

lack of baby milk. Other reports testify to the bleak living conditions of those internally displaced in Northern Syria, who have so little resources that they are forced to eat herbs and collect stagnant rainwater to drink and wash.^x

For the sake of the millions of children facing a future of fear and hunger, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access is needed to all areas of Syria by the most effective routes possible. Save the Children calls on governments to:

Build consensus across the international community, including in the UN Security Council, to demand all parties to the conflict fulfill their obligation to allow humanitarian aid—including UN aid—to all areas where children need it, across conflict lines and across Syria's borders;

Increase funding. Overall the UN is calling for over \$5 billion to meet needs inside Syria and among refugees in neighboring countries. Only 41%^{xii} of the appeal is funded. Governments must increase support for humanitarian operations throughout Syria by any possible channel, as well as scale up support for refugees and host communities in neighboring countries.

ENDNOTES

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ii. Al Jazeera: UN: Syria death toll rises above 100,000; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/2013725142157450141.html> last viewed 28 August 2013.

iii. OHCHR, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child appalled by killing of Syrian children in alleged chemical attack, 26 August 2013; <http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13660&LangID=E> last viewed 28 August 2013.

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v. France 24: UN says 5,000 dying each month in the Syrian conflict: <http://www.france24.com/en/20130716-un-says-5000-people-dying-month-syrian-conflict>.

vi. The Telegraph: "One third of Syrians have fled their homes, reports United Nations" <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10280869/One-third-of-Syrians-have-fled-their-homes-reports-United-Nations.html>

vii. Global News, "1 million children have fled Syria as refugees: UNICEF" <http://globalnews.ca/news/797520/one-million-children-have-fled-syria-as-refugees-unicef/>

viii. OCHA (2013) "Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 11 July 2013)," <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/syria.pdf>, last checked 16th August 2013

ix. The Guardian: "Half of Syrian population will need aid by end of year": <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/19/half-syrian-population-aid-year>

x. OCHA (2013) "Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Dashboard" (as of 11 July 2013), <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/2resources/syria.pdf>, last checked 16th August 2013.

xi. Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria (2013) "Joint Regional Assessment of Northern Syria—II 2013, Final Report 2013," p. 20, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRANS%2011%20-%20Final%20Report_0.pdf, last viewed 28th August 2013

xii. UNICEF (2013) "UN Emergency Directors shocked by appalling plight of people in Syria," http://www.unicef.org/media/media_67620.html

xiii. World Health Organisation (2013) "WHO warns of increased risk of disease epidemics in Syria and in neighboring countries as summer approaches," <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/who-warns-increased-risk-disease-epidemics-syria-and-neighbouring>

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xv. BBC, Syria crisis: UN launches largest ever aid appeal, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22813207>, last viewed 28 August 2013.

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xvii. Col. A/HRC/23/58, p. 16.

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xix. DRAFT Child Protection Working Group assessment, Syria—publication pending

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xxi. OCHA, Financial Tracking services, Syrian Arab Republic Civil Unrest, 2013 Humanitarian Funding : Actual <http://fts.unocha.org/pagelocator.aspx?page=emergencyCountryDetails&cc=syr>

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:58 a.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 5 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes at this time.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, today there are hopeful signs that the

international community will act to secure Syria's chemical weapons which have caused so much pain and so much suffering, including the suffering of little infants and children. A peaceful resolution to the Assad regime's use of these lethal, outlawed weapons would certainly be the best outcome. I commend the resolve of President Obama, without which we wouldn't be looking at a potential diplomatic solution.

I wish to lay out for the record why we must act in response to the use of chemical weapons. Of course, I prefer it to be done through the international community. But I wish to be clear: There are certain norms, there are certain rules, there are certain laws that must be respected and obeyed; otherwise, we lose our humanity, and this is an example.

Famous leaders throughout history have called war various things. They have called war a contagion. They have called war hell. They have called war a scourge, murder, a crime, despicable. But even in the chaos and in the darkness of war, there are rules. There are red lines. There are boundaries. There are limits. There are norms and there are laws. That is why in our Nation, as difficult and as painful as it has been, we have held our servicemembers accountable when they acted outside those norms. We did it just last month with the conviction of a soldier for war crimes committed in Afghanistan.

The use of chemical weapons is way outside international laws, rules, boundaries, limits, and norms, and has been so since the end of World War I, when the world uniformly condemned them. We know—we know without a shadow of a doubt—that they have been used by Syria in a big way, and it is time for all Members of Congress and, frankly, all members of civilized society to look into our hearts, to look into our souls, and to look into our consciences. The painful way to do it is to look at the shocking acts committed against innocent, men, women, and children in Syria. Look at those videos, as difficult as it might be, of children and their families dying horrible, ghastly deaths, writhing in pain, gasping for air, foaming at the mouth as the gas attacks their nervous systems.

Do we have a conscience? I pray we do. Albert Einstein once said: "The world is a dangerous place not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing."

Let me repeat it. "The world is a dangerous place not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing."

Doing nothing can sometimes be an attractive alternative. I understand it. But each of us who looks at these videos, who reads about what happened, each of us must ask ourselves, as human beings, as citizens of our great Nation: Can we respond to these atrocities by doing nothing? Can we sit back and do nothing in the face of Syria's use of chemical weapons on its own people, its own children?

When the President said he had a red line on this, he wasn't speaking for himself alone; he was speaking for the world that disavowed these weapons. I have to say that, to me, the Senate has a red line on this. Anyone who voted for the Syria Accountability Act in 2003, be it in the House or Senate, drew a red line, because in it, we condemned and we decried the development of chemical weapons by the Assad regime, and we tied that program to our own national security. There is no way our national security is unaffected when these weapons are used and no one is held accountable.

Did we mean it when we voted for the Syria Accountability Act? Did we mean it when we passed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, which I was proud to vote for. Did we mean it? Words are good, but tyrants do not heed words. History is replete with tyrants who stood in the face of the worst condemnation and annihilated people. If we stand by and do nothing, what message do we send to those who have these weapons?

I mentioned the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, and I will tell my colleagues, as we look at the world—and there is a lot to complain about and be ashamed of and worry about—one of the good things is that since we passed the Chemical Weapons Convention and ratified it, 80 percent of the chemical weapons of the world have been destroyed.

I think we should listen again to colleagues who spoke during the Senate debate on the Chemical Weapons Convention. Here is what JOE BIDEN, our Vice President, said:

Norms are created so that we have standards for civilized conduct by which to judge others. Without them, we leave the rogue countries to behave as free actors.

Our own PAT LEAHY said:

We will advise and consent so the President can ratify this treaty. I truly believe we will. It will show the moral leadership that the Senate should show and the United States should show. We will act as the conscience of this Nation, and we will advise and consent to this treaty. We will show the moral leadership because we began this by saying we would act unilaterally, if need be, renouncing our own use of chemical weapons with or without a treaty. That was true leadership.

So we hear the words “morality” and “conscience” and “leadership.” These shouldn't be just words. We should show that courage. Here are words from John Warner, our former colleague. He said:

I first learned of chemical weapons at the knee of my father who was a surgeon in the trenches in World War I. He described to me in vivid detail how he cared for the helpless victims of that weapon . . . we cannot turn back now from that leadership role.

Sixteen years later, in this very Chamber where I stood and proudly cast my vote for the Chemical Weapons Convention, we are facing a clear violation of law and humanity.

How do we react? If we do nothing, what is the signal to Assad? What is

the signal to Kim Jong Un in North Korea, who has what has been described as a massive array of chemical weapons in an area where we have 28,000 American troops keeping the peace. The message we send if we do nothing is not a good one. It will send a message that says we don't mean what we say; We don't stand behind the laws we pass or the conventions we ratify. These chemical weapons kill people like cockroaches. When we read history, we know these weapons were used on the Iranians by Saddam Hussein and one Iraqi military official called these weapons an “annihilation insecticide.”

That is what they have been called. These weapons cause excruciating death. That is why a monster such as Hitler chose them to wipe out millions of those he considered subhuman. We all know the history. He didn't use them on troops; he used them on those groups that he considered subhuman. Yet, while the rest of the world was eliminating chemical weapons, Syria was stockpiling precursor chemicals and building one of the largest chemical weapons arsenals in the world.

A Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman said in 2012 that Syria reserved the right to use these weapons against external forces. His statement already is a violation of international law. He said: We reserve the right to use these weapons against external forces. But he went on to say—and we have his name: “Any stock of WMD or unconventional weapons that the Syrian Army possesses will never, never be used against the Syrian people or civilians during this crisis, under any circumstances.” Remarkably, Syria violated its own red line.

Chris Miller is a U.S. Army veteran and he is an expert in the area of chemical and biological weapons. Here is what he wrote in “The Guardian.” He said we must: “jealously guard what progress has been made in working toward a more peaceful world.”

He added:

The steady worldwide reduction of chemical weapons is a prime example of that progress—one that we cannot allow to be eroded so easily.

I can't underscore this enough. In a world full of challenges and disappointments and for people such as the Presiding Officer and me who believe so much that we can have a peaceful world, this is one of the few areas we can point to—where 80 percent of the world's arsenal of chemical weapons has been destroyed. If we turn our back on this tyrant and on this use, clearly, the chemical weapons will go right back into production. They will be marketing chemical weapons, and we know what will happen when they get into certain hands. We should not ignore history or we are doomed to repeat it.

The British soldier and poet Wilfred Owen wrote this in an effort to depict the horrors of chemical warfare in World War I. This is what he said: “If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

/ Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs.”

He saw it firsthand in World War I, where 90,000 troops were killed by these heinous weapons, including 6,000 French, British, Canadian, and Belgian troops killed by German forces in one battle alone. Nations flocked to sign the Geneva Protocol after World War I. Syria joined them, and now more than 1,000 Syrian civilians lay dead due to Assad's decision to bring back these horrors.

How will we react?

Our former colleague and respected national security leader Dick Lugar says chemical weapons “may be the greatest threat to our country of any security risk that we have, much more than any other government, for example, or another Nation because they can be used by terrorists, by very small groups”—Dick Lugar, who played such a great role in securing nuclear weapons after the Cold War; Dick Lugar, who understands what could happen if we turn our back now.

I respectfully say to my colleagues: Don't look away. Don't rationalize inaction. We cannot stay silent. If we fail to act in the face of such a brazen violation of international norms, in the face of an assault on conscience, then outlawing these weapons becomes meaningless and we put the security of all of us at risk. If we fail to act, we make it more likely that these weapons will be used again in Syria and elsewhere. If we fail to act, we send a terrible message to brutal regimes such as North Korea and Iran, which are seeking to develop nuclear weapons. In the case of North Korea, they have what has been described by Secretary Hagel as a massive amount of chemical weapons. If we fail to act, we make it more likely that these horrific weapons could be used against our allies such as Israel and our troops. That is for sure. If we fail to act, we make it more likely that chemical weapons will fall into the hands of terrorists and others who would do us harm. If we fail to act, we send a message that the civilized world will permit the use of these ghastly and inhumane weapons, not just on the battlefield but against children and families sleeping in their beds.

I ask my colleagues and the American people, do not look away. It is easier to look away.

We had a chance to see some of the videos, Madam President, as you know, during our luncheon meeting. We cannot sit by and do nothing in the face of such horror. We cannot.

So here is the thing: We have a chance now—because of President Obama's resolve, because of the resolve of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, because of the resolve of many people inside government and outside government, we have the resolve to do something. And the best something would be an international response.

I am proud of our President for making sure this alternative was in Vladimir Putin's mind when they met. And

I am glad Secretary Kerry said: Look, there is an alternative. Let them hand over their weapons. Let's dismantle them and do it right and verify it and hold them accountable, and we get past this. That is the route I believe we all want to see happen. We want to see the world stand up against this inhumanity, but let's not be naive about it. When you are dealing with tyrants, you have to enforce that kind of a plan.

I am hopeful today but not sanguine. I am hopeful that the United Nations will take this as an opportunity to stand firm, to say that the outlawing of chemical weapons meant something in reality, not just on paper. And when we said people should not die like cockroaches, we meant it. So I am hopeful we will have a small pause here and we will give diplomacy a chance to work between the nations, and I praise our leadership in the Obama administration and France's leadership and British leadership. I hope the Russians meant it when they said: Let's try to resolve this in a way that will result in the absolute destruction of the chemical weapons Syria has. I hope they mean it.

We cannot walk away from an inhumane act that caused innocent children to die in unspeakable ways because, I will tell you, if we walk away, then I think the message is that there are no limits on gross violations of international norms, there are no limits on gross violations of international laws, and there are no limits on violations of human decency.

I am very pleased the President took this to the Congress. I think it was right. But I want to be clear: The President, as our Commander in Chief, has the authority—if he believes there is an imminent threat or danger to us, he has the authority to act. And I think Richard Lugar is sending us a very powerful message when he says one of our greatest national security threats—he said even greater than a threat posed by any nation—is the possibility that a small terrorist group could get their hands on these weapons. I will tell you, Madam President, that is an unacceptable situation, and I know the President worries about this every day, and every night when he goes to sleep, it is on his mind. One way to make sure the chance of that happening is lessened greatly is to make sure one of the largest caches of these weapons is controlled internationally and then destroyed. That will, in fact, mean we will have a more peaceful world.

There is a civil war going on in Syria. No one wants to get in the middle of it—least of all those of us who voted against the Iraq war because we saw what would happen. And years and years and years later, unfortunately, we were proven right. I was proud to vote no on that war. I think I have a little credibility here for not wanting to go to war, for making sure the intelligence is right, for making sure there is a limited mission, for making sure this is well thought out.

I would say in closing that the best ending to this crisis is for the international community to take hold of this—together, all of us—and work to see that these weapons of mass destruction are first accounted for, then controlled, and then destroyed. If we can do that, then the horrifying deaths we have witnessed and we have seen on tape today and the American people have been witnessing—at least there will be something good that could come out of this because otherwise, if there is no action, their deaths will not mean anything, they will be forgotten.

So we need to keep a credible plan before us, which means we want to see international rules apply, we want to see the international community take hold of this and have a good outcome. But I will tell you this—and I believe this with every fiber of my being—such a gross violation of humanity cannot go unanswered.

Thank you very much.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that time during all the quorum calls be charged equally to both sides.

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

Mrs. BOXER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I wanted to use this opportunity to say a few words about the issue that is on everybody's minds; that is, Syria. I want to tell you that approximately 95 percent of the thousands of e-mails and phone calls my office has received are against U.S. military intervention in the bloody and chaotic civil war in Syria.

The truth is the numbers in Vermont may be higher than the national average in terms of opposition to this war. But there is probably no State in this country where U.S. military intervention in this bloody and complicated civil war in Syria is being supported. It is an interesting phenomenon.

We have a very divided Nation politically, but on this issue it appears the vast majority of Democrats, Republicans, Independents, the vast majority of progressives—I am a progressive—conservatives, moderates, have all come together to express deep concern

about the United States being involved in the third military intervention in the Middle East in 12 years.

Let me tell you why I believe the American people feel so strongly against military involvement in Syria. Clearly, it has much to do with the fact that the United States has already been at war for 12 years. There are kids in this country who are halfway through primary school who have never known an America that has not been at war.

What the American people also understand is these wars have been enormously costly in many ways. Not only have these wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost us the lives of some 4,600 brave American men and women who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, but as chairman of the Veterans Affairs' Committee I can tell you that today we have tens of thousands of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan who are dealing with traumatic brain injury, who are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, problems they are going to be carrying with them for the rest of their lives.

The human cost of those wars has been enormous. But it is not only the human cost, it is the financial cost as well. Today, at a time when working families are struggling to keep their heads above water economically, we are throwing thousands and thousands of little kids who desperately need preschool education off of Head Start. We should be expanding Head Start. But because of sequestration we are throwing them off of Head Start. We are denying nutrition programs, the Meals on Wheels Programs, that go to some of the most vulnerable and fragile seniors in this country. We are throwing them off basic nutrition programs.

We are forcing massive cuts through furloughs on tens of thousands of Federal employees, including members of the Vermont National Guard. At the end of the day, by the time we take care of the last servicemember who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, those wars will have cost us at least \$3 trillion.

But it is not only the human cost of those wars that troubles the American people. It is not only the financial cost of these wars that troubles the American people. It is the deep sense that exists across the political spectrum that foreign policy and going to war are a lot more complicated and unpredictable and have unintended consequences, far more so than many of our leaders in past years have believed.

Afghanistan is a small country that in 2001 virtually had no army when the United States invaded it; no army against the most powerful military force in the history of the world.

What is the problem? Twelve years later we are still in Afghanistan. All of us remember President George W. Bush standing on an aircraft carrier telling us that in Iraq the mission was accomplished. Mission accomplished.

Well, it didn't turn out quite that way. Thousands of deaths later for

American servicemembers, tens of thousands of deaths later for the people of Iraq, peace and democracy in that country has not yet been accomplished. It is a lot more complicated than people thought it would be.

Today people worry what are the long-term implications and what are the unforeseen consequences of the United States being involved in a horrendous, bloody, and complicated war in Syria. All of us know Asad is a ruthless dictator who has exploited his people terribly and used chemical weapons against them. But not every American knows that some 20 to 25 percent of the opposition to Asad turns out to be Islamic fundamentalists, some of them affiliated with Al Qaeda.

What are the long-term implications and unintended consequences of being involved in a war in that area? I know the President has been very clear about saying he is talking about strikes that are very targeted, very minimal. But once you break the egg, once you get involved, we have to bear and will bear a certain amount of responsibility for what happens during the war and even after the war if Asad is overthrown.

This is why the American people are extremely concerned about the United States unilaterally going into Syria without the support of the international community and without the support of the United Nations.

Having said all of that, in my mind there is another reason, a deeper reason, as to why there is so much opposition to the President's proposal and the proposal that came out of the Foreign Relations Committee, which was more open-ended and spoke about regime change. That has everything to do with the fact that the favorability rating of the Congress is today somewhere between 8 and 15 percent.

The vast majority of the American people don't know. They don't care who controls the Senate, whether it is the Democrats. They don't know who controls the House, the Republicans. By and large, the American people have given up believing that the Congress and the White House are listening to their needs, which are very serious at this moment, or are interested or capable of responding to their needs.

What the American people are saying, and they are saying it very loudly, is we have a Congress and a White House which continues to ignore the enormous crises facing the middle class and working families of our country. What they are saying is: Yes, Mr. President, we agree with you, what Asad is doing in Syria is unspeakable; that he is gassing his own kids is beyond belief. We understand that. We want the international community to address that.

But what they are also saying is: Mr. President, Members of Congress, think about our children, the kids in West Virginia, the kids in California, the kids in Detroit, the kids in Vermont. What about our kids? What kind of future are they going to have in an econ-

omy in which the middle class continues to disappear and poverty remains at an almost all-time high for the last 60 years?

Today real unemployment in this country is not 7.4 percent, the official unemployment rate. Real unemployment is close to 14 percent.

Youth unemployment is a tragedy. Kids are graduating high school, going out and looking for jobs, and they want to get a sense of independence. There are no jobs for them. Youth unemployment in this country is close to 20 percent.

For minorities, the number is considerably higher. Black youth unemployment in this country is close to 40 percent. Parents are worried that their kids are graduating from high school and there are no jobs available to them.

Before I came to Washington the other day, I talked to a physician in the State of Vermont who said: Bernie, do you know what. In Vermont, beautiful Vermont, rural Vermont, we are facing a heroin epidemic. Kids are shooting up heroin in Vermont, not to mention the rest of the country, because they don't see much of a future facing them.

Parents are worried that their kids are graduating college, often deeply in debt, and that either they can't find a job or the jobs they do obtain often do not require a college degree. The fact is most of the new jobs being created in this country are part-time jobs with minimal benefits, and they are often low-wage jobs.

What the Department of Labor is telling us is that, in fact, most of the new jobs we see coming down the pike for our kids do not require a college degree. They are low-wage jobs.

The people are saying from one end of this country, yes, we are concerned about Syria, but we are also concerned about Los Angeles, Detroit, and St. Johnsbury, VT. Please, Mr. President, create jobs for the working families of this country. What they are begging the Congress to do is to address the needs our people face.

What they understand, and I think this has a lot to do with why there is so much opposition to getting involved in this war in Syria, is that the Congress has virtually done nothing to improve the economy for working families, and they worry very much that if all of our time, energy, and resources are devoted to Syria, we are never going to address the serious problems facing the working families of this country.

Tens of millions of our fellow Americans today are working longer hours for lower wages, and many of them are earning wages that are simply too low to support a family. We have been happy to hear in Michigan, for example, the automobile industry is doing better; more people are being hired. That is the good news.

Do you know what the bad news is. The new jobs in the automobile indus-

try are barely more than 50 percent in pay of what the old jobs were. All over this country the new jobs that are being created are not paying what the jobs in this country used to pay. We have millions of people working for a disgracefully low minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour.

People are saying: Mr. President, Members of Congress, yes, we are worried about Syria, but why don't you work to make sure every person who has a job in this country can earn a wage which enables him or her to take care of their family?

The media doesn't pay a lot of attention to it, Congress doesn't pay a lot of attention, but the American people also understand it is not only high unemployment and low wages, something else is going on in this country. They know that while the middle class is disappearing and 46 million Americans are living in poverty, they understand the people on top today, the people whose lobbyists surround this institution, the people who make huge campaign contributions to the political parties, are doing very well. They are doing extraordinarily well. Corporate profits are at an all-time high. The people on Wall Street, whose greed, recklessness, and illegal behavior caused the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, well, guess what. They are doing phenomenally well. They are making record-breaking profits. The rich are doing well and corporate America is doing well. They are making all kinds of campaign contributions.

The American people are looking around and saying, What are you doing for us? What are you doing to protect the seniors and their Social Security? What are you doing to protect the children of this country, to make sure they get a decent education? What are you doing to make sure the United States joins the rest of the industrialized world so all of our people have health care as a right?

One of the reasons I think there is so much lack of support for this war is the American people feel it is high time for us to pay attention to their needs.

We have recently heard, and the news is being updated almost momentarily, that Russia, for whatever reasons, has decided finally to play a positive role in this crisis. They are urging Syria to allow the international community to take possession of their chemical weapons. We believe that France right now is prepared to go to the Security Council with a resolution similar to what the Russians are talking about.

I can't tell you how honest the Russians are being in this effort, what their ulterior plans may be. But I think now is the opportunity to work with Russia, to work with China, to work with the Security Council and the United Nations. It would be an extraordinary victory, in my view, for the people of Syria, who are going through horror after horror right now,

for the entire world, and for the future of the world, if we could take those terrible chemical weapons out of Asad's hands and destroy them. I would hope very much the President and our Secretary of State will be working with the international community to make that happen.

Let me conclude. I think we are in a very interesting and, in fact, momentous moment in the history of the United States of America. The people are coming together to say we have enormous crises in our own country and if we don't get our act together, we are going to see the decline of a once-great Nation. We are going to see, for the first time in the modern history of our country, our children having a lower standard of living than we do.

I would hope the lesson we learned of this entire episode is the American people do not want us unilaterally getting involved in another war in the Middle East. I would hope also the lesson we learned is the American people are saying very loudly and clearly this country faces enormous crises: economically, global warming, health care, education, income and wealth inequality, and they want us to start addressing those needs. I hope that out of this very difficult moment the silver lining is we learn something from what the American people want and we begin to do what they say.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the very serious vote before us—the vote to authorize force against Syria. Let's be clear: This is a vote to authorize an act of war. The American people are watching. They know what this is—a dilemma with no easy answers. They know it could spiral out of control. It has happened before and it could happen again.

The use of chemical weapons is an outrage. What happened in Syria was despicable. The horror is clear. The world cannot look away. This crime is a crime against humanity. It demands an international response—strong and unequivocal. On this we can all agree. However, what should that response be?

The President has presented a plan for military strikes on the Syrian regime—an attack that has been presented to the American people as limited in scope but with very great consequences. So we are confronted with urgent appeals to strike, but I believe there are strong reasons not to do so.

First, we should pursue all diplomatic and economic options to pres-

sure both Asad and his backers to change course. We have not yet done that to the fullest extent.

We all know the Russian Government is aiding and abetting the criminal regime in Syria, supplying military support, providing diplomatic cover, and preventing an international response to this atrocity. The world is rightly outraged. That outrage should be loud and clear, and the full force of international condemnation must be exerted, not just against Asad.

As of this week there are signs Russia may be getting the message. If their proposal to help secure Syria's chemical weapons is sincere, then we should welcome this opportunity. We should work with the international community to make this a reality. The inability to use chemical weapons in this conflict will restore the international norm we seek to uphold and prevent a recurrence of the horrors we have seen.

If Russia aims to be a responsible world power and not a rogue nation, they will seek solutions, not obstruction. They are a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Let's hold their feet to the fire to do what is right. The President's mandate is stronger with congressional approval, and the mandate of the United States is stronger with international support. I would urge Ambassador Power and Secretary Kerry to keep up the pressure on Russia. Make the forceful case to the Security Council. Continue to share the evidence with the people of the world.

This situation will not be solved with Tomahawk cruise missiles fired into Syria. It will require a concerted international effort to push Asad and the various rebels to pursue a political solution. For us to go it alone, to take unilateral action, will put us on shaky ground legally and strategically.

Second, the proposal to use military force could embroil the United States in a complex Middle Eastern civil war. There is a cancer in Syria, from Asad to Al Qaeda. The civil war is a twilight zone comprised of multiple players internationally, regionally, and within Syria. Many of the rebels do not share our values. Some—we don't know how many—are enemies of the United States and our allies. Many of these rebel groups have also committed terrible atrocities. Tilting the balance too far in their favor is not in our Nation's interest and will not leave Syria safer for innocent civilians.

These strikes have been presented as limited and targeted, but last week there were reports about expanding military targets, of regime change. Even the resolution we are considering today includes veiled language—the language that could make it the policy of the United States to tilt the momentum in the civil war and endorse the policy of arming the Syrian rebels—a policy I and others believe is very dangerous—about whom we know too little.

Third, there is a real risk that even limited U.S. military involvement may make Asad feel more desperate, putting our allies—Israel, Turkey, and Jordan—at risk of attack. This could spark a regional war, creating a situation on the ground where Asad may be more, not less, inclined to use chemical weapons.

As with so many elements here, the question occurs, what then? Here is the reality. There is no simple solution, and the American people know this. I understand there is a natural instinct to want to retaliate, to strike out. No one can forget the horrific images, the terrible suffering of the victims. But we need a clear strategy that will not mire the United States in a bloody and uncertain civil war. I remain unconvinced that we have such a strategy in place.

The Iraq war, which I voted against, began as an international effort to kick Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. There followed years of a no-fly zone and airstrikes to prevent Saddam from threatening his neighbors or reconstituting his arsenal of chemical weapons. As we all know, these limited military actions led to one of the biggest blunders in U.S. history.

Americans are understandably skeptical after the fiasco of Iraq. They want to know if we are going down the same path in Syria, into a civil war that is more complex and potentially damaging to the United States and its interests. Limited attack or broader, there is no easy way out of the quicksand. Have we not learned at least that after 12 years of war?

I have listened to the administration's arguments closely, as well as the opinions of New Mexicans. The American people do not believe a limited strike will deter Asad; they fear this strike will just lead us further toward direct involvement. They rightly ask, for what purpose and to what end? Public officials should not always let polls be their guide before making important decisions for our country, but I agree with the majority of Americans and New Mexicans—we must exhaust our political, diplomatic, and economic options first. This is not a lack of resolve. America has the greatest military on Earth. No one should doubt that we will defend our interests and our allies. But a military strike in Syria is the wrong response in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I come to the floor not to push my colleagues one way or another. Each of us must make up his or her own mind. I come here simply to explain my reasons for voting no on this authorization for the use of military force in Syria.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, make no mistake about it, the resolution before us, in my judgment, is one of the most difficult decisions a Member of the Senate will ever have to make. The authorization of force is an awesome responsibility that each of us has. None of us wants to see American troops in harm's way. None of us wants to see the need for the use of military force. This is a difficult judgment for us to make.

The Constitution envisions that both the President and Congress are involved in the deploying of U.S. military. Certainly the President, as Commander in Chief, and the Congress, under the War Powers Act, have a responsibility to authorize the use of force. Today in this country Americans are tired of war. We have been involved in Iraq and Afghanistan for way too long. We thought these campaigns would be short campaigns. They turned out to be very long. There has been a tremendous loss in human life and fiscal resources as a result of the wars in which the United States has participated. But the public also understands that we have a responsibility to use our military to protect the national interests of the people of this country. They understand that America's military strength keeps the people in this country safe, and they expect that the President and the Congress will use that military force in order to protect the national security of the people of this country.

What is in our national security interest and why would the President come to Congress asking us to consider the use of military force in the current circumstances in Syria? People understand, they recognize that if we are about to be attacked, there is a need to use force.

The United States plays a unique role in the international community, for we understand that standing up for basic internationally recognized human rights is a responsibility we all have. I supported President Clinton when he asked for the authorization of force for the United States, along with the international community, to be involved in restoring order in the republics of the former Yugoslavia, where there was ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo. But for the leadership of the United States additional communities would have been destroyed and people would have lost their lives. We stood up because it was in the interests of the United States to stand up for the enforcement of basic internationally established human rights.

Let's evaluate what is happening in Syria today and understand that although what is happening there may be far from our shores, the impact very much could be felt here in the United States. I serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We were called back into session last week because of the President's request for the Con-

gress to act on his request for the use of force. We held hearings that were open to the public, and we held classified hearings in order to better understand what had happened in Syria.

I think it is now clear beyond any doubt that the Asad regime in Syria used chemical weapons. The evidence is clear. It was not the first occasion they used chemical weapons. They had used chemical weapons in the past but not to the magnitude they did on August 21 of this year which resulted in more than 1,400 deaths, many of whom were children. The videos of that image are now available publicly. People can see the horrific act that was imposed upon the people of Syria by its President, President Asad.

The action of Syria on August 21 violated international norm. Since chemical weapons were used in World War I, the international community has come together and said: Even in war we will not permit the use of chemical weapons. It is so horrific, so indiscriminate in its killing and in its maiming that as an international community we will stand and say: No, you cannot use chemical weapons.

The evidence is clear that President Asad of Syria used chemical weapons in a mass way and killed over 1,400 people. That action requires the response of the international community, for if it goes unchallenged it is more likely President Asad will continue to use chemical weapons. He just considers it one of the weapons in his toolbox, and he will call it out more and more if it goes unchallenged by the international community.

The people of Syria are not the only ones at risk. These chemical weapons could easily be used against American allies in that region. It could be used against Turkey. It could be used against Jordan. It could be used against Israel.

If the use of weapons of mass destruction in Syria goes unchallenged and if President Asad can get away with the use of chemical weapons, what message does that send to the regime in Iran and its ambition to become a nuclear weapons state and perhaps use nuclear weapons? What message does it send to the Government of North Korea, which is openly testing the use of nuclear weapons?

We have a direct interest in preventing the use of weapons of mass destruction, and we have to work with the international community to say this will not go unchallenged. We not only have a moral imperative—and we do have a moral imperative—but we also have an issue of our national security interest. If these weapons of mass destruction get in the hands of terrorist organizations and groups, it threatens the security of Americans and it threatens the security of our allies. We have a responsibility to protect the national security of the people of this country.

I have engaged many people in Maryland who have talked to me about their

concerns about the use of the American military in Syria. They recall what happened when the Congress authorized the use of force in Iraq where there was evidence of chemical weapons, and then we went in and found no chemical weapons. There were statements made about how this would be a limited operation. Our troops were there for a decade. So there is obviously concern about the information being made available to us and what is being asked of the Congress of the United States.

When force was authorized against Iraq and that resolution was pending on the floor, I served in the other body, in the House of Representatives. I had a chance to see firsthand the information about Iraq and its risk factors to the interest of the United States. Some may recall that the popular sentiment was for America to authorize the use of force—for Congress to authorize the use of force. I voted no on that resolution because I was convinced America did not have a national security interest to use military force. So I will explain the difference between the circumstances in Iraq over a decade ago and what we are facing today in Syria.

The original justification for the United States entering its combat troops in Iraq was that Iraq was deeply involved with the then-government of Afghanistan and the attack on our country on September 11. I looked for that information, and I saw no information between the Iraqi Government and the attack on our government. Yet those statements were made and it was used as justification for the use of military force.

Here the justification is the use by Syria of chemical weapons, and that has been established. I believe the international community has now understood the evidence is clear that the Asad regime used chemical weapons in contravention to international norm.

When we were authorizing the Iraq use of force, there were no restrictions on the U.S. military. As everyone knows, we used ground troops. We used hundreds of thousands of ground troops in our campaign in Iraq. American lives were put directly at risk, and it put America directly in harm's way.

The request made by the President of the United States for military action in Syria does not include—and, in fact, the resolution that has come out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee makes it clear that there will be no ground combat troops from the United States of America. We will not be drawn into a ground war.

The Iraqi resolution that was approved over a decade ago had no time limit on that authorization. As we saw with that authorization and with the Afghanistan authorization, those campaigns went for over a decade, with American troops at risk.

The authorization that has come out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee contains a 60-day limitation on the authorization of the use of force. It can be extended once for an additional

30 days. This is a limited campaign. It is very clear this authorization is restricted to the specific objective to degrade and deter the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime and to prevent the transfer of chemical weapons to terrorist organizations.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommended resolution is limited. It is limited to that mission. It is limited in the type of military operation—no ground troops. It is limited in time and is not to exceed 60 to 90 days. It is limited to the fact that use of force should be the last option—not the first but the last option.

I have said many times on the floor of the House, and now on the floor of the Senate, that the use of military should be the last resort. There are other options that need to be explored first. So the resolution that has come out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee requires the President to pursue diplomatic ways to resolve the issue before he can use force. He must certify to Congress that he has done that before he can use force.

Mr. President, you understand this directly because you raised some of these issues. We now have an opportunity that we hope will work. We now have the attention of Russia and Syria since they know America is serious about reacting to Syria's use of chemical weapons. They know we will not stand by.

They have now acknowledged that chemical weapons in great numbers exist in Syria. And, quite frankly, I think they have acknowledged the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Of course, the videos speak for themselves and the physical evidence is overwhelming.

Now the suggestion is they will turn over those chemical weapons to the international community. If that is done, we have achieved our objective in the resolution that is before us. The resolution before us is to degrade and deter the use of chemical weapons by Syria. If they turn their chemical weapons over to the international community, we have achieved our objective. However, any such plan must be verifiable, enforceable, and timely.

Excuse me if I seem a little bit suspicious of the suggestions made by Russia and Syria. I want to make sure they are verifiable, they are enforceable, and that they are timely. We anticipated a diplomatic effort when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommended this resolution to the floor of the Senate.

There are many Members of the Senate, including the Presiding Officer, who are looking at ways we can come together to support the President's effort to stand up against the use of chemical weapons. I hope we will be able to come together with language in this resolution that will allow the Syrian Government to turn over its chemical weapons in a timely and enforceable way so military force will not be necessary.

Make no mistake about it, but for the leadership of President Obama and their fear of the use of American military force, we would never be at this opportunity right now where we have a viable diplomatic channel we can pursue. I wanted to acknowledge that we anticipated diplomacy would be used, as it always should be, before the use of our military. We hope our military will not be necessary, but we have to react to the use of chemical weapons.

Let me explain some of what we don't want to see happen. Earlier I referenced the hearings we had in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I congratulate Senator MENENDEZ and Senator CORKER, the chairman and ranking Republican on our committee. We had a very open hearing, we had access to classified information, and then we had an open discussion in our committee where all views were heard.

We tried to recommend a resolution we thought was responsible for the Congress to weigh in on. It was not the resolution the President submitted to us. It was one that was much more limited to the authorization we thought was appropriate. I think it has served its purpose from the point of view of putting Syria on notice that the United States is prepared to join the international community to say: Chemical weapons will not be allowed to be used. We also made it clear we will not be drawn into a civil war.

President Asad has done some horrible things in that country. In my view, he has lost the legitimacy of leading the country, but it is up to the Syrians to solve their civil conflict. American troops will not be drawn into the civil problems within Syria itself. They are going to have to resolve that issue.

As the United States has said, and as the international community has said, there needs to be a political solution to the future of Syria. Yes, there are some good people in the opposition and there are some people we are concerned about in the opposition. At the end of the day, it is up to the Syrians, through a political process, to determine their own government. What we should expect is a government that will respect the human rights of all the people of Syria and will respect the right of Syrians to determine who their leader should be. All ethnic communities should be able to live in peace in Syria, and that is our objective, to get to that political solution. We will not be drawn into a broader conflict.

As I said earlier, the people I have talked to in Maryland don't want war. The people I have talked to in this Nation do not want the United States drawn into another war, and neither do I.

One more point about the response to the use of chemical weapons. Yes, our first priority is to make sure these chemical weapons aren't used again. The best way to do that is to get control of the weapons and make sure they are not used and, hopefully, destroyed.

President Asad needs to be held accountable. He has committed war crimes. He has committed crimes against humanity. He needs to be held accountable for the criminal actions he has perpetrated on the people of Syria. As we know, over 100,000 have lost their lives, many of whom were civilians who were put in harm's way by the Syrian Government against international norms. I encourage my colleagues to join me in the effort of calling on an international tribunal to take President Asad, in this case, and establish the international justice so that he is held accountable for his actions.

One last point about the resolution before us. It is important to work with the international community. I hope we will find more countries standing up for the importance of international participation regarding condemning the use of chemical weapons. One of the hopes we have in this new opportunity for a diplomatic solution is for the United Nations to assume its appropriate role. The United Nations Security Council will have an opportunity as early as today to pass an enforceable resolution condemning what happened in Syria and accepting the offer to take control of all of its chemical weapons and do it in a way that is enforceable and in a way that accomplishes its goal. I hope the United Nations Security Council will act. I hope the international community will join us. United States leadership is needed, and President Obama is providing it. But the key point is we must respond to the use of chemical weapons.

I think this debate is strengthening our country. I understand there are different views. I urge my colleagues to come together to support a resolution that puts America on record supporting President Obama in saying we will not permit the use of chemical weapons to go unchallenged, that our objective is to make sure the world is safer, and we are prepared to work with the international community in order to achieve those objectives.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the time until 7 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my dear friend Senator

HEITKAMP of North Dakota so we can talk about the serious situation we have before us.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. MANCHIN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. MANCHIN and Ms. HEITKAMP pertaining to the introduction of S.J. Res. 22 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MANCHIN. I thank the Senator and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I come to speak to the important debate we are having about the most sobering issue I face as a Senator, as a Wisconsinite, and as an American—the issue of military action by the United States.

Let me start by saying that the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people is morally reprehensible and a serious violation of longstanding international law. The various treaties and conventions addressing these issues have been ratified by most of the world's nations. There is a reason why almost the entire world has gathered under the Chemical Weapons Convention to ban these weapons. It is because chemical weapons are truly barbaric in nature. They are a global threat, and they therefore require a global response.

The President has made the right choice to seek congressional authorization for any potential military action in Syria. The gravity of these issues before us is significant and they deserve a full debate. President Obama should be praised for understanding and appreciating that fact. We must demand that all Presidents—not just this President—come to Congress to get approval before taking military action in another country in instances where we are not facing an imminent threat. I have made that case with both Democratic and Republican Presidents.

I strongly believe our response to this situation must not be a unilateral military action. This is not America's responsibility alone, and it is not in our interest to set the precedent that it is our responsibility alone.

Syria violated international laws and should be held accountable by the international community. America must not act alone. The use of chemical weapons is a global atrocity that demands a global response, and that is why I oppose going to war in Syria and I oppose authorizing military involvement in Syria's civil war—not for 1

day, not for 60 days, not for a decade. I do not believe we should involve ourselves militarily in the middle of a brutal years-long civil war. That would not strengthen America's national security. But the answer is not to do nothing. The answer, rather, is to create a situation where these violations of humanitarian norms and crimes against humanity can be dealt with effectively by the U.N. and other international institutions.

We must continue to focus on building a global coalition to support the encouraging developments in the past few days and to resolve this crisis without the use of unilateral military engagement in Syria. By working through the United Nations and its institutions, we strengthen international frameworks that can help resolve the conflict in Syria and build a safer and stronger international community moving forward.

I firmly believe that the recent potential for progress in today's U.N. discussions is a testament to American democracy. By President Obama fulfilling his constitutional duties to come to Congress and by our serious debate here on Capitol Hill, I believe America has helped drive a more constructive international debate and engagement on Assad's regime's atrocities. We must now give the opportunity of a path forward without military involvement in Syria a chance to succeed.

Madam President, I yield back my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, we are back from the August recess, and I am here now for the 42nd time to try to awaken this body to the threat of climate change. Today I have come to talk about some of what went on during the recess while we were away in my home State of Rhode Island and around the globe.

Here is some of what happened in Rhode Island.

On August 14, Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, joined me in Rhode Island to deliver a clear message. As she said: "Climate change poses a very real threat to public health, both now and in the future."

Warmer temperatures in the Northeast mean harmful ozone can form very quickly. That leads to the bad air days we hear about on the news, when children with asthma and other vulnerable citizens are urged to stay indoors, often on what appear to be beautiful, sunny, summer days. Nancy Sutley and I heard from Nick Friend, a 15-year-old

from East Providence, and Kenyatta Richards, an 8-year-old from Warwick, about the six Rhode Island bad air days we have had already this year that threatened Nick's and Kenyatta's health, and thousands more children.

In Narragansett, a lovely Rhode Island beach town, I visited two sites that sustained significant damage during Hurricane Sandy to see how that town is using recovery aid to repair roads and public housing. People in Narragansett realize rebuilding is not enough; that we need to start adapting for future storms.

The oceans are warming, undeniably, and as they warm they expand. So sea levels rise, leading to more erosion and flooding. Tide gauges in Newport show an average sea level increase of nearly 10 inches since 1930. So storm surges such as the damaging surge last year from Hurricane Sandy will batter our shores further inland, and we have to adapt to that.

In Westerly, RI, town officials and the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Center held an informational meeting about the effects of sea level rise on the town's coastal wetlands, planning for 1, 3, and 5 feet of coastal sea level rise, so Westerly can create a communitywide adaptation plan.

Cranston, RI, was hit hard by the floods of 2010. In August, during this recess, demolition crews began tearing down homes in a neighborhood near the Pawtuxet River to buffer the surrounding homes to protect against future flooding. Cranston also announced a series of climate change workshops to increase awareness about the threats facing city residents and to help them plan ahead. So that is some of what happened in Rhode Island.

Nationally, in August the Rim Fire burned in California near Yosemite National Park, the third largest wildfire on record in California. No one can say climate change caused this fire. Wildfires have been happening forever. But hotter, drier years make for worse wildfire seasons. Spring and summer temperatures are edging up, snow is melting earlier, wildfire season is lengthening, and the intensity of the wildfire season is increasing, as State and Federal fire and forest managers forewarned our bicameral task force in a hearing just before the recess.

During August, nearly all of New Mexico experienced drought, with the majority of that State in severe, extreme or exceptional drought. In late August, the Bureau of Reclamation announced the first reduction of outflows from Lake Powell since the reservoir was filled in the early 1960s. Tens of millions of people who rely on the Colorado River for water will be affected.

Reports are that a late August heat wave in the Midwest caused school closures in Minnesota, and students were released early from schools in Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Again, it is the loaded dice phenomenon. We can't

assign specific blame for this heat wave to climate change, but on a planet with hotter summers, we can expect worse and more frequent heat waves. So that is nationally.

Globally, NOAA announced that July 2013 was the sixth warmest July on record.

I was traveling in Asia during the recess with Senator JOHN MCCAIN immediately following record-setting heat. In mid-August temperatures passed 105 degrees Fahrenheit in Shanghai, China, the hottest temperature measured in the city since records began to be kept about 140 years ago. The temperature in Shimanto, Japan, hit 105 degrees Fahrenheit, the hottest ever recorded in that Nation.

South Korea's President Park talked with us about climate change and its importance in Northeast Asia. While we were there in South Korea, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy had warned of power shortages due to high temperatures, and we met with public officials in rooms with air-conditioners shut off to save power.

Senator MCCAIN and I heard from China's leading climate official, Vice Chairman Xie, about China's plan to invest almost \$475 billion on clean energy and emissions-reducing projects through 2015—nearly \$500 billion between now and 2015 and about seven regional cap-and-trade programs that will eventually include other large cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin. For my colleagues who say China must act first on climate change: They are acting, and we should not look to them for an excuse to delay action here at home.

Indeed, a report recently by the Pew Charitable Trusts described China as—let me quote this—China: “The epicenter of clean energy finance, attracting \$65.1 billion in investment . . . it garnered 25 percent of all solar energy investment . . . 37 percent of all wind energy investment . . . and 47 percent of the investment in the ‘other renewable energy category.’”

That is what the Pew Report said about China.

The report compared that to the “disappointing U.S. performance in the worldwide race for clean energy jobs, manufacturing, and market share.” That is not a race we want to lose. Yet we are exhibiting disappointing performance against China.

August was also a month for the usual climate denial. One of our Senate colleagues reportedly self-declared that he was a global warming denier and said he believes evidence points to the Earth entering a mini ice age.

One California Representative told constituents: “Just so you know, global warming is a total fraud.”

A conservative Representative from Iowa told his constituents:

[Climate change] is not science. It's more of a religion than science.

A Representative from Florida said: “Our climate will continue to change because of the way God formed the Earth.”

August even brought a climate denier opinion piece to my home State “Providence Journal:” “Climate science is in turmoil,” the piece said, “because global surface temperatures have been flat for 16 years.”

Rhode Island's PolitiFact unit quickly determined that this claim “cherry-picked numbers and leaves out important details that would give a very different impression.”

In truth, there have been steps in the upward march of global surface temperature before. My skeptical colleagues should read about these steps and what may cause them in mainstream news outlets, which explain that while these pauses do happen, they have not and do not herald the end of climate change. Setting aside surface temperature for a moment, we continue to see warming, rising, and acidifying oceans.

The recess brought the latest issue, for instance, of “National Geographic,” whose cover story is “Rising Seas.” Let me read two excerpts:

A profoundly altered planet is what our fossil-fuel-driven civilization is creating, a planet where Sandy-scale flooding will become more common and more destructive for the world's coastal cities. By releasing carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere, we have warmed the Earth by more than a full degree Fahrenheit over the past century and raised sea level by about eight inches. Even if we stopped burning all fossil fuels tomorrow, the existing greenhouse gases would continue to warm the Earth for centuries. We have irreversibly committed future generations to a hotter world and rising seas.

Here, focusing on a specific location:

Among the most vulnerable cities is Miami. I cannot envision southeastern Florida having many people at the end of this century, says Hal Wanless, chairman of the department of geological sciences at the University of Miami. We're sitting in his basement office, looking at maps of Florida on his computer. At each click of the mouse, the years pass, the ocean rises, and the peninsula shrinks. Freshwater wetlands and mangrove swamps collapse—a death spiral that has already started on the southern tip of the peninsula. With seas four feet higher than they are today—a distinct possibility by 2100—about two-thirds of southeastern Florida is inundated. The Florida Keys have almost vanished. Miami is an island.

That is from that extremist publication National Geographic.

August also brought news that the IPCC will announce that it is now more certain than ever that human activity is the main cause of recent climate change. Let me be very clear about this: There is a broad and strong scientific consensus that climate change is ongoing and that human actions are a cause. It is a consensus of a breadth and strength that it is disgraceful and stupid for us to ignore it. That consensus should come as no surprise because the science behind it—behind the proposition that carbon dioxide in the atmosphere warms the Earth—dates back to the Civil War. It ain't news. We have known it for more than a century. Even the contrarian scientists brought in by the deniers to testify in Congress

agree that carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that warms the Earth.

The science is credible. The danger is credible. Now it is about time for Congress to become credible. It is time to wake up. It is time to do our duty here in Congress to our country and to our fellow man. It is time for us to get serious and protect Americans from the looming harms of climate change.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

16TH STREET CHURCH BOMBING

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, two weeks ago, thousands of people gathered on the National Mall in front of the Lincoln Memorial to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his historic “I Have a Dream” speech. That remarkable moment in this Nation's history was a peaceful day of unity and we rightfully remember the inspiring words of Dr. King.

We are reminded this week of just how quickly that hope and positive signs of progress were challenged by a stunning act of violence. Just a few days after Dr. King inspired a nation with his dream for his four children, four other children in Birmingham were killed at their church because of the color of their skin. On September 15, 1963, a bomb was planted by members of the Ku Klux Klan at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Addie Mae Collins, 14, Denise McNair, 11, Carole Robertson, 14, and Cynthia Wesley, 14, were innocent victims of racial hatred. The inhumanity of those who conspired and killed children in a church may seem unimaginable in our Nation today, but, as Colbert King of the Washington Post noted recently, “Before al-Qaeda, there was the Ku Klux Klan.”

We celebrate the significant strides we have made with determined efforts in forging a more just and equal America since the KKK's reign of terror, and yet we cannot forget that these events occurred just days after the March on Washington. It occurred in the lifetime of 88 of 100 members of this Senate body. It is our recent history, not ancient history.