S. Navy destroyers have expended more than \$1 billion in high-tech munitions to intercept the Houthis' Iran-made arsenal of missiles and drones in exchange for no measurable increase in deterrence.

It is well and good to insist America is not at war, but a growing list of authoritarians, rogues, and strongmen are at war with us. The President's failure to respond decisively to threats may have let him believe we are not at war, but the same failure has emboldened our adversaries.

Time and again, the Biden-Harris administration has limited support, agonized over perceived risks of escalation, and tried to micromanage the way our friends in Ukraine and Israel actually defend themselves. In Secretary Blinken's first public comment after Hezbollah's most recent strike, he insisted that "we don't want to see it spread." Well, neither did Israel on October 6, before Hamas spread murderous violence into peaceful kibbutzim, in violation of a cease-fire agreement. And neither does Israel now, as its military continues to focus on finishing the job against Hamas and building the pressure necessary to secure a stable peace.

There is simply no question Iran and its proxies are the instigators and aggressors in this conflict. They have planned and prepared this violence for years. And they will escalate, spread, and perpetuate it until it is no longer in their interests to do so.

If the so-called international community wants an end to the war in Gaza and chaos in the region, they can do more than issue statements expressing concern about escalation. It is past time for civilized countries to present Tehran with cold consequences, with heavy pressure on the leaders responsible for the campaign of death and de-

struction across the Middle East. Instead, Western leaders have repeatedly blamed the victim.

This is the message sent by Democrats who boycotted the joint address to Congress by the democratically elected Prime Minister of Israel. This is the message sent by their presumptive Presidential nominee who, instead of extending a hand of solidarity, pressured a friend and ally to cease military operations to defend itself.

This sort of pressure will please the American left, but restraining Israel also pleases the butchers in Tehran.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Madam President, the Supreme Court is under attack. Prominent Democrats say it must do what they want and not what the laws and the Constitution require.

They have incited violence against the Court. We have had to put Justices under 24/7 police protection. Even so, a deranged young man is about to go on trial for trying to kill a Justice and his family while they slept in order to change the outcome of a case.

In polling last year, the Court was the branch of government with the highest level of trust from the public. But that hasn't stopped Democrats from devoting the last 8 years from an all-out campaign against the Court's legitimacy—and, ultimately, against its very existence. Radical liberals have called for Court packing.

Influential Members of this body, including the senior Senator from Rhode Island and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee have threatened ominously that:

Perhaps the Court can heal itself before the public demands it be "restructured."

The left wage daily warfare against the Justices, illegally picketing their neighborhoods with impunity, trying to harm their spouses' careers, and even spying on what kinds of flags they fly in their yards.

Today, the Biden-Harris administration, which desperately wants these radical votes, is once again jumping right into the fray. After talking to a Harvard Law extremist who had helped then-Senator Biden stage-manage the character assassination of Robert Bork almost 40 years ago, they decided the time has come to eliminate the Supreme Court as we know it.

In his op-ed, the President says he wants term limits on Justices, never mind what the Constitution says, never mind the advice-and-consent role of the Senate. President Biden and his leftist allies don't like the current composition of the Court, so they want to shred the Constitution to change it. He wants what he calls an "ethics code," but that already exists. What the President is actually proposing is a stealth process for people other than the Justices to decide cases. Again, Constitution be damned.

The fact is that President Biden himself came to office and stood up a Commission to investigate whether to change the Supreme Court. This morn-

ing, the President thanked this Commission for its "insightful analysis" that supposedly informed his reform proposals.

Never mind now—never mind—that this Commission, cochaired by one of his closest political confidants, didn't actually recommend that he do anything. On the contrary, it explained in detail the challenges posed by hare-brained ideas like term limits.

As one of the Members noted:

We ought to be really careful about tinkering with the Supreme Court because you just don't know what the consequences could be.

Why is the Biden-Harris administration so willing to put the crown jewel of our system of government—the independent judiciary—to the torch? Because it stands in their way.

Don't take my word for it. They are running ads about it. With pictures of the Justices on the screen, one commercial intones that the Supreme Court has made the President "above the law" because the former President "asked them to."

What happened to respecting court decisions? The Biden-Harris Justice Department took an extreme position in the prosecution of their electoral component, and they lost.

Rather than accepting that they lost, the Biden-Harris administration has responded with a full-scale attack on the Justices who ruled against them. This from the folks who love to remind us that "You can't only love your country when you win."

Perhaps the President and Vice President should take a good look in the mirror.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Illinois.

ISRAEL

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to make sure that the record is clear and unequivocal. The Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, met personally with Prime Minister Netanyahu. At that point, she said, with him and publicly, that our alliance with Israel is "unwavering." That was her exact quote, despite what you might have heard to the contrary.

Then she went on to say she believed that Israel had the right to exist and the right to defend itself, but how it does it makes a difference. That is a significant statement because what she is suggesting is our alliance has to reflect our values as well as our commitment to Israel.

I don't believe that is a radical statement. I agree with that statement. And I believe that to suggest otherwise is to mischaracterize what the Vice President said. I think she speaks for America. I hope she does. She speaks for me when she says those words. I thought her meeting with Netanyahu was historic, important, timely, and repeated the basic principles that guide our two nations.