

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) On U.S. Airstrikes Against Syrian Government Forces

After the appalling chemical weapons attack on Syrian civilians, including children, believed to have been perpetrated by the Syrian government, I said Bashar al-Assad was a war criminal and must be held accountable. Last night the President launched a limited attack on the base that apparently carried out those attacks.

When brutality, like we have seen against the citizens of Syria by their own government, shocks our consciences, the desire to act decisively is strong. We must keep in mind that we have learned that there are grave risks and unintended consequences in the use of military force, especially unilateral military force. When used it should be in self-defense or part of a larger strategy in conjunction with our international partners, and with the broad support of the American people.

The President is now required to give Congress notification under the War Powers Act. I will want to see what it says, and I would think that all Senators will want to see it as well.