Mr. President, we

rise at a time of great debate here in

this Chamber and in this country about

what the appropriate response should

be by the United States to the horrific

use of chemical weapons by the Government

of Syria. That is a debate

which will unfold over the next days

here. We will see, as the situation continues

to develop, what actually comes

to the floor.

But the President of the United

States has asked for our input here in

the Senate. Today we are focused on

really the most important question an

elected representative is asked to respond

to; that is, whether to commit

America to military combat. To that

end, we have all spent time looking

over intelligence reports. We have participated

in classified intelligence

briefings. I have also had the opportunity

to meet with top members of

the administration. From the information

I have received, I do believe the

Government of Syria used chemical

weapons against its own people.

I believe an international response is

appropriate, but I do not believe the

administration’s proposal of a U.S.

military strike is the right answer.

There is no guarantee it will prevent

Asad’s use of chemical weapons. I do

not believe it will end the senseless

bloodshed in Syria. I do not believe it

will bring stability to the region that

is so critical to our national security. I

do not believe it will enhance Israel’s

security. I do not believe, most fundamentally,

that it is nested in a

broader strategic plan for the region.

The situation we face in Syria today

is partly the result of a failed foreign

policy. It is time for a change of

course. We need a comprehensive longterm

strategy first, not a strike and

then the promise of a strategy, which

is what the administration has proposed.

‘‘Strike first, strategy later’’ is

a recipe for disaster. If the current resolution

comes to the floor as a result,

the current resolution being considered,

I would not be able to support it.