

those troops to battle. Reluctant? Yes. But wise? Yes, I want a wise warrior too.

I listened to the Senator from Kentucky criticize the President because he is, quote, telegraphing his punches when it comes to what is going to happen in Syria. Well, you cannot have it both ways. This President could make a unilateral decision and attack without even consulting Congress and thereby maintain the element of surprise or he could do as this President has done and follow what he considers to be our constitutional requirement of a national debate before we engage in military action.

So I would say to the Senator from Kentucky, do not criticize the President for letting us know what he might do when he turns this over to Congress to debate. It is something most of us in Congress should welcome.

I also take exception to this notion that we have somehow abandoned our commitment to the world—this notion that what we hope to do in the Pacific is unreachable, or the closing of embassies because of danger is problematic or that there is austerity in the Department of Defense.

It is hard to reconcile those statements from the Republican side of the aisle with the fact that repeatedly we have asked for a conference committee on the budget to work out our budget differences when it comes to funding the Department of Defense and our Nation's national defense and time and again the Republicans have objected—objected to even sitting down and trying to work out differences so we can restore some of the funds cut through sequestration.

You cannot have it both ways. Do not criticize the President for not spending enough money when it comes to our Nation's defense and then stand by the sequestration which continues to cut even more from that same Department and many others.

As for the war on terror, what the President has said is there comes a moment, and we have reached it, where we cannot always be on a war footing. It causes a nation to make decisions which in the long haul may not stand the test of time and history. The President has said, yes, there is a war on terrorism, but we have to resume our leadership in this world with the view of a stable nation, not always thinking about the wartime status we face.

I listened to the Senator from Kentucky, who talks about saving money and cutting budgets, trying to hang on to that relic of times gone by at Guantanamo, where we are spending so much money—hundreds of thousands of dollars for each prisoner to be kept at Guantanamo—when we know full well that at least half of them should be released—carefully released—and should not be maintained at Guantanamo.

Today, we have hundreds of convicted terrorists safely incarcerated in the Federal penitentiaries of America, including one in Illinois in Marion, and

the people in the nearby community would not even know it because they are safely incarcerated.

Let me say a word too about this issue of Syria. You cannot, on the one hand, criticize this President for stepping up and saying we need to take action, if necessary, to stop the use of chemical weapons and then, on the other hand, say he is a reluctant warrior and that he does not support it. How in the world do you reconcile those two points of view?

The President has shown leadership. What he has asked is for the Congress to follow. What I heard from the Republican Senator from Kentucky is he is not interested in following that leadership.

Let me also add, this Putin overture, that we find some peaceful way to resolve this—I hope it turns out to be true and something that works. And if it does, give credit where it is due. This President stepped up and said we have to challenge the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Even if it does not affect the United States directly or its allies directly, we have to stand up to them. And if this Putin overture leads to some containment or destruction of those chemical weapons, give the President credit for it. Do not criticize him for not leading. He has shown more leadership on this issue than, frankly, many politicians of either party wanted to face.

I think when it comes to a credible strategy, this President has one.

It is a strategy which is ending two wars, which has put an end to the leader of that terrible terrorist attack on the United States on 9/11. It is a strategy which has improved the image of the United States since this President has come to power over the last several years. It is a strategy we can build on in the future. But we need to make certain that what we do is done with an eye toward the reality of this world in which we live. It is a dangerous world. It is one where the United States may be called on to lead at times when we do not want to lead. We cannot be isolationist. The United States has a responsibility in this world. That responsibility has to be used very carefully. This President understands that.

I hope that at the end of the day we can, in fact, see a peaceful resolution of the chemical weapons issue in Syria. I hope we can find a way to harken back to Ronald Reagan where we can trust that will happen but verify it as well. That would be the right ending. I think the President has taken the right position.

I would like to add something. When it comes to the nation of Israel, our closest and best ally in the Middle East, they understand what we are trying to do with chemical weapons in Syria. They have made it clear through their friends in the United States and other ways that they support it without fear of retaliation by Syria. They are ready, according to Prime Minister Netanyahu, for whatever Syria chooses

to do. We should not be any less forceful or less committed when it comes to ending the threat of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes and that following my remarks Senator PORTMAN be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

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

#### SYRIA

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I know that—and what we have heard this morning—what is rightfully at the forefront of all of our minds this week is the debate about whether to authorize the use of force in Syria. This is a very serious matter, as we all know. It raises a number of geopolitical and national security issues.

The decision to undertake military action is not one to be taken lightly. I am very aware that people are war-weary, that they are concerned about the consequences of the use of military force. Consequently, I believe we should pursue every possible diplomatic solution prior to engaging in military action.

I welcome the possibility of international cooperation to secure and destroy Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. I hope that Russia is being serious and that they will take real, legitimate actions to quickly follow through on what they have raised with their effort to try to encourage Assad to give up his chemical weapons to international control. I am working with some of my colleagues on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on an amendment to the resolution that would incorporate this new development and pressure the Syrians to ensure that we see credible concrete steps in any possible effort to place their chemical weapons under international inspection. I look forward to hearing from the President today and this evening, and I look forward to the debate later this week as we consider the situation in Syria.

#### ENERGY SAVINGS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes this morning to talk about legislation that was previously scheduled to be debated on the Senate floor this week—the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act, also known as Shaheen-Portman. I know the Presiding Officer has been very involved in energy issues for all of his time in public life, and I do appreciate the work he did as a Member of the House. I know he is following this debate very closely. I appreciate that.

This bill is one Senator ROB PORTMAN and I have been working on for 3 years.

I appreciate that he has come to the floor today to talk about it as well. We have had 3 years of meetings, negotiations, and broad stakeholder outreach in an effort to craft the most effective piece of energy legislation, with the greatest possible chance of passing both Chambers of Congress and being signed into law.

Shaheen-Portman is a bipartisan effort that reflects an affordable approach to boost the use of energy efficiency technologies. It will help create private sector jobs, save businesses and consumers money, reduce pollution, and make our country more energy independent. It will have a swift and measurable benefit on our economy and our environment. In the last few weeks we saw a study from experts at the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy which found that this legislation has the potential to create 136,000 domestic jobs by 2025, all while saving consumers billions of dollars and reducing pollution.

Efficiency is the cheapest and fastest approach to reduce our energy use. Energy savings techniques and technologies lower costs and free up capital that allows businesses to expand and our economy to grow. Perhaps equally important, energy efficiency has emerged as an excellent example of a bipartisan and affordable opportunity to immediately grow our economy and improve energy security. In addition to being affordable, efficiency is widely supported because its benefits are not confined to a certain fuel source or a particular region of the country. It is clearly one of the policy areas where we really can come to a common agreement.

It is no wonder that energy efficiency legislation—Shaheen-Portman—enjoys such large and diverse support. It has received more than 250 endorsements from a wide range of businesses, environmental groups, think tanks, and trade associations, from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

I am hopeful the Senate will return to Shaheen-Portman when we have finished debating the serious issue of Syria. I appreciate the commitment of our leadership on both sides of the aisle in the Senate to do so. I recognize this will be the first time a major energy bill has reached the Senate floor since 2007; therefore, it only makes sense for us to have a robust energy debate that allows for amendments from both sides of the aisle to be considered. I look forward to working with my colleagues to find an agreement on the way forward.

I thank my good friend Senator PORTMAN for his partnership in bringing this bill to the floor. I also thank the majority and minority leaders as well as Chairman WYDEN and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for all of their support as we have gone through this process and hopefully will bring this bill to the floor in the next couple of weeks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### SYRIA

Mr. PORTMAN. 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 long-term 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.

#### ENERGY SAVINGS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. America must also look to its interests here at home. Senator SHAHEEN just talked about that. Without a doubt, the ongoing chaos in Syria has served to remind us once again of the volatility and the instability that has plagued the Middle East for many years. It should also serve as a wake-up call.

As a country, we have for way too long been dependent on dangerous and volatile parts of the world for our foreign energy needs, particularly foreign oil. We have seen the impact in the price of oil, even in the last couple of

weeks. We certainly have seen it in our economy, the roller coaster we have seen with energy prices up and down. As a result, the need for American energy independence is not just a matter of the economy or economic security or energy security, it is also a matter of national security.

Given these realities, it is incumbent upon us now more than ever to pursue a true "all of the above" domestic energy strategy. We have to find ways to produce more energy here at home. Just as important, we have to figure out how to use less by wasting less. We will save money, we will save energy, we will make our economy more competitive and create more jobs, and, yes, we will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

The piece of legislation on which I joined with the senior Senator from New Hampshire, which we introduced just before we left for the August recess, takes important steps toward that goal of reducing the amount of energy we waste in this country. Senator SHAHEEN just talked about it. It is called the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act. It was meant to be on the floor today. We were supposed to be debating it. It is absolutely critical that we are debating Syria instead, but I do hope we can take up this legislation after the discussions about what we do with regard to the situation in Syria.

This bill, the energy security bill, is bipartisan. It is bicameral in the sense that there is support in the House and the Senate for it. It is, as Senator SHAHEEN said, a bill that reduces our energy waste and moves us toward energy independence. According to the recent study she talked about, it is estimated to aid in the creation of 136,000 new jobs, saving consumers over \$13 billion a year by the year 2030. That is why it is no surprise that it is supported by such a broad group, as Senator SHAHEEN talked about. That support, by the way, is one big reason it passed the Energy Committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 19 to 3.

Simply put, the legislation we proposed makes good environmental sense, it makes good energy sense, and it makes good economic sense too. It is a rare example around here of bipartisanship, which ought to be encouraged in a number of areas, but certainly this is one where we can find common ground.

I want to thank the majority leader this morning, and the minority leader, for working out a unanimous consent agreement that allows us to move forward on this commonsense approach in the coming days. In that debate, we will talk more about the legislation, how it helps manufacturers on the global stage, and how the savings companies will accrue from energy efficiency will lead to better paying jobs. We will talk about how our legislation helps to train the next generation of workers in the skills they need to compete in the growing energy efficiency field. We will talk about how it makes