Thank you very

much, Madam President.

I rise to speak on the use of chemical

weapons by the Syrian regime and the

decision that is before the Senate on

how to respond to such inhumanity. I

also come to the floor with the hope

that the use of military force will not

prove necessary and that the proposal

to place Syria’s chemical weapons program

under United Nations control

will, in fact, be successful.

Last night, in my view, the President

delivered a strong, straightforward

speech that directly outlined the current

situation in Syria. He asked that

a vote by the Congress to authorize

military force against the Asad regime

be delayed so that a strategy could be

developed with Russia and the United

Nations Security Council that would

eliminate Syria’s deadly chemical

weapons program. I believe this is the

appropriate path forward, and I appreciate

very much the majority leader’s

holding off on bringing this resolution

for a vote so that negotiations can continue.

Here in the Senate, there are

discussions going on about how to

amend the resolution passed by the

Foreign Relations Committee to provide

time for diplomacy.

I would also like to take a minute to

give Russia credit for bringing forward

this plan for a negotiated solution to

the conflict. I disagree with the Senator

from Texas. As the Russian Ambassador

described to me on Monday of

this week, he said Russia is sincere,

wants to see a United Nations resolution,

and supports the Geneva II process

which would accompany a negotiated

settlement to Syria’s civil war.

Based on my conversation with Ambassador

Kislyak, I believe Russia’s goal is

now, in fact, to eliminate these weapons,

and I would point out that is also

our goal.

So I very much hope that the path to

settlement—although complicated, no

doubt, but if well-intentioned by all

participants, it can be accomplished,

and I deeply believe that. If the United

Nations Security Council can agree on

a resolution to put this proposal into

practice, it would put the world’s imprimatur

on an important plan to safeguard

and then to destroy Syria’s

chemical weapons program.

Russia’s responsibility to get this

done is enormous, and they must move

with all deliberate speed. I think Russia

and Syria must understand that the

only way to forestall a U.S. strike on

Syria is for there to be a good-faith

agreement and process underway to

put all of Syria’s chemical weapons—

including munitions, delivery systems,

and chemicals themselves—under

international control for eventual demolition.

Syria’s chemical weapons program is

maintained and stored across Syria in

more than three dozen sites. There are

indications that Syria currently has

chemical weapons loaded and ready for

immediate use in bombs, artillery, and

rockets and already loaded on planes

and helicopters. All of it needs to be

inventoried, collected, and then destroyed

as soon as possible if the effort

is to succeed. This will be a large and

complicated process, and the agreement

may take some time to put in

place. But if it can be done, we should

take the time to get it done right. At

the same time, we cannot allow there

to be so much delay and hesitation, as

has characterized some arms control

efforts in the past.

It is clear to me that the United

States is moving quickly already. Tomorrow

Secretary Kerry and Russian

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will

meet in Geneva to discuss the specifics

of how to move forward.

I cannot stress enough the importance

of this process. Not only is it a

possible solution to the specter of future

use of chemical weapons by the

Syrian regime and a way to ensure

that extremist elements of the opposition

do not gain control of these weapons,

but it also sets an important

precedent for the United Nations to act

to resolve conflict before there is large

military confrontation.

But it should be clear by now that

the Asad regime has repeatedly used

chemical weapons. So I would like to

speak as chairman of the Senate Select

Committee on Intelligence and lay out

some of the unclassified intelligence

that shows the regime was indeed behind

this largest use of chemical weapons

in more than two decades. The unclassified

assessment is based on classified

intelligence we have seen on the

Intelligence Committee and it has been

available to all Senators. So here is the

case.

The intelligence community assesses

today, with ‘‘high confidence,’’ that

the Syrian regime used chemical weapons—

specifically sarin—in the Damascus

suburbs in the early morning of

August 21. This assessment is supported

by all 16 of our intelligence

agencies as well as other countries, including

the United Kingdom and

France.

The Obama administration has publicly

laid out its case at an unclassified

level, and I have carefully reviewed the

classified information that supports

those findings.

First, there is intelligence indicating

that the Asad regime—specifically its

military and the Syrian Scientific

Studies and Research Center, which

manages its chemical weapons program—

has used chemical weapons

roughly a dozen times over the past

year.

On June 13, 2 months before this latest

attack, the administration stated

that it had completed a review of all

available intelligence and had concluded

that the intelligence community

had ‘‘high confidence’’ that the

Asad regime used chemical weapons,

‘‘including the nerve agent sarin, on a

small scale against the opposition multiple

times.’’ This followed similar assessments

by France, the United Kingdom,

Israel, and Turkey earlier this

year. In some of these cases the regime

may have been testing its delivery vehicles

or various amounts of chemical

agents. Some were small-scale tactical

uses against the opposition. Perhaps

Asad was just trying to find out how

the world would react to his use of

chemical weapons.

It has been more than a year since

top intelligence officials learned of

Syrian preparations to use sarin in

large quantities. Since then, at numerous

other briefings and hearings, the

Intelligence Committee has followed

this issue closely. On September 11,

2012—exactly a year ago—while protests

against our Embassy in Cairo

were underway and the attack on our

diplomatic facility in Benghazi was imminent,

I was again briefed on the administration’s

plans should Asad conduct

such an attack.

So the attack on August 21 in Damascus

was not a first-time use, rather it

was a major escalation in the regime’s

willingness to employ weapons long

held as anathema by almost the entire

world population.

Let me lay out the intelligence case

that the Asad regime used chemical

weapons on August 21. Much of this is

described in a four-page August 30 unclassified

document

I ask unanimous consent that the

document be printed in the RECORD.

We know that 3 days before the attack

of August 21, Syrian officials involved

in the preparation and use of

chemical weapons and associated with

the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research

Center were ‘‘preparing chemical

munitions’’ in the Damascus suburb

of Adra. That is according to the

intelligence community.

The intelligence specifically relates

to an area in Adra that the regime has

used for mixing chemical weapons, including

sarin. The Syrian chemical

weapons personnel were operating and

present there from August 18 to the

early morning of August 21, and finished

their work shortly before the attack

began.

Some of the intelligence collected on

the preparations for the attack is highly

sensitive. So the details of the Syrian

actions cannot be described publicly

without jeopardizing our ability

to collect this kind of intelligence in

the future. But in numerous classified

briefings over the past 2 weeks, Members

of Congress have been provided

with additional detail on the names of

the officials involved and the stream of

human signals and geospatial intelligence

that indicates that regime was

preparing to use chemical weapons. So

we actually have names.

It is from the specificity of this intelligence

reporting that the intelligence

community has drawn its high level of

confidence that the regime was behind

the use of chemical weapons. The

strike began in the early morning

hours on Wednesday, August 21. It is

beyond doubt that large amounts of artillery

and rockets were launched from

regime-controlled territory in Damascus

and rained down on the oppositioncontrolled

areas of the Damascus suburbs.

There is satellite imagery actually

showing this, as well as thousands

of firsthand accounts that began showing

up on social media sites at around

2:30 a.m.

The barrage continued for 5 days,

though the use of chemical weapons appears

to have been deliberately suspended

by the regime after the first few

hours. Since the attack, physical samples

from the area have been analyzed.

The intelligence community assesses

with high confidence that

More than 100 videos were posted online

showing the effects of the chemical

weapons on hundreds of men,

women and, most troubling, sleeping

children who were dead or showing the

signs of exposure to the nerve agent.

At my request, the intelligence community

compiled a representative sample

of 13 videos which have been corroborated

and verified. According to

the intelligence community,

These videos clearly show the suffering

and death caused by these weapons.

The intelligence committee has

posted these videos on our Web site,

www.intelligence.senate.gov. I would

urge all Americans to look at this.

They are absolutely horrendous and

should shock the conscience of all humanity.

The videos show the physical manifestations

of a nerve agent attack:

foaming mouth, pinpointed and constricted

pupils, convulsions, gasping

for breath, all happening as the nervous

system begins to shut down.

One video shows a lifeless toddler receiving

emergency respiratory assistance.

Another shows a young boy

struggling to breathe, gasping while

his eyes are swollen shut and covered

in mucous. A third heinous video shows

rows and rows of bodies lined up in an

improvised morgue. Another shows a

man foaming at the mouth and convulsing,

both indications of sarin exposure.

It goes on and on.

Last night, the President urged all

Americans to watch these videos to see

how hideous the use of these chemicals

actually is. Seeing these images firsthand

makes clear why chemical weapons

have been banned and why Asad

must be prevented from using them

again.

What truly affected me was a video I

saw of a little Syrian girl with long

dark hair who was wearing pajamas.

The little girl looked just like my

daughter at that age—same hair, same

pajamas, same innocence, except the

little Syrian girl was lifeless. She had

died from exposure to sarin, a chemical

the world has essentially outlawed. For

me, watching the videos shows the abhorrence

of chemical weapons. It shows

why we must do something. Fired into

densely populated areas such as cities,

they have an indiscriminate effect,

killing everyone in their path and

causing suffering and eventual death to

others nearby.

We have evidence that the chemical

attack was premeditated and planned

as part of the regime’s heinous tactics

against the rebels. Specifically, there

is intelligence that Syrian regime personnel

were prepared with gas masks

for its people in the area, so it could

clear these areas in the Damascus suburbs

that were attacked in order to

wrest control from the opposition. Additional

intelligence collected following

the attacks includes communications

from regime officials that

confirms their knowledge that chemical

weapons were used.

Let me repeat that. Additional intelligence

following the attack includes

communications from regime officials

that confirms their knowledge that

chemical weapons were used. The official

unclassified intelligence assessment

distributed by the administration

states:

On the afternoon

of August 21, we have intelligence that

Syrian chemical weapons personnel

were directed to ‘‘cease operations.’’

This is specific evidence.

To sum up the intelligence case, I

have no doubt the regime ordered the

use of chemical weapons on August 21.

I also have no doubt the use of these

weapons by the military and under the

guidance of Syria’s chemical weapons

team, Branch 450, operates under the

command and control of the regime,

under the ultimate leadership and responsibility

of President Asad.

Let me move now from the intelligence

case of Syria’s use of sarin on

August 21 to the question before the

Senate of how to respond. As I said in

the beginning, it would be my strong

hope that the United States and Russia

can come to an agreement with other

U.N. Security Council members on a

way to resolve this situation peacefully.

Not only is a peaceful solution preferred

to the use of force, but if Syria’s

chemical weapons program, including

all of its precursors, chemicals, equipment,

delivery systems, and loaded

bombs, can be put in the custody of the

United Nations for its eventual destruction,

that would provide a much

stronger protection against future use.

It also sets an important precedent

for the future for the world to settle

other disputes of this nature. I have

urged the Obama administration to

take all possible steps to make this

proposal work. I appreciate the President’s

decision to ask us to delay any

use-of-force resolution so diplomacy

can be given a chance. However, the

Senate may still face a resolution to

authorize the use of force in the event

that all diplomatic options fail. Many

of my colleagues have noted that the

threat of force has helped push forward

the diplomatic option.

The Asad regime has clearly used

chemical weapons to gas its own people.

I believe it will most likely do so

again, unless it is confronted with a

major condemnation by the world.

That now is beginning to happen.

The regime has escalated its attacks

from small scale ones that killed 6 or 8

to 10 people with sarin to an attack

that killed more than 1,000. We know

the regime has munitions that could

kill tens of thousands of Syrians in

Aleppo or Homs. If the world does not

respond now, we bear the responsibility

if a larger tragedy happens later.

Of course, it is not only Syria who is

looking at preparing and using weapons

long banned by the international

community. Iran is watching intently

what the world will do in Syria and

will apply the lessons it learns to its

current development of nuclear weapons.

North Korea, which has refrained

from using both the nuclear weapons it

has and the chemical weapons stockpile

that actually dwarfs that of Syria,

may well use the Asad example to fire

on South Korea. Remember, we have

28,000-plus troops right over the border

of the DMZ, within a half hour.

More generally, countries around the

world will see the United States as a

paper tiger if it promises to take action

but fails to do so. Former Secretary

of Defense, Bob Gates, whom I

have great respect for, who worked in

both the Bush and Obama administrations,

said exactly that when he came

out in support on the resolution for use

of force against Syria.

Gates said this:

I strongly urge the Congress, both Democrats

and Republicans, to approve the President’s

request for authorization to use force.

Whatever one’s views on the current United

States policy towards Syria, failure by Congress

to approve the request would, in my

view, have profoundly negative and dangerous

consequences for the United States,

not just in the Middle East, but around the

world both now and in the future.

I strongly believe the major powers

in the world have a responsibility to

take action when a country not only

slaughters 100,000 of its own citizens,

makes millions homeless within Syria,

and makes millions into refugees in

Turkey and Jordan, but especially

when it is willing to use weapons

against them that have been banned as

an affront to all humanity because

they are outlawed by a treaty joined by

189 nations representing 98 percent of

the world’s population.

If the United Nations does not act in

such cases, I believe it becomes irrelevant.

If nothing is done to stop this use

of chemical weapons, they will be used

in future conflicts. I am confident of

that.

American servicemen in World War I

were gassed with their allied partners.

In our briefings over the past week, the

military has made clear to us that if

we allow the prohibition on chemical

weapons use to erode, our men and

women in uniform may again suffer

from these weapons on the battlefield.

Chemical weapons are not like conventional

weapons. Consider for a moment

how sarin, for example, can kill

so indiscriminately. The closer you are

to the release, such as from a mortar

or an artillery shell, the more certain

you are to death. It spreads over a wide

geographic area. It can shift from one

neighborhood to another if the wind

shifts.

During World War I, chemical weapons,

primarily chlorine, phosgene, and

mustard gas were used by both sides of

the war. They caused an estimated

100,000 fatalities and 1.3 million injuries,

1,462 American soldiers were

killed, and 72,807 were injured by chemical

weapons, which represented one-

third of all U.S. casualties during

World War I.

Since World War I, not a single U.S.

soldier has died in battle from exposure

to chemical weapons. However, according

to the United Nations Office for

Disarmament Affairs,

During World War II, Nazi Germany

used carbon monoxide and pesticides

such as Zyklon B in gas chambers during

the Holocaust, killing an estimated

3 million people.

An additional document will be

printed in the RECORD that details the

history and uses of chemical weapons

around the world since World War I.

These past uses of chemical weapons

make clear that they should never be

used again and that the entire world

must stand up and take action if they

are.

In Syria, the intentional use of chemical

weapons on civilians, on men,

women, and children gassed to death

during the middle of the night while

they were sleeping, is a travesty that

reflects hatred and increasing desperation

of the Asad regime. I also believe

there are other chemical weapons that

have been mixed and loaded into delivery

vehicles with the potential to kill

thousands more.

Think about that. If Asad can slaughter

100,000 of his own people without a

second thought, what is he going to do

next if we do nothing to hold him accountable?

What is he going to do next

if the United Nations does nothing?

What is he going to do next if this effort

to reach consensus on the Security

Council doesn’t work? He will use them

again. I believe they are ready to go.

Why would the Asad regime load

bombs with chemical weapons and not

use them?

If the United States does nothing in

the face of this atrocity, it sends such

a signal of weakness to the rest of the

world that we are, yes, a paper tiger.

That is going to be the conclusion in

Iran and in North Korea.

The answer is we cannot turn our

backs. The use of chemical weapons is

prohibited by international law and it

must now be condemned by the world

with action.

Albert Einstein said in a well-known

quote: ‘‘The world is a dangerous place

to live; not because of the people who

are evil, but because of the people who

don’t do anything about it.’’

For more than 90 years, our country

has played the leading role in the world

in prohibiting the atrocities of World

War I and then World War II. We are

the Nation that others look upon to

stop repressive dictators and massive

violations of human rights. We must

act in Syria. We cannot withdraw into

our own borders, do nothing, and let

the slaughter continue.

I hope military force will not be

needed, that we will allow the time for

the United Nations and the parties on

the Security Council to put an agreement

together, and that the threat of

force will be sufficient to change President

Asad’s behavior.

If these diplomatic efforts at the U.N.

fail, I know we are going to be back

here on the floor to consider the authorization

for use of military force,

but I sincerely hope it won’t be necessary.

When the Ambassador from Russia

described Russia’s intentions to me on

Monday, he told me it was sincere. Now

the ball is in Russia’s court. Russia and

the United States will need to come together,

bring the other parties together,

and make it possible for the

United Nations to act so the United

States won’t have to.

I yield the floor.