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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, You are in the midst of us and we are called Your children. We confess that we often fail to live worthy of Your great Name and generous mercies. We thank You for the opportunity to serve You as we strive to keep America the land of the free and the home of the brave. Abide with our lawmakers. Be their companion as they labor to keep this Nation strong. Drive away all snares of the enemy and may no weapon formed against them be able to prosper. Make our Senators models of excellence and integrity for our Nation and world.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The majority leader is recognized.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me quote from a letter I recently received from our colleagues across the aisle. Here is what they said:

We are writing to reiterate our interest in working cooperatively to facilitate the fiscal year 2017 appropriations process. As we see it—

Our Democratic friends said—restoring the regular order promises not only a more open and transparent process, but a chance for Senators on both sides of the aisle to participate meaningfully in funding decisions. This is a win-win opportunity and we should seize it together.

That was a letter I received from all of our friends on the other side of the aisle. That is exactly what we have been doing—exactly. The appropriations process is off to a strong start, an “excellent kickoff,” in the words of the top Appropriations Committee Democrat, Senator MIKULSKI, with bills passing through the committee by unanimous bipartisan votes.

“If this is the way it is going to be to move appropriations,” she said just a few days ago, “then I think it is a good day.” Senator MIKULSKI said: “I think it is a good day.” Democrats lauded the first bill on the floor and in press releases for helping promote American jobs and for addressing the cleanup of radioactive and hazardous contamination across our country.

They praised its key investments in research and water infrastructure. Then, what did they do? They filibustered—the very same people who wrote the letter, the very same people who praised the bill in press releases, the very same people who took credit for amendments in the bill, those same people.

It seems Democrats are more concerned with funding the acquisition of heavy water from Iran than funding water infrastructure in America. Let me say that again. It seems Democrats are more concerned with funding the acquisition of heavy water from Iran than funding water infrastructure right here in our own country.

As we all know, President Obama concluded a nuclear deal with Iran last year. Tehran is expected to reap approximately \$100 billion, thanks to the deal, and the Obama administration itself has admitted the regime is likely to use that windfall to invest in its war economy, to defend its regime, and to

strengthen the hand of the Revolutionary Guard, a group that has been accused of helping Shiite militias attack and kill American soldiers in Iraq.

Many of us, including myself, warned that this deal made little sense in terms of our regional strategy. We warned it would enhance Iran’s capability and its power. Indeed, since signing President Obama’s deal, Iran has tested ballistic missiles. It has deployed forces to Syria in support of the Assad regime. It has harassed American ships and those of our allies within the Persian Gulf.

So when the administration made an announcement over this past weekend that it would be purchasing so-called heavy water from Iran, a lot of us were concerned. That is right. Make sure everybody understands. U.S. funds would be sent to Iran. Nothing in the President’s deal with Iran required the United States to make that purchase. It is likely it will effectively amount to even more money for Iran to invest in military modernization.

So Senator COTTON filed an amendment to prevent the money we are appropriating from being used for more of these purchases in the future—in the future. His amendment does not put the Secretary of Energy’s current heavy water purchase agreement at risk. It simply tries to keep our Treasury from subsidizing the modernization of Iran’s military or the procurement of ballistic missiles or air defenses that may be used against America or her allies.

I support his policy objective. I don’t know why it would not be supported by every Member of the Senate, regardless of party, but apparently Democrats do not. They have filibustered the overall bill, a bill that passed committee with unanimous bipartisan support, remember, to prevent even the possibility—this amendment is not even pending—to prevent even the possibility of voting on this amendment. They could not wait a single week before throwing an

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



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