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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOSH HAWLEY, a Senator from the State of Missouri.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Everlasting God, keep our lawmakers in Your holy hands. Empower them to heed Your instructions as they remember that Your admonition provides light for their journey.

Let Your gentleness motivate our Senators to respect one another and to guard their lips. Lord, give them the gift of Your peace that provides joy even during life's storms. Use them as instruments for righteousness in a sinful world.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 13, 2020.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOSH HAWLEY, a Senator from the State of Missouri, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. HAWLEY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been 10 days since the United States removed Iran's chief terrorist, Qasem Soleimani, from the battlefield. It has been 5 days since the brutal violence, recklessness, and failed governance that defines the Iranian's regime was put on full display with their shoot-down of a Ukrainian civilian airline and the death of all 167 souls on board.

After a brief stab at a failed coverup, the Iranian Government had to come clean and explain that its own recklessness had killed more than 80 Ira-

nians, 63 Canadians, and the other victims. Despite the claims of supposed experts on Iran that Iranians would rally behind their oppressive regime, the truth is quite different. Instead, thousands of Iranians have taken to the streets to celebrate Soleimani's death, condemn the regime's domestic repression, call for regime change in Tehran, and denounce their government's feeble efforts to lay its own violence at the feet of the United States.

According to journalists, here is one chant that has been ringing out on the streets of Iran: "Soleimani is a murderer, his leader a traitor." Here is another: "They are lying that our enemy is America, our enemy is right here." The irony is rich.

As Iran's master terrorist, Soleimani himself led efforts to brutalize Iranian protesters who dared to challenge the regime. Just a few months ago, he boasted to Iraqi leaders: "We in Iran know how to deal with protests." That violent approach is exactly why Iraqis and Iranians alike are now celebrating his death and denouncing the regime he helped lead. I am sure the mullahs regret that Soleimani himself is no longer around to help intimidate and murder their own citizens into silence.

These protests aren't limited to Iran either. Protestors are back in Iraq as well—not phony, Iran-staged demonstrations but real citizen-led protests across Iraq. Iraqis are demanding a government whose top priority is Iraqi's own interests rather than facilitating Iranian interference.

Given the death and terror that Iran has wrought in the Middle East for decades, this kind of reaction shouldn't be a surprise, but strangely—strangely—it seems it has surprised many of our fellow Americans.

Here at home, many on the left and in the media had rushed to reflexively blame President Trump, and not the Iranian regime, for the recent violence.

After only the earliest initial reports, the Speaker of the House rushed

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



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S151