Mr. President, I wish

to address the subject of Syria.

First of all, I wish to commend to

anyone who is listening to my voice to

view the videos the intelligence community

has released. They came from

social media. There are 13 videos that

came from a body of in excess of 100

videos, but they show the horror of

what happens to the human body with

an attack by a weapon of mass destruction—

in this case, chemical weapons, a

gas called sarin.

It is my hope the President, when he

speaks to the Nation on Tuesday, will

show clips of those videos because I

think very few Americans have seen

the extent of those videos, even though

they have been shown on some cable

shows in some limited amounts. They

could see the range of why, almost a

century ago, in 1925, the nations of the

world came together in a treaty after

the use of chemical weapons in World

War I. This treaty banned the use of

chemical weapons anywhere, any time,

including in war, because of the horrific

nature their use causes. In the

1990s this was subsequently reaffirmed

in a convention or some kind of conclave

which the nations of the world—

I believe in excess of 180 nations—

signed banning the use of chemical

weapons.

If you watch the videos, you will see

why. You will see what happens to innocent

human beings as they struggle

for life before the throes of death overtake

them. You will see this on the videos.

Of course, parents may wish to use

discretion because it is going to make

a lasting impression. You will see how

the body starts to shut down by the

nerves being attacked.

Interestingly, for the first time in a

CBS interview today, President Asad of

Syria has said, has admitted, today,

that Syria has chemical weapons. Up

to this point that was denied. No wonder

he would want to deny, because

when you see what happens in the use

of them and what it does to the human

nervous system—and I don’t wish to be

graphic, because I want anybody listening

to what I am saying to watch them.

I hope the President will show them

Tuesday night, to see how the human

body convulses when it attacks the

nervous system—the convulsions, the

twitching, what happens to the face,

the respiratory system, and all of the

evidence that comes from that.

The American people need to know

what we are dealing with, not only in

Syria but in other nations that possess

chemical weapons. This is not only

sarin, which was the gas used here, but

also mustard gas and a toxin called VX

that directly attacks the nervous system.

It does not have to be inhaled,

like mustard gas or sarin, to do its evil

deed. Instead, VX can be absorbed

through the skin.

If the American people understand

the consequences of the use of this,

they will understand why it is classified

as a weapon of mass destruction,

along with biological weapons of mass

destruction introducing some plague

among a community of innocents and,

of course, the weapon of mass destruction

that most everybody recognizes,

the nuclear weapon.

There are three weapons of mass destruction:

chemical, biological, and nuclear.

This is why, in the family of civilized

nations, we have said their use is

so abhorrent that civilized humans say

they should be banned. But they

weren’t. They were used extensively on

August 21.

Before I give the unclassified evidence,

I wish to point out that maybe

there is a little opening on the occasion

of the Russian Foreign Minister

today, since our Secretary of State, almost

in an offhanded comment a few

days ago, said it would certainly be a

game changer if he, Asad, would allow

the international community to come

in and take control of his Syrian chemical

weapons. The Russian Foreign

Minister today picked that up. Supposedly

there is a comment by an official

out of Syria who says that is worth

looking into. I can’t speak to the authenticity

of that comment. I have

heard it was said.

Whatever it is, of course, Asad is the

decisionmaker and it is ultimately

going to come down on him. But in the

meantime, what the United States

ought to do—and the Congress of the

United States ought to authorize what

the President of the United States has

requested, that the Congress back him

in giving him the authority to use a

limited, short duration retaliation in

degrading Asad’s capability of utilizing

these weapons in the future.

If Congress will give the President

that authority, it may well be the additional

incentive for the ultimate decisionmaker,

President Asad, to do what

the Russian Foreign Minister has suggested.

That would be a good thing.

In the meantime, they are going to

be debating this and we are going to be

put to the question: Do we support the

President in this time of peril?

Let us look at the facts. I think when

you see the videos, clearly, most every

reasonable human being is going to

conclude chemical weapons were used

on innocents in the Damascus suburbs

on the night of August 21.

The question then, of course, is, is

there a chain of custody to show in fact

they came from the Syrian army?

There is an unclassified body of evidence

that clearly shows, to put it in

the speak of the intelligence community,

we have high confidence. That

means it happened.

How did that happen? The assessment

is the Syrian chemical weapons

personnel, who are associated with the

chemical weapons part of the Syrian

command, were preparing chemical

munitions prior to the attack. This is

all unclassified. There were streams of

data of human signals and geospatial

intelligence that revealed regime activities

that were associated with the

preparations for that chemical weapons

attack. Syria chemical weapons personnel,

we know, were operating in the

Damascus suburb from August 18 all

the way through August 21. That was

the suburb that was attacked. Multiple

streams of intelligence indicate the

Syrian army executed the rocket and

artillery attack against those suburbs

in the early morning hours of August

21. We have satellite detections that

corroborate those attacks from a regime-

controlled neighborhood to where

the attacks landed. At the same time,

social media reports started exploding

about a chemical attack in the Damascus

suburbs. Those social media reports

started coming at 2:30 in the morning.

Three hospitals in Damascus received

approximately 3,600 patients displaying

the symptoms of a nerve agent exposure,

and they received them in less

than 3 hours on the morning of August

21.

As I said earlier, there have been

over 100 videos attributed to the attack.

This has been distilled down into

13 videos, many of them showing large

numbers of bodies exhibiting the physical

signs of nerve agent exposure. Any

Member of the Senate will have access

to the classified information that

shows the Syrian opposition does not

have the capability to fabricate those

videos or the physical symptoms

verified by the medical personnel.

So when we put all of this together,

with past Syrian practice and some of

the small-scale attacks they have done

previously, the conclusion is obvious:

The Syrian regime of Bashar Asad was

willing and directed the attack on August

21.

To this Senator, who has had the

privilege of seeing and hearing classified

information—and I have visited

with President Asad three times, the

last time being 6 years ago where the

two of us had a sharp exchange over

what was happening in Lebanon and

the fact he was harboring Hamas and

Hezbollah, which of course he denied—

the conclusion is obvious: There is a

substantial body of information that

corroborates that the Syrian Government

was responsible for the chemical

weapons attack on August 21.

There is additional information for

the Senators to see, but the question

is, Are we going to agree to the President’s

request that we authorize him to

attack? If we don’t, where does that

leave the President on any kind of negotiations

in the future? If the President

decides to go ahead and attack,

we automatically give to the opponents

in these countries—especially President

Asad and North Korea and Iran—

the obvious scenario that the American

people are so divided that they won’t

support the President. So if he were to

decide to attack—knowing it is his responsibility

to provide for the national

security, and he has sworn to provide

for that national security—we will

look so divided at that point, whatever

the scenario is for the future.

What about the mindset of other people

who want to do harm to the United

States? Does it give additional license

to North Korea if we were to do nothing?

North Korea is sitting on a huge

stockpile of chemical weapons, not to

mention their nuclear weapons. What

about Iran? We are very concerned as

they continue to energize weapons material

and march down the road perhaps

to building a nuclear weapon.

What kind of message does it send to

Iran? Just game that out. If Iran had a

nuclear weapon or felt free to use

chemical weapons, what would that do

to the interests of the United States in

that region of the world, not to mention

our allies in the region, of which

there are many.

So it is clear to this Senator. I will

admit I don’t know why the President

did not keep his own counsel and make

the decision without saying he wanted

to come to Congress, but he made that

decision, and now it is up to us.

Hopefully, there may be some validity

to this report coming from the Russian

Foreign Minister, but we won’t

know that for a long while, until, as we

say, the proof is in the pudding with

Asad turning over control of all the

chemical weapons to an international

body. In the meantime, are we going to

support the President? Clearly, in the

interest of the national security of this

country and our allies, I think that is

a position we must take. I will vote yes

on the resolution.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence

of a quorum.