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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.

Eternal Lord God, the center of our joy. Thank you for a safe return to Capitol Hill and for more opportunities to strengthen our Nation and world. Remind our lawmakers that You continue to stand in the shadows, ensuring the success of Your prevailing providence.

Lord, may these servants of freedom in the upper Chamber of our legislative branch never forget that their times are in Your hands, for You are able to accomplish more than they can ask or imagine.

Permit these thoughts to provide them with peace that the world can neither give or take away.

We pray in Your loving 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, September 9, 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 consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The clerk read the nomination of Adam B. Abelson, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

#### KENTUCKY SHOOTINGS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I need to begin today by addressing a shooting that took place along I-75 in southeastern Kentucky this past weekend. My office is in close contact with local law enforcement as their search for the perpetrator continues.

Elaine and I are grateful for their swift efforts to protect the surrounding communities, and we are holding those who were injured in this senseless violence in our prayers.

#### AUGUST WORK PERIOD

Madam President, on an entirely different matter, I would like to welcome everyone back from the August State work period. Hearing from the people we represent is what allows us to be effective here. So I know our colleagues will agree that the time we spent back home last month was particularly valuable.

Unsurprisingly, the issues I heard about across Kentucky are familiar to millions of American families. In Daviess County, I heard about how small family farms are struggling to stay afloat amid rising costs.

Of course, historic inflation hasn't just hit our Nation's growers and producers. From Pikeville to Hopkinsville, job creators and working families are bearing the brunt of the Biden-Harris administration's reckless spending.

I also heard from Kentucky farmers who are waiting for Congress to act on the farm bill—legislation for which the Democratic majority has yet to secure a single minute of floor time.

In my hometown of Louisville, I spoke with legislators about the regulatory costs that are crippling State leaders and Main Street alike. Today, navigating the maze of redtape from Washington nearly requires a black belt in bureaucratic politics.

And, finally, I heard from Kentucky's brave servicemembers as we celebrated the first newly renovated barracks facility to open at Fort Campbell.

I was proud to work with Army leaders to modernize 11 barracks that have stood untouched for nearly half a century. In just one year, we accomplished what would have taken close to a decade to finish.

As I have said time and time again, rebuilding American hard power starts here at home in projects just like this, modernizing our capabilities, rebuilding the arsenal of democracy, and equipping America's servicemembers to keep us safe.

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



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## NATIONAL SECURITY

Madam President, now, on a related matter, the challenges facing an American-led order and American interests around the world are no less serious nor less connected than they were the last time the Senate convened.

Last week, Iran was expected to transfer ballistic missiles to Russia in a major expansion of its support for Putin's war in Ukraine. The PRC is ranking up its destabilizing provocations in the South China Sea, and Russia, for its part, continues to court the fealty of senior officials from a NATO ally, Hungary.

And our adversaries' advances have been compounded by the West's own inaction, distraction, and astonishing lapses in moral clarity.

In recent days, the head of UNRWA, whose employees participated in the slaughter of Jews on October 7, insisted that deserved criticism of his organization's complicity in terrorism was itself tantamount to "a weapon" in the world.

The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom's new government announced that a suspension of some 30 licenses of military aid to Israel, just as the world's only Jewish State buried hostages—including a young American citizen—that were murdered in cold blood by Hamas.

This step—and calls for similar restriction on our own assistance—validate the terrorist strategy and broadcast the weakness of our resolve.

And in a bizarre public message, even by its own standards, the Biden-Harris administration urged the Houthi terrorists holding international commerce hostage in the Red Sea to think—think—about the consequences of their blockade for the environment.

Needless to say, with August behind us, Congress's own unfinished business has become even more glaring. The President's meager defense budget request is already an insufficient starting point for top line funding discussions when they began literally months ago.

Today, constraints on Congress's ability to provide for the common defense are even more dangerous and demands for parity with nondefense discretionary spending even more reckless.

Meanwhile, continued failure to process the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act puts the lie to any suggestion that the Senate Democratic majority is focused on urgent business.

The authoritarians conspiring to supplant American-led peace and prosperity did not ease up while the Senate was in recess. Our adversaries are resolved to exploit American weakness and hesitate. And we have given them quite enough.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

MUHAMMAD YUNUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was over 20 years ago when I was a Member of the House of Representa-

tives that one of my colleagues Mike Synar, then a Congressman from Oklahoma, asked me if I would like to join him on a trip.

I said: Where do you want to go, Mike? I'm not all that popular back home in my district, so you better pick a place that we can explain. He said: I am going to take you to a place that no one will ever complain about. I would like you to go with me to Bangladesh.

I said: Where is that? He said: I will show you. And off we went to Bangladesh halfway around the world. It was a great trip. It is a poor country that has been through a lot of political turmoil. It has had more than its share of natural disasters, and they are a remarkable people.

During the course of that trip, I was introduced to an economics professor at the university. He was an interesting character. He would come up with a theory that he thought would help the poorest people on earth. It was known as microcredit, and he created something called the Grameen Bank, the people's bank.

And, basically, what he set out to do was to prove that you could loan a small amount of money to the poorest people on earth and dramatically change their lives.

They would pay it back, and they would start to be more constructive, more profitable in what they were doing. It was just a theory at the time, but he is starting to prove it. We kept in touch after leaving that visit, and I watched over the years as he expanded the concept.

Pretty soon, there were cell phones in these tiny little villages in Bangladesh. One person would own a cell phone and sell minutes on the phone for people to call in to the nearest city to see if this was the right time to bring their produce to market.

His name was Muhammad Yunus, and he caught the attention not just of this Congressman—now a Senator—but he caught the attention of the world. When it was all said and done, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in economics.

I thought he was extraordinary and should be recognized here as well, so I led the effort with the late Senator Mike Enzi and Congressman RUSH Holt to award the Congressional Gold Medal to this remarkable economics professor—Dr. Muhammad Yunus. He was sometimes known as the "Banker to the Poor" after he received the Nobel Prize.

He pioneered microlending as a groundbreaking method of helping some of the world's poorest people. He recognized that, just with a little bit of money in hand, many people could lift themselves out of poverty, but traditional banks wouldn't lend small sums to the poor, particularly the women who were poor. Banks saw such loans as too risky, not profitable, and unworthy.

Dr. Yunus never gave up. He saw things differently, with incredible re-

sults. Through his Grameen Bank, he proved that microlending could be done collateral-free and investing in poor women actually paid off. In fact, most of Grameen Bank's loans have gone to poor women who rise from terrible poverty to become small business people.

I have seen the results of that innovative approach all over the world now, including a visit to a ramshackle hut in Uganda, where I met three mothers who were working in a local market. I asked them, through an interpreter, how microcredit had changed their lives. One woman said: "My knees have gone soft." I didn't understand what she meant. I asked her to explain.

She said: Before I got my microcredit loan, which gave me a chance to go to the market and make a little money, I used to have to crawl on my knees to beg my husband for money to feed the children. I don't have to crawl anymore. My knees have gone soft.

I will never forget that exchange.

In recent decades, more than 140 million people on 5 continents have received microloans with incredible repayment rates and success. Quite simply, Dr. Muhammad Yunus's ideas changed the World and helped to earn him that Nobel Peace Prize.

Tragically, his ideas also earned him the wrath of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, whose government harassed Dr. Yunus for years with questionable legal charges and threatened jail time.

So imagine my surprise last month—just a few weeks ago, during this break. Hasina finally resigned as Prime Minister of Bangladesh amidst massive public protest, and the students who were leading the protest demanded that the leader of their country be none other than Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the same economics professor I met more than 20 years ago. They asked him to create a caretaker government and hold new elections, which he is in the process of doing.

I called him on the phone when I heard of his good fortune and the fact that he is now the leader of that nation. I asked him what I could do to help, and he said: We need so much help to stabilize the economy and move forward with this poor nation. I will be coming to the United Nations in the next few weeks.

I hope to get the chance to see him. I hope he can make it down here to Washington.

He was upbeat. He believes the people of that country are prepared now to rise to this historic opportunity.

I am going to offer my full support to him today. I believe in him. I did 20 years ago, and I do today. I urge President Biden to support him as well. I know Dr. Yunus has the best interest of the Bangladeshi people at heart and will do his utmost in this challenging time.

ISRAEL

Madam President, on another topic, last weekend we learned of even more