

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK R. WARNER 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 (Mr. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, December 10, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK R. WARNER, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

## RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

## SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, if any, the Senate will turn to a period of morning business, with Senator SANDERS of Vermont to be recognized at 10:15 a.m. to speak for whatever time he feels appropriate.

There will be no rollcall votes during today's session of the Senate. The next rollcall vote will be at 3 p.m. Monday, December 13, on the motion to invoke cloture with respect to the tax agreement. As I announced last night, that vote will be held open longer than usual to allow Senators to make that most important vote.

I have nothing further.

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now be in a period of morning business.

The Senator from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## AFGHANISTAN

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, this month, the Obama administration will submit its review of the war in Afghan-

istan. I expect—and I think a number of Members of Congress expect—that this review will provide answers to the key questions before us, questions the American people deserve answers to. I believe these questions fall into three broad categories: first of all, Afghan governance; second, development and humanitarian efforts; and, finally, establishing a sustainable security environment in Afghanistan.

Since the announcement of a new strategy in December of 2009 and the deployment of 30,000 additional troops, I have sought to carefully monitor U.S. progress toward its goals. As part of this effort, I have paid special attention to combating the top killer of U.S. troops, which, of course, is improvised explosive devices. I chaired a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on this topic on November 18 and will continue to press our government and our leaders and governments in the region to do more to restrict the availability of components that make up these terrible weapons, especially, of course, ammonium nitrate, which flows into Afghanistan every day of the week to make IEDs that kill our troops.

I am pleased significant progress has been made by the Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense to coordinate an all-of-government approach to this problem. I wish to applaud the recent efforts of the Afghan security forces that seized one metric ton of ammonium nitrate on Monday in Zabul Province. All the key players appear to be on the same page on this issue, but there still has not been a significant decrease of these deadly weapons in Afghanistan. I trust that the December review by the administration will address the flow of ammonium nitrate, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with the administration on this issue.

At a strategic level, too many questions remain as we head into the December review. I would like to list some of those right now.

First of all, on the issue of governance, I have two questions I hope the December review will address. First, do we have a political strategy—a political strategy—in place to ensure that the Afghan Government is prepared to enact reforms that concretely show the population it represents their key interests and concerns? I believe our efforts to pressure the Afghan Government have been at best uneven in this area, due, in large part, to a reluctance to pressure the Afghan leadership.

Any security gains in Afghanistan can be easily squandered without serious progress on governance. The United States, ISAF, and Afghan security forces are sacrificing too much as the Afghan Government fails to enact reforms in the best interests of the Afghan people. It will be difficult to succeed in Afghanistan without a strategy to help build the institutions of governance, including the judiciary, political parties, and, of course, electoral institutions.

As difficult as these interactions may be, the international community must be more willing to confront the Afghan Government on issues of political representation, corruption, and the rule of law. We should stand ready to help build and develop these democratic institutions.

The 2009 Presidential election and the 2010 parliamentary elections were rife with problems that seriously undermined the confidence of the international community in Afghanistan's ability to conduct elections free of fraud and manipulation. If the electoral process remains deeply flawed, the Afghan people's support for the democratic process itself may well erode.

While the government has said it wants to develop a "strategy for long-term electoral reform that addresses in particular the sustainability of the electoral process," few steps have been taken in this direction. The election law is in need of serious reform. The executive branch has nearly exclusive power over the Independent Election Commission and Electoral Complaints Commission. The single nontransferable vote system impedes the development of political parties, an essential long-term way to organize and represent the interests of the Afghan people.

Corruption continues to be a serious issue that affects citizens across Afghanistan, especially in the southern part of the country. A recent public opinion survey conducted by the Washington Post, ABC News, the BBC, and ARD television in Germany showed that 55 percent of respondents in Kandahar say they have been asked for bribes from the police—55 percent—well above the national figure of 21 percent. Moreover, most Kandahar residents say their situation would only get worse if they exercised due process and filed a complaint about a public official.

U.S. efforts to improve governance at times compete with our security concerns. There is an inherent tension between the United States and ISAF forces in efforts to engage, to combat extremist elements at the local level and cooperation with warlords who rule over certain areas. While there is an imperative to collect intelligence and conduct operations that may require cooperation with local power brokers, I am concerned the long-term cost of such interaction is very high. Are we empowering another generation of local power brokers who have little regard for representing the interests of the local population? That is a question that needs to be asked over and over, and we need answers to that question.

It is a simple fact, disaffection among Afghan citizens with the central government and local power brokers provides recruiting opportunities for the Taliban. This is a serious concern because it gets to the heart of our engagement in Afghanistan: Cooperation