

critical it is that we have a team in place that can be part of the team that protects this Nation.

As Senator KLOBUCHAR said, Azita Raji has been waiting over a year since she was nominated. She went through the Foreign Relations Committee unanimously. Nobody objected. Sam Heins was nominated almost a year ago. He is nominated to be U.S. Ambassador to Norway.

Again, this is not about just these two individuals; this is also about the message we are sending to two of our best partners and allies, Sweden and Norway. Both of these countries have been part of the anti-ISIL coalition fighting with us against the terrorists. Sweden has been on the frontlines of the refugee crisis, taking in thousands of refugees in Europe. As we think about the strains that the European Union is under right now, for us to have failed to put ambassadors in two of our most important allies is unforgivable.

Yesterday I said it was in 1914 that Norway had to scramble their F-16 fighters. We know they didn't have F-16 fighters in 1914. It was 2014. So a little over a year ago, Norway, which is a NATO ally, scrambled its F-16 fighters 74 times to intercept Russian warplanes.

As we think about the threats from Russian aggression, Sweden and Norway are right there. They are on the frontlines. Norway has committed to participate in NATO's missile defense system. So, again, it is very important as we are looking at our efforts to stop Russian aggression.

Yesterday in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee we were talking about the strains on Europe. We had witnesses for both the majority and the minority who confirmed that our failure to move these nominees on the Senate floor is "an enormous issue," a "disastrous policy," and sends the message that Washington does not "care about European security"—both minority and majority witnesses—even arguing that the United States does not have "players on the field."

Not only are there national security implications, but, as the Senator from Minnesota pointed out, vacancies in Sweden and Norway mean that some \$11.3 billion in U.S. exports lack a strong champion in-country.

I hope the Senator from Texas—who is out running for President—will come back or will lift his hold so we can send the message that we should be sending to our European allies about how important they are and how strongly we want to support what is happening in those countries.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to move two other national security nominees.

The first is Ambassador Tom Shannon. He has been nominated to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Again, he has been waiting 136 days since being nominated. He also went through the Foreign Relations

Committee without any opposition. He would be responsible for working with Europeans on the implementation of the Iran agreement, on coordinating the G7 to combat Russian aggression, as well as providing daily oversight and direction to all the Department's regional bureaus. He is a career Foreign Service officer who has served in five administrations, two Democratic and three Republican.

At this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: the nomination of Ambassador Tom Shannon to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Calendar No. 375; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. On behalf of the junior Senator from Texas, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Again, I am hopeful the junior Senator from Texas is going to do what he should have done all along, which is lift his hold and allow both the Ambassadors to Sweden and Norway and Ambassador Shannon to move forward.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, finally, I want to ask unanimous consent to move Adam Szubin, who has been nominated to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes. He has also been waiting almost a year. He is somebody who Senator SHELBY, chairman of the Banking Committee, has said is eminently qualified, but the Banking Committee still has not voted to move his nomination to the Senate floor.

His position is very critical because he would lead the policy, enforcement, regulatory, and intelligence functions of the Treasury Department. They are aimed at identifying and disrupting the lines of financial support to international terrorist organizations to a whole range of other bad actors.

Next week on the Senate floor we are supposed to take up sanctions on North Korea. How can we in good faith tell the American people we are going to enforce sanctions on North Korea when we haven't been willing to fill the position that is responsible for doing that enforcement? It belies understanding that we are not going to move forward.

Again, this is a position that I know is supported by the Foreign Relations Committee. The Republican chair of the Foreign Relations Committee has been very supportive of moving Adam Szubin's nomination, just as he has been supportive of moving the two Ambassadors, of moving Ambassador Shannon.

This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue about what we are doing to ensure the national security of this country. It is unfortunate we have rules in the Senate that allow one person to hold things up for an indefinite period of time when the national security of the country is at stake.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of PN371, the nomination of Adam Szubin to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes; that the Senate proceed to its consideration and vote without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. On behalf of the senior Senator from Alabama, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Again, it is disappointing that the senior Senator from Alabama isn't here to talk about his concerns about Adam Szubin and why he is still on hold in the Banking Committee and that we haven't heard from the majority leader in the Senate about the importance of moving not only Adam Szubin's nomination but these other nominations that are critical as we make sure we do what we need to, to protect this country.

I am disappointed, but as Senator KLOBUCHAR said, we will be back.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANNUAL NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I want to chronicle for the Senate and to make a part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that nearly 5,000 people gathered this morning for the annual National Prayer Breakfast with the President, members of the Cabinet, members of the Joint Chiefs, most of the Diplomatic Corps, and a lot of the Members of Congress.

The national breakfast is sponsored by the Senate prayer group that meets on Wednesday morning and the House