

earned pensions. A few reasonable Republicans were willing to join Democrats to avert a catastrophic default on our Nation's obligations—a default that would have thrown our economy into a tailspin and damaged this Nation's standing in the world.

I commend Speaker BOEHNER for doing the right thing. He voted for this, and he had enough Republican votes to get it done. I have said often that he has a difficult job—if not the most difficult, certainly one of the most difficult jobs in Washington, especially when we look at the caucus he has to deal with. I am pleased he has come to the realization that the full faith and credit of this country is not a hostage to be held for political gain.

Unfortunately, Republicans on this side of the Capitol are forcing us to jump through procedural hoops to alleviate the threat of a default. I can't imagine that they are doing that, but they are.

Every reputable economist acknowledges that defaulting on our bills would devastate the economy and waste the past 5 years of recovery. The recovery is good, but it is not great. We can do a lot better.

According to a report by the non-partisan Peterson Institute, when Republicans forced us to the brink of default 2 years ago, it cost our economy \$150 billion in productivity and 750,000 jobs. This is not some leftwing blog that is saying this; this is a non-partisan institute that is well respected—it will cost our economy \$150 billion in productivity and 750,000 jobs. Scary.

The reason I am a little concerned is because it was just a few months ago that Republicans in the House, by a two-thirds majority, voted to keep the government closed after having been closed for 16 days and voted to default on our Nation's debt. So I hope the Senate is not going to follow that tea party-driven action that was done in the House just a short time ago.

Financial industry leaders have warned Congress again and again that even the threat of default ripples through the economy, and today there is the threat of a default. We have Republican Senators saying they are going to filibuster the debt ceiling. We can't default on our obligations. It is too bad that a few Senate Republicans would threaten a filibuster on this critical legislation. It is critical, and it is crucial. However, I am hopeful Senate Republicans won't force the economy to wait for weeks or even days for a resolution. We should wrap this up today.

So I hope we can vote and vote soon. The markets all over the world are watching to see what we do in the Senate. The House did the right thing. I believe many of my Republican colleagues would like to be reasonable—I really do believe that—if they weren't so beholden and afraid of the tea party overlords. I am hopeful that a more bipartisan, commonsense approach—one

that favors collaboration over hostage taking—will prevail this year.

Congress should be striding from accomplishment to accomplishment, not staggering from crisis to crisis as they force us to do. If we spent more time working together and less time running out the clock on procedural hurdles and Republican filibusters, we might actually get legislation done in the Senate.

So I hope we can continue to cooperate and collaborate this year and to deliver results for Americans looking for action instead of the constant gridlock we have had.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in morning business, and pending the arrival of the Republican leader, I will pause and then ask unanimous consent to return to my statement at that time.

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

MASS ATROCITIES IN SYRIA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to appeal to the conscience of my colleagues and my fellow citizens about the mass atrocities that the Assad regime is perpetrating in Syria. When the images and horrors of this conflict occasionally show up on our television screens, the impulse of many Americans is to change the channel. But we must not look away. We must not divert our eyes from the suffering of the Syrian people, for if we do, we ignore, we sacrifice that which is most precious in ourselves—our ability to empathize with the suffering of others, to share it, to acknowledge through our own sense of revulsion that what is

happening in Syria is a stain on the collective conscience of moral peoples everywhere.

I appeal to my colleagues not to look away from the images I will show. I want to warn all who are watching these are graphic and disturbing pictures, but they are the real face of war and human suffering in Syria today—a war our Nation has the power to help end but which we are failing to do.

These images are drawn from a cache of more than 55,000 photographs that were taken between March 2011 and August 2013 by a Syrian military policeman, whose job it was to document the horrors the Assad regime committed against political prisoners in its jails. This individual eventually defected to the opposition along with his photographs, which were meticulously reviewed and verified by three renowned international war crimes prosecutors and a team of independent forensic experts. They compiled their findings in a report late last month that provides direct evidence that the Assad regime was responsible for the systematic abuse, torture, starvation, and killing of approximately 11,000 detainees in what amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity. These are just a few of those pictures and far from the most disturbing.

I urge every Member of Congress and the American people to read the full report, which can be found on both cnn.com and theguardian.com. Although only a handful of these gruesome images have been released publicly, the authors have provided their own startling commentary on what they reveal.

David Crane, the first chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the man responsible for indicting former Liberian President Charles Taylor for crimes against humanity, stated that many of the photographs show groupings of bodies in ways that “looked like a slaughterhouse.” Crane characterized the Syrian Government as a “callous, industrial machine grinding its citizens” that is guilty of “industrial-age mass killing.”

Professor Sir Geoffrey Nice, lead prosecutor in the case against former Yugoslav President Milosevic at The Hague, reported that the systematic way the bodies were cataloged and the effort given to obscure the true causes of death leads one to “reasonably infer that this is a pattern of behavior” for Assad's forces.

But perhaps most chilling of all, Sir Desmond de Silva, who also served as a chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, stated that the emaciated bodies revealed in these pictures are “reminiscent of the pictures of those who were found still alive in the Nazi death camps after World War II.”

Yesterday, in a hearing of the Committee on Armed Services, I asked the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, whether these photographs, which clearly depict ghastly

crimes against humanity, are authentic. The Director said he has “no reason to doubt” their authenticity. The United Nations is now doing its own assessment of these images, and all of us should fully support that. It is important to have the broadest possible validation of these images, and I am confident the U.N. team will validate them. After all, does anyone seriously believe the Assad regime does not have the means, motive, and opportunity to murder 11,000 people in its prisons?

Indeed, this kind of inhumane cruelty is a pattern of behavior within the Syrian Government. According to a detailed U.N. report issued at the end of January, Assad’s forces have systematically, as part of their doctrine, used children as human shields and threatened to kill the children of opposition members if they did not surrender. The U.N. also detailed the arrest, detention, torture, and sexual abuse of thousands of children by government forces. I will spare you the remaining details, as they are unspeakable, but again I urge you to read the entire report which can be found on the Web site of the United Nations.

I also recommend that my colleagues read of the war crimes that Human Rights Watch has been documenting. They have reported, for example, on how Syrian authorities have deliberately used explosives and bulldozers to demolish thousands of residential buildings, and in some cases entire neighborhoods, for no military reason whatsoever, just as a form of collective punishment of Syrian civilians.

Human Rights Watch researchers have also documented the toll of the Syrian Government’s airstrike campaign against Aleppo and Damascus and, in particular, the regime’s use over the past few months of what has become known as “barrel bombs.” For my colleagues who are not aware of them, barrel bombs are oil drums or other large containers packed with explosives, fuel, shrapnel, glass, and all manner of crude lethal material. Their sole purpose is to maim, kill, and terrorize as many people as possible when they are indiscriminately dropped from Syrian Government aircraft on schools and bakeries and mosques and other civilian areas. In one stark video of a barrel bomb’s aftermath, a man stands in front of a child’s body and cries out: Oh God, we have had enough. Please help us.

These are just some of the many reasons our Director of National Intelligence referred to the Syrian crisis yesterday as “an apocalyptic disaster.” With more than 130,000 people dead, after more than one-third of the Syrian population has been driven from their homes, no truer words were ever spoken.

But this apocalyptic disaster in Syria is no longer just a humanitarian tragedy for one country, it is a regional conflict and an emerging national security threat to us. The regime’s war crimes are being aided and abetted by

thousands of Hezbollah fighters and Iranian agents on the ground, as well as Russian weaponry that continues to flow into the Assad government, even as Russia works with us to remove the Assad regime’s chemical weapons, a truly Orwellian situation.

The conflict in Syria is devastating its neighbors. Lebanon is suffering from increasing bombings and cross-border attacks by both the Syrian government and opposition fighters in response to Hezbollah’s role in the fighting. Unofficial estimates suggest that half of Lebanon’s population will soon be Syrian refugees. Similar estimates suggest that Syrian refugees now represent 15 percent of the population in Jordan, which is straining to manage the social instability this entails. Turkey has been destabilized. Perhaps most worrisome of all, the conflict in Syria is largely to blame for the resurgence of Al Qaeda in Iraq, which has grown into the larger and more lethal Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, which now possesses a safe haven that spans large portions of both countries. Nowhere is this more threatening or more heartbreaking than in Fallujah, the Iraqi city where hundreds of U.S. troops were killed and wounded fighting to rid it of the terrorists and extremists, but where the black flags of Al Qaeda now hang above the city.

The sanctuary that Al Qaeda now enjoys, thanks to the crisis in Syria, increasingly poses a direct threat to U.S. national security and that of our closest allies and partners. The Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr. Jeh Johnson said, “Syria is now a matter of homeland security.” The Director of National Intelligence has referred to the Al Qaeda sanctuary in Syria and Iraq as “a new FATA”—the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan where Al Qaeda planned the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Indeed, Director Clapper has warned that Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists in Syria now aspire to attack the homeland. If the September 11 attacks should have taught us anything, it is that global terrorists who occupy ungoverned spaces and seek to plot and plan attacks against us can pose a direct threat to our national security.

This was Afghanistan, September 10, 2001. That is what top officials in this administration are now warning us that Syria is becoming today. The conflict in Syria is a threat to our national interest, but it is more than that. It is and should be an affront to our conscience.

Images such as these should not be just a source of heartbreak and sympathy, they should be a call to action. It was not too long ago, just a few months after the revolution in Syria began, that President Obama issued his Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities. In it he stated, “Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States.”

He went on to say:

Our security is affected when masses of civilians are slaughtered, refugees flow across borders, and murderers wreak havoc on regional stability and livelihoods.

Last year, speaking at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the President said:

Too often, the world has failed to prevent the killing of innocents on a massive scale. And we are haunted by the atrocities that we did not stop and the lives we did not save.

Just last September in his address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Obama said this:

[T]he principle of sovereignty is at the center of our international order. But sovereignty cannot be a shield for tyrants to commit wanton murder, or an excuse for the international community to turn a blind eye. While we need to be modest in our belief that we can remedy every evil, while we need to be mindful that the world is full of unintended consequences, should we really accept the notion that the world is powerless in the face of a Rwanda, or Srebrenica? If that’s the world that people want to live in, they should say so, and reckon with the cold logic of mass graves.

That was our President. That was the President of the United States. I agree with every word of what he said. But how are we to reconcile these stirring words with the reality of these images from Syria? How do we explain how the leader of the free world, who says that it is the moral obligation of the United States to do what we can to prevent the worst atrocities in our world, is not doing more to stop the atrocities that are occurring every single day in Syria?

Where is that President Obama today? Where is the President Obama who spoke so movingly of the moral responsibilities that great power confers? Where is the President Obama who has said he refuses to accept that brutal tyrants can slaughter their people with impunity, while the most powerful nation in the history of the world looks on and stands by? Where is the recognition that the “cold logic of mass graves” is right there, right in front of us, Syria, today?

Yet our government is doing what we have sadly done too often in the past. We are diverting our eyes. We try to comfort our guilty consciences by telling ourselves that we are not doing nothing, but it is a claim made in bad faith, for everyone concedes that nothing we are doing is equal to the horrors we face.

We are telling ourselves that we are too tired and weary to get more involved; that Syria is not our problem; that helping to resolve it is not our responsibility. We are telling ourselves that we have no good options, as if there are ever good options when it comes to foreign policy in the real world. We are telling ourselves that we might have been able to do something at one point, but that it is too late now, as if such words from a leader of the world’s only global power will be any comfort to the Syrian mother who will lose her child tomorrow.

We are telling ourselves what Neville Chamberlain once told himself about a different problem from hell in an earlier time; that is, and I quote Neville Chamberlain, "a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing." Where is our outrage? Where is our shame?

It is true that our options to help in the conflict in Syria were never good, and they certainly are worse and fewer now. But no one should believe that we are without options, even now, and no one should believe that doing something meaningful to help in Syria requires us to rerun the war in Iraq. That is an excuse for inaction. That is not a question of options or capabilities; it is a question of will.

These images of the human disaster in Syria haunt me. They should haunt all of my colleagues and all Americans. But what haunts me even more than the terror unfolding before our eyes in Syria is the thought that we will continue to do nothing meaningful about it, and how that deadens our national conscience, how it calls into question the moral sources of our great power and the foundations of our global leadership, and how many years from now an American President will stand before the world and the people of Syria, as previous Presidents have done after previous inaction in the face of mass atrocities in far away lands, and say what all of us know to be true right now: That we could have done more to stop the suffering of others. We could have used the power we possess, limited though it may be; we could have exercised the options at our disposal, imperfect though they may be, and we could have done something. It is to our everlasting embarrassment that we did not.

That future President will apologize for our current failure. Shame on us if we let history repeat itself that way.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I very much appreciate Senator MCCAIN's stunning delivery on this horrible situation going on in Syria.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request just to get us through the day. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding lack of receipt of the papers if they have not arrived from the House, it be in order for the majority leader or his designee to move to concur in the House amendment to S. 25 at 1:30 p.m. today; if the message has arrived prior to 1:30 p.m., then the Chair lay before the body the message from the House at 1:30 p.m. and I then be recognized to move to concur in the House amendment to S. 25; that there be up to 30 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to concur in the House amendment;

and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to have up to four votes starting at 11:30 a.m., and then at 1:30 p.m. we will come back and finish some other business today. We hope to have a lot of votes today. I am aware, as I mentioned last night, we are following the storm on an hourly basis, and we should know within the next few hours how accurate the reports of the snowstorm—good or bad—will be.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

ADEGBILE NOMINATION

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, fairly recently, the President of the United States nominated a candidate to lead the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. His name is Debo Adebile. I am here this morning to explain to my colleagues why I believe that Mr. Adebile is a very bad choice to run the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

To make my case clear, I need to start with a story of a slain Philadelphia police officer. His name was Daniel Faulkner. This is a picture of Daniel Faulkner. It is important to tell his story. It is a story that begins 32 years ago. Many people have never heard this story, others have perhaps forgotten, since it was some time ago.

But the fact is that Danny Faulkner can no longer speak for himself and those who have tried to speak for him have often been drowned out by some powerful and wealthy voices that have had a political agenda and that have perversely defended his killer rather than the memory of Daniel Faulkner.

The story begins late at night on December 9, 1981. It was actually in the early morning hours that 25-year-old Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner stopped a car that was driving in Philadelphia. The driver got out of the car and began to assault Officer Faulkner. The driver's brother Mumia Abu-Jamal was watching the incident from across the street. When he saw what was happening and as Officer

Faulkner attempted to handcuff the driver of the car, Abu-Jamal ran up to the car and shot Officer Faulkner in the back. As Officer Faulkner was falling, he got off a shot, but the shot did not seriously wound Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Officer Faulkner then collapsed on the ground. While he was lying on the ground, helpless, defenseless, and severely wounded, Mumia Abu-Jamal stood over him and pumped four more bullets into him, including five bullets to the face, which killed Danny Faulkner on the spot.

Abu-Jamal himself was quickly apprehended. There were police who were on the next block over, and they got there almost immediately. They arrested Mumia Abu-Jamal. They took him to the hospital because he had been wounded, and while he was at the hospital he bragged about the fact that he had just shot a police officer and stated that he hoped the police officer would die.

Given these facts, Mumia Abu-Jamal's guilt was never in any serious question. There was a trial. There were four eyewitnesses to the shooting. There were three other witnesses who heard Mumia Abu-Jamal brag about the murder he had committed while he was in the hospital. In addition, there was ballistic and forensic evidence that made his guilt completely obvious to everyone. So it was not surprising that a jury took only 3 hours to convict Mumia Abu-Jamal after the trial occurred. It took them a further 2 hours to sentence him to death.

Then, instead of allowing Daniel Faulkner's young 24-year-old widow and his extended family to grieve in peace, a group of political opportunists decided this would be the case they would use to launch a campaign to further their political agenda. They fabricated a whole set of claims that Mumia Abu-Jamal was somehow framed. They spread lies about the trial. They organized a rally. Amazingly, what they were doing was portraying Mumia Abu-Jamal as a victim when, in fact, he was unquestionably a cold-blooded murderer.

It was part of a bigger campaign to turn Abu-Jamal into a celebrity and use him by those who had an agenda to attack America's criminal justice system. Unfortunately, to a large extent it worked. Abu-Jamal the murderer became somewhat of a celebrity in certain Hollywood circles. In Paris, they even named a street after him, and there were plenty of high-priced lawyers who lined up to volunteer their time to jump on this cause and to file endless series of appeals in a case that was an open-and-shut case. This, of course, among other things, had the effect of forcing Danny Faulkner's widow to relive this tragedy, this disaster for her, time after time, for decade after decade.

This gross abuse of justice, this travesty of justice had been going on for nearly three decades when in 2009 the