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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.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.

Eternal God, our hearts rise up to meet You as the day rises to meet the Sun. Humble our lawmakers in Your presence that they may delight in the power You provide. Help them to remember that before honor comes humility. Give them also the wisdom to know that their sufficiency comes from You.

Lord, teach them Your wisdom as You infuse them with the spirit of reverence for You. May they make the commitment to faithfully serve You and country with their whole hearts.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Branstad nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Terry Branstad, of Iowa, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, since last week's all-Senators briefing with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle have alleged that his appointment of a special counsel impedes the congressional investigation into Russian interference in our elections and whether the Trump campaign was involved. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The executive branch investigation under the special counsel looks at criminal wrongdoing. The congressional investigation takes a broader approach. The two can proceed on parallel tracks, as has happened many times in the past. If anything the congressional investigation is doing potentially interferes with the special counsel's activities, the two parties will discuss it. It is a process called deconfliction. They know how to do it. They have done it before. There is no reason whatsoever for the congressional investigation to slow down or stop.

Mr. Mueller's appointment as special counsel in no way diminishes the need for Congress to play an active role in helping to get to the bottom of all the recent events. Let me repeat. This is our solemn constitutional duty, the very bedrock of the separation of powers and coequal branches of government designed by our Founding Fa-

thers to preserve something we all cherish: American liberty and American democracy. Let me outline three things that should happen.

First, Intelligence Committee Chair BARR and Ranking Member WARNER should continue to pursue their committee's investigation into these matters with just as much vigor. That investigation has been proceeding in a bipartisan way, and it absolutely should continue as such. For example, my friends Senators BARR and WARNER have recently requested financial records of key Trump campaign officials from the Treasury Department. They should be given that information and continue to pursue whatever other avenues they view as helpful to the committee's investigation.

Second, Mr. Comey should testify in both the Judiciary and the Intelligence Committees to discuss the events surrounding his dismissal. The committees should be given access to memos he reportedly drafted following interactions with President Trump, and Congress should also be provided any transcripts or tapes the White House might have of Mr. Comey's conversations with President Trump.

Third, the Intelligence Committee must be provided the details of transcripts relating to President Trump's reported disclosure of information to the Russian Foreign Minister and Ambassador. There is a great deal of dispute about what was said at that meeting. The committee should have access to both Mr. Comey's notes and the White House's notes.

Finally, the Senate must demand the next FBI Director be nonpartisan, independent, fearless, and of unimpeachable integrity, just as Mr. Mueller is. A career politician of either party or anyone who suggests a lack of impartiality should not be considered a fit choice for that office. Every one of these, by the way, deals with congressional oversight—some directly, like the appointment of an FBI Director; some a little

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



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