

that—during my 7 years in the Senate—Ohio business owners who want to pay their workers a fair wage and have joined in efforts to raise the minimum wage. They know increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour will increase domestic production by nearly \$33 billion over 3 years as workers spend their raises in their local businesses and communities. This economic activity would generate 140,000 new jobs over the course of 3 years.

It is no surprise that the American public is anxious about our place in an increasingly multipolar, complicated, dynamic global economy. People know that after NAFTA and CAFTA and permanent China trade relations were passed, plants closed and we lost 5 million good manufacturing jobs. Never in history has company after company implemented a business plan where they close down production in Stuebenville or Toledo or Dayton, OH, to move overseas to Wuhan or Shanghai, China, and sell the products back to the United States. That business plan led us to this.

In 1977 manufacturing was 20 percent of our GDP and financial services represented significantly less. That flipped by 2010, where manufacturing is now only about 11 percent of GDP. Between 2000 and 2010, because of wrong-headed trade agreements, because of tax policy that has given incentives to move offshore, our country lost 5 million manufacturing jobs and 60,000 plants closed down.

Since 2010 we have seen manufacturing jobs grow by more than 500,000. That is not good enough. We have to enact an agenda that includes the best trained workers, the most developed and sophisticated infrastructure, the most robust manufacturing base, and the strongest defense against currency manipulation. Until every American worker is able to rise out of poverty, we still have work to do. Labor Day, celebrated last week, shouldn't simply mark the end of summer; it should mark the beginning of a renewed commitment to fighting for American workers, American businesses, and strengthening our middle class.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

SYRIA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me thank my friend the distinguished Senator from Ohio for including me in his unanimous consent request. I will briefly speak about an amendment.

We all understand that the issue is going to come before this body to send activity into Syria. I am very much opposed to any kind of force in Syria, but if it happens, we want to be sure there is some protection there. So I have an amendment that even if my amendment passes, I will still oppose the effort of this President to send activity into Syria, and I believe it would precipitate a war.

My amendment is very simple. If the President takes military action against Syria, sequestration of our Armed Forces would be delayed for 1 year. We are talking about the fiscal year where we would take another \$52 billion out of our military.

What Assad has done and continues to do is reprehensible, but the United States can't afford another war given the current state of our military. The threats from Syria and the Middle East are not emerging threats. These threats have been around for decades. We knew they were there. There is nothing new about them. Yet the readiness capabilities of our military continue to be decimated by drastic budget cuts.

Sixteen Air Force combat flying squadrons have been grounded. We finally, after 3 months, put them back in the air again, and right now we know it costs more to get them back in a state of readiness than the money we saved from grounding them for 3 months. Our naval fleet has been reduced to historically low levels, the end strength of our ground forces has been cut by more than 100,000 personnel, and hundreds of thousands of DOD civilian employees have been furloughed. Just in my State of Oklahoma, in one of my installations, 14,000 civilian employees have been furloughed.

We can't have it both ways—continuing to cut the funding of our military while still expecting to meet our national security requirements. As military readiness and capabilities decline, we accept greater risk, and, as I have always said, risk equals lives. Every time we have a hearing, we have our combatant commanders come in and talk about the risks. Risk means lives. As I have always said, risk equals lives, and allowing these cuts to continue while proposing to send our forces into harm's way is immoral and reprehensible.

Over the last week I have heard a lot from the President and his administration about how any action in Syria will be limited. I suggest there is no such thing as limited war. Once we decide to strike, we can't predict where it will end or how the situation might escalate. Let's not forget that we have troops currently on the ground in Jordan and Turkey, marines guarding our Embassies, and sailors and airmen stationed around the region. We have already heard that Iran is ordering its terrorist proxies to retaliate by attacking U.S. interests in the region, including our Embassy in Iraq. The State Department has ordered nonessential personnel to evacuate our Embassy in Lebanon. The threats to our forces are real.

I wish to read for my colleagues excerpts from a letter that was written by two ladies, Rebekah Sanderlin and Molly Blake. These are spouses of two of our servicemen. They are responding—much more eloquently than I could ever hope to—to the immense hardship our military is enduring

under sequestration and to the misguided belief that a military strike on Syria can be done in isolation—that it won't affect our troops and their families.

I ask unanimous consent that the entire letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

AN OPEN LETTER TO CNN REPORTER BARBARA STARR

[From The Huffington Post, posted Sept. 4, 2013]

DEAR MS. STARR: We are writing to let you in on a secret. It's a big one—so get to a fresh page in your reporter notebook and have your pen poised and ready.

You told your viewers last Thursday that there was “no question” that the military could afford to go into Syria and that you “don't think it's really going to affect military families at all.”

Here's some inside information for you: There is no such thing as a person-less war. Our military cannot afford for Americans to forget that wars and battles and military strikes are fought by troops, that troops are people, and that those people have families.

In our military communities this summer we couldn't even afford to pay federal employees for a five-day work week. Military families can't get doctors' appointments and can't get the counseling services needed to grapple with the problems we already have, problems largely created by almost 12 years of war. And while Congress was busy sending a warning letter to the president to ensure they get to sign off on whether or not we go to war, they managed to ignore military families when the sequester hit. Today clinic hours are being slashed—along with pretty much every other service military families need. Walking around our communities lately, it doesn't look like we can afford much of anything—and certainly not a whole new war.

And that's just taking ‘afford’ literally.

Figuratively, the picture is even grimmer. An entire generation of military kids have grown up with a parent they know primarily through Skype. Couples are trying to piece together marriages that have been badly fractured by more years spent apart than together. We grew hopeful that better days were coming as we watched the end of the Iraq war, and we're thrilled that the end of our involvement in Afghanistan is nigh, and yet now all of cable news is breathless and giddy with talk of war in Syria.

You boast, in your bio, that you have exclusive access to Lt. Gen. Russel Honore and you've interviewed several secretaries of defense and other important people at the CIA. You may very well have Sec. Hagel on speed dial—but that doesn't give you the right to toss around your thoughts on how military families may or may not be affected by military action. Not until you've stood in our shoes for longer than a three-minute live shot.

You see, Barbara, there's no such thing as ‘no boots on the ground.’ We in the military community sigh and shake our heads when we hear talk like that from the people on TV. Perhaps you consider a relatively small number of troops to be the same as zero—but we don't. We know that each of those service members is somebody's somebody.

As journalists, we like to show both sides of the story. So we would like to also voice our thanks. For your careless words have aimed a giant floodlight on the military-civilian divide. Blue Star Families Director of Research and Policy, Vivian Greentree said it best:

We hear a sense of angst in our membership and throughout the military community. How can we be in the middle of the fall out of sequestration—furloughs, program cuts, loss of mission readiness—we have families who can't get medical appointments. They are all wondering how they will manage if the situation in Syria continues to escalate. They wonder how will it affect them. Not, if it will affect them. But, how.

"That statement, in all its small-minded glory, captures the civilian-military divide more clearly than any survey ever could."

And maybe someday we will be able to fight whole wars without using a single human . . . And Rosie the Robot will clean our kitchens while we tackle our morning commutes in flying cars. But today, in 2013, we can't have a 'surgical strike' without someone saying where to drop the bombs or where to aim those missiles. And those planes that drop the bombs? The destroyers that carry the missiles? They have pilots, captains and crews. All humans. Even the "unmanned" drones have human pilots, and the psychological wear and tear on them is staggering. Planes take off from airfields in foreign lands or from aircraft carriers, both of which are staffed by thousands of American somebodies, just like those destroyer ships. At every turn in a military operation you will find people. Intel analysts, linguists, flight crews, and cooks. Even war plans, regardless of whether they were, as you stated, "on deployment anyway" rely on thousands of people who will be pulled to a new duty, which causes reshuffling far and wide in the military community.

And this, most definitely, affects military families.

The big question is, as you said, "will it work?" and, as we learned from the most recent wars, it bears recalling that things don't always go as planned. But that's not the only question. Do not kid yourself, Barbara, and don't you dare kid the viewers who trust your reporting.

Sincerely,

REBEKAH SANDERLIN and MOLLY BLAKE,
Military Spouses.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to quote from the letter I just submitted for the RECORD, and I ask my colleagues to listen to the quote. These are two ladies who are spouses of servicemen. They said:

There is no such thing as a person-less war. Our military cannot afford for Americans to forget that wars and battles and military strikes are fought by troops, that troops are people, and that those people have families. In our military communities this summer we couldn't even afford to pay Federal employees for a five-day work week. Military families can't get doctors' appointments and can't get counseling services needed to grapple with the problems we already have, problems largely created by almost 12 years of war. Today clinic hours are being slashed—along with pretty much every other service military families need. Walking around our communities lately, it doesn't look like we can afford much of anything—and certainly not a whole new war.

I am still quoting now these wives of our military men:

And maybe someday we will be able to fight whole wars without using a single human, but today, in 2013, we can't have a surgical strike without someone saying where to drop the bombs or where to aim those missiles. And those planes that drop the bombs? The destroyers that carry the missiles? They have pilots, captains, and crews. All humans. Even the "unmanned" drones have human pilots, and the psycho-

logical wear and tear on them is staggering. Planes take off from airfields in foreign lands and from aircraft carriers, both of which are staffed by thousands of American somebodies, just like those destroyer ships. At every turn in a military operation you will find people. Intel analysts, linguists, flight crews, and cooks. Even war plans . . . rely on thousands of people who will be pulled to a new duty, which causes reshuffling far and wide in the military community. And this, most definitely, affects our military families.

Again, that is a quote from two of the wives of our current servicemen. I hope all of my colleagues will read this letter. I hope they understand that the decisions we make this week about whether to go to war in Syria have a human dimension.

If we expect the brave men and women in our military to go to foreign lands and risk their lives on our behalf, we have a moral obligation to ensure that they and their families have the support and the resources that are required. Sequestration has already inflicted severe damage on our military, and we are now only a couple of weeks from another \$52 billion being slashed from an already devastated military budget.

I have been clear that I don't support the President's call for military action in Syria. He still hasn't presented Congress and the American people with a plan for what he wants to accomplish, how he intends to accomplish it, or how he intends to pay for it. Will the President pay for this operation with more furloughs and by grounding more squadrons again? The CNO has already come forward and stated that if operations against Syria extend into October, he won't be able to afford it and will likely require supplemental funding from Congress.

Furthermore, the President hasn't told us how a strike in Syria fits into a broader strategy for the Middle East. What we decide to do is not just about Syria. It is bigger than that. This is about the growing threat from Iran, stability in the Middle East, and our commitment to Israel and allies and our ability to respond to other contingencies that are there.

I recall knowing what was going to happen. This is 4½ years ago, back when President Obama was first elected, his first election. I knew that when he came out with his first budget, he was going to do something devastating to the military. So I put myself into Afghanistan, knowing, with the tanks going back and forth, that I would be able to get the interest and the attention of the American people, and it worked. So in that very first budget 4½ years ago, he did away with the early fifth-generation bomber then, the F-22; did away with our future combat system—the first ground capability increase in about 50 years; did away with our lift capacity, the C-17. Then, the worst thing, which I hope doesn't turn out to create the worst problem for America, he did away with the ground-based operation in Poland. That was

just the first budget. That was 4½ years ago. Since that time, in his extended budget, he has taken \$487 billion out of the military, and with sequestration it will be another \$½ trillion. This just can't happen.

It is not just me who is saying this. People would expect it more from me. I am the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee. I have gone there and worked with these guys and noticed the problems they have. I would suggest that not just me but Admiral Winnefeld, who is the second highest military guy, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said:

There could be, for the first time in my career—An admiral speaking now, the second highest person in our military—

instances where we may be asked to respond to a crisis and we will have to say we cannot.

And then we go to the very top person, General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said, "Our military force is so degraded, so unready, it would be immoral to use force."

I only say this because we are going to be facing this, and I would be opposed to this even with my amendment to postpone the sequestration of the military for 1 year. However, if that passes, I will still oppose this taking place. I don't think many people in America realize what has happened to our military under the Obama administration.

Well, I have just stated what has happened. This is certainly not a time when we would use force in Syria. Keep in mind that General Dempsey said it would be immoral to use force, we are so degraded, and that is exactly what we will be voting on in the next couple of days.

With that, I yield the floor.

CHIRIBIQUETE NATIONAL PARK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about a recent development in Colombia of which many Senators may not be aware.

Colombia is ranked as the second most biologically diverse country in the world. The variety of plant and animal life is staggering, which reflects its similarly diverse geography—from Amazon rainforest to glacier-covered mountains, and Caribbean and Pacific coastlines.

To its credit, Colombia has an extensive system of national parks and biological reserves. I have long been convinced that as security improves in that country and long after the oil wells are depleted, its national parks and other protected areas will be among Colombia's greatest resource, attracting eco-tourists from around the world.

On August 21 President Santos took an historic leap forward by doubling the size of Chiribiquete National Park, which is home to a myriad of species including jaguars and is comprised of extraordinary rock formations and