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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer, for we find refuge in Your sovereign leading. On this 12th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, we thank You for the wisdom You provide us in our trying times. Through the terrorist attacks, You helped us to become more aware of our vulnerability as a Nation, to better appreciate the heroes and heroines who emerge during seasons of crisis, and to discover how the worst of times can bring out the best in us.

As our Nation again confronts precarious challenges, use our lawmakers as instruments of Your peace, bringing hope where there is despair and order where there is chaos.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARKEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

OBSERVING THE TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACKS ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a moment of silence to pay tribute to the Americans whose lives were taken on September 11, 2001.

(Moment of Silence.)

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER FOR MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business until 2:30 p.m. this afternoon for debate only, with all other aspects of the previous order being in effect.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican leader and I have spoken, and we are working on a way forward based on the President's speech and what has happened over the last few days. He and I will confer shortly again, but right now we will be in a period of morning business. Senators may talk about whatever they want. It is my un-

derstanding that the time is equally divided between the two sides; is that right?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for 10 minutes each. There will be a remembrance ceremony on the east side of the Capitol. Members will gather in the rotunda at 10:45 a.m.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I can remember events 12 years ago so clearly. I was not far from here at the time. I was in S-219, which is a meeting room. That is where Leader Daschle held his leadership meetings every Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. I was the first one in the room. Senator John Breaux from Louisiana came in and said: Flip on the TV. There is something going on in New York.

We turned on the TV, and it looked as though something happened in New York. We just thought an airplane had malfunctioned or something had gone wrong to cause the plane to hit that tower.

So the meeting started and the TVs were off. We were doing our business of the day when suddenly a group of police officers came in and grabbed Senator Daschle and took him outside. He came back very quickly and said: There is an airplane headed for the Capitol. We have to get out of here.

There was a lot of confusion, to say the least, as staff and Senators were ordered out of the buildings—plural. As we left S-219, we looked out the window toward the Pentagon, and smoke was billowing out of it. We could see it so very plainly. At that time we didn't

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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know what was happening; we just knew we had been ordered to get out of the building.

Of course, we all have memories of what took place that day. I was the assistant leader, as was Senator Nickles from Oklahoma. Senator Lott was the Republican leader, and Senator Daschle was the Democratic leader. We were taken in helicopters from the west front of the Capitol to a secure location. When I was taken to the west front of the Capitol, the scene was eerie to say the least. There were lots of people in black uniforms trying to create order out of confusion. Without going into a lot of detail, we went to a location, and the Vice President was there. He met with us and kept us informed as to what was going on with the President. We spent the day there and then came back to the west front of the Capitol, where all Members of Congress gathered. BARBARA MIKULSKI, for lack of anyone having a better suggestion, said: We should sing "God Bless America." She got the song started, and that was extremely memorable.

We are going to have a ceremony in a few minutes out front, and I will talk a little bit there. The four leaders have been asked to talk out there.

We did have a moment of silence regarding the more than 3,000 people who were killed in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Pentagon. In addition to those 3,000 people who were taken from us permanently, thousands of other people were injured, some of them permanently injured. Some of them have missing legs, some are blind, and some suffer from paralysis. So we raise our voices today in celebration of America's spirit and perseverance. May we never forget 9/11.

It is also worth mentioning that on this day we also honor what took place a year ago in Libya, where one of our stellar Ambassadors was murdered along with three of his brave colleagues. They were all killed in Libya. Our country remains committed to seeking justice for them and every American victim of terrorism, and that is what the debate of Syria is all about—terrorism.

Before I began the caucus yesterday, when the President came, my introduction to the President was a film that was created by Senator FEINSTEIN and others. It is about 12 or 13 minutes long, and it shows what went on in graphic detail with the brutal chemical weapons attack in Syria where these children were left to die. Remember, these poisons get the little kids first.

Senator DURBIN has a Palestinian on his staff. We all know Reema. She does the whip count for Senator DURBIN and for me. I had her listen to the film. I watched it and she listened so she could give me some idea of what people were saying there. They were yelling. It was so sad. Mostly they were praying. It was very, very sad to see people holding little babies and saying: Breathe, breathe. They couldn't

breathe. We could see the perspiration on some of them. They dumped water on them—anything to give them some relief. The video showed rows of dead people. Hundreds of them were little children. Some of them were dressed in their play clothes, little fancy, colorful T-shirts.

Even as we pay tribute to America's tradition of freedom for every citizen across the globe, an evil dictator denies its citizens not only their right to liberty but also their right to live. The Asad family is pretty good at killing people. The New York Times had an article over the last 24 hours about his dad, because of the failed assassination attempt, killing 30,000 people he thought needed to be killed—30,000. That country, Syria, denies its citizens the right to liberty, but even more significant the right to live.

Yesterday I showed the video at the caucus. No one wanted to see it. I didn't want to see it again. It was all I could do to glance up. I had already seen it. Those visions will always be in my mind. I showed my Senators a video of this: little boys and girls and grown men with their eyes crusted, frothing from the mouth. It was such unspeakable scenery. They were convulsing, writhing, spasms from the poison gas he used to murder his victims. It was hard to watch, but it confirmed all of our conviction that the United States must not let the Syrian regime go unpunished for using something that is outlawed. Those weapons are not to be used in a war, let alone used on a bunch of innocent people.

Yesterday the President spoke to two caucuses. He spoke last night and made a compelling case for military action against the Asad regime. As the President said, we have to send an explicit message not only to Syria but the rest of the world. Remember—who has more chemical weapons than Syria? Only one country—North Korea. Think about that. If they get away with this, what is North Korea going to do? Then are we going to have a marketplace for purchasing chemical weapons? The use of chemical weapons by anyone, any time, anywhere, including the battlefield, should not be tolerated.

Preventing these weapons from being used is not only in our own national interests, but it is in the interests of the world. Diplomacy should always be the first choice. That is who we are as a country. So we have been asked to temporarily suspend consideration of the Syria resolution to allow for these conversations to take place around the world.

Tomorrow our Secretary of State is meeting with the Russian Secretary of State, Mr. Lavrov, to explore in fact if this is a legitimate proposal. Talking and action are two separate things. So what the Republican leader and I have spoken about—and we will talk more about it today—is to see what we can do to give the President the time and space our country needs to pursue these international negotiations. We

will report back at a later time. America must remain vigilant and ready to use force if necessary, and Congress should not take the threat of military action off the table.

I want to spend a little time talking to Senator MENENDEZ, the chair of the committee. I want to talk to other Senators who are trying to work something out on their own, and I will do that.

Leaders in Damascus and Moscow should understand that Congress will be watching these negotiations very closely. If there is any indication this is not serious—that it is a ploy to delay, to obstruct, to divert—then I think we have to again give the President the authority to hold the Asad regime accountable. So it is our determination not to let Asad's atrocities go unanswered. How we answer is a question we will continue to pursue. But it is very clear that we wouldn't be where we are today—even my friend, the junior Senator from Kentucky, today said the reason we are having the possibility of a deal is because of the President threatening force.

It is interesting. Asad has even denied, until just recent hours, ever even having had chemical weapons. So it is in Syria's power to avoid these strikes, but that will require swift and decisive action on the part of the Asad regime to relinquish these weapons. We need a diplomatic solution to succeed, but saying we want one doesn't mean it will happen. So he must quickly prove the offer to turn over Syria's chemical weapons is real and not an attempt to delay.

All eyes are on the Russian President, President Putin. We all know he was formerly head of the KGB. We all know about the KGB. He is the President of that very big country. We are also grateful that even though relations aren't perfect with Russia, they are OK—so much better than they have been prior to the breakup of that massive country, the Soviet Union.

We hope Russia is a productive partner in these negotiations. Any agreement must also assure it is possible to secure these chemical weapons in spite of the ongoing civil war, to keep those stockpiles out of the hands of terrorists.

In short, I am happy we have some conversations going to see if this can be resolved diplomatically. I certainly hope so.

I apologize to my counterpart, the Republican leader, for taking so much time.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, 12 years ago more than 100 Members of