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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal spirit, You are God, and all creation worships You. To You all angels, all the powers of Heaven sing in endless praise.

Draw the hearts of our Senators to You today so that they will trust You to guide their minds and control their wills. Replenish their strength, rekindle their enthusiasm for Your purposes, and renew their commitment to serve You with all their hearts. Whatever they plan or accomplish today, may it bring America closer to the righteousness that exalts any nation and away from the sins that bring reproach to any people.

We pray in Your holy 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 933, the continuing appropriations legislation. The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. today for our weekly caucus meetings.

We are going to continue to work to see if we can get these amendments in

order. We wanted to vote on them last night, but we hope to complete the CR very quickly.

I have not had an opportunity yet to speak to the Republican leader this morning, but very shortly I am going to move to begin work on the budget. Senator SESSIONS and Senator MURRAY are anxious to move forward on that.

I had a long conversation with Senator SESSIONS last night—and I speak to Senator MURRAY quite often—and there is no reason that 30 hours postcloture should be wasted. A Senator who doesn't like what went on before can have 1 hour, but we should not waste our time as we have done so often by killing 30 hours. We should start the budget.

If people decide they are going to use the 30 hours and then another 30 hours—we have to have cloture not only on the substitute but on the bill itself, it is 60 hours—that would mean we would start on the budget sometime Thursday morning. We are going to do it. The 60 hours will be eaten up sometime Thursday morning. I hope we don't have to waste that time, but we are going to finish the budget before we leave here.

We have had conversations on both sides of the aisle about how we need a budget. Because we had the Budget Deficit Reduction Act, which set our 302(b)s, we didn't need to do our usual budget because we had one signed into law by the President. Regardless of that, there will be no more talk about not having a budget. We will have a budget. No matter how long it takes, we are going to do that before we leave for the Easter break.

As everyone knows, there is 50 hours under the budget act, which is statutory, and then afterward there could be a lot of amendments. So everyone should be aware we should start using some of this time to work on the budget, and we will do that. I will come and propound my consent shortly.

MARINE BASE EXPLOSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the late 1920s, there was a violent explosion in New Jersey at an ammunition depot of our military. Basically, it was the Navy at that time, and it was a very bad explosion. After that explosion, there was a decision made that storing our ammunition should be someplace else. After some work done by relevant committees in the House and Senate and working with the President, it was decided the best place to do that was in Nevada near a place called Hawthorne.

Hawthorne is, frankly, in a kind of remote place. That base has been there since about 1930. It was originally a naval ammunition depot where most of our ammunition was stored, and it is still there. It survived base closings—the BRAC work—and it was determined it was essential for the security of this Nation.

Anyone who flies over that area will see miles and miles of bunkers where ammunition is stored. Some ammunition is stored there from World War II. It is a wonderful place for storing ammunition because it is so dry so stuff can stay there for long periods of time.

I just met with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. They were very impressed with this. It has also become a terrific place for tearing down ordnance—demil, they call it. In recent years, it has also been used as a training facility. The terrain is much like a lot of the desert in Afghanistan and Iraq and places such as that. We have had training exercises there for some time. It is very valuable.

Late last night, seven of our marines were killed in Hawthorne, and many others were injured in an explosion during a training exercise near the ammunition depot in Hawthorne, NV. We don't know exactly what happened, but we know it was a violent explosion. My thoughts are with those who were injured and, of course, the families of those who lost loved ones.

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



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