

I also want to point out that I think it is important that the President of the United States, rather than saying "I will not negotiate with anybody under any circumstances," say "I am willing to sit down and negotiate. I am willing to join with all parties in trying to find a way through this."

We will sooner or later. The question is not whether we will solve these issues. The question really is—and I ask my friend from Tennessee—how much damage will be done before we solve it. Right now, there are people beginning to hurt all over America, and maybe it is not so bad right now, but it is going to get worse every single day that goes by. Frankly, I think we owe the American people more than that. Now, if somebody wants to blame me, fine. I will take the blame. If they want to blame the Senator from Tennessee, put the blame on him—on the President, on anybody. But shouldn't we remember what our duties are here?

Mr. CORKER. Absolutely. As a matter of fact, I am just looking down to see what the date is, but it seems to me that we have 2 weeks here, and to get to the Senator's comments, hopefully a week. In other words, the quicker we resolve these issues, the better it is for our Nation, the better it is for the world, because at the end of the day, let's face it, what we care about most is the well-being of our citizens back home. We know that uncertainty creates uncertainty in the economy. It affects people's jobs. I would agree.

Look, we are at that moment in time where we have all realized the CR and the debt ceiling are probably going to be linked together. They are linked together in essence, and, as the senior Senator from Arizona just mentioned, there is no question we are going to resolve those. So what we ought to do is sit down right now, the President of the United States, the appropriate leadership here in the House and Senate—and whether it is they or their proxies—but to sit down, and let's figure out if there are some reforms we can put in place to make our country stronger and to again get back on the right topic, which is our financial strength. I think we could do that.

The fact is that there are no new issues. Every single issue has been litigated. There is legislative language. They are scored. There is not a new issue for us to talk about relative to putting some good policy in place to move ahead.

The Senator from Arizona has been so involved in these issues. I just could not agree more. I know the junior Senator from Arizona is sitting in the back, and I know he has been incredibly responsible fiscally.

I think we have an opportunity. I think this body should take advantage of it. I think the President should come to the table, take advantage of it, the leadership of the House. Let's do something good for our country. Let's do it in an appropriate amount of time. Let's put this behind us and move on—move on as a nation.

Mr. McCAIN. I thank my friend.

Does the Senator yield the floor?

Mr. CORKER. I do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I want to thank my friend from Tennessee, whose commitment to achieving solutions and resolution of this bitter environment in which we find ourselves is admirable. I am grateful for his participation and his leadership. I also thank my young, handsome colleague from Arizona, who also has had a many yearlong commitment to fiscal sanity and balance. I thank my colleagues.

SYRIA

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk for a short period of time about Syria, which is, although not dominating our conversation here—lead stories in both the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal are deeply disturbing.

First, I would like to point out that on the front page of the Wall Street Journal today there is an article titled "Syrian Regime Chokes Off Food To Town That Was Gassed." I repeat: "Syrian Regime Chokes Off Food To Town That Was Gassed."

Government forces are tightening the noose around one of the suburbs gassed by chemical weapons in August, raising concerns of a fresh humanitarian crisis as residents forage for olives, grapevine leaves and other basic foods.

Pro-regime fighters—

That is Bashar al-Assad's killers—

have encircled about 12,000 people, mostly civilians but also including some rebel fighters, in the town of Moadhamiya, according to local and international aid workers, opposition activists and people interviewed on Monday in a government-controlled section of the town.

This is a town that is strategically important to both sides because the flow of humanitarian and military aid flows through this particular area for those who are fighting in Aleppo and in Damascus.

The story goes on:

"We won't allow them to be nourished in order to kill us," said a 24-year-old pro-regime paramilitary in the government-controlled section. . . . "Let them starve for a bit, surrender and then be put on trial."

These are the same people, apparently government forces, that are "cooperating" with us on chemical weapons, that are allowing inspectors to come in to gather the chemical weapons. So they have 12,000 people encircled, that they have already gassed, 1,400 of them, 400 children in the same town. So now they are going to starve them. Like the fighters said, "Let them starve for a bit, surrender and then be put on trial."

It is remarkable. An opposition activist inside the rebel-held side of the town who was reached by Skype said the situation is so dire now in the rebel-controlled area that people are subsisting on whatever they can forage

locally, including olives, grapevine leaves, fresh mint, and figs.

So here we have the latest result of our wonderful and much heralded agreement on chemical weapons. They killed, in this town, 1,400 people, 400 of them children, with gas. Now they are going to kill 12,000 more with conventional weapons: bombs, guns, tanks, knives. Brutality and torture has characterized their behavior for a long period of time.

It seems to me it is a little bizarre. It is a little bizarre that we are hailing this cooperation from Bashar Assad on chemical weapons, and meanwhile the slaughter goes on: 110,000 dead, 1 million children refugees, the surrounding countries being destabilized, and, of course, the refugee camps are terrible situations to which we have not given the assistance that we should.

I urge all of my colleagues, if they had the opportunity, to visit one of these refugee camps and hear the stories of the murder, the gang rapes, the torture that is the official doctrine of Bashar Assad, not random acts of violence. The defectors from Bashar Assad's military will tell you that is their training and indoctrination and instructions.

So the second article today is from the Washington Post. "CIA ramping up covert training program for moderate Syrian rebels."

The CIA is expanding a clandestine effort to train opposition fighters in Syria amid concern that moderate U.S.-backed militias are rapidly losing ground in the country's civil war.

But the CIA program is so miniscule that it is expected to produce only a few hundred trained fighters each month even after it is enlarged, a level that officials said will do little to bolster rebel forces that are being eclipsed by radical Islamists in the fight against the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Here is the interesting part.

The CIA's mission, officials said, has been defined by the White Houses's desire to seek a political settlement, a scenario that relies on an eventual stalemate among the warring factions rather than a clear victor. As a result, officials said, limits on the agency's authorities enable it to provide enough support to help ensure that politically moderate, U.S.-supported militias don't lose but not enough for them to win.

Picture these young people who are fighting in Syria today. The official U.S. policy is that they will provide weapons but only enough so they cannot win. Those people are being slaughtered. They are being murdered. They are dying. Some 110,000 have died. I am not sure how many of them were actual fighters. The official U.S. policy, according to the Washington Post, is that they want them not to win.

It is hard to motivate people to fight for a cause that we are not willing to help them win.

The agency has trained fewer than 1,000 rebel fighters this year, current and former U.S. officials said. By contrast, U.S. intelligence analysts estimate that more than 20,000 have been trained to fight for government-backed militias by Assad's ally Iran

and the Hezbollah militant network it sponsors.

So we have trained 1,000. We are going to do about 100 a week, I guess, something like that. More than 20,000 have been trained by the Iranians, who are all in, and we expect them to be able to continue fighting.

The CIA is ramping up its effort . . . it was clear that the opposition was losing, and not only losing tactically but on a more strategic level.

Congressman MIKE ROGERS, whom I respect a lot, Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said there is a—

. . . high degree of frustration . . . with the Syrian strategy. The situation in Syria is changing faster than the administration can keep up. U.S. support for moderate opposition groups is less than robust and has been hobbled by inconsistent resource allocation with stated goals.

CIA veterans expressed skepticism that the training and weapons deliveries will have any meaningful effect. In Jordan, operatives involved in training and arming rebels lament that we're being asked to do something with nothing.

I would like to quote some articles: "Al-Qaeda expands in Syria via Islamic State."

A rebranded vision of Iraq's al-Qaeda affiliate is surging onto the front lines of the war in neighboring Syria, expanding into territory seized by other rebel groups and carving out the kind of sanctuaries that the U.S. military spent more than a decade fighting to prevent in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We left Iraq. Iraq is now deteriorating. Thousands of people are being killed literally every month. Now we see Al Qaeda coming from Iraq in larger and larger numbers.

Finally, I would like to mention the Wall Street Journal article from some time ago:

"Iranians Dial Up Presence in Syria. Shiite Militiamen From Across the Arab World Train at a Base Near Tehran to Do Battle in Syria."

At a base near Tehran, Iranian forces are training Shiite militiamen from across the Arab world to do battle in Syria—showing the widening role of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard Corps in Syria's bloody war.

The busloads of Shiite militiamen from Iraq, Syria and other Arab states have been arriving at the Iranian base in recent weeks, under cover of darkness, for instruction in urban warfare and the teaching of Iran's clerics, according to Iranian military figures and residents in the area. The fighters' mission: Fortify the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad against Sunni rebels, the U.S. and Israel.

So here is what we should take away from all this recent reporting: Despite the recent agreement on chemical weapons, that agreement does nothing to address the underlying conflict in Syria, which not only continues but is getting worse and worse.

So, my friends, as the administration trumpets this deal of chemical weapons, the fact is that the slaughter goes on. It is clear to these people whom I have spoken with personally, tragically their morale is badly damaged. They believe they have been abandoned. The ongoing tragedy and massacre con-

tinues in Syria. The United States will pay a very heavy price in the future unless we do something rather dramatic.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that after the quorum call I be recognized.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 2:33 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 4:12 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COONS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CAPITOL HILL SHOOTING

Mr. REID. Today was a sobering reminder of how Federal law enforcement officers keep all of us safe—not us, the Members of Congress, but the American people. We have millions of people who visit this Capitol every year, and they work so hard to protect this Capitol, this city, and the citizens of the United States from harm.

The brave men and women on the Capitol Police force are so well trained. The Capitol police officers put their lives on the line every day for us. I thank them for their service and their sacrifice—and it is a sacrifice. There was no better example of that than today. Chief Gainer and others will have more about the details.

I will only say this: I spoke just a few minutes ago to one of the police officers who was injured in this situation that took place. It was so inspiring to talk to this man. He has been hurt, but he said—and I am paraphrasing but not much—I work every day to make sure you are safe. When he says "me," he is not talking about me, he is talking about us. My thoughts are with him for a speedy recovery, and again my admiration goes to all Federal law enforcement but especially our Capitol Police.

PROMOTION OF ROBERT HERBERT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate Bob Herbert on his recent promotion to Brigadier General in the United States

Army National Guard. Today I had the honor to preside over his promotion ceremony in the Mansfield Room. Bob has been a loyal member of my staff for the past 14 years. But he had also given 38 years of loyal military service to Nevada and our Nation.

Bob Herbert grew up the son of a military man, retired MSG Robert W. Herbert. From an early age Bob had a great fascination with military aviation. Before he graduated from high school in Slinger, WI, Bob joined the Army to fly in a unique program known as "High School to Flight School." Once he completed flight school, Bob was posted in Germany, where he flew patrols along the borders between East and West Germany during the Cold War era. After a successful 3-year tour in Germany, Bob completed his undergraduate work at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Shortly after graduation, he attended test pilot school and earned the title of Army test pilot.

As a test pilot, he flew both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft, including helicopters, which we all know are important to both modern military missions and for fighting fires and responding to emergencies in the civilian world.

After 6 years of active duty with the Army, Bob moved to Reno, where he transitioned to the Nevada Army National Guard. As a member of the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, I had the opportunity to meet with Bob Herbert about the needs of the Nevada Guard. I quickly found that Bob was not only an outstanding military officer but was excellent with numbers and figures surrounding the Military's budget and equipment.

At my request, Bob arranged to come to Washington where he worked as a fellow with the Brookings Institution. During that time, he was assigned to me, and worked closely with my staff on Nevada military issues as well as national defense policy and appropriations. During his time as a fellow, Bob was promoted by the military and I had the privilege of pinning Bob with his Lieutenant Colonel insignia.

When his fellowship concluded, I asked Bob to join my staff here in Washington, D.C. Bob had become an important part of my office and his expertise would have been hard to replace. Over the years I have grown to depend on his judgment and advice, not just about military matters but about many other issues. He has always made sound decisions and is able to bring simple common sense to complex issues.

I was pleased when Bob decided to work for me full time on military and veterans' affairs, as well as transportation and technology issues. Throughout his time on my staff, Bob has also remained committed to the Army and continued to serve his National Guard unit in Nevada. While working full-time on my staff, Bob earned a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University, my alma mater.