

Masked gunmen shouting “Allahu akbar!” stormed the Paris offices of a satirical newspaper Wednesday, killing 12 people before escaping. It was France’s deadliest terror attack in at least two decades.

With a manhunt on, French President Francois Hollande called the attack on the Charlie Hebdo weekly . . . “a terrorist attack without a doubt.” He said several other attacks have been thwarted in France “in recent weeks.”

France raised its security alert to the highest level and reinforced protective measures at houses of worship, stores, media offices and transportation. Top government officials were holding an emergency meeting and Hollande planned a nationally televised address in the evening. Schools closed their doors.

World leaders including President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the attack, but supporters of the militant Islamic State group celebrated the slayings as well-deserved revenge against France.

This event in Paris recalls what we lived through not that long ago when the United States—on September 11, 2001—was attacked by terrorists and more than 3,000 innocent Americans lost their lives in New York, in Washington, and in the countryside of Pennsylvania. Many of us recall that at that moment—that sad, awful moment—people around the world rallied to stand with the United States in our grief and in our determination for justice. We particularly remember that the people of France did that, and they spoke out in one voice saying they were going to be by our side in this battle against terrorism. I think it is appropriate today that we follow suit, that we join in that same spirit. “A ce moment tragique, nous sommes tous Parisiens, nous sommes tous Français.”

Let us all work together not only to bring justice to this horrible situation—this attack on free press in France—but let us also work together to bring an end to terrorism in our time. We can work with our allies and friends in France to achieve that goal.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY ON 40 YEARS IN THE U.S. SENATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 40 years ago this week, a young prosecutor from Vermont was sworn into the Senate. He was part of a historic group of lawmakers often referred to as the “Watergate babies.” Today that man is President pro tempore emeritus as well as the most senior Member of the Senate. It is an honor to serve with him and to recognize Senator PATRICK LEAHY for reaching this historic milestone.

PATRICK LEAHY remains the youngest Senator—and the only Democratic Senator—ever sent to this body by the people of his home State of Vermont. But that is not what makes PATRICK LEAHY exceptional. What makes him exceptional is the fact that he is a consensus builder—a thoughtful man committed to making government work better. It has been a privilege for me to work closely with Senator LEAHY serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

As a member of that committee since 1979 and for many years as chairman, Senator LEAHY made a profound mark on America’s system of justice. He has voted on the nominations of every sitting member of the U.S. Supreme Court. He has fought to preserve the balance between liberty and security during especially difficult times. Senator LEAHY has also fought to make America’s respect for human rights a cornerstone of our Nation’s foreign policy. He has been a leader in the global effort to ban antipersonnel landmines. He championed the “Leahy Law” to prevent U.S. tax dollars from benefiting human rights abusers abroad. He was a leader in recent efforts to free U.S. citizen Alan Gross from a Cuban jail and in the modernization of our Nation’s policy toward that island.

One last point, PAT LEAHY is also, almost certainly, the biggest “Dead Head” in the Senate. Twenty years ago, he invited his good friend, Jerry Garcia—the lead guitarist for the Grateful Dead—to join him for lunch here in the Capitol. Two other members of the band came, too: drummer Mickey Hart and bass player Phil Lesh. As one might imagine, this unusual foursome created a bit of a stir in the Senate Dining Room. Then in walked Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Ever the bridgebuilder, Senator LEAHY walked over to Senator Thurmond and said: “Please join us. There’s someone I want you to meet.”

It is a story worth pondering as we begin the 114th Congress. If we could all be so open to creating unlikely alliances, there is no telling what we might achieve in the next 2 years.

Again, I thank my friend Senator LEAHY on his 40 years of service to the people of Vermont, America, and to the great causes that face our generation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESTORING THE SENATE’S GREATNESS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to address the state of the Senate and how to restore its greatness.

Yesterday, I was sworn in as the President pro tempore. Although there have been some notable exceptions throughout history, the modern practice of the Senate has been to elect as the President pro tempore the most senior Member of the majority party. As one noted historian of the Senate has generously written, “election of a senator to the office of president pro tempore has always been considered one of the highest honors offered to a senator by the Senate as a body.”

I am greatly honored to have been selected for this position, but I am keenly aware of the great responsibilities that come with it. The President pro tempore of the Senate is one of only three legislative offices established by the U.S. Constitution, and in recent decades it has been occupied by true giants of the Senate. Their names, which include Vandenberg, Russell, Byrd, Stevens, Inouye, and LEAHY, resonate as some of the greatest legislators ever to serve in this body.

Beyond the President pro tempore’s formal responsibilities in presiding over the Senate and helping ensure the continuity of government, this office represents a unique opportunity to assist the majority leader in guiding the Senate as it addresses the critical issues facing our Nation. In that sense, the President pro tempore serves as an elder statesman, sharing accumulated knowledge and lessons learned through long experience.

I consider it fortuitous that the beginning of my service as President pro tempore coincides with the start of a new year. For many, the new year is a time for reflecting upon the past and reviewing commitments for the future. I believe we as Senators should use this opportunity for some much needed introspection about the state of this institution.

The Senate has long been heralded as the world’s greatest deliberative body. With so many critical challenges facing our Nation today, there has never been a more important time for the Senate to live up to its storied legacy and to fulfill its responsibilities to the American people.

Central to properly understanding our responsibilities as Senators is to appreciate the Senate’s role in our system of government. This means understanding both the Senate’s purposes and its unique place at the center of our constitutional structure. It is important for us to consider these issues.