

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

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 191, the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

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

It is important we make that point.

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

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

on the Syrian regime for a diplomatic solution.

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

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

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

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

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

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

United States in 2003 passed the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of that year. This act explicitly states that Congress found—the U.S. Congress made a finding that “Syria’s acquisition”—and I am underlining that word “acquisition”—“of weapons of mass destruction threatens the security of the Middle East and the national security interests of the United States.”

This Congress 10 years ago made a determination that the acquisition of chemical weapons was a threat to our national security. We are in a different world now. Syria not only acquired them but has now used them multiple times on its own people, the most recent being the horrific scenes that we all saw in some of the videos that are now part of the public record. So there is clear and convincing evidence of the direct involvement of the Asad regime, the forces of the Asad regime and senior officials, in the planning, execution, aftermath, and attempts to cover up the August 21 attack. This is graphically evident in the 13 authenticated videos released by the Senate Intelligence Committee compiled by the Open Source Center showing the results of chemical weapons use in the Damascus suburbs on August 21. These videos were shown to the Intelligence Committee on Thursday and played on CNN on Saturday. So many Americans have seen them. If anyone would like more information about those, go to my Web site and I am certain many others as well.

It is clear that the regime violated international law as it relates to chemical weapons. We know the regime committed a barrage of terror across the country with the sole aim of remaining in power. We have to ask ourselves, when a dictator or terrorist organization uses chemical weapons in violation of international law, should that regime or terrorist organization pay a price? I argue that they must pay a price.

We simply can’t condemn this crime against humanity; it is in the national security interest of the United States for the administration to have the authorization to act. The regime in Iran, the terrorist organization Hezbollah, and the regime in North Korea are watching very closely, so it is imperative that we take steps to address this threat.

Let me talk about the regime in Iran and Hezbollah. What happens in Syria is of great consequence to our security interest as it relates to that regime in Hezbollah. When I say “that regime,” I am speaking about the Iran regime. Their support for Hezbollah, through Syria, has resulted in constant plotting against the United States and its allies. The Asad regime in Syria is the conduit of this relationship between Hezbollah and the Iranian regime itself.

I support this authorization of targeted and strategic military action in order to hold the Syrian regime ac-

countable and because it will diminish the ability of Iran and Hezbollah to conduct acts of terror. It will also protect American lives if we hold them accountable, as well as, of course, the Syrian people. Indeed, other than Al Qaeda, Hezbollah has killed more Americans than any other terrorist organization in the world, including 241 marines in 1983. Hezbollah has consistently partnered with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to bolster Asad’s campaign of repression and violence in Syria, which has further destabilized the region. The regime in Iran has provided funds, weapons, logistical support, tactical advice, and fighters to the Syrian Government forces. Just this year Iran’s support to Asad has increased, with reported daily resupply flights to Syria.

The Syrian regime possesses a stockpile of chemical weapons that we cannot allow to fall into the hands of terrorists. Iran and Hezbollah—I think some people in Washington missed this—are not on the sidelines; they are already on the battlefield. I would argue that Iran and Hezbollah are on two battlefields. Certainly, they are on the battlefield in Syria but also the daily battlefield of terrorist acts plotting against the United States and other countries as well.

Failure to bring action and failure to hold Syria accountable after such a horrific crime will only serve to embolden the Iranian regime, to embolden the terrorist organization Hezbollah and others, to expand terror across the world. Iran’s status as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism is well established, and its proxies have perpetuated attacks against the United States, Israel, and our allies.

Emboldened by Iran’s support, Hezbollah has conducted terrorist attacks since its inception in the early 1980s—including Western targets. Hezbollah has become more aggressive in the last few years and has executed attacks not only in the Middle East but on two other continents—South Asia and Europe. Just 2 years ago a plot was uncovered to blow up a restaurant in Georgetown—right here in Washington, DC—to kill the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, along with U.S. officials and average citizens who are American. When the Iranian-backed attacker was questioned, he referred to the potential killing of Americans as “no big deal.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the report by the Department of Justice entitled “Two Men Charged in Alleged Plot to Assassinate Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States.”

The list goes on. We know that in June of 1996 there was the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia where 19 U.S. Air Force personnel were killed. That is another example of an Iran-backed terrorist activity. It goes back, as I mentioned, to 1983 when 241 marines were killed by a truck bombing in Beirut. There are also new reports on

evidence that strongly suggests that an Iran-backed plot was underway to kill a U.S. Ambassador in 2011. Hezbollah has consistently partnered with Iran to do just that.

The national security interest of the United States is even more significant than that. It is not simply the green light it would send to Iran and Hezbollah as it relates to terrorism. If we don’t take the right action here, it would send a message and green light to Iran as it relates to their nuclear program. We know the Iranian regime is intent on developing nuclear weapons capability. I support a variety of measures to prevent Iran from acquiring that capability. Condemnation only of Syria would embolden Iran and undermine our efforts to prevent the Iranian regime from developing and possessing a nuclear weapon.

Every Member of Congress will have to weigh the consequence of giving the green light to the use of chemical weapons and contemplate what it will mean for enemies, such as the Iranian regime and Hezbollah, who plot against the United States every day. I am like a lot of Members of Congress in that after receiving several intelligence briefings, I have more confidence than ever before that we have a significant national security imperative to authorize the President to act as it relates to Syria. I have no doubt that Mr. Asad used the chemical weapons against his people and it is evident that he crossed more than one redline. So I support this limited and proportional scope of authorization for the use of force.

By the way, this authorization would probably be the most limited authorization in recent American history.

I believe Congress must stand united on this issue, and we have to make sure we not only hold the regime accountable but make sure we are doing everything possible to send the right message.

I have two more points before I conclude. One of the best rationales for the reason we are taking the steps I hope we will take was set forth in an op-ed printed in the New York Times last weekend by Nicholas Kristof, and it is dated September 7, 2013. The op-ed is entitled “Pulling the Curtain Back on Syria,” and I ask unanimous consent to have this op-ed printed in the RECORD.

I think one of the most important lines in here—and, of course, I will not read the entire op-ed—is what Mr. Kristof wrote:

In other words, while there are many injustices around the world, from Darfur to eastern Congo, take it from one who has covered most of them: Syria is today the world capital of human suffering.

There are few journalists—there are few Americans—who have more credibility on the issue of what is happening to children and vulnerable populations around the world than Nicholas Kristof. For him to say the world capital of human suffering is in Syria is a powerful and compelling statement.

That brings me back to where I started. I started walking through the early days of this opposition to a repressive regime against Mr. Assad, and the people who led the way and made a case against his regime in large measure were the children or young people. One of the harrowing and very disturbing elements of this entire crisis—this war that has raged on for more than 2 years now—is the impact it has had on children.

I received a report today that came from Save the Children. They have enormous credibility not only on children's issues worldwide, but there are Save the Children personnel on the ground in Syria.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the document entitled "Briefing note: The children crisis in Syria" be printed in the RECORD as well.

That documents in great detail the human suffering of children and the impact this has had on millions of Syrian children. But, of course, maybe the most graphic and disturbing example of that was the footage that virtually every American has had an opportunity to view which shows the hundreds and hundreds of children who were killed instantly in this horrific chemical weapons attack. By one estimate, more than 400—maybe as many as 426—children were killed.

When we confront this issue, we cannot simply say: Oh, this is just another horrific situation around the world. When we consider what this regime did to schoolchildren—arrested them and by many accounts tortured them from the beginning of this opposition all the way through to the attack on August 21—and what will continue to happen to children in Syria and in places around the world, we are summoned by our conscience to act in some fashion and hold this regime accountable.

I want to be open to this possibility that maybe there is a breakthrough, that we can remove this terrible threat from Syria and wipe out the chemical weapons threat by giving total and complete control of chemical weapons to an international force, but the burden of proof is on Syria and the Russian Federation. They have to deliver very specifically in a very short time-frame if they expect us to agree to this. We should be hopeful and consider this opportunity, but at the same time we cannot divorce ourselves from the reality of what happened, the consequence of not acting, and also the long-term and short-term national security interests of the United States, which I think are overwhelming and compelling in this instance.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess.

From CNN.com, Mar. 1, 2012]

DARAA: THE SPARK THAT LIT THE SYRIAN FLAME

(By Joe Sterling)

Syria is burning—scorched for nearly a year by tenacious political resistance, a merciless security crackdown and cries for democracy.

The spark that lit the flame began about a year ago in the southern city of Daraa after the arrests of at least 15 children for painting anti-government graffiti on the walls of a school.

The community's blunt outrage over the children's arrests and mistreatment, the government's humiliating and violent reactions to their worries, and the people's refusal to be cowed by security forces emboldened and helped spread the Syrian opposition.

FATE OF NEIGHBORHOOD UNCERTAIN

Daraa soon became a rallying cry across the country for what began as a rural and provincial-driven uprising.

Syrians compare the dramatic dynamics in the rural city to the moment Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi torched himself in December 2010. Bouazizi's act and death spawned demonstrations that led to the grassroots ouster of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and fueled other protests across the Arab world.

Mohamed Masalmeh—a Halifax, Nova Scotia-based Syrian activist whose family hails from Daraa—said Daraa residents broke the people's "wall of fear" by defying what he and others call a police state and taking to the street.

"What people did in Daraa was unheard of," he said.

Omar Almuqdad, a journalist from Daraa now living in Turkey, said, "They started protesting day after day."

"It was the flame of the revolution."

A SLOW BURN INTO A FIRESTORM

Discontent in Syria has slow-burned for decades.

A clampdown on a Muslim Brotherhood uprising by the current president's predecessor and father—President Hafez Assad—killed thousands in Hama in 1982.

When Bashar al-Assad took the presidency after his father died in 2000, he gave lip service to reforms.

But activists who emerged from the so-called Damascus Spring after the death of Hafez and those in 2005 who urged reforming what they said was an "authoritarian, totalitarian and cliquish regime" found themselves in trouble with the authorities.

There was sectarian and ethnic unrest in the last decade, too, with a Druze uprising flaring in 2000 and a Kurdish rebellion erupting in 2004.

When the Arab Spring unfolded last year, Syrians imbibed the contagious revolutionary fervor spreading across the Middle East.

But the anger smoldered under the surface because of the Goliath-sized, all-seeing and all-knowing security and spying apparatus.

Protests popped up in Syria as video images of public defiance in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia swept the world—small outpourings seen by observers as tests to build a Syrian nerve to take to the streets.

And then—Daraa.

Remote Daraa sits just a few miles from the Jordanian border. It has had its economic struggles, such as drought and drops in subsidies and salaries. Nevertheless, it had been a reliable bastion of support for the regime and its Baath party.

Tribal and predominantly Sunni, Daraa is like many small towns. People know one another and the relationships are close in the city and in the nearby villages and towns.

When the schoolchildren were arrested in late February 2011, they were accused of scrawling graffiti on a school that said "the people want to topple the regime." Masalmeh, the activist, said security went to a school, interrogated students and rounded up suspects.

It wasn't as if this vandalism was rare. Such graffiti was becoming so common in

the region that ID was needed to buy spray cans.

But these arrests struck a chord. Residents found out their boys were being beaten and tortured in prison.

The families of the boys approached authorities and asked for their sons' release. Activists and observers say authorities shunned and insulted the people. One official reportedly said: "Forget your children. If you really want your children, you should make more children. If you don't know how to make more children, we'll show you how to do it."

"At some point, the insult is so far below the belt. People do respond to it. They just don't bow down anymore," Amnesty International's Neil Sammonds said.

PROTESTS GROW

On March 16, a female-led sit-in in Damascus demanded the release of prisoners unfairly jailed. Some of the participants were Daraans, with strong ties back to their home province, and part of the educated, urbanite youth living in Damascus.

"Police dragged protesters by the hair and beat them," said Mohja Kahf, a novelist, professor and activist in Arkansas with contacts across Syria. "This built on the gathering outrage over the Daraa children who are prisoners."

A day later, a sit-in in Daraa, with some detained. The next day, on March 18, a protest against the arrests of the children, according to The Human Rights Watch.

"Security forces opened fire, killing at least four protesters and within days, the protests grew into rallies that gathered thousands of people," the group said.

Activists regard these as the first deaths in the Syrian uprising.

People began rallying in other cities across Syria that day—Jassem, Da'el, Sanamein and Inkhil. Kahf said the government responded with live fire only in Daraa.

But the more people demonstrated in Daraa, the tougher security forces cracked down. And as the crackdown worsened, the more resolute the protesters became.

The people in Daraa "didn't want to go against the regime," Masalmeh said. "People thought this guy—Bashar—was better than his dad. Nobody wanted to go face-to-face with him."

"It's not like they fought with arms at that moment," he said. "They were just defiant. All that we want is our children."

The youths were eventually freed, but YouTube videos and demonstrations were already spreading.

Al-Assad addressed the Daraa unrest in a March 30 speech before lawmakers, blaming the unrest on sedition. "They started in the governorate (province) of Daraa," al-Assad said, adding "the conspirators took their plan to other governorates."

"That speech had a catastrophic impact," the International Crisis Group's Peter Harling said. "People who wanted to support the regime at the time were shocked by the speech."

The dismissiveness of al-Assad and the lawmakers who applauded his words awakened many Syrian people, says the Human Rights Watch's Nadim Houry. Two days later, weekly anti-government protests began across Syria.

Calls for reforms soon morphed into calls for the removal of the al-Assad regime.

"Courage is contagious," Houry said.

The government launched a full-scale siege on Daraa April 25, with other towns such as Homs to follow.

Mass arrests unfolded and tales of torture spread across the country. The protest movement grew and solidified into an opposition.

Paul Salem, director of the Carnegie Middle East Center, points out "it's conceivable

that if the events didn't happen in Daraa," the uprising "might not have occurred."

But the deep-seated political and economic reasons underlining Syrian discontent was an omen. Protest in Syria was "going to happen" at some point, Salem said.

So, out of Daraa, a spark. And a year later, the uprisings blaze on.

"The impact of small events on history can be huge," Salem said.

The following is an official release from the Department of Justice on the alleged plot.

TWO MEN CHARGED IN ALLEGED PLOT TO ASSASSINATE SAUDI ARABIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON.—Two individuals have been charged in New York for their alleged participation in a plot directed by elements of the Iranian government to murder the Saudi Ambassador to the United States with explosives while the Ambassador was in the United States.

The charges were announced by Attorney General Eric Holder; FBI Director Robert S. Mueller; Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; and Preet Bharara, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

A criminal complaint filed today in the Southern District of New York charges Manssor Arbabsiar, a 56-year-old naturalized U.S. citizen holding both Iranian and U.S. passports, and Gholam Shakuri, an Iran-based member of Iran's Qods Force, which is a special operations unit of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that is said to sponsor and promote terrorist activities abroad.

Both defendants are charged with conspiracy to murder a foreign official; conspiracy to engage in foreign travel and use of interstate and foreign commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire; conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosives); and conspiracy to commit an act of international terrorism transcending national boundaries. Arbabsiar is further charged with an additional count of foreign travel and use of interstate and foreign commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire.

Shakuri remains at large. Arbabsiar was arrested on Sept. 29, 2011, at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport and will make his initial appearance today before in federal court in Manhattan. He faces a maximum potential sentence of life in prison if convicted of all the charges.

"The criminal complaint unsealed today exposes a deadly plot directed by factions of the Iranian government to assassinate a foreign Ambassador on U.S. soil with explosives," said Attorney General Holder. "Through the diligent and coordinated efforts of our law enforcement and intelligence agencies, we were able to disrupt this plot before anyone was harmed. We will continue to investigate this matter vigorously and bring those who have violated any laws to justice."

"The investigation leading to today's charges illustrates both the challenges and complexities of the international threat environment, and our increased ability today to bring together the intelligence and law enforcement resources necessary to better identify and disrupt those threats, regardless of their origin," said FBI Director Mueller.

"The disruption of this plot is a significant milestone that stems from months of hard work by our law enforcement and intelligence professionals," said Assistant Attorney General Monaco. "I applaud the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who helped bring about today's case."

"As alleged, these defendants were part of a well-funded and pernicious plot that had, as its first priority, the assassination of the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, without care or concern for the mass casualties that would result from their planned attack," said U.S. Attorney Bharara. "Today's charges should make crystal clear that we will not let other countries use our soil as their battleground."

THE ALLEGED PLOT

The criminal complaint alleges that, from the spring of 2011 to October 2011, Arbabsiar and his Iran-based co-conspirators, including Shakuri of the Qods Force, have been plotting the murder of the Saudi Ambassador to the United States. In furtherance of this conspiracy, Arbabsiar allegedly met on a number of occasions in Mexico with a DEA confidential source (CS-1) who has posed as an associate of a violent international drug trafficking cartel. According to the complaint, Arbabsiar arranged to hire CS-1 and CS-1's purported accomplices to murder the Ambassador, and Shakuri and other Iran-based co-conspirators were aware of and approved the plan. With Shakuri's approval, Arbabsiar has allegedly caused approximately \$100,000 to be wired into a bank account in the United States as a down payment to CS-1 for the anticipated killing of the Ambassador, which was to take place in the United States.

According to the criminal complaint, the IRCG is an arm of the Iranian military that is composed of a number of branches, one of which is the Qods Force. The Qods Force conducts sensitive covert operations abroad, including terrorist attacks, assassinations and kidnappings, and is believed to sponsor attacks against Coalition Forces in Iraq. In October 2007, the U.S. Treasury Department designated the Qods Force for providing material support to the Taliban and other terrorist organizations.

The complaint alleges that Arbabsiar met with CS-1 in Mexico on May 24, 2011, where Arbabsiar inquired as to CS-1's knowledge with respect to explosives and explained that he was interested in, among other things, attacking an embassy of Saudi Arabia. In response, CS-1 allegedly indicated that he was knowledgeable with respect to C-4 explosives. In June and July 2011, the complaint alleges, Arbabsiar returned to Mexico and held additional meetings with CS-1, where Arbabsiar explained that his associates in Iran had discussed a number of violent missions for CS-1 and his associates to perform, including the murder of the Ambassador.

\$1.5 MILLION FEE FOR ALLEGED ASSASSINATION

In a July 14, 2011, meeting in Mexico, CS-1 allegedly told Arbabsiar that he would need to use four men to carry out the Ambassador's murder and that his price for carrying out the murder was \$1.5 million. Arbabsiar allegedly agreed and stated that the murder of the Ambassador should be handled first, before the execution of other attacks. Arbabsiar also allegedly indicated he and his associates had \$100,000 in Iran to pay CS-1 as a first payment toward the assassination and discussed the manner in which that payment would be made.

During the same meeting, Arbabsiar allegedly described to CS-1 his cousin in Iran, who he said had requested that Arbabsiar find someone to carry out the Ambassador's assassination. According to the complaint, Arbabsiar indicated that his cousin was a "big general" in the Iranian military; that he focuses on matters outside Iran and that he had taken certain unspecified actions related to a bombing in Iraq.

In a July 17, 2011 meeting in Mexico, CS-1 noted to Arbabsiar that one of his workers had already traveled to Washington, D.C., to

surveil the Ambassador. CS-1 also raised the possibility of innocent bystander casualties. The complaint alleges that Arbabsiar made it clear that the assassination needed to go forward, despite mass casualties, telling CS-1, "They want that guy [the Ambassador] done [killed], if the hundred go with him f*ck 'em." CS-1 and Arbabsiar allegedly discussed bombing a restaurant in the United States that the Ambassador frequented. When CS-1 noted that others could be killed in the attack, including U.S. senators who dine at the restaurant, Arbabsiar allegedly dismissed these concerns as "no big deal."

On Aug. 1, and Aug. 9, 2011, with Shakuri's approval, Arbabsiar allegedly caused two overseas wire transfers totaling approximately \$100,000 to be sent to an FBI undercover account as a down payment for CS-1 to carry out the assassination. Later, Arbabsiar allegedly explained to CS-1 that he would provide the remainder of the \$1.5 million after the assassination. On Sept. 20, 2011, CS-1 allegedly told Arbabsiar that the operation was ready and requested that Arbabsiar either pay one half of the agreed upon price (\$1.5 million) for the murder or that Arbabsiar personally travel to Mexico as collateral for the final payment of the fee. According to the complaint, Arbabsiar agreed to travel to Mexico to guarantee final payment for the murder.

ARREST AND ALLEGED CONFESSION

On or about Sept. 28, 2011, Arbabsiar flew to Mexico. Arbabsiar was refused entry into Mexico by Mexican authorities and, according to Mexican law and international agreements; he was placed on a return flight destined for his last point of departure. On Sept. 29, 2011, Arbabsiar was arrested by federal agents during a flight layover at JFK International Airport in New York. Several hours after his arrest, Arbabsiar was advised of his Miranda rights and he agreed to waive those rights and speak with law enforcement agents. During a series of Mirandized interviews, Arbabsiar allegedly confessed to his participation in the murder plot.

According to the complaint, Arbabsiar also admitted to agents that, in connection with this plot, he was recruited, funded and directed by men he understood to be senior officials in Iran's Qods Force. He allegedly said these Iranian officials were aware of and approved of the use of CS-1 in connection with the plot; as well as payments to CS-1; the means by which the Ambassador would be killed in the United States and the casualties that would likely result.

Arbabsiar allegedly told agents that his cousin, who he had long understood to be a senior member of the Qods Force, had approached him in the early spring of 2011 about recruiting narco-traffickers to kidnap the Ambassador. Arbabsiar told agents that he then met with the CS-1 in Mexico and discussed assassinating the Ambassador. According to the complaint, Arbabsiar said that, afterwards, he met several times in Iran with Shakuri and another senior Qods Force official, where he explained that the plan was to blow up a restaurant in the United States frequented by the Ambassador and that numerous bystanders could be killed, according to the complaint. The plan was allegedly approved by these officials.

In October 2011, according to the complaint, Arbabsiar made phone calls at the direction of law enforcement to Shakuri in Iran that were monitored. During these phone calls, Shakuri allegedly confirmed that Arbabsiar should move forward with the plot to murder the Ambassador and that he should accomplish the task as quickly as possible, stating on Oct. 5, 2011, "[j]ust do it quickly, it's late . . ." The complaint alleges that Shakuri also told Arbabsiar that he

would consult with his superiors about whether they would be willing to pay CS-1 additional money.

This investigation is being conducted by the FBI Houston Division and DEA Houston Division, with assistance from the FBI New York Joint Terrorism Task Force. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Glen Kopp and Edward Kim, of the Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, with assistance from the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division, The Office of International Affairs of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and the U.S. State Department provided substantial assistance. We thank the government of Mexico for its close coordination and collaboration in this matter, and for its role in ensuring that the defendant was safely apprehended.

The charges contained in a criminal complaint are mere allegations and defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 7, 2013]

PULLING THE CURTAIN BACK ON SYRIA

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

When I was a law student in 1982, I escaped torts by backpacking through Syria and taking a public bus to Hama, where the government had suppressed a rebellion by massacring some 20,000 people.

The center of Hama was pulverized into a vast field of rubble interspersed with bits of clothing, yet on the fringe of it stood, astonishingly, a tourism office. The two Syrian officials inside, thrilled to see an apparent tourist, weighed me down with leaflets about sightseeing in Hama and its ancient water wheels. After a bit of small talk, I pointed out the window at the moonscape and asked what had happened.

They peered out at the endless gravel pit. "Huh?" one said nervously. "I don't see anything."

It feels to me a bit as if much of the world is reacting the same way today. The scale of the slaughter may be five times that of 1982, but few are interested in facing up to what is unfolding today out our window in Hama, Homs, Damascus and Aleppo.

As one woman tweeted to me: "We simply cannot stop every injustice in the world by using military weapons."

Fair enough. But let's be clear that this is not "every injustice": On top of the 100,000-plus already killed in Syria, another 5,000 are being slaughtered monthly, according to the United Nations. Remember the Boston Massacre of 1770 from our history books, in which five people were killed? Syria loses that many people every 45 minutes on average, around the clock.

The rate of killing is accelerating. In the first year, 2011, there were fewer than 5,000 deaths. As of July 2012, there were still "only" 10,000, and the number has since soared tenfold.

A year ago, by United Nations calculations, there were 230,000 Syrian refugees. Now there are two million.

In other words, while there are many injustices around the world, from Darfur to Eastern Congo, take it from one who has covered most of them: Syria is today the world capital of human suffering.

Skeptics are right about the drawbacks of getting involved, including the risk of retaliation. Yet let's acknowledge that the alternative is, in effect, to acquiesce as the slaughter in Syria reaches perhaps the hundreds of thousands or more.

But what about the United Nations? How about a multilateral solution involving the

Arab League? How about peace talks? What about an International Criminal Court prosecution?

All this sounds fine in theory, but Russia blocks progress in the United Nations. We've tried multilateral approaches, and Syrian leaders won't negotiate a peace deal as long as they feel they're winning on the ground. One risk of bringing in the International Criminal Court is that President Bashar al-Assad would be more wary of stepping down. The United Nations can't stop the killing in Syria any more than in Darfur or Kosovo. As President Assad himself noted in 2009, "There is no substitute for the United States."

So while neither intervention nor paralysis is appealing, that's pretty much the menu. That's why I favor a limited cruise missile strike against Syrian military targets (as well as the arming of moderate rebels). As I see it, there are several benefits: Such a strike may well deter Syria's army from using chemical weapons again, probably can degrade the ability of the army to use chemical munitions and bomb civilian areas, can reinforce the global norm against chemical weapons, and—a more remote prospect—may slightly increase the pressure on the Assad regime to work out a peace deal.

If you're thinking, "Those are incremental, speculative and highly uncertain gains," well, you're right. Syria will be bloody whatever we do.

Mine is a minority view. After the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the West is bone weary and has little interest in atrocities unfolding in Syria or anywhere else. Opposition to missile strikes is one of the few issues that ordinary Democrats and Republicans agree on.

"So we're bombing Syria because Syria is bombing Syria?" Sarah Palin wrote, in a rare comment that liberals might endorse. Her suggestion: "Let Allah sort it out."

More broadly, pollsters are detecting a rise in isolationism. The proportion of Americans who say that "the U.S. should mind its own business internationally" has been at a historic high in recent years.

A Pew survey this year asked voters to rate 19 government expenses, and the top two choices for budget cuts were "aid to the world's needy" and the State Department. (In fact, 0.5 percent of the budget goes to the world's needy, and, until recently, the military had more musicians in its bands than the State Department had diplomats.)

When history looks back on this moment, will it view those who opposed intervening as champions of peace? Or, when the textbooks count the dead children, and the international norms broken with impunity, will our descendants puzzle that we took pride in retreating into passivity during this slaughter?

Isn't this a bit like the idealists who embraced the Kellogg-Briand Pact that banned war 85 years ago? Sure, that made people feel good. But it may also have encouraged the appeasement that ultimately cost lives in World War II.

O.K., so I've just added fuel to the battle for analogies. For now, the one that has caught on is Iraq in 2003. But considering that no one is contemplating boots on the ground, a more relevant analogy in Iraq may be the 1998 Operation Desert Fox bombing of Iraqi military sites by President Bill Clinton. It lasted a few days, and some say it was a factor in leading Iraq to give up W.M.D. programs; others disagree.

That murkiness is not surprising. To me, the lessons of history in this area are complex and conflicting, offering no neat formula to reach peace or alleviate war. In most cases, diplomacy works best. But not always. When Yugoslavia was collapsing into civil war in the early 1990s, early efforts at

multilateral diplomacy delayed firm action and led to a higher body count.

Some military interventions, as in Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Kosovo, have worked well. Others, such as Iraq in 2003, worked very badly. Still others, such as Libya, had mixed results. Afghanistan and Somalia were promising at first but then evolved badly.

So, having said that analogies aren't necessarily helpful, let me leave you with a final provocation.

If we were fighting against an incomparably harsher dictator using chemical weapons on our own neighborhoods, and dropping napalm-like substances on our children's schools, would we regard other countries as "pro-peace" if they sat on the fence as our dead piled up?

BRIEFING NOTE: THE CHILDREN CRISIS IN SYRIA

The crisis in Syria is a humanitarian tragedy of a scale that is almost impossible to imagine. The recent chemical attack in Al Ghouta adds to an already too bleak picture; even before the recent massacre, Syria was the most dangerous place to be a civilian.ⁱ

The lack of humanitarian access, and hence of witnesses, makes the human price hard to quantify, but our teams in the region responding to this humanitarian crisis report increasingly dire conditions and the daily arrival of thousands of exhausted and terrified refugees. These data indicate the scale of the crisis:

Altogether at least 100,000 people have been killedⁱⁱ, including more than 7,000 childrenⁱⁱⁱ of whom 1,700 are under the age of 10.^{iv} The fighting continues to take the lives of an average of 5,000 people each month.^v

The UN estimates that today one third of Syrians have been forced to abandon their homes.^{vi} Two million are refugees and another 4.5 million are internally displaced. Children account for more than half of those displaced.^{vii}

The UN estimates that 8.8 million (including 6.8 million in Syria itself^{viii}) are urgently in need of assistance across the region, predicting 10 million by end 2013.^{ix}

At least four million Syrians—half of them children—are in need of emergency food assistance.^x

In Northern governorates, 80% of school facilities have ceased to function,^{xi} with as many as 3,900 schools damaged or destroyed by the conflict throughout the country.^{xii}

Medical supplies are severely lacking throughout the country and the World Health Organization has warned that disease outbreaks are "inevitable" in the midst of summer heat, with deteriorating access to water and sanitation.^{xiii}

In addition to pervasive insecurity, bureaucratic restrictions imposed by the Government severely limit aid agencies' ability to reach all civilians in need: between January and July 2013 only 20 UN convoys crossed the conflict lines into opposition-controlled areas.^{xiv} The UN estimates that 6.8 million—one in every three Syrians—are trapped in conflict areas and in need of assistance.^{xv} However, a recent NGO assessment in northern Syria puts the figure much higher, finding that 10.5 million people in these districts alone are not getting enough essential supplies.^{xvi} Despite the huge efforts of humanitarian agencies, the volume of aid crossing Syria's borders and conflict lines is still not enough and millions are still receiving no assistance. Children are dying as a result.^{xvii}

With price inflation—with basics such as wheat and flour up as much as 100%^{xviii}—the lack of food is reported by Syrian parents as the second biggest source of stress, after insecurity.^{xix} Our teams have heard testimonies of mothers forced to feed their infants with water mixed with sugar due to a

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.^{xx}

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%^{xxi} 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

i. See Action on Armed Violence: "Civilians killed in 2011 vs 2012." <http://aoav.org.uk/2013/aoav-find-global-increase-in-civilian-casualties-of-explosive-weapons/#jp-carousel-285> last viewed 22 April 2013.

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.

iv. Updated Statistical Analysis of Documentation of Killings in the Syrian Arab Republic Commissioned by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 13 June 2013, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SY/HRDAG-Updated-SY-report.pdf>

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>

xiv. OCHA, UN-led relief convoys into hot-spot areas (January to 10 July 2013), updated with field information; http://syria.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/syria.humanitarianresponse.info/files/syria_UN_led_relief_convoys_into_hot_spot_areas_january_to_10_july_2013_en.pdf, last viewed 28 August 2013.

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.

xvi. Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria (2013) "Joint Regional Assessment of Northern Syria—II 2013, Final Report 2013," p. 36, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRANS%2011%20-%20Final%20Report_0.pdf, last viewed 28th August 2013

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

xviii. FAO GIEW Country Brief, Syrian Arab Republic, <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=SYR>, last checked 3rd September 2013, and Syria Needs Assessment Project (2013) "Regional Analysis Syria: Part 1—Syria, July 2013," p. 16.

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

xx. Global Post: In north Syria, eating herbs to survive; <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130402/north-syria-eating-herbs-survive-0>

xxi. OCHA, Financial Tracking services, Syrian Arab Republic Civil Unrest, 2013 Humanitarian Funding : Actual <http://fts.unocha.org/pagelader.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?