

in the area and, in fact, around the world. American troops have become even bigger targets. What about the American humanitarian organizations and their personnel abroad, American students, and American tourists? They are all at greater risk as a result of the action taken.

Secretary Pompeo's call today for de-escalation after the assassination is a pipe dream. What we do know—and no one should be surprised—is that Iran has stated that the assassination of the general is tantamount to a declaration of war and they will strike back at a place and time of their choosing. We know with certainty that a response will come and that Iran and its allies have the ability to act against Americans and American interests across the region.

Moreover, the assassination will likely lead to a decline in American influence in Iraq and, as a result, even greater Iranian power and influence in that country. Our ally, the Iraqi Government, has already stated that the attack on its soil violated its sovereignty. Prime Minister Mahdi called for an extraordinary session of the Iraqi Parliament to safeguard Iraq's sovereignty, calling the strike "a dangerous escalation that will light the fuse of a destructive war in Iraq, the region, and the world."

Iraq's President, Barham Salih, also condemned the strikes. Here is the Reuters' piece: "Iraq president condemns U.S. strike, urges restraint."

These are our allies in the Iraqi Government who are condemning these actions and saying that they will lead to a spiral toward war, and these statements came just days after the Iraqi Prime Minister and the President had made similar warnings about prior American actions in Iraq. This is already intensifying calls within Iraq to expel U.S. forces. Who do we think is going to fill the vacuum there? Iran. It already has enormous influence in Iraq, and now we are going to be giving it even more.

This administration, like the Bush administration, has never understood basic political geography. Iran is a large Shia country that borders Iraq. Iraq is also a majority Shia country. Ever since the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and removed Saddam Hussein, Iran's influence in Iraq has steadily grown. The assassination may appear gratifying in the short term, for, as I said, he was a bad person who had a lot of blood on his hands, but it has likely ushered in the most volatile moment in the Middle East in a very, very long time.

The same group of warmongering, political ideologues who told Americans that the Iraq war would lead to democracy's breaking out in the Middle East is telling us today that the Iranians will be celebrating in the streets. The truth is that this action will likely usher in the most militant Parliament in Iran that we will have seen in decades. The door will be closed com-

pletely on the hard-won moment for trying to derail Iranian nuclear ambitions through negotiations.

In closing, this is a pivotal and dangerous moment for America as the result of reckless policies over the last 3 years. The President's action may become the spark that could trigger another war in the Middle East. Let us here in Congress make very clear that President Trump has no authority to take America to war against Iran. Our Constitution requires that Congress authorize any decision to go to war, and Congress has not given that authorization.

In the days and weeks ahead, I hope all of us will do our duty as Senators to look at the situation we find ourselves in at this moment, and I hope we will resolve to do what President Trump said he wanted to do while he was campaigning for President, which is to not plunge us into more wars in the Middle East but to find a way to use our influence and our power responsibly to stabilize the situation there.

I yield the floor.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5377. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the limitation on deduction of State and local taxes, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5430. An act to implement the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada attached as an Annex to the Protocol Replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, and the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Speaker reappoints effective January 1, 2020, the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission for a term expiring on December 31, 2021: Ms.

Carolyn Bartholomew of Washington, DC.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 7002, the Minority Leader appoints the following member to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission: Mr. Michael Wessel of Falls Church, Virginia, as previously agreed, because of the change in Congress and the presumed statutory intent of the Commission, the Minority Leader appoints Mr. Wessel on behalf of the Speaker.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:12 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RASKIN) has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 1424. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure the Secretary of Veterans Affairs permits the display of Fallen Soldier Displays in national cemeteries.

H.R. 2385. An act to permit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program to conduct cemetery research and produce educational materials for the Veterans Legacy Program.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. ROBERTS).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 5377. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the limitation on deduction of State and local taxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 5430. An act to implement the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada attached as an Annex to the Protocol Replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement; referred jointly to the Committee on Finance; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Environment and Public Works; Appropriations; Foreign Relations; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; the Budget pursuant to section 151(e)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 3148. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to list fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on December 20, 2019, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 151. An act to deter criminal robocall violations and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first