

doing at every country that I visit because it is my firm belief that a country's strength ultimately comes from its people, and that as important as government is—and laws—what makes a country democratic and effective in delivering prosperity and security and hope to people is when they've got an active, thriving civil society.

And all of these leaders, ranging from business leaders to youth leaders to environmental leaders, those who are advocating on behalf of a free press or the rule of law, all of them contribute in one way or another to continuing to strengthen Russian society and helping to make progress on behalf of all people.

And the same is true in the United States. I'm now in government, but I got my start as a community organizer, somebody who was working in what would be called an NGO in the international community. And the work I was doing was helping poor communities have a voice in what was happening in their lives.

The President's Weekly Address *September 7, 2013*

Almost 3 weeks ago in Syria, more than a thousand innocent people, including hundreds of children, were murdered in the worst chemical weapons attack of the 21st century. And the United States has presented a powerful case to the world that the Syrian Government was responsible for this horrific attack on its own people.

This was not only a direct attack on human dignity, it's a serious threat to our national security. There's a reason governments representing 98 percent of the world's people have agreed to ban the use of chemical weapons: not only because they cause death and destruction in the most indiscriminate and inhumane way possible, but because they can also fall into the hands of terrorist groups who wish to do us harm.

That's why, last weekend, I announced that, as Commander in Chief, I decided that the United States should take military action against the Syrian regime. This is not a deci-

And I got elected as President by engaging people at a grassroots level.

So the kinds of activities that are represented here are critically important to Russia's development, and I'm very proud of their work. And I think it is important for us to remember that in every country—here in Russia, in the United States, around the globe—that part of good government is making sure that we're creating a space for civil society to function effectively: freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, making sure that people can join together and make common cause around the issues that they care deeply about.

So I appreciate taking the time. I'm not going to do all the talking here. I want to spend most of my time listening. But I want to thank you again and hope all of you continue the good work. Good.

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg Airport hotel.

sion I made lightly. Deciding to use military force is the most solemn decision we can make as a nation.

As the leader of the world's oldest constitutional democracy, I also know that our country will be stronger if we act together, and our actions will be more effective. That's why I asked Members of Congress to debate this issue and vote on authorizing the use of force.

What we're not talking about is an open-ended intervention. This would not be another Iraq or Afghanistan. There would be no American boots on the ground. Any action we take would be limited, both in time and scope, designed to deter the Syrian Government from gassing its own people again and degrade its ability to do so.

I know that the American people are weary after a decade of war, even as the war in Iraq has ended and the war in Afghanistan is winding down. That's why we're not putting our troops in the middle of somebody else's war.

But we are the United States of America. We cannot turn a blind eye to images like the ones we've seen out of Syria. Failing to respond to this outrageous attack would increase the risk that chemical weapons could be used again, that they would fall into the hands of terrorists who might use them against us, and it would send a horrible signal to other nations that there would be no consequences for their use of these weapons, all of which would pose a serious threat to our national security.

That's why we can't ignore chemical weapons attacks like this one, even if they happen halfway around the world. And that's why I call

on Members of Congress from both parties to come together and stand up for the kind of world we want to live in, the kind of world we want to leave our children and future generations.

Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:20 p.m. on September 3 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on September 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 6, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 7.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks *September 10, 2013*

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared in Proclamation 7463 with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11,

2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14, 2013, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 10, 2013.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Address to the Nation on the Situation in Syria *September 10, 2013*

My fellow Americans, tonight I want to talk to you about Syria: why it matters and where we go from here.

Over the past 2 years, what began as a series of peaceful protests against the repressive regime of Bashar al-Asad has turned into a brutal civil war. Over 100,000 people have been killed. Millions have fled the country. In that time, America has worked with allies to pro-

vide humanitarian support, to help the moderate opposition, and to shape a political settlement. But I have resisted calls for military action because we cannot resolve someone else's civil war through force, particularly after a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The situation profoundly changed, though, on August 21, when Asad's Government gassed to death over a thousand people, including