

Congress from both parties stood together on the Capitol steps to show our sympathy, solidarity, and resolve. Those of us who were there will never forget it. Later this morning Members will gather on the same steps to remember once again those who died and to recommit ourselves to our national ideals—together. Our Nation always pulls together in difficult moments; 9/11 showed us that. It is important we remember it.

I look forward to joining congressional leaders and others out on the same steps shortly, on this day that has rightly become a very solemn one throughout our country.

We remember today all those who were killed as well as the families they left behind. We remember them with renewed sorrow. We remember all who lost their lives or who have been injured in the line of duty defending our freedoms since 9/11.

Today, we remember the resolve we shared on a clear September morning 12 years ago.

In the days and months that followed the attacks of 9/11, we did not cower. We took the fight to the terrorists, while here at home we opened our doors, our wallets, and our hearts to those around us. We persevered. We maintained what was and is best about our country. And, together, we will continue to do so as long as this struggle continues.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now be in a period of morning business for debate only until 2:30 p.m. with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in a few moments we will recess to gather on the steps of the Capitol. It is an annual event that commemorates 9/11. The leaders have spoken to their memories of that day, and I associate myself with their remarks and the sadness we all feel as we reflect on the lives lost, some 3,000 Americans—to this blatant act of terrorism.

We can all recall that moment. I can recall looking down the Mall toward the Washington Monument and watching the black smoke billowing across the Mall from the Pentagon because of the deadly crash there that took the lives of passengers on that plane and innocent people working in defense of America. That was a moment that will never be forgotten.

Over the weekend there was an indication of a new memorial in New York City that will commemorate 9/11 as

well, and soon it will be open as a lasting tribute to not only those who fell and the families we grieve with, but also to the paramedics and first responders who did such a remarkable and courageous job that day.

SYRIA

It is in keeping with that theme that we reflect today on what the majority leader told us. We had a visit yesterday from the President of the United States who spoke directly to the Senate Democratic caucus and Republican caucus luncheons answering questions from Senators. The President came to speak to us about the situation in Syria, about the use of chemical weapons, the deadly impact it has had on innocent people, and the obvious breach of norms of civilized conduct which the world has agreed to for almost 100 years.

The President made it clear that we have a chance now, an opportunity for a diplomatic solution because of the suggestion of the Russians that the Syrians come forward, surrender their chemical weapons, submit to inspections, and have real enforcement. Nations around the world are working with the United States to craft a resolution for the United Nations to consider. I am hopeful and I pray they will be successful. If that occurs, the President will have achieved his goal without the use of military force, which is something he made clear to us yesterday that he hopes to pursue—achieving his goal without the use of military force. Over and over again yesterday he told us: I am not a President who looks forward to the use of military force. I don't want to do it unless I have to. I believe that, because I know the man. I have known him for many years and I know what is in his heart.

However, we have to acknowledge the obvious. Had the President not raised the prospect of military force, this conversation on an international level would never have occurred. It was the President's leadership, even without majority support among the American people, that precipitated this action by President Putin, and I hope it will lead to a diplomatic solution. It is where it should be—in the United Nations. It was only the threat of veto by Russia and China and the Security Council which kept President Obama from turning to the United Nations first. But we have a chance, and I pray it is successful.

We will now move forward with other items on the Senate agenda very quickly, as we should, and still the possibility that if this diplomatic effort fails, we will have to return to this critically important debate about the future of Syria.

It is important to recall, though, even after the chemical weapons are gone—and I pray that happens with diplomatic efforts soon—there will still be a civil war in that country that has claimed 100,000 lives over the last several years. The sooner that comes to an end, the better. The humanitarian cri-

sis on the ground in Syria is terrible, but the impact on surrounding nations is awful as well.

Last year I visited a refugee camp in Turkey where Syrians, fearing for their lives, moved by the thousands into Turkey. I reflected on the generosity and compassion of the people of Turkey, accepting 10,000 people in one of these refugee camps, providing for them shelter and food and medical care and education for their children. It was an amazing humanitarian gesture on their part.

Then we go to the nation of Jordan. Jordan is overrun with refugees from the Middle East, and it has created serious economic challenges for that country and threats to political stability. The sooner this war ends in Syria, the sooner normalcy comes to the Middle East, the better for Jordan and the better for the entire region. So we pray that occurs soon.

This has been a rough few weeks as we have considered chemical weapons in Syria. As Senator REID said yesterday, the objects and visions we saw on this film and video—the victims of these chemical weapons—remind us of how horrible this is. When those who turn to weapons of mass destruction are not held accountable, there are more innocent victims.

I hope we can solve this issue on a diplomatic basis. We will stand down now in terms of any congressional effort until that effort in the United Nations has a chance to reach fruition, and I pray it will.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise to speak in morning business to remember 9/11, 2001, a day every American citizen and every citizen in the world remembers. They remember where they were. They remember what they thought. And they remember the tragedy we all watched on television that day.

It is appropriate that on every 9/11 of every year we pause for a moment and pray for the victims of that tragedy and their families, that we remember what happened on that day, and that we commit ourselves to see to it that it never happens again.

It is important that it not just be a memory. It needs to be a seminal moment in our lives that allows us to never forget the tragedy of what I believe is the first battle in the greatest war between good and evil. Terrorism is the ultimate enemy of freedom, liberty, and democracy, and it is something we must stand up to and never cower to.

Sometimes people ask me: What can I do? What can I do on 9/11, 2013, to remember those who died, to remember those who saved lives, and to remember what happened? I say there are three important things for us to always do.

No. 1 is to give thanks for the EMTs, the firemen, the law enforcement officers who risked their lives and, in many cases, died to save people who were victims of the Twin Towers tragedy. That is No. 1.

No. 2 is to remember we are a soldier in the army to fight terrorism. Every American should remember to be vigilant, to watch where they go. If they see something unusual, if they see something out of character, report it. We can be the second security force for our country.

Third, and most importantly, pray for our country. Pray that we have the strength to continue to confront terrorism. It is important for us to remember that terrorists win when we fear them. When we change what we do in our lives because we fear terrorism, they have won that great battle. We must stand up to, be vigilant for those signs that indicate a terrorist attack may happen, and let them know that no matter where, no matter when, or no matter what, the people of the United States of America stand ready to confront it and see to it that never does our country cower in fear because of terrorism. So on this tragic day, when almost 3,000 citizens of the world lost their lives in New York City, Shanksville, PA, and Washington, DC, it is appropriate that we pause and remember those victims, their families, and all of those who worked to save lives on 9/11, 2001. We must also remember those three things: Pray for America and those who were victims, remember to be vigilant and part of the army that keeps our eyes open and reports things that are seen, and always remember that when we cower to terrorism in fear, the terrorists have won. America must always be what America is: the strongest democracy on the face of this Earth.

May God bless our country and may God bless the souls who died on September 11, 2001.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SYRIA

Mr. KAINÉ. Madam President, I rise to speak to the grave issue of the Syria resolution currently pending before the body.

It is September 11. I know many Members have expressed thoughts, and we are all thinking about that day and what it means to our country. In a few minutes I will leave and go to the Pentagon to be with Pentagon staffers and family members as they commemorate the anniversary of this horrible trag-

edy in American life. The shadow of that tragedy and its rippling effects even today, 12 years later, definitely are a matter on my mind and heart as I think about this issue with respect to Syria.

Also on my mind and heart as I think about this grave issue is its connection to Virginia. I believe Virginia is the most militarily connected State in our country. Our map is a map of American military history: the battle at Yorktown, the surrender at Appomattox Court House, the attack on the Pentagon on 9/11. Our map is a map of American military history. We are more connected to the military in the sense that one in nine of our citizens is a veteran. We have Active Duty at the Pentagon, training to be officers at Quantico, the largest concentration of naval power in the world at Hampton Roads. We have DOD contractors. We have DOD civilians such as Army nurses. We have ROTC cadets, Guard and Reserve members, and military families, all of whom care very deeply about the issue we are grappling with as a nation.

I am sure in the Presiding Officer's State, as in mine and across the country, there is a war weariness on this 12th anniversary of 9/11, and that affects the way we look at this question of whether the United States should potentially engage in military action.

I cast a vote last week in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to authorize limited military action, and I have spent the days since that vote talking to Virginians and hearing from them and hearing from some who aren't happy with the vote I cast.

I spent 1 day talking to ROTC cadets at Virginia State University, folks who are training to be officers who might fight in future conflicts for this country. Then I spent Friday in Hampton Roads with veterans and military families talking about the choices before us.

I heard a teenager last night say something that truly struck me. This is a teenager who doesn't have any direct connection to the military herself, no family members in service. But at an event I was attending, she stood and said: I don't know war, but all my generation and I know is war. Think about that: I don't know war, but all my generation and I know is war. During her entire life that she has been kind of a thinking person, aware of the outside world, we have been at war. That makes us tremendously war-weary, and I understand that. So trying to separate out all those feelings and do what is right is hard.

Similar to many Virginians, I have family in the military who are going to be directly affected by what we do or what we don't do. I think about those family members and all Virginians and all Americans who have loved ones in service as I contemplate this difficult issue.

I wish to say three things. First, I wish to praise the President for bring-

ing this matter to Congress, which I believe is courageous and historic. Secondly, I wish to talk about why I believe authorizing limited military action makes sense. Third, I wish to talk about the need to exhaust all diplomatic opportunities and openings, including the ones that were reported beginning Monday of this week by Russia and Syria.

First, on the President coming to Congress. This was what was intended by the Framers of the Constitution; that prior to the initiation of significant military action—and this would be significant by all accounts—that Congress should have to weigh in. The Framers wanted that to be so. They had read history. They knew executives might be a little too prone to initiating military action, and they wanted to make sure the people's elected representatives had a vote about whether an action should be initiated. Once initiated, there is only one Commander in Chief. But at the initiation, Congress needs to be involved. That was the intent from the very beginning of this Nation from 1787. There was an understanding that in an emergency, a President might need to act immediately, but even in that case there would need to be a reckoning, a coming back to Congress and seeking approval of Presidential action.

In my view, the President, by bringing this matter to Congress, has acted in accord with law, acted in accord with the intent of the Framers of the Constitution, and actually has done so in a way that has cleared up some sloppiness about the way this institution and the President has actually done this over time.

Only five times in the history of the Nation has Congress declared war. Over 120 times Presidents have initiated military action without congressional approval—at least prior congressional approval. Presidents have overreached their power, and Congress has often made a decision to avoid being accountable for this most grave decision that we make as a nation.

I praise the President for bringing it to Congress, the people's body, because I think it is in accord with law. But I praise him for a second reason. It is not just about the constitutional allocation of responsibility. Responsibilities were allocated in the Constitution, in my view, for a very important moral reason. The moral reason is this: We cannot ask our men and women in service to put their lives on the line if there is not a consensus of the legislative and executive branches that the mission is worthwhile.

That is why it is important for Congress to weigh in on a decision to initiate military hostility because, absent that, we face the situation that would be a very real possibility in this instance that a President would make a decision that an action or a war was worth fighting but a Congress would not support it. That would put the men and women who have to face the risk