The Senate met at 9 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Rev. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Lord, You have loved, forgiven, and cared for us. In Your holy presence, any self-sufficiency fades like a candlelight before the rising sun. Awaken us again to the wonder of Your unqualified grace. May the radiance of Your Spirit invade our hearts, vanishing all the gloom and darkness of worry and fear and anxiety.

Father, set us free to do our work today with joy and gladness. The people in our lives desperately need Your love. Liberate us with the sure knowledge of Your unfailing love so that we will be able to be free to love unselfishly. Speak to us now so that we may be energized with new life and new power. We claim this in the assurance of Your love divine, all loves excelling! Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President.

SCHEDULE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I will lay out the plan for today.

This morning, the Senate will be in a period for morning business until 9:30 a.m. Following morning business, under a previous order, the Senate will begin consideration of the Department of Defense appropriations bill. All Members are encouraged to come to the floor early during today's session to offer and debate any amendments to the defense bill. The first votes of today's session will occur in a stacked series beginning at approximately 2 p.m. These votes will include any remaining amendments to the Treasury appropriations bill and possibly several amendments to the defense bill. Members should expect votes late into the evening during today's session, as the Senate attempts to complete action on the defense bill.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

THE PRESIDENT pro tempore. The SENATE proceeds to the consideration of the Department of Defense appropriations bill, to begin consideration of the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

THE PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. STEVENS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I have given the clerk a list of staff members. I ask unanimous consent that these staff members associated with our presentation of the bill be allowed the privilege of the floor during consideration of the defense bill.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The list is as follows:

Sid Ashworth, Tom Hawkins, Susan Hogan, Mary Marshall, Gary Reese, John Young, James Hayes, Justin Weddle, Carolyn Willis, Jennifer Stiefel, Frank Barca, and Kristin Iagulli.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the Senate begins consideration today of the 1999 Defense appropriations bill, to fund the military activities of the Department of Defense for the upcoming fiscal year.

This bill provides $250.5 billion in new budget authority for 1999, an increase of $2.8 billion over the amount appropriated in 1998.

The committee reported this bill on June 4th. Unforeseen circumstances delayed the consideration of the bill, but I believe it is vital that we pass the Defense funding bill prior to the recess.

The military must know how much money it will have to meet critical