

the Federal Government practice what it preaches, to reduce the waste in the largest user of energy in the world, which is our Federal Government. We will describe how our bill accomplishes these goals with no new mandates, no mandates on the private sector, no new spending, entirely offset. And again, it is a commonsense approach that is bipartisan. I look forward to that discussion. I look forward to seeing the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act become law so this Nation can take a big step toward achieving the true goal of an “all of the above” energy strategy and indeed make us less dependent on those dangerous and volatile parts of the world.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 191, the nomination be 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 related statements 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

Marilyn A. Brown, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2017.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

AUTHORIZING THE LIMITED AND SPECIFIED USE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AGAINST SYRIA—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 21.

Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum calls, which I will suggest in just a few seconds, be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

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

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, this week we have a very difficult set of questions to answer relating to Syria and the ongoing crisis there. But in particular we have a question to answer as it relates to what the United States should do. I rise this morning to express strong support for this authorization to degrade Bashar al-Asad’s chemical weapons capability and deter the future use of these horrific weapons. I made this determination based upon the evidence and the national security interests of the United States, both our national security interests today as well as in the future.

The resolution that is before the Senate right now does not allow for the deployment of U.S. combat troops on the ground in Syria. I will not support—nor do I think there will be much support in this Chamber—any measure that would involve U.S. boots on the ground in Syria and this resolution specifically speaks to this concern. I am quoting, in part, the resolution:

The authority granted in section 2(a) does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces on the ground in Syria for the purpose of combat operations.

It is important we make that point.

As we have all seen, especially in the last few days, the situation in Syria is in flux, especially in the last 24 hours. The Russian Government put forth a proposal yesterday which would have international monitors take control of Syria’s chemical weapons in order to avert a U.S. military strike. I am open to this diplomatic discussion—however not without caution and not without skepticism. Diplomatic solutions are always a preferred path and military strikes should always be the last resort.

I think prior to this proposal we were at this point of a last resort. But the only reason this proposal is on the table is because of the credible threat of force that is being debated in Washington—but even more significantly being debated across the country. The authorization itself should still go forward because it will keep the pressure

on the Syrian regime for a diplomatic solution.

Let’s take a couple of minutes on our own national security interests. In March of 2011, as reported by the U.S. State Department, multiple news sources, including CNN, reported—and I will submit for the RECORD a report from CNN—that the Syrian Government authorities had arrested 15 schoolchildren in the city of Daraa for spray-painting antigovernment slogans. These young people were reportedly tortured while in custody and authorities resorted to force when their parents and others in the community called for their release. Within 1 week the police had killed 55 demonstrators in connection with the early efforts to provide opposition to the Asad regime. The regime committed countless atrocities during the next 2 years of this conflict, culminating in the unspeakable use—the indiscriminate use of chemical weapons on August 21.

I submit for the RECORD a report from CNN, dated March 1, 2012, and ask it be printed in the RECORD.

This report is March of 2012, but it looks back in a retrospective fashion on what happened in those early days of the opposition coming together in 2011. I will read a pertinent part, part of what CNN said about what happened when these schoolchildren were demonstrating against the regime. They talked in this report about the young people, as I mentioned, not just protesting but spray-painting their beliefs against the regime. At the time, not a lot of people around the world were focused on what was happening in Syria. Let me quote in pertinent part what at one point one of the citizens on the street was saying, that the people in Daraa:

... didn’t want to go against the regime. People thought that this [leader, Mr. Asad] was better than his dad. Nobody wanted to go face-to-face with him.

But then of course it was young people, in this case even schoolchildren, who led the way to take him on. I submit this for the record because this opposition started on the streets of Syria, in this case in Daraa, starting with young people, but it of course continued from there. We know that the regime itself has the largest chemical stockpile in the region, one of the largest in the world. We know Mr. Asad used these weapons against his own people, not only on August 21 but on multiple occasions prior to that in a much more limited way. We also know he has the capacity, the will, and unfortunately the track record to use these weapons against innocent civilians.

We also should remember we have troops and other military and diplomatic personnel in the region, in the Middle East. Even Syria’s acquisition—even Syria’s very acquisition of chemical weapons threatens our national security. In 2003, the Congress of the United States—some people have forgotten about this—the Congress of the