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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Saturday, April 8, 2017, at 11 a.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2017

The Senate met at 9:30 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 God of Hosts, be with us yet, lest we forget that our work on Capitol Hill matters to Your Kingdom.

Lord, with the military response against Syria, we are reminded again that eternal vigilance is the price for freedom. Continue to provide our lawmakers with opportunities to serve Your purposes on Earth.

May they take seriously the responsibilities entrusted to them in their stewardship of the legislative branch. Remind them that You know the pressures they must confront as they strive to serve You and country. Bestow upon them the blessing of Your presence that will guard their hearts with Your peace.

Lord, give them the confidence that, in following You, they can be certain of ultimate triumph.

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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 (Mrs. CAPITO). The majority leader is recognized.

SYRIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last evening the Vice President notified me of the President's decision to respond to the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons against its own people through military action. The action was taken to deter the Assad regime from using chemical weapons again.

I support both the action and the objective. The planning of this operation was clearly well considered. It was taken against the Shayrat airfield from which the aircraft used in the attack had been launched, where chemical weapons had been stored, and was taken against assets of importance to the regime—aircraft, hardened shelters, and air defense systems.

In the days ahead, I am committed to working with the administration to continue developing a counter-ISIL strategy that hastens the defeat of ISIL and establishes objectives for dealing with the Assad regime in a manner that preserves the institutions of government in an effort to prevent a failed state.

Our gratitude goes out to the world's most capable military, which in a span of just hours presented options, capabilities, and plans to the Commander in Chief and then executed a difficult mission. None of this occurs without years of training, investment, and the dedication by our servicemembers.

This was an action of consequence. It is a clear signal from America that Bashar al-Assad can no longer use chemical weapons against his own people with impunity.

In addition, for the attention of all Senators, we will have a briefing on this matter later today.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday, as we all know, was a consequential day for the Senate. In the end, we restored to this body a tradition that Democrats first upset in 2003 by using a tool Democrats first employed in 2013. As a result, we will move to the confirmation of Judge Gorsuch shortly. He is going to make an incredible addition to the Court. He is going to make the American people proud.

After all, at this point, a few things about this man seem beyond dispute. He has sterling credentials, an excellent record, and an ideal judicial temperament. He has independence of mind and a reputation for fairness. He has also earned plaudits from so many across the political spectrum.

President Obama's former Acting Solicitor General lauded Judge Gorsuch as "one of the most thoughtful and brilliant judges to have served our nation over the last century," while President Obama's legal mentor called Judge Gorsuch a "brilliant, terrific guy who would do the Court's work with distinction."

An appointee of President Clinton's, Judge James Robertson, said Judge Gorsuch "is superbly well prepared and

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



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