

We have to exercise restraint, and we have to exercise that restraint among ourselves. The appropriations process is a critical way for us to do this. It is the only way that our citizens can truly hold their elected representatives accountable for this spending. It allows the American people to see the true priorities of their elected representatives.

There is one last point before I close. Reducing the national debt does not mean that we stop investing. It simply forces us to make smarter choices. Some things we need to prioritize, and we know what those are. We need to keep our families and our communities safe. We must invest in infrastructure to promote commerce and grow this economy. We must reduce wasteful spending and prioritize prudent spending. We must reduce the national debt. We must get government out of the way so opportunities can be created for our families and for our young people, but we have to be responsible stewards of taxpayer money. We must make those responsible choices.

I believe that our very best days as a nation are before us, and that is because of my unwavering faith in the fundamental goodness, tenacity, and the creativity of the American people. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES.
39

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator PAUL and pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Foreign Relations Committee from further consideration of S.J. Res. 39, relating to the disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is now pending.

Under the previous order, there will be 3 hours of debate on the motion, divided between the proponents and opponents, with the Senator from Kentucky controlling 30 minutes of proponent time and the Senator from Connecticut controlling 15 minutes of proponent time.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during quorum calls on the motion be equally divided between the proponents and the opponents.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am going to speak briefly in support of the resolution. Senator LEE, a cosponsor of this resolution, is on the floor, and he will speak after I do.

Let me say at the outset that I believe in a strong U.S. global presence. I

believe the United States is at its best when it is a global leader. We can and we should be a force for good and for peace in the world.

I also believe, quite frankly, that peace comes through strength. I don't apologize for the size of our military budget, nor do I think it would be wise for this Congress to give up this country's massive military edge over every global adversary and friend. Having the world's biggest, baddest military keeps us safe, and, frankly, it keeps a lot of our friends safe as well.

My last stipulation before I talk about the resolution would be this: I also believe there are times when we should use that military power. There are times when war or military action is just. If you want to provide safe harbor for terrorists who plan a massive attack against this country, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, then they can expect a visit from the U.S. Army.

But increasingly we all have to reconcile with the fact that there are more and more limitations on the effectiveness of U.S. military power. Today, our adversaries and our enemies practice something we call asymmetric warfare, which means they concede our conventional military advantage and use other means and methods to exert power and project strength. China does it through economic aid, Russia does it through bribery and the extension of its natural resources to its neighbors, and ISIL does it through terror and through the perversion of religion. Yet this country and this Congress continue to believe that most conflicts around the globe can be solved with just a little bit more American military hardware.

That is what brings us here today to talk about this arms sale to Saudi Arabia, particularly in the context of the ongoing conflict inside Yemen—a civil war inside Yemen in which the United States has become a participant.

This is a picture from war-ravaged Yemen—an ongoing humanitarian disaster. We don't have the full extent of the numbers, but there have already been thousands of civilians killed. If we talk to Yemenis, they will tell us that this is perceived inside Yemen as not a Saudi-led bombing campaign, which it is broadly advertised as in the newspapers, but as a U.S. bombing campaign or, at best, a U.S.-Saudi bombing campaign.

There is a U.S. imprint on every civilian death inside Yemen which is radicalizing the people of this country against the United States. Why is this? Well, it is because, while the conflict inside Yemen started as a civil war—the Houthis overrunning the government inside Sana'a—the Saudis and a coalition of other Gulf States have entered the conflict, largely through air operations, to try to push the Houthis back, and they have asked for our assistance, which we have given, and we have given it in substantial means and methods. We provide the bombs, we provide the refueling planes, and we provide the intelligence. There really is no way this bombing campaign could happen without U.S. participation.

The United States is at war in Yemen today. The United States is at war in Yemen today, and this Congress has not debated that engagement. This Congress has not debated that war. It is yet another unauthorized U.S. military engagement overseas.

But the scope of this disaster for the purposes of U.S. security interests is not just the radicalization of the Yemen people against the United States or the thousands of people who have been killed but also the fact that this war has given ground—an opportunity for Al Qaeda and ISIS to grow—grow by leaps and bounds.

Let's be honest. Our first responsibility here is to protect this country from attack, and the most likely arm of Al Qaeda that would have the means or the inclination to attack the United States is the branch that exists inside Yemen. Their recruitment has grown by multiples over the course of this conflict. For a period of time, AQAP was able to use this conflict to grab control of a major port city inside Yemen, which radically changed the ability of AQAP to recruit and to grow their capacity to do harm outside of Yemen, because they had control of resources and taxation inside this city.

One would think that if the United States was providing all of these resources to the Saudi-led coalition, that some of them would be used to try to push back on ISIS's growth or AQAP's growth inside Yemen, but the exact opposite has happened. None of the Saudi bombs are dropping on AQAP; they are all dropping on Houthi targets and civilian targets. So we are arming the Saudis to fight an enemy—the Houthis—whom we have not declared war against, and the Saudis are not using those weapons to fight our sworn enemy whom we have declared war against: Al Qaeda. So the civilian casualties mount, ISIS and Al Qaeda grow, yet this is the first time we have had the opportunity to discuss the wisdom of this engagement.

We begged the Saudis to change their conduct. We have asked them to target Al Qaeda. To the extent that Al Qaeda is shrinking a bit, it is not because the Saudis have targeted them, it is because other players in the region—the Emirates—have targeted them. We begged the Saudis to stop bombing civilians. Yet in a 72-hour period earlier this summer, the Saudi-led coalition bombed another Doctors Without Borders facility, a school, and the principal's house next door. We give them targets that they should stay away from because they are key parts of routes to bring humanitarian relief in a country that is ravaged by famine, and they still hit those targets even after we told them to stay away. We begged the Saudis to change their behavior inside this war, and they haven't listened.

But it is not the only time they haven't listened. The fact is, if you are serious about stopping the flow of extremist recruiting across this globe, then you have to be serious about the very real fact that the Wahhabi-Salafist branch of Islam that is spread around the world by Saudi Arabia and their Wahhabi allies is part of the problem.

In 1956, there were 244 madrassas in Pakistan; today there are over 24,000. These schools are multiplying all over the globe. Conservative Salafist imams and mosques are spreading all across the world. Don't get me wrong, these schools and Mosques by and large don't teach violence directly. They aren't the minor leagues for Al Qaeda and ISIS, but they do teach a version of Islam that leads very nicely into an anti-Shia, anti-western militancy. We begged the Saudis to stop setting up these conservative Wahhabi operations in parts of the Middle East, in the Balkans, in Indonesia. Again, they haven't listened.

Just take the example of Kosovo. Kosovo 10 years ago would never have been a place that ISIS would have gone to recruit people into the fight inside Syria, but today it is one of the hotbeds of recruitment. It is not a coincidence that during the same period of time the Saudis and Wahhabis spent millions of dollars there, trying to convert Muslims to their brand of religion—a brand of religion that essentially says that everybody who doesn't believe what we believe is an infidel, that the crusades never ended, and that the obligation of a true Muslim is to find a way to fight back against any brand of the religion that doesn't match ours.

So for those who are going to vote for this arms sale, who are essentially going to endorse our current state of the relationship with Saudi Arabia and our Gulf State allies, just ask yourselves if we can really defeat terrorism if we remain silent on the primary progenitor of this brand of Islam that feeds into extremism. How can you say you are serious about strangling ISIL when the textbooks that are produced inside Saudi Arabia are the very same textbooks that are handed out to recruit suicide bombers?

If we really want to cut off extremism at its source, then we can't keep closing our eyes to the money that flows out of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States into this conservative Salafist missionary movement around the world.

This arms sale is relevant to both of these questions—changing the war inside Yemen and sending a message that this export of the building blocks of extremism cannot continue. Why? Because the main part of this arms sale is a replacement of battle-damaged tanks—tanks that were likely in part damaged in the conduct of this war. It represents a piece of a very long ramp-up of arms sales into Saudi Arabia.

The numbers are pretty staggering. This administration has sold about six

to eight times the number of arms to Saudi Arabia than the last administration did, and the Saudis do listen. They do pay attention to what we say here. They don't like the fact that there are Republicans and Democrats critiquing this relationship. They will not like the fact that there will be votes against this arms sale. So even if it ultimately doesn't become law—which is unlikely, given the fact that even if it passes, the President could veto it—this could impact both of these questions, the conduct of the war in Yemen and the conduct of the export of Wahhabism around the globe.

Lastly, let me make the case that rejecting or voting against this arms sale is not going to end or even permanently damage our relationship with Saudi Arabia. We are allies. We will continue to be allies. Our common bond was forged during the Cold War when American and Saudi leaders found common ground in the fight against communism. The Saudis helped ensure that the Russians never got a meaningful foothold in the Middle East. Today, this unofficial detente that exists between Sunni nations and Israel in the region is part of the product of Saudi-led diplomacy. There have been many high-profile examples of deep U.S.-Saudi cooperation in the fight against ISIL and Al Qaeda, notwithstanding these critiques. More generally, our partnership with Saudi Arabia, the most powerful and richest country in the Arab world is an important bridge to the Islamic community—a testament to the fact that we can seek cooperation and engagement with governments in the Middle East and people worldwide, which is a direct rebuttal to this idea the terrorists spread that asserts we are at war with Islam.

This is not an either-or question, but we are strategic allies, which is different from being a values-based alliance. That means that when our strategic goals occasionally depart from one another, then we shouldn't be obligated to continue our cooperation on that particular front. The Saudis' guiding foreign policy goal is to gain regional supremacy over Iran. We certainly prefer a Middle East with more Saudi friends than Iranian friends; there should be no doubt about that. But our guiding foreign policy goal in that region is not for the Saudis to win the broadening proxy war with Iran; it is to protect our country from attack by terrorist groups that are metastasizing in Syria, Iraq, and now at worrying rates inside Yemen.

Today, our participation in the war inside Yemen is making us more vulnerable by attacks from AQAP and ISIS, not less vulnerable. Our bombs, our intelligence, our spotters, and our refueling planes are certainly helping the Saudis project power in the region, but it is fueling an arms race between Shia and Sunni nations that has no logical end other than mutual destruction, increasing chaos, and more un-

governable space for groups that want to attack the United States.

Said another way, is this really the right moment for the United States to be sending record numbers of arms into the Middle East?

Do we have any evidence from past conflicts in Afghanistan or the Iran and Iraq wars that more U.S. weapons end up in less, rather than more, bloodshed—an abbreviated rather than an elongated war?

It is time for the United States to press pause on our arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Let's make sure that the war in Yemen doesn't continue to spiral downward, jeopardizing U.S. national security interests. Let's press the Saudis to get serious about spending more time as firefighters and less time as arsonists, as they say, in the global fight against terrorism.

Let's ask ourselves whether we are comfortable with the United States getting slowly, predictably, and all too quietly dragged into yet another war in the Middle East. What will it take for this country to learn its lesson?

I thank the Presiding Officer and the body for the time, and I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I thank Senator MURPHY, Senator PAUL, and Senator LEE for their leadership on this very important issue.

Since the Saudi-led coalition started a bombing campaign in Yemen in 2015, there has been an average of 13 civilian casualties each day, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This means that thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded in the U.S.-backed war in Yemen. This is unacceptable. People all across this country have been outraged at how the Saudis have conducted this war and believe that the United States should not acquiesce or support such conduct.

Over the last decade, the United States has sold the Saudis over \$100 billion in arms. The United States has also supported the Saudi-led coalition with air-to-air refueling sorties, intelligence sharing, and military advisory assistance. That kind of support should not go along with acceptance of the Saudi disregard for innocent human lives and innocent civilian lives.

The legislation we will be voting on later today is a disapproval resolution regarding a \$1.15 billion arms sale. The very fact that we are voting on it today sends a very important message to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that we are watching their actions closely and that the United States is not going to turn a blind eye to the indiscriminate killing of men, women, and children.

Again, I would like to thank Senators MURPHY, PAUL, and LEE for their leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to lend my support and urge my colleagues to lend theirs to S.J. Res. 39, offered by my friend Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky. The purpose of this particular resolution is to reconsider the billion-dollar arms sale between the United States and Saudi Arabia that was negotiated by the two governments earlier this year.

Under U.S. law, any arms sale approved by the State Department will go into effect within 30 days after that deal has been finalized, absent passage of a resolution of disapproval to prevent it from taking effect. That is exactly what Senator PAUL's resolution aims to do. If passed by the Senate and the House, the resolution would raise formal objections to the sale of \$1.15 billion worth of weapons and military equipment to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

Notice that there are Senators from both sides of the aisle working to pass this resolution of disapproval, supporting it in speeches and voting on it hopefully later today. It was introduced by a fellow Republican, and I am proud to join three of my Democratic colleagues as original cosponsors: Senator CHRIS MURPHY from Connecticut, from whom we heard just moments ago; Senator AL FRANKEN of Minnesota, from whom we heard after we heard from Senator MURPHY; and Senator MARTIN HEINRICH of New Mexico.

Some might call us strange bedfellows—two conservative Republicans and three liberal Democrats working together to achieve the same goal. But this observation misses the point entirely. Each one of us may have their own unique justification for supporting this resolution, but there is nothing strange about that; it simply proves that there are many reasons to consider and to reconsider this deal with Saudi Arabia.

One of those reasons and the basis for my support of Senator PAUL's resolution is that there is no conclusive evidence that the Saudi arms deal will in fact advance the strategic and security interests of the United States. In fact, there is evidence that points in the opposite direction. We know that Saudi Arabia is heavily involved in the civil war that is raging at this moment in Yemen—a conflict that has left a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions in its wake and continues to do so. We know that the Saudi military will use the equipment included in this deal—everything from machine guns to grenade launchers to armored vehicles and tanks—to increase its own engagement in that seemingly intractable conflict. What we don't know is exactly how America's involvement in the civil war in Yemen serves our national security interests and protects the American people.

I have no problem in principle with the United States approving the sale of weapons and military equipment to

foreign governments when it is in our interest to do so. I certainly am not categorically opposed to selling arms to the Saudi Government. Saudi Arabia has long been an American ally in a very volatile region of the world, and I believe strengthening that alliance should be a priority for our foreign and military policy in the Middle East, but the fact that Saudi Arabia is an ally with whom we have a track record of selling arms is not in and of itself a sufficient reason to endorse this particular deal. It is not a reason that this deal should move through, should take effect without so much as a whimper from Members of Congress who might feel the need to raise possible concerns—concerns that relate to our own national security.

Yes, we want our allies to be strong. Yes, we want our allies to be capable of defending themselves. Yes, sometimes this means that we should offer them assistance in times of need. But the first and most fundamental responsibility of the U.S. Government is not to satisfy the requests of our allies reflexively, unflinchingly, and without asking acute questions; rather, the fundamental responsibility—the first job of the U.S. Government—is to protect the lives and liberties of the American people. That is where we need to be focused.

Now, the Government of Saudi Arabia clearly believes that intervening in this civil war in Yemen and participating in the decades-long sectarian conflict underlying that civil war in Yemen is in the best interest of the Saudi people. I don't doubt that, and it is not my place to question it, even if I did doubt it.

That is why the Saudi military has been fighting in Yemen since it first launched its intervention in March 2015. But can the same be said of the U.S. Government? Is intervening in this civil war a national priority for the American people? Is intervening in that civil war in our national security interest? Is it something that is going to make the American people safer?

Astoundingly, these are questions that have never been fully discussed and certainly have never been fully debated in this institution—an institution that likes to call itself and loves to be referred to as the world's greatest deliberative body.

This is more of an abdication of responsibility by Congress. It is more than just that. It is a national security hazard. It is not just that we are abdicating. It is not just that we are not doing something we are supposed to do. We are making things more dangerous than we need to.

The Framers of our Constitution gave important and exclusive foreign policy powers to the legislative branch because our Framers believed that the process of defining America's national interests and developing a foreign policy to pursue those interests must involve the participation of the people's representatives in Congress.

But alas, in recent years, Congress, in general, and the Senate, in particular, have happily taken a back seat to the executive branch in debating, developing, and defending to the public our Nation's foreign policy and grand strategy in the Middle East. That explains how it is possible that our military has actively supported the Saudi military's intervention in Yemen, including hundreds of air-to-air refueling sorties at a time when our military leaders unanimously contend that they are suffering from readiness and personnel shortfalls. It explains how it is possible that the U.S. military would be actively involved in the civil war in Yemen, even though many security experts point out that by supporting Saudi Arabia in Saudi Arabia's fight against the Houthis, we could be unintentionally assisting Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS affiliates in Yemen.

I urge my colleagues today to support this resolution of disapproval. Let us pause our intervention in this foreign conflict and show the country—show our country—that the legislative branch can fulfill its obligations to the American people faithfully, that we can openly and thoughtfully evaluate our interventions abroad, and that we are focused on protecting the security, safety, and interests of the American people above all others.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today the Senate will consider a motion to discharge a resolution of disapproval from the Foreign Relations Committee. I oppose that motion because I believe it would harm our Nation's long-term strategic interests in the Persian Gulf and in the broader Middle East.

It would further damage our alliance and our partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at a time when our moderate Sunni Arab allies are questioning whether our Nation is able to meet our traditional commitment to the region. The resolution would also ignore the shared interests we have with Saudi Arabia in combating Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Were this resolution of disapproval ever to be adopted, it would further convince the world that the United States is retreating, not only from its commitments but also as the guarantor of the international order we worked to create after the Second World War.

I will move to table this motion and encourage all of my colleagues to support the motion. We are nearing the end of the Obama administration. The next President will have a stark choice upon assuming office—whether to continue the drawdown of America's conventional military power across the globe or to restore our warfighting capabilities to both renew our alliances and restore America to its position as the guarantor of the international security order.

After nearly 8 years, the President's approach to foreign policy has become all too clear—to end the war on terror, to draw down our conventional forces and capabilities, and to deploy special operations forces in economy-of-force train-and-assist missions across the globe.

The essence of this foreign policy was captured in his speech at West Point in May of 2014. In that speech, the President described a network of partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel, to be funded by a \$5 billion counterterrorism partnership fund for which Congress has yet to receive a viable plan. In those cases where indigenous forces prove insufficient and a need for direct action arises, the President announced his intention to resort to the use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles for strikes, as has been done in Yemen and Somalia.

So by deploying special operations forces for train-and-equip missions, the President hoped to manage the diffuse threat posed by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Boko Haram, terrorist networks inside of Libya that now threaten Egypt, the al-Nusra Front, the Taliban, ISIL, and other terrorist groups.

The concept of operations allowed the President to continue the force structure cuts to the conventional forces and sought to manage the threat from global terrorism. He envisioned no need to reverse the harmful damage of defense sequestration, to rebuild our conventional and nuclear forces, or to accept that leaving behind residual forces in Iraq and Afghanistan was a means by which this Nation preserves the strategic gains that we have made through sacrifice.

The threat of some of these Al Qaeda affiliates, associated groups, or independent terrorist organizations has outpaced the President's economy-of-force concept. In some cases, the host nation's military which we had trained and equipped had proven inadequate to defeat the insurgency in question, as was the case with AQAP, the Taliban, or ISIL.

The Obama administration never answered the question: What was to be done when the host nation's force we trained for counterterrorism was incapable of counterinsurgency—Iraq, Libya, Yemen? The efforts of the Department of Defense to train a moderate Syrian opposition never provided sufficient reasons for the President to rethink the basic strategy.

The President's concept of operations countenanced a persistent, enduring terrorist threat from AQAP, the Taliban, and other groups in those countries where insufficient ground combat power could be generated by the force that we trained.

In Riyadh, our traditional long-standing ally Saudi Arabia warned of Iran's efforts to arm and support Shia proxies in Syria, in Yemen, and in Lebanon and to foment unrest across the region, all of which was lost on the White House.

Instead, they were called "free riders," and Saudi Arabia's concerns with what a Muslim Brotherhood government in Cairo, instability in Libya, and the slaughter of Sunnis within Syria would mean for the region were completely ignored. The Obama administration has sounded an uncertain trumpet, but the words that resounded in Saudi Arabia and across the region were the commitment to our allies—that in negotiating with Iran to end its nuclear weapons program, no deal is better than a bad deal.

Well, this proved not to be true. The administration accepted the bad deal, and in its negotiation with Iran, the administration made concession after concession after concession: allowing Iran to retain a nuclear enrichment program, allowing for the retention of working centrifuges and a research and development program, providing financial relief and support, and lending legitimacy to the world's chief state sponsor of terror.

Under any net assessment, Iran has emerged from the nuclear deal with the Obama administration stronger—stronger than before the deal. The funds derived from the lifting of sanctions enable Iran to invest in proxy forces and conventional capabilities, such as advanced air defense systems, and to threaten Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Even more consequential is the fact that the Obama administration's single-minded pursuit of achieving and preserving the deal has held the other elements of our foreign policy toward Iran hostage. Iran is free to harass American vessels within the Persian Gulf, to test ballistic missiles, and to fund proxy forces.

After agreeing to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the President gathered the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council at Camp David. At that meeting, our President made commitments to those allies that we would help them in building their respective defense capabilities.

A vote in support of this resolution today undermines that commitment made by the President to help the Saudis. Our allies in the region, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, came to understand that after the fall of the Mubarak government, the decapitation of the government in Libya, and civil war in Syria, they must act in pursuit of their own sovereign interests, whether the United States would lead or not.

The specific foreign military sale in question here is for Abrams tank structures to Saudi Arabia. We have been selling ground combat equipment to Saudi Arabia for decades—for decades. There is no evidence—none—that the Saudis have used the Abrams tanks in ground combat within Yemen. These systems have been used along the Saudi Arabia border to defend against Houthi incursions.

The United States is actively working to improve Saudi targeting capa-

bility and to deliver humanitarian relief to the people of Yemen. So let us also remember that denying the sale of Abrams tank structures will simply lead some of our allies to pursue weapon systems from other countries.

Let me say that again. The Saudis don't have to buy this equipment from us. They can buy it from somebody else. So this motion comes at a singularly unfortunate time and would serve to convince Saudi Arabia and all other observers that the United States does not live up to its commitments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, let's be clear about what the arms sale is all about. It is about giving a nation that is under attack by an Iranian-sponsored militia the arms that it needs to defend its people and its territory.

The Houthi militia, which is Iran's proxy in Yemen, is attacking Saudi Arabia's southern border. It has carried out hundreds of cross-border raids into Saudi Arabia and has fired numerous missiles deep into Saudi territory. Make no mistake, this aggression is fueled by the Iranians.

Earlier this year, the United States seized a shipment of arms bound for the Houthi militia. Have no doubt that the Houthi militia are the clients and the stooges and the agents of Iran, which is attempting to take over control of Yemen, which is an important nation, particularly because of its geographic location on the Straits of Hormuz.

Have no doubt about what the situation would be strategically if the Iranian-sponsored Houthis controlled Yemen. Have no doubt about the threat that it is to the United States of America and to freedom of navigation.

Houthi aggression against Saudi Arabia has displaced over 75,000 Saudis and killed hundreds of civilians. If militias were attacking our borders and launching missiles into our territory and our friends refused to help us defend ourselves, we would certainly question the value of that friendship. This is why this sale is more important than just a sale. It is a message.

The sale will give Saudi Arabia tanks it has used to defend its own country from Houthi attacks. The United States has no evidence that Saudi Arabia has used the tanks outside of Saudi territory. In fact, 20 of the tanks in the case would be intended to replace those damaged by Houthi artillery while the tanks were on Saudi territory, deployed in defensive positions to counter offensive Houthi cross-border raids. These tanks will be reviewed and monitored like all U.S.-origin defense articles to ensure they are used in the manner intended or consistent with legal obligations and foreign policy goals and values.

I say to my colleagues that blocking this sale of tanks will be interpreted by our gulf partners—not just Saudi Arabia—as another sign that the United States of America is abandoning our

commitment to the region and is an unreliable security partner. That is what this vote is all about. The nations in the region already have that impression because President Obama has reneged on his promise made at the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council meeting at Camp David in May of 2015 to fast-track arms transfers.

As we support the Saudis in the defense of their territorial integrity, we do not refrain from expressing our concern about the war in Yemen and how it is being conducted. We remain concerned by the high number of casualties resulting from the fighting. We have repeatedly expressed our deepest concern about the ongoing strikes that have killed and injured civilians, the heavy toll paid by the Yemeni people, and the urgent and compelling need for humanitarian assistance. There has been some progress, including the establishment of the Joint Incident Assessment Team, a commission to investigate civilian casualties.

But we cannot forget that an Iranian-backed, Houthi-controlled Yemen will be a chaotic, unstable place ripe for exploitation not only by Iran but also by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIL. That is why it must be our goal and the goal of the international community to arrive at a political solution to bring stability and security back to Yemen. Saudi Arabia has been seeking such a solution.

The Saudis were cooperative and participated in good faith in the peace negotiations in Kuwait before those talks, unfortunately, broke down over Houthi intransigence. They have shown considerable restraint in not responding with airstrikes to Houthi cross-border attacks, which continue.

In the meantime, we must continue to support an important regional partner against Iran's destabilizing behavior in Yemen and beyond.

I say to my colleagues, this vote is more important than the sale of tanks. This vote is a message to our friends and our enemies alike. This message is that we will continue the commitment President Obama made at a meeting in 2015 with the nations in the region that we would expedite arms sales to them, not prohibit them. This is a message that one of the strongest forces against Al Qaeda in the region and other terrorist organizations is going to be allowed to acquire weapons with which to defend their sovereign nation.

This vote will resonate throughout the entire Middle East. That is why I hope my colleagues will understand that the importance of this vote transcends anything to do with military equipment. I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to vote overwhelmingly.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I wish to speak for 10 minutes, and I request that the Presiding Officer let me know when that time expires.

This body, the Senate, is going to have a vote in a couple of hours about whether we should approve an arms sale to our friends in Saudi Arabia. I use the term "friends" because that is what I think they are when it comes to the efforts to win the war against terror.

Internal problems in Saudi Arabia are real. They need to modernize the way they do business. They have had double-dealing in the past of helping terrorist organizations. At the end of the day, the Mideast is a very complicated place, but here is what is not complicated: Saudi Arabia has shared intelligence with us that has made Americans safe. They have allowed us to use their air bases in times of conflict. They are all in against ISIL, and they are great allies against the ambitions of the Iranians. When you add up the pluses and the minuses of the relationship with Saudi Arabia, in my view, it is not close—the pluses outweigh the minuses.

To those who wish to sever this relationship, be careful what you wish for. Saudi Arabia is the center of gravity of the Islamic world. Most holy sites in Islam are in Saudi Arabia. I have met with the King, the Crown Prince, and the Deputy Crown Prince. They have shown a willingness to work with us at a time when we need partners. If you drive this good partner, Saudi Arabia, away, you will one day regret it.

This is what is going on in the Mideast. Iran is marching through the Mideast with terror. They are destabilizing the entire region. The Saudi Kingdom is not perfect, but they are aligned with us on the big issues when it comes to terrorism and pushing back against Iran.

The Iranian regime is controlled by a radical Ayatollah who openly chants and tweets that the State of Israel must be destroyed. This regime is in the hands of a religious Nazi. The Ayatollah in Iran controls everything. There are no moderate voices left there.

Since the deal with Iran has been signed regarding their nuclear program, they have test-fired four missiles in violation of U.N. resolutions. One of the missiles basically had in Hebrew "Israel must be destroyed." They constantly threaten our ally Israel. They have taken over four Arab capitals.

The Houthis, who threw out a pro-American government in Yemen by force of arms, is being supplied arms by the Iranians.

The \$150 billion the Iranian regime will receive in sanctions relief is finding its way into the hands of terrorist organizations. Hezbollah, a mortal

enemy of Israel, has been provided up to 300 new missiles with precision-guided technology by the Iranians to threaten the Jewish State. Assad wouldn't last 5 minutes without Iranian support. They have disrupted all of our gains inside of Iraq. They are influencing Baghdad in a very bad way.

When it comes to Yemen, when it comes to Iraq, and when it comes to Syria, Iran is creating havoc.

This body has a choice. We are talking about a \$1 billion package of armaments that will upgrade the Saudis' capability to fight common enemies such as Al Qaeda and ISIL more aggressively, and it will give them the military capability to challenge the increased threats to the region from of Iran.

If we say no to the Saudis, not only will that be seen as a sleight by the Saudis, they will buy their arms somewhere else.

And if you want to talk about a body that would have things ass backwards, this would be the moment in history where you will be seen in history as not understanding the world. There are some of my colleagues on the other side who are worried about how the Saudis are using military force inside of Yemen to protect their borders from an Iranian intrusion that is being basically carried forward by the Houthis. There is an effort to bring about peace in Yemen, but Iran has empowered the Houthis to displace a pro-American, pro-Western government, creating havoc for the Saudis. They have dropped bombs on civilians. There is no way to conduct war without mistakes being made. We are trying to sell them new equipment, precision-guided weapons that will lessen civilian casualties when Saudi Arabia has to defend themselves.

I think it would be pretty odd for Members on the other side of the aisle, who almost unanimously supported the Iranian nuclear agreement, to give sanctions relief to an Ayatollah who on the day of the vote said he hopes to destroy Israel in 25 years and deny a weapons sale to somebody who is in the fight with you. Talk about ass-backwards: flush the Iranian regime with capabilities they have dreamed of to pursue a nuclear deal that I think is a nightmare for the region, and in the same context, within a matter of months, start denying Arab allies who are willing to fight the capability to fight.

If you want to send a signal to the Ayatollah that America is out of the fight and we no longer are a reliable ally, stop helping Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Arab States, who have been helping us, as imperfect as they may be. What a world we live in, where this body wants to be tough on Saudi Arabia because they are in a shooting war in Yemen, sponsored by the Iranians, right on their border, that we want to cut off military aid to them because of human rights violations, when the people on the other side are watching Iran

destroy the Mideast, threaten us, and create the possibility of a second holocaust for the Jewish people. Not one person on the other side has risen their hand to say: You know, maybe we should revisit sanctions on Iran based on what they have done since we signed the deal.

So here is the answer. The Iranians have test-fired four ballistic missiles, after signing the Iranian nuclear agreement with us, in violation of U.N. resolutions, and our response is to cut off weapons to Saudi Arabia. We haven't done a damn thing to send a signal to the Ayatollah: Hey, man, you are going to pay a price if you keep doing this.

The Iranians are shipping weapons to the Houthis, who have destroyed a pro-American government, creating havoc in the region inside of Yemen, and our response is to cut off weapons to the Saudi Arabians.

If you want to change the Mideast forever, do this. If you really want to tell everybody who has fought with America you are no longer a reliable ally, do this. If you want to tell the Russians we are going to cede authority and power to them, do this. The Russians are pulling for us. The Russians would like nothing better than for America to cut off arms sales and alliances with the Gulf Arab States, particularly Saudi Arabia, because that would give them the opportunity of a lifetime. If you care about the American homeland, you better put Iran in a box as soon as you can.

Here is my belief about the Iranians. Not only are they trying to take over four Arab capitals—and they have—they are developing ballistic missiles to deliver something. They are not going to put the Ayatollah in space, though I would like to do that myself. They are going to put something on top of that missile and I know exactly what it is and all the Arabs know what it is and the Israelis know what it is.

So at a time of great and clear conflict—and it is clear to me the Iranians are the bad guys and our allies in the Arab world, though imperfect, are still our allies—that we are going to send a signal to the radical regime in Tehran that we are going to roll back supporting our allies and do nothing about their provocative behavior would be a mistake for the ages.

I wish the body would have a different debate than we are having today. I wish somebody would come and talk about reimposing sanctions on the Iranians. They have captured American sailors and humiliated them. They are allies of Bashar Assad, who has butchered 450,000 of his own people. They are empowering Hezbollah, the mortal enemy of Israel. They are humiliating every force of good, and our response is to stand up and undercut an ally.

What a world we live in, where the United States Senate is considering stopping selling arms to somebody who would fight with us at a time when we are doing nothing to a country that has

called us the Great Satan—and if they could, they would destroy us—and have killed American soldiers by providing radical groups inside of Iraq with IEDs that have killed hundreds of American soldiers. Talk about a body and an idea that is ass-backwards, this is one for the ages.

To my friends inside of Saudi Arabia, I will push you to do better, and you need to look in the mirror about who you are, but I understand there are more pluses than there are minuses. To our enemies in Iran—who are not the Iranian people, it is the Ayatollah—as long as I am here with my colleagues, we are going to push back against you more, not less, we are going to help our Arab allies more, not less, as long as you are doing what you are doing.

To those who want to vote today to suspend this aid to Saudi Arabia, people in Iran will cheer you on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, while he is still on the floor, I just want to tell the Senator from South Carolina how much I appreciate his remarks. I agree with virtually everything he said. He is one of the most knowledgeable and articulate Members of the Congress on national security matters. He knows whereof he speaks and he speaks the truth.

JUSTICE AGAINST SPONSORS OF TERRORISM ACT

Madam President, I have come to the floor a few times this last week to talk about another piece of legislation called the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, known as JASTA. This might as well be known as the justice for the 9/11 families bill.

I support the position articulated by the Senator from South Carolina and will vote against the resolution of disapproval to block the Saudi arms sale. I believe that is the same position articulated by the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, Senator MCCAIN, and the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and I find myself in agreement with each of them. Some might say: Well, how can you agree to maintain the relationship with Saudi Arabia when it comes to providing them with the necessary arms they need in order to fight this proxy war by Iran against the Gulf State allies and at the same time support this Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, which some say may be focused on the Saudis. I would like to explain that.

First of all, let me just say that when I think about the Senate, I am reminded of the comments made by Robert Byrd, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia who is no longer with us. He wrote books on Senate procedure. He wrote a history of the United States Senate. He was truly a remarkable man. He was also former majority leader of the Senate and a force to be reckoned with. When I came to the Senate, Senator Byrd said, among other things: In the Senate, you

have no permanent allies. In the Senate, he said, you have no permanent enemies.

I believe what he meant by that was that on a case-by-case basis, people who come from different regions of the country, different States with different interests, will work together where their interests are aligned, and when they are not, they are going to differ—respectfully, I would hope—but they are not going to always do the same thing or see the world in exactly the same way. That doesn't mean we are enemies. That doesn't mean we are adversaries. That is just the way it works.

As I think about our relationship with countries such as Saudi Arabia—but it is not just Saudi Arabia, it is all of our international relationships—we are going to agree with them on matters of principle when our interests are aligned. We are. And certainly in the case of this arms sale, our interests are perfectly aligned.

Saudi Arabia finds itself in a very rough neighborhood, subjected to violence and war perpetrated by Iran, frequently through proxy groups such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other forces, but it is very much in the U.S. interest that Iran not continue to dominate the whole region in the Middle East. Obviously, they have made great strides in dominating and influencing Iraq.

Unfortunately, as a result of the misguided nuclear deal negotiated by the White House, Iran is now on a pathway toward a nuclear weapon. One can imagine what our other allies, such as Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States, are thinking. If our No. 1 adversary in the region is going to get a nuclear weapon, we may need to defend ourselves. By what? Well, by getting nuclear weapons. That makes the world a much more dangerous place.

My point is, when it comes to relationships between Senators from different States, representing different regions and different interests, even though we sometimes agree with each other, sometimes disagree with each other, that is just the way the Senate works, and that is the way I believe the world works. When our interests are aligned with countries such as Saudi Arabia, we will stand with them, and we hope they will stand with us. When they diverge, we are going to take a little different approach.

I believe it is absolutely imperative we override the forthcoming veto of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act so the families who suffered so much and lost so much on 9/11 can go to court and make the case, if they can, to hold whoever was responsible accountable. That is just as basic as anything in our system of justice. That is not for us to decide. We are not a court of law. The rules of procedure and the rules of evidence don't apply here. Sometimes I wish they did. In court, you can't just introduce hearsay or conspiracy theories and not back

them up. They have to be based upon reliable testimony as determined by a judge.

That is what the 9/11 families are going to get, is the opportunity to make their case, if they can. I don't know if they are going to be successful, but I do believe one of the most fundamental things about our system of government is the opportunity to try. If you think you have a case to make, present it to the judge and try to make your case. You may win. You may lose.

I spent 13 years of my adult life as a trial judge and on an appellate court, the Texas Supreme Court. Maybe I just became too familiar with how courts operate. Maybe I have more confidence in the ability of the courts to sift through these matters and get to the bottom of them than some of my other colleagues do, but I have confidence, by and large, in the Federal judiciary, and I believe under the oversight of a good Federal judge, they are going to enter the appropriate sort of protective orders necessary to protect people sued against overreaching and fishing expeditions when it comes to discovery, for example. The judge is going to make sure everybody plays by the rules and does not take unfair advantage.

So enough about that. But I believe, unlike a few of my colleagues whose comments I have read about, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act does not target a specific country. As I have mentioned time and time again, we don't even mention a specific country in the legislation. All it does is extend a law dating back to 1978—the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act—and it says that in a narrow set of facts, you may be able to sue a foreign government. In this case, if you sponsor or facilitate a terrorist attack on American soil, you will have been deemed by law to have waived your sovereign immunity and you will be held accountable in court.

Again, I have read the 28 pages that remain classified from the 9/11 report. I have read other responses from our law enforcement and intelligence authorities. I can't talk about that here. I will not talk about that here.

I believe the families do deserve an opportunity to make their case, and I trust that we will override the President's veto once it arrives here after Friday. But it is absolutely imperative that we keep our promises to our allies like Saudi Arabia, particularly where it serves our own national security interests. They live in the region. They are working as a counterbalance and a check on Iranian hegemony. As the Senator from South Carolina noted, Iran is the biggest troublemaker, not only in the Middle East but maybe on the planet. They have been trying to wipe Israel off the map using proxy forces like Hezbollah and Hamas. Obviously, they have been working their mischief in Iraq. After Saddam Hussein was deposed, President al-Maliki was put in place, but unfortunately because of his favoritism toward the Shia Mus-

lims and his opposition to Sunni Muslims, he essentially joined common cause with Iran. Now we find ourselves in the unenviable position, as U.S. military forces that are training and assisting Iranian security forces—as they march forward to Mosul to take that back from the Islamic State, we are literally going to be fighting side by side with Iranian militias directed by the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism. It is outrageous that we find ourselves in this situation.

I encourage our colleagues to vote against the resolution of disapproval. This bill would keep the United States from supporting Saudi Arabia in ways that benefit our country strategically. As we have heard, that includes tanks and other equipment to help the Saudis maintain control of their border in a very dangerous and tumultuous part of the world and most importantly to help them protect themselves from an emboldened Iran that is awash in cash as a result of the President's misguided, bad nuclear deal in lifting sanctions on the Iranians.

In the long run, I think voting for this bill would actually help Iran and strengthen its hand, and I certainly cannot and will not support that.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of suicide prevention, to continue to shine a light on the impact of suicide and to discuss the importance of efforts to strengthen mental health care. Sadly, too many Hoosiers and Americans are taken from us by suicide, shattering families and communities. Today, I want to talk about suicide prevention as it relates to our servicemembers, our veterans, and their families.

Last year, sadly, for the fourth straight year, more U.S. troops were lost to suicide than in combat. In 2015, 475 servicemembers took their own lives. Prior to that, we lost 443 servicemembers in 2014, and 474 servicemembers in 2013. We are painfully aware of the statistic that an estimated 20 veterans a day take their own lives.

These numbers allude to hundreds upon thousands of individual tragedies that have rocked our families, our communities, and our Nation. These numbers represent sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives who have dedicated their lives to the service of this Nation and have succumbed to invisible wounds. These numbers illustrate the simple, terrible fact that we are losing too many of our servicemembers and veterans to suicide. These numbers demand that we

keep efforts to improve military and veterans mental health services and suicide prevention efforts at the top of our to-do list in the Senate.

Despite gridlock in Congress, this is an issue where we have solid bipartisan consensus. I have seen it firsthand, working year after year with my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to work to improve military mental health care.

In 2014, my bipartisan Jacob Sexton Military Suicide Prevention Act was signed into law. The Sexton act, named for a young Hoosier whom we lost far too soon, established for the first time a requirement that every servicemember—Active, Guard, and Reserve—receive an annual mental health assessment.

Building on the success of the Sexton act, last year we had provisions of my bipartisan Servicemember and Veterans Mental Health Care Package signed into law, which helped expand access to quality mental health care for servicemembers and delivered mental health care in a way that meets the unique needs of servicemembers and veterans, whether through the Department of Defense or civilian providers right in our home communities.

While passing these laws is a step in the right direction, it will take a consistent, concerted effort to bring the number of servicemember suicides down to zero. We need to ensure that the laws we have passed, including the Sexton act and the care package, are implemented correctly so the services reach the troops and the veterans who need them the most. We need to keep working on smart legislation that streamlines access and strengthens the quality of mental health care.

This has been a top priority for me since I first introduced the Sexton act in 2013—my first bill as a U.S. Senator. It remains a top priority for me today.

This year, the final provision of my bipartisan care package passed the Senate as part of the national defense bill. It expands the ability of physician assistants to provide mental health care evaluations and services for servicemembers and their families. The bill establishes a pilot program to expand the use of physician assistants specializing in psychiatric care to help address the mental health care provider shortage.

This legislation can help make a difference for our servicemembers in Indiana and across the entire country. I urge Congress to come together on a final defense bill that can be sent to the President and signed into law.

There is no single solution that ends suicide. We may never fully understand the internal battles that lead to an individual taking his or her own life. However, this much is clear: We must do more to help prevent military and veteran suicides. Throughout September, we will recognize Suicide Prevention Month, but this issue demands our attention and our efforts every single day of the year.

To our servicemembers and veterans struggling with mental health challenges and to your loved ones, we are here for you, and we will not stop working until you receive the care you deserve and the support you need. We will be there with you every step of the way.

Mr. President, I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, you wouldn't think that I would have to keep coming here to talk about how it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to grow American manufacturing jobs, keep manufacturing jobs, and make sure American manufacturers are competitive in the global economy.

When young people come to my office to talk about the future, the one thing I tell them—and it is critical that you never forget this—is that 95 percent of all potential consumers in the world today do not live in this country. If you want to be successful in the future, you are going to have to be competitive and you are going to have to be innovative and do everything you can to grab that market share. That is how our economy is going to grow. It is what brings new wealth to our country, and that gives us the opportunity to advance an economic and political agenda that will move our country and the values we have in this democracy forward.

What do we do? We stall out by saying that even though 90 or 80 other countries have export credit agencies that can assist in financing those manufacturing jobs and those purchases, we, the United States of America, are going to tie the hands of a 70-year-old institution that has functioned incredibly well to bring jobs and wealth to our country. We are going to do it not because the will of this body and this Congress hasn't been expressed—in fact, it is the opposite.

When we reauthorized the Export-Import Bank, we were able to secure almost 70 percent of the Senate and over 70 percent of the House. It sounds like a mandate to me. It sounds like an understanding that most of the people in this institution understand the importance of a credit export agency. Guess what. We have now told our export agency: We are not going to give you the structure or the power to function. If you want to do a deal that is more than \$10 million, we won't be there. We will not be there to provide assistance or guarantees, and we will not be able to help American businesses be competitive internationally.

A lot of people will say: Well, those are just the big guys. Those are the

Boeings, GEs, and Caterpillars of the world.

That totally ignores how American manufacturing is done. American manufacturing is done in small shops all across this country, small businesses that have been a part of that supply chain for decades and have relied on the corporate innovation and selling of large aircraft, large construction equipment, and large gas turbines and generators.

Do you know what is going to happen when those manufacturers or assemblers do not have export financing? Guess what they do. They say: I have to move someplace else where I can get it. If I am going to sell my products in the global market, I have to be able to qualify for export financing, and that means I have to move those manufacturing jobs—manufacturing gas turbines or manufacturing small parts—to France, where there is an environment and government that understands the importance of providing this important trade resource.

As we sit here today collectively worried about the middle class and America's competitiveness in manufacturing and trying to grow our global presence and our global exports, we take one critical piece of trade infrastructure and say: Can't use it. It is not because people here don't think so or because the American people don't think that is a good idea.

When you talk about this with the American people, they say: That is crazy. Something that returns dollars to the Treasury and provides this resource to grow American jobs and we are not going to do it?

And I say: We are not going to do it because the conservative think tanks in Washington, DC, whose influence is outsized from their ideas and political support, decided it is not a good idea—whether it is Club for Growth, the Heritage Foundation, CATO, or whichever one comes forward and says it is not a good idea.

We are talking about American jobs and American manufacturing, and we can do something about it with a simple act, which in this CR we have to do because we can't move on the nominee who would give us a quorum on the Ex-Im Bank, and that is what is holding us up. The Ex-Im Bank operates like a lot of banks. It has a board of directors. When that board of directors doesn't have a quorum, they can't make decisions on credits over \$10 million. We have \$20 billion worth of business we could be doing internationally that is held up by the lack of a quorum.

I get it. We are about regular order, right? I don't know what regular order says about not sending a nominee out of a committee so we can vote him up or down. This is the argument I get: We have never had a debate. Really? I can't tell you how many times I have stood in this spot debating the Ex-Im Bank and the values and importance of the Export-Import Bank, but they say we haven't had a debate.

I said: If you want to have a debate, move the nominee to the floor and let's have a debate. You don't want to have a debate because you could lose.

They don't want to have a debate because they will, in fact, lose in this body if that nominee comes up.

I recognize there is support for regular order, if we can call it that. To me, regular order means getting your job done. It doesn't mean stalling out and stopping American innovation and American exports.

Let's say we go to regular order. Now we are working on trying to change the quorum rule so that people can actually make a decision and move these credits forward and get Americans back to work and get us back to exporting.

Where are we right now? Well, we read in the press that once again the outsized—for their political support—interest groups in this town are saying: Don't do it.

American manufacturing is hurt, and American manufacturing is calling and saying: We must do it, and we can't wait until the end of the year. We can't wait to do this credit.

The last time I came here, I brought what I call a payload, a front-end loader. I brought a loader here, and I talked about the manufacturing of that piece of equipment in my State. I talked about a huge credit and a huge deal we could do that involved international credit with a dealership, which would include manufacturers in Iowa, Kansas, and North Dakota—all American jobs. It obviously didn't influence anyone or we would have gotten it done.

So now I am asking that everybody who says they are for American workers, American progress, and American exports to call leadership. This is something we have to do. It is bipartisan and it is nonpartisan. I know the Democrats have put it on their list of asks, but it shouldn't be a Democratic-Republican issue. I have good allies on the other side of the aisle who want to move this forward as well. When we can't move a piece of legislation and an idea that has supermajority support, that is when the American public says: Guess what. This is a broken institution. This is an institution that doesn't function for the American people.

When American jobs and when American workers get pink slips because we aren't doing our job here, that is a sad day for the Congress, and it is a sad day for what we do here.

Standing on principle is one thing. You fought the fight and the Bank was reauthorized. Let's get the Bank fully functioning. Let's get a resolution and a provision in the continuing resolution that actually provides for reviving and moving the Ex-Im Bank forward.

As I have said before in this very spot, I don't go to bed worried about the CEOs of major companies. They have options. They can move those jobs overseas. They will function just fine. They are a part of multinational businesses. I go to bed worried about that

worker who has to come home with a pink slip because there is no longer the opportunity to sell what is being manufactured. Don't think that is not happening right now in the United States of America because it is. Those pink slips are on us. Those pink slips are happening because we have an institution that does not function in a majority fashion and for the people of this country and certainly for the middle class.

Everybody who says they are for the middle class, why don't we just quit engaging in lipservice and start taking action that tells American manufacturers, American workers, and American business that we are going to stand with them as they innovate, export, and grow the economy of this country?

When everybody says our economic growth is sluggish, I look at them and say: Do you know how we can amp it up? By exporting. Do you know why we are not exporting \$20 billion worth of goods in this country? Because we do not have a fully functioning Ex-Im Bank.

There is no way anyone could look at this logically and say this is good public policy.

I couldn't be more distraught or more sympathetic about what is happening to American workers. It is time we all work together.

I know the Presiding Officer is very interested in moving the Bank forward as well, and we all need to make sure we get this problem taken care of before we leave in October.

With that, I yield my time.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the vote that is going to take place at 2:15 p.m., and I urge my colleagues to vote to table this motion. The motion itself would keep us from being able to follow through on a sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.

It is my belief that the appropriate policy here is to table this motion, and let me take a few moments to share why I feel that way.

First of all, this is not a subsidized sale; this is a sale where a country is trying to buy U.S. weaponry with its own money. This is not the United States giving foreign aid to another country. This is a situation where an ally that is certainly an imperfect ally—they are very aware they have public relations issues within our own country for lots of reasons, but they are an ally nonetheless—has looked around and decided and feels it is the best thing for them to do relative to the purchase of the tanks and other

weaponry listed here. By the way, they already own tanks like this already, and they can go someplace else to purchase them.

Let me start out by saying that we had a huge debate in the Senate about the Iran nuclear deal. We ended up in different places. Fifty-eight people decided they didn't like it, but I think everyone probably has concerns about Iran and what they are doing in the Middle East.

During that timeframe, the administration met at Camp David with Saudi Arabia and some of our other Arab friends in the region and mentioned that in order to counter the nefarious activities Iran is involved in—and I think everyone in this body would agree they are involved in nefarious activities; they are a country we stated is a state sponsor of terrorism—in order to counter that, we would expedite sales to friends like Saudi Arabia and the UAE and other countries in the region, and this is a part of that. In essence, for us to back away from this would be saying we do not want to counter the nefarious activities of terrorism Iran is conducting in the region.

I understand my friend from Kentucky has heartfelt concerns about some of the aid we have provided other countries, and we have had very responsible discussions. Again, this is not aid. This is an ally we are utilizing in our alliance as a balance of power against what Iran is doing in the region. In essence, by not following through on sales to friends like Saudi Arabia and other countries, what we are really saying is, we want to undermine the balance of power that is created there in the region.

Let me say something else. I have noticed in this body that people are far less willing to want to commit U.S. troops in foreign places. There is a range of feelings about that, but I would say, generally speaking, I don't think there is any question that Americans are far less willing to commit massive ground troops to efforts in the Middle East. If we know that to be the mood of the public today, the last thing we would want to do is to not provide the armaments necessary for countries that might be willing to counter terrorism in the region.

Again, to me, this is one of those cases where I think the sponsors of the legislation and those who are advocating for it are well-meaning people, but it is a case where I think we are cutting our nose off to spite our face. I don't understand any policy objective we can be achieving by saying we have a country that wants to buy our equipment with their money—no foreign aid involved whatsoever—and we are unwilling to sell it to them.

Let me make one last point. We have an infrastructure in our country that is utilized to protect us in tough times. These are lines of building equipment that we utilize if we ever have to gear up, and I hope that is not the case again in the near future. If we ever

have to gear up again for operations in other countries, we rely upon these alliances. So what other countries do in purchasing equipment from us is they keep those lines and keep those employees and keep that technology building in such a way that it is useful for us in the future.

Again, I cannot identify a single policy objective we can achieve by blocking a sale to someone who has been an ally. Although not perfect, they are an ally. They are helping us with the balance of power. They are helping us in the fight against some of the efforts that are underway with Iran now in Yemen—we are not involved in that directly; they are helping us with that—and they are a country that again is willing to buy U.S.-made equipment that helps us keep in place the infrastructure that is necessary for us over time to protect our country.

I am glad we are having this debate. I hope we table this motion overwhelmingly to send a message that again we see no good policy objective in carrying out the blocking of this sale.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to address the issues at the heart of S. J. Res. 39, the resolution introduced by Senators PAUL, MURPHY, LEE, and FRANKEN regarding the sale of \$1.15 billion in military equipment to the Government of Saudi Arabia.

Despite obvious differences in our systems of government and concerning the rights of women and other issues, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a longstanding partnership that has benefited both countries. For roughly six decades, security cooperation has been an important part of the relationship, fueled by military sales to Saudi Arabia under both Republican and Democratic administrations. For its part, the Government of Saudi Arabia has pledged to work with the United States in countering terrorism in the region.

But what has been unfolding in Yemen since the spring of 2015 should concern all Senators. There have been frequent, credible reports of Saudi Arabian armed forces indiscriminately attacking civilian-populated areas, targeting civilians, and otherwise misusing U.S.-origin weapons; of humanitarian access being impeded; and of a lack of serious investigations of, and accountability for, those who have alleged to have caused civilian casualties.

I am not opposed to training and equipping our allies or selling them the weapons they require to combat terrorism. But the conditions under which we provide such support must include a commitment to avoid civilian casualties and to ensure that if egregious harm is done to the civilian population there are thorough investigations, punishment if warranted, and assistance is provided to the victims. We should also be confident that the strategy and tactics of our allies are achieving goals that we share.

Since the earliest reports of harm inflicted by Saudi forces on the civilian

population in Yemen, I have repeatedly raised this issue with the Department of State. Although the Department and Saudi officials have offered assurances that effective steps are being taken to avoid civilian casualties and to investigate when they occur, the attacks and casualties have continued. Efforts by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct an independent investigation into war crimes in Yemen have to date been rebuffed by the Saudi Government. There is scant evidence that the assurances reflect a meaningful change in strategy or tactics or that the Saudi military operations in Yemen are achieving their goals.

That is why I cannot support the provision of military equipment, particularly on this scale, to any country as long as legitimate concerns regarding the manner in which such equipment is being used remain unaddressed. It is inconsistent with the laws of war, and it implicates, at least indirectly, the United States. I need to be convinced that the Saudi Government is taking effective steps to reduce civilian casualties, to address the harm caused by its operations, and to support the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to those in need.

Therefore, I will support the resolution and oppose the motion to table.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, today the Senate will discuss questions of war and peace. Today the Senate will do its constitutional duty for a change. Let's be very clear, though. The Senate does this under duress.

The Senate has abdicated its role in foreign policy for too long. We have been at war nearly continuously for 15 years and the initiation, conclusion, and resumption of war has not had debate in this body. The last time we voted on whether we should be at war was the Iraq war, which was a very emotional vote. It is a war that has long been over.

There is now a new war in Iraq and Syria, but there has been no congressional authorization. Therefore, it is illegal and unconstitutional.

Today's debate will attempt to debate whether or not we should initiate war in Yemen. It is an indirect vote because they won't allow a direct vote. In fact, they would not have allowed this debate had I and several others not forced it. But this is a bipartisan coalition that has brought this issue to the floor and said: We should debate issues of war.

I know young men who have lost limbs in the war. I know young men

and their families who have sacrificed their lives. They deserve to have the country debate when and where we should be at war. It should never be something that we slide into.

Now, some will say: No, we are debating over whether to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. Yes, but I would also argue that we are at war in Yemen. Whether or not we sell arms to Saudi Arabia for the war in Yemen is something that should be debated because it is not just about selling arms. It is about whether we will be complicit in a war in Yemen.

If there is no debate in Congress, if there is no debate in the public, are we ready to spend lives, money, and treasure on another war in Yemen? People will say: Oh, no big deal, we are not really at war in Yemen. Well, yes, we are. We are refueling Saudi bombers that are dropping bombs in Yemen. There is said to be over 3,000 innocent people who have died in Yemen from Saudi bombs. What do you think happens to those families when 100 people die in a wedding in Yemen? What do you think happens to those families? Do you think they have a warm, fuzzy feeling for Saudi Arabia and the United States, which is helping to pick the targets and fuel the planes? Don't you think we as a country ought to have a debate before we go to war? Don't you think we ought to read the Constitution?

Our Founding Fathers had a significant, detailed, and explicit debate over war. They explicitly took the power to declare war, and they gave it to the legislature. Madison wrote that the executive is the branch most prone to war. Therefore, with studied care, the Constitution took the power to declare war and vested it in the legislature. This is repeated throughout the Federalist papers. It is repeated by all of our Founding Fathers that the power to initiate war was too important to place in the hands of one individual.

But over the last decade and a half, we have been at war in Libya without the permission of the American people or Congress. We have been at war in Syria and Iraq without the permission of the American people. Now we are at war in Yemen without the approval of Congress or the American people.

So this is a twofold debate today. It is a debate over whether the United States should be at war without a vote of Congress. I think our Founding Fathers were clear on this. It is absolutely certain that it was supposed to be a prerogative of Congress, but there are also practical concerns.

Some have come to the floor and said: Well, Saudi Arabia is an imperfect ally. Well, I would go a little bit further. Saudi Arabia has often done things that have not been good for America, have not been in our national interest, and have not been consistent with our understanding of human rights.

Let's give a few examples. The girl of Qatif was raped by seven men. Saudi Arabia put her in prison for the crime

of being alone with a man. You see, it is the woman's fault because women don't get to testify. The testimony comes from her attackers, and the woman of Qatif was given 7 years in prison and 200 lashes.

There is a poet who was writing in Indonesia who is Saudi Arabian and who was picked up by Interpol and taken home to be given the death penalty for possible criticism of the state religion.

There was a young 17-year-old man who is a Shia, a minority, who was a protester at a rally. I think he is 21 now. He has been in prison for 4 years. His uncle was beheaded by the government 1 month or 2 ago and was, by all appearances, a religious leader, not a collaborator, not an espionage perpetrator. The man is now 21, has been in prison for 4 years, and faces beheading in Saudi Arabia.

You might say: Well, human rights just aren't important. We need to do what is right for us in the region. We have given Saudi Arabia \$100 billion worth of weapons—\$100 billion. OK, we didn't give it to them; we sold it to them. But you know what. I think the taxpayer owns our weaponry. We have an ownership interest in our weaponry. This is not the free market. The weaponry was developed with taxpayer money and with explicit reservations that we in Congress can control who it is sold to. So we do need to ask, and it is an important debate, and we should be having it here in this body instead of leaving it up to the President. Let's have the debate.

Is Saudi Arabia a good ally?

Well, we have had this war in Syria for some time now. It is a messy war, a sectarian war. Most of the rebel groups are Sunni Muslims and the government is more allied with the Shiites. In this war, there have been hundreds and hundreds of tons of weapons—some by us, but maybe 10-fold more by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. There has been public report after public report after public report saying that these weapons that are being poured into the country by Saudi Arabia have been given indiscriminately. They have been weapons about which some would say: Oh, they are being given to the pro-Americans. One group said that when they were done with Assad, they would go after Israel. It doesn't sound like people who are necessarily our friends.

According to public reports, many of these weapons that Saudi Arabia has bought from us and channeled into Syria have gone to al-Nusra, an off-branch of Al Qaeda. They used the justification to go to war in Syria—the 9/11 justification that said we would go after those who attacked us. I thought that was Al Qaeda. Are we now giving arms to Saudi Arabia, which is giving arms to Al Qaeda and al-Nusra? There have been some reports that the arms have gone directly to ISIS.

I think it has been indiscriminate, inexcusable, and not in our national interest.

How do we know what is in our national interest? We have to have a debate. Instead, Congress wants to be a lap dog for an imperial Presidency—Republican or Democrat, rubberstamped. Here you go—not even a rubberstamp. There is no vote, no discussion, nothing. We are forcing this debate against the wishes of both parties, because both parties are complicit in this. This is not a Republican versus Democrat issue. This is a bipartisan foreign policy consensus that says that we should always give weapons without conditions, indiscriminately. It is \$100 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia—more than any other President. President Obama has given more.

You say: Why does he do this? Well, because we released about \$100 billion worth of Iranian assets, and the Saudis bug him and say: Well, Iran is getting all this money. We need weapons, too. So it fuels an arms race over there.

But here is the great irony of this. It is something that is so ironic that this body cannot overcome it. Unanimously, this body voted to let 9/11 victims sue Saudi Arabia. Now, why would we let them do that unless the people who voted unanimously actually believe that there is a possibility Saudi Arabia had something to do with 9/11? So the body that voted unanimously that there is a possibility that Saudi Arabia had something to do with 9/11 is now going to vote overwhelmingly to send weapons to the country they think might have had something to do with 9/11?

Is Saudi Arabia an ally or an enemy? I sometimes call them “frenemy.” I am not arguing that they never do anything that is good for us. They do on occasion. They also do many things that aren’t good for us. As we look through the list of things and we look to the arms that have been channeled into this region, we wonder: Will we be better off? Will our national security be better off or worse off?

For example, as to the weapons that Saudi Arabia poured into Syria, they pushed back Assad, and there occurred a vacuum in the Syrian civil war. Guess who came to occupy that vacuum? Guess who grew stronger and stronger in the absence of Assad and in the chaos of the civil war? ISIS.

In Yemen, you have several factions fighting. It is maybe not quite as complicated as Syria, but you have Salafis, people who believe in the primitive, intolerant form of Islam that Saudi Arabia practices. These people are allied with Saudi Arabia. They are fighting against rebels they call the Houthi rebels. The Houthi rebels are allied with Iran and in all likelihood are supplied by Iran. They fight each other. It is somewhat of a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

You say: Don’t we hate Iran so much that we have to be involved everywhere to stop Iran? I don’t know. Saudi Arabia funds hatred around the world. Does Iran fund madrassas in our country? That is a really good question. I don’t think I heard anybody ask it.

I am not apologizing for Iran, by any means, but Iran, to my knowledge, does not fund madrassas in our country. Saudi Arabia does. Saudi Arabia funds madrassas around the world that teach hatred of America, hatred of the West, and hatred of Christianity. By the way, if you are a Christian, don’t bother trying to go to Saudi Arabia. You are not allowed in Mecca, you are not allowed in Medina, and God forbid you bring a Bible into their country. This is whom we want to send more weapons to?

What of the Yemen war? What happens as the weapons pour into Yemen? Is it possible that ISIS and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula sit by laughing and rubbing their hands, watching the war between the Houthis and the Salafis, and then step into the breach? It is what happened in Syria.

Are we not to learn the lessons of the Middle East? Are we to completely stick our heads in the sand and say: We must always give weapons, and if we don’t give weapons, that is isolationism. That is, literally, what people are saying. It is isolationism not to send \$1 billion worth of weapons. To send \$1 billion less would somehow be isolationism. Well, perhaps it would send a message.

There have been people who have described Saudi Arabia as both arsonists and firefighters—throwing fuel and adding fuel to the flames and at times being our friend and being helpful, maybe giving us some information or some intelligence.

As to the Syrian civil war, nothing good has come from that civil war. Arms have been plowed into that country from both sides, and there is nothing good. But one concrete thing has come from the Syrian civil war—millions of refugees, millions of displaced people. They have flooded Europe, and they are wanting to come to America also.

What do you think will happen in Yemen if we put more weapons in there? What do you think happens in Yemen if we put more arms into Yemen? More or less refugees? There will be millions of refugees coming. They will be flooding out of Yemen, if they can get out of there, as the war accelerates.

Does Saudi Arabia help with the refugees? Does Qatar help? Do any of the Gulf States take any refugees? Zero. Saudi Arabia has taken zero refugees. So while they fan the flames, while they send arms into Syria and arms into Yemen and bombs into Yemen, they take zero refugees from Yemen or from Syria. Somehow it always seems to be America’s responsibility to pay for everything and to absorb the brunt of the civil wars throughout the Middle East.

I think there is another answer. I am not saying that we can’t be allied with Saudi Arabia, but I am saying that they need a significant message sent to them. I am saying they need to change their behavior, and I am saying there

needs to be evidence that Saudi Arabia has changed their behavior. This evidence needs to be that they quit funding madrassas that preach hate; that they come into the modern world and quit beheading people when they don’t like what they say; that they quit beating and imprisoning the victims of rape.

I think we should think long and hard about war. I think war should always be the last resort, not the first resort. I don’t think it should be easy to go to war. I think our Founding Fathers understood that. They did not want to give one man or one woman the power to declare war, the power to initiate war. That power was specifically and explicitly given to Congress.

There is something to be said about the corrupting influence of power. Lincoln said: If you want to test a man, give him power. The true test is whether a man can resist the allure of power. I think this President has, on many occasions, failed that allure, whether it is privacy or whether it is issues of war.

President Obama once was a defender of privacy and once was a defender of the Constitution, but for some reason, the power of the office has caused him to forget the constitutional restraints that disallow even him from creating, causing, engaging in war without our permission.

But there is blame to go around. For partisan reasons, we want to blame the other party sometimes, but if you look at the blame and who is to blame, there is a great deal of blame to go around—the President for taking us to war without our permission, but even more so, Congress for its abdication of our role, our responsibility.

The last vote on going to war was for the Iraq war in 2002. We have not voted to go back to war. We have abdicated our responsibility.

There is a young man in the military currently who is actually suing over an order he was given to go to war because he said it is not constitutional for him to go to war without the permission of Congress. The President once understood this.

This is a proxy debate over whether Congress has a role, whether we are relevant in foreign policy, and whether we will stand up and do our duty. We should be debating on this floor with every Member present whether the President will be authorized to fight a war in Syria and Iraq.

We should also have that same debate on Yemen because we are involved in the war in Yemen, and everyone who loses their life there believes that it is not only Saudi Arabia that is bombing them, they believe it is us. We are refueling the bombers in midair, we are helping to choose the targets, and we have people embedded within this war zone. So make no mistake, we are at war in Yemen. We are at war illegally and unconstitutionally and without the permission of Congress.

We should immediately stop everything we are doing and debate a use of

authorization of force for the Middle East. Everybody says they are for it on both sides, yet it never happens because it is messy. It is messy also because I think the American people might wake up to the facts. They might wake up to the fact that ISIS grew in the midst of a Syrian civil war. They might wake up to the fact that our involvement in the Yemen war may well make Al Qaeda stronger, may well make ISIS stronger.

This is a twofold debate. It is a debate over whether you can go to war without the authority of Congress, but it is also a debate over selling arms and whether that will be in our national interest. I think we still do own these arms. Those arms are not privately owned by a company. We paid for the research for them. They are owned by the taxpayer, and by law there are restrictions as to where they can be sold.

I don't believe Saudi Arabia is an ally we can trust. The fact is, they continue to support schools in our country—schools that preach hatred of our country, preach hatred of Israel, and preach hatred of civilization, as far as I am concerned. I just don't see how we send them the correct message by saying: You can have unlimited arms from us.

Some say this is too far. I say this is too little. But I think there will be something that occurs today. It will occur despite what the majority wants. This is a debate, but this is not the end of the debate. If we lose the battle on the vote, we will have begun the debate over whether Congress is relevant. Whether or not we go to war without the permission of Congress, this is the beginning of the debate. Part of the victory is that we are having this debate, but mark my words—we are having this debate only because it has been forced upon Congress. No one on either side of the aisle wants this debate. If they could, this would be shuffled under the rug. It has occurred only because the law mandates that they allow it to occur. But this should be occurring on moments of war, on issues of war, and I regret that we don't do it.

I hope in the future this will be a lesson to the American people and to the Senate that it is our duty, and there is no duty above our duty to decide when and where we go to war.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISHER). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I have respect for my friend from Kentucky. We have had numbers of conversations about this. I think he is aware that I am holding up, as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, subsidies going to Pakistan in their purchase of F-16s. I do so because I don't believe we should be subsidizing a country that has been so duplicitous with us in so many ways.

So there are some issues we agree with, including the fact that I am glad to be having this debate. I do think Congress is playing a role today. Regardless of how you vote, Congress is

exercising itself. I am glad that is occurring. I just think it is cutting our nose off to spite our face to block a sale—a sale. This is not being subsidized.

Saudi Arabia is not a perfect ally, but they have chosen to pursue and purchase U.S. equipment versus Russian equipment or Chinese equipment or some other equipment. This is a sale that benefits us. It benefits our country in a number of ways. If I may, I will lay those out one more time.

No. 1, one of the things that have occurred with the Iran deal is that we have upset, to a degree, perceptually the balance of power in the Middle East. Even the President, who brought forth the Iran deal that I opposed and the majority of people on the floor opposed, realized that was going to be a problem. He convened Saudi Arabia and the UAE and some of our other Arab allies at Camp David and suggested that we would expedite sales to these countries in order to push back against the nefarious activities that we know Iran is conducting. All of us agree with that. They are a state sponsor of terror.

So, in essence, if we block a sale to a country that we have agreed, in order to strengthen our alliance with them and to counter what Iran is doing—all we are doing is cutting our nose off to spite our face.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CORKER. Yes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it correct that in Yemen, the Houthis are a proxy for Iran?

Mr. CORKER. No question.

Mr. MCCAIN. It is true that weapons supplies from Iran have been intercepted?

Mr. CORKER. We have interdicted them several times.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it true—would you estimate, given your knowledge of the issue, that if Saudi Arabia had not intervened in Yemen, it would now have become a client state and would have been taken over basically by the Iranians?

Mr. CORKER. I don't think that is even debatable.

Mr. MCCAIN. So you agree—

Mr. CORKER. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. Isn't it true that in all conflicts—one of the great tragedies of conflicts is that innocent civilians are slaughtered?

Mr. CORKER. No question. As a matter of fact, we have actually demarched, in some ways, Saudi Arabia because we felt in some ways, using what we might call "dumb bombs," that civilians were being killed in inappropriate ways. They have moved to using other weaponry, smart bombs, and other kind of things to move away from that.

So we don't think Saudi Arabia has been perfect in Yemen. No doubt civilians have been killed. But the facts that you are stating about pushing back against an Iranian proxy are true.

Had they not done that, the country would have fallen into their hands, no question.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I ask again the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee: Suppose that, unimpeded, the Houthis, the clients of the Iranians, had taken over the country of Yemen. What would that do? Would that, indeed, pose a threat to the Straits of Hormuz, where they are already harassing American naval vessels?

Mr. CORKER. It creates greater instability in a region that already has had tremendous amounts of it. But no question—I mean, it borders the Straits. Again, it puts more of that in Iranian hands, no question.

Mr. MCCAIN. Would it be accurate to state that your committee has held hearings on human rights, your committee has advocated improvements of human rights in Saudi Arabia, and it is the thinking of almost all of us that we want to see more progress in that direction? But at the same time, isn't it true that when we look at what Bashar al-Assad is doing, when we look at the slaughter of 400,000 people in Syria, 6 million refugees, would one assume that maybe this priority of the sponsors of this amendment might be a little bit misplaced?

Mr. CORKER. Look, I was speaking earlier about this issue, which no one knows more about than the Senator from Arizona, but one of the basic national interests that we have in the Middle East is the balance of power.

As you know well, people in our country have been far more reticent to have our own men and women on the ground in the Middle East. I mean, that is just a fact. We know that. If that is the case, then if you have a country like Saudi Arabia that is willing to push back against these efforts which, again, further Iran, it seems to me that we would want to allow them to buy equipment to be able to do that. So it helps us with the balance of power. It helps us with an ally. It helps us push back against Iran, and the thing I know you care so much about is our own readiness in the United States. It also keeps the lines of building equipment open. That could be very useful to us down the road. So I don't understand what policy objective could possibly be achieved by blocking this sale.

Mr. MCCAIN. May I ask one more question concerning the so-called 28 pages that recently have been declassified? Isn't it true that information implicates individual Saudis as having been responsible for 9/11? Isn't it true that no one disagrees with that?

Mr. CORKER. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. But isn't it also true that the Government of Saudi Arabia has not been implicated by these so-called 28 pages that were going to reveal the vast conspiracy that the Government of Saudi Arabia allegedly for years had—the adversaries, shall I say, had alleged that somehow the Saudi

Government was involved in? Isn't it true that the 28 pages show they were not?

Mr. CORKER. That is right. One thing that is sad about this in some ways is that everything you have said is true. But in addition to that, there are some intelligence community affidavits that go on top of these and explain even more fully that that is the case. Yet those documents, because they are classified, likely will not be made available to the U.S. public. But I have seen them, you have seen them, and others here have seen them. There is a huge misunderstanding, if you will, about what these 28 pages contain. Then, what has come after that by other intelligence agencies within our own country further state with even greater strength some of the things that you just said. There is just no evidence.

Mr. McCAIN. So, if this proposal or this piece of legislation were passed, I would ask my friend: What message is sent? What message would be sent, supposing that we voted in favor of this misguided resolution that we are now debating?

Mr. CORKER. I think it sends—

Mr. McCAIN. Not only to Saudi Arabia—

Mr. CORKER. Yes.

No, I think it sends a signal.

Look, I don't think anybody can debate—we have had these discussions in our Foreign Relations Committee. I know you have had them in Armed Services, where you are the distinguished chairman.

I think everyone on both sides of the aisle understands what a blow to our credibility—this is not a pejorative statement—has occurred to us since August–September of 2013. People understand in the region and in the world our credibility has diminished over the redline. This is just sending a signal to people even more fully that we cannot be counted upon; that the objectives we lay out to achieve a balance of power, to help our friends, to counter the nefarious activities that everyone acknowledges Iran is conducting cannot be conducted. It is another stake in the heart about what we value most about our Nation; that is, our credibility to others.

I hope this is defeated.

I appreciate my friend from Kentucky and his feelings about this particular issue. I don't look at this as a proxy for some other issue relative to the declaration of war. That, to me, is a stretch. This is about a direct relationship and other relationships that you are referring to and—basically—demonstrating that we as a nation cannot be counted upon.

Mr. McCAIN. I thank the Senator, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, for his stewardship of the Foreign Relations Committee, for his in-depth knowledge and advocacy for a strong America and strong alliances.

I think the voice you have added to this debate should have an effect, I

hope, on both sides of the aisle. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, there is probably no greater issue before Congress at any time in our lives or any time in our service than whether we should go to war. I think it is a mistake to slide into war. I think it is a mistake to allow the power to declare war to default to one person. Our Founding Fathers were very clear throughout the Federalist Papers, explicitly in the Constitution, that the power to declare war shouldn't go to one person; that the power to declare war should be determined by a vote of Congress. We have abdicated that role, and the vote today is a vote over whether we should try to reclaim that power.

Some will say: Well, it is just arms, and if we don't sell them, somebody else will.

Well, you know, I don't think of national security as a jobs program. I don't think of whether we create jobs here at home. I think about the young man who lives down the road from me who lost both legs and an arm, OK? I think about the human toll of war. I think about whether there is a national security interest, but I think nothing at all about whether any jobs are created.

If we make weapons and we have a weapons industry, that is good for our country when we make them for ourselves, but when we are selling weapons around the world, by golly, we shouldn't sell weapons to people who are not putting them to good purpose. What we have found is that Saudi Arabia is an irresponsible ally.

One of the great ironies that nobody here can quite explain is that this body has voted unanimously to let the people of 9/11 sue Saudi Arabia. So we are going to let the person who we think might have had something to do with Saudi Arabia have more weapons? What kind of signal is that to Saudi Arabia?

Would Saudi Arabia be bereft of weapons if we held \$1 billion out? No. We have already sold them \$99 billion worth. They have enough to blow up the Middle East 10 times over. I think it might send them a message.

Do you know what. Stop the sale, send them a message. Do you know what the message might be? Quit funding madrasas that teach hate in our country. Don't tell us you are going to stop doing it.

Saudi Arabia, tomorrow, stop funding madrasas in America that teach hatred, that teach intolerance. Stop putting Christians to death. Stop putting people who convert to Christianity to death. Stop beheading protesters.

The one young man who is a protestor in Saudi Arabia is scheduled to be beheaded and crucified. Does that sound like somebody who is a great ally with a great human rights record?

The young woman who was raped by seven men—she was put in prison. She

was told it was her fault for being alone with the man. She was publicly whipped.

Poets have been picked up around the world and brought back to Saudi Arabia to be whipped for what they write.

Do you trust Saudi Arabia to do the right things with your weapons? These weapons are owned by the American taxpayer. We built them. We did the research into them. Private companies make money off of them, but it isn't about them making money. It isn't about them getting to sell the weapons instead of Russia selling the weapons. It is about our national security.

Saudi Arabia's indiscriminate placement of weapons into the Syrian civil war has led to the rise of ISIS. ISIS grew stronger as Saudi Arabia was flying weapons to al-Nusra, Al Qaeda, and likely some of them to ISIS.

We now have a war in Yemen. Yes, we are directly involved in the war. Yes, this is a vote not just about weapons, this is a vote about whether we should be at war in Yemen. We are refueling the Saudi bombers in midair. Our military planes are, in a sophisticated fashion, refueling their planes. Do you think the Yemenis think: Oh, no big deal. You know, 3,000 citizens have died. When you go to a wedding in Yemen and you get a bomb dropped on you from Saudi Arabia, do you think you have warm, fuzzy feelings for our great ally, Saudi Arabia?

Absolutely, we should be telling Saudi Arabia what to do. These are our weapons. Do you know when they are willing to listen? It is when we argue from a position of strength.

Do you know what is the ultimate weakness? Give them what they want. Giving the arms industry what they want is the ultimate weakness. We look weak, and we look bowed before and cowed before the Saudi Arabians.

As they sit back in their long robes sipping tea, refugees bob about the Mediterranean. People are starving and displaced in Yemen. Not one of them will come to Saudi Arabia, not one of them will be allowed in the country.

Yes, this is a debate about war, and this is a debate about whether you want to be at war in Yemen. It is not just a debate about sending and selling another \$1 billion of weapons, it is about should we be at war in Yemen. It is about should we be at war anywhere without the permission of Congress.

This is not a small occurrence. This is not a small happening. This is a big deal. This is the most important vote that any legislator will ever have. Should we be at war or shouldn't we be at war?

Those who want to make this about a jobs program, about we are going to get some sales of tanks—no, it is not a jobs program. It is about young men and women dying in a war. It is about whether it is in our national interests. It is about whether we are going to be safer. Shouldn't we have a debate over whether the war in Yemen is making us safer?

We certainly should have had a debate about the war in Libya. Did that make us safer? Once Qadhafi was gone, chaos ensued. ISIS controls one-third of Libya after the war as a result of the war.

We are now bombing in Libya. We are bombing the replacement to the government we bombed. So we bombed Qadhafi into oblivion. We don't like the people who replaced him either so we are bombing them. Does anybody think that maybe it is a mistake?

This is what this debate is about. What should American foreign policy be? Should Congress lie down and be a lapdog for the President—let him do whatever he wants? That is what a vote on this will mean if you let the President have what he wants, if you let the arms industry have what they want because they can make a buck selling tanks into a war that is a catastrophe.

In the Wall Street Journal, Simon Henderson wrote that the chaos and violence in Yemen is such that it would be an improvement to call it a civil war.

It is hard to know who is friend and foe. Even our former Ambassador to Syria has said, in Syria, it is almost impossible to know friend from foe.

People have repeatedly written that Saudi weapons in Syria have gone to the wrong people. It is not like: Whoops, Saudi Arabia is sometimes wrong, and they are not that bad. They have a horrific human rights record. There are people who believe them to be complicit in 9/11. This body voted unanimously to let the 9/11 victims sue them, and now this body wants to give them weapons? Does no one sense the irony?

As we move forward on this vote, everyone should understand that this is a proxy vote for whether we should be at war in the Middle East because neither side—the leadership on neither side—will allow a vote on whether we should authorize force. Neither side will let the constitutional debate occur on whether we should be at war.

I see my colleague from Connecticut. Would he like to have the last word?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. I thank the Senator.

Madam President, I do think this is an important moment. As I said in my opening remarks, I don't think a vote in favor of this resolution fundamentally breaks the alliance with Saudi Arabia.

They remain an incredibly important partner. We will still cooperate with them with respect to other counterterrorism measures. We understand the importance of the role they play in the Middle East with respect to providing some sort of detente between Sunni nations and Israel, but friends also have the ability to part ways. Friends have the ability to call each other out when their friend isn't acting in their interests.

As we have talked about over the course of the last few hours, there is no

way to read the war in Yemen as in our national security interests. There is no way to understand how the growth of Al Qaeda and ISIS inside Yemen, as a result of a bombing campaign that is funded by the United States, is in our national interests.

I hope we have a good vote because I think it will send a strong message to the Saudis that their behavior has to change, but I hope we are able to find other ways where Republicans and Democrats can come together to talk about these issues because Senator PAUL is right. We are not doing our constitutional duty. We are not performing our constitutional responsibility when we acknowledge multiple conflicts in the Middle East that are unauthorized today—when we don't come to the floor of the Senate and do what we used to do, which is debate matters of war and peace.

Maybe war looks different today than it did 20 years ago or 50 years ago or 100 years ago, when conventional armies marched against each other, but this smells, this looks, and this sounds like war. We are providing the ammunition. We are providing the targeting assistance. The planes couldn't fly without U.S. refueling capacity.

We may not be—American pilots may not actually be pulling the trigger to drop the bombs, but we are pretty much doing everything else that is necessary for this war to continue. It sounds like we should have a say, as a coequal branch, as the article I instituted, as to whether this is in U.S. national security interests.

At the very least, by saying it is time to put a pause on these arms sales—which, by the way, are happening at a pace that is unprecedented. There are unprecedented levels of arms sales, not just to Saudi Arabia but to the region at large. By saying it is time to put a pause on arms sales, we send a strong message to our ally, Saudi Arabia, that if the conduct of this war doesn't change inside Yemen, if their continued export of Wahhabism to the world doesn't change, then we all have to rethink this partnership.

Friends occasionally disagree. I think this is a moment of important disagreement. This doesn't fracture the partnership with Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, it may make our partnership stronger.

I thank Senator PAUL for leading us, and I encourage my colleagues to support this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I think it would be wonderful to debate many of the things, at any time, that any Senator wishes to debate, but to use this as a proxy for something totally unrelated, to me, is a most unusual way of approaching the other issues that have been discussed.

This has nothing to do with a declaration of war. This has nothing to do with any of those things. This is about whether we want to consummate a

sale, a purchase—an arm's length purchase—between two countries that we have said, as a national policy, would help strengthen our own U.S. national interests.

If we will remember, the President actually convened—by the way, in a bipartisan way, we supported this—convened these countries to share with them that we were going to be willing to expedite the sale of arms to counter Iranian influence in the region and to continue to have the balance of power that is on the ground.

Again, I think, today, based on just the conversations I have had, Republicans and Democrats are going to come together overwhelmingly to table this motion that is definitely, from my standpoint, not in U.S. national interests. I do think what they are speaking to is going to occur. My sense is, there is going to be an overwhelming vote to table this because people realize that while the optics of it—you know, Saudi Arabia, people are wondering about them, which is true—at the end of the day, a vote for this resolution, again, cuts our nose off to spite our face.

We are here to do those things that are in our own country's national interest, and I hope today we will bind together and continue to do that by tabling this motion.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I move to table the motion to discharge and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) is necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) would vote "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 145 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Boozman	Carper
Ayotte	Brown	Casey
Barrasso	Burr	Cassidy
Bennet	Capito	Coats
Blunt	Cardin	Cochran

Collins	Hoeven	Reed
Coons	Inhofe	Risch
Corker	Isakson	Roberts
Cornyn	Johnson	Rounds
Cotton	King	Rubio
Crapo	Lankford	Sasse
Cruz	Manchin	Schumer
Daines	McCain	Scott
Donnelly	McCaskill	Sessions
Enzi	McConnell	Shaheen
Ernst	Menendez	Shelby
Feinstein	Merkley	Sullivan
Fischer	Mikulski	Tillis
Flake	Moran	Toomey
Gardner	Murkowski	Vitter
Graham	Nelson	Warner
Grassley	Perdue	Whitehouse
Hatch	Peters	Wicker
Heitkamp	Portman	

NAYS—27

Baldwin	Heller	Paul
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kirk	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Leahy	Stabenow
Durbin	Lee	Tester
Franken	Markey	Udall
Gillibrand	Murphy	Warren
Heinrich	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Kaine	Thune
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The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be given 1 minute so I can give a short speech.

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

NASA LEGISLATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we just passed a NASA bill in the Commerce Committee, and we are going to Mars. We are going to Mars in the decade of the 2030s with humans, and the bill sets the goal of having a colonization of other worlds. This is a new and exciting time in our Nation's space exploration program and particularly now with the human exploration program. I thought that would be good news for the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS WILSON

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to raise my concern about another nominee who has been on hold in this body for months. I am sad to say that this has been an ongoing issue with the Senate. People have been nominated—good people who are very well qualified—and then their nomination doesn't get acted upon.

One of those people is Douglas Wilson, who has been nominated to serve

on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. This is probably a Commission that most people don't even know exists, and yet Mr. Wilson has been on hold since June 13, when his nomination was referred to the floor. He actually was nominated by the President in March.

He is eminently qualified. He is a noncontroversial nominee. The Republican Vice Chairman of the Commission, William Hybl, has urged the Senate to confirm Mr. Wilson, and yet his confirmation remains blocked for reasons that seem completely unrelated to the nominee or his qualifications.

I believe it is time for the Senate to confirm Mr. Wilson so that the Commission can be fully constituted to carry out its important mission. Surely, these days when there are so many hotspots around the world, when there is so much going on, it would be helpful to have the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy in place and fully staffed up to be able to help advise on so many of the conflicts that we see going on in the world.

Doug Wilson has had a distinguished career of more than three and a half decades in the public and private sector. After graduating from Stanford University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Doug became a Foreign Service officer serving in posts throughout Europe and later with senior positions with the U.S. Information Agency. During the Clinton administration, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs under Secretary Cohen. Most recently, from 2010 to 2012, he was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, serving as a principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense.

He is a three-time recipient of the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award, the Pentagon's highest civilian honor. Since 2013, he has been a senior fellow and chair of the board of advisers at the Truman National Security Project. In 2009, he was the founding chair of the board of directors at Harvard's Public Diplomacy Collaborative. I think there is no question that Doug Wilson is extremely qualified. He has worked in a bipartisan way over the years.

I have had the great pleasure of knowing Doug for more than 30 years. When I first met him, he was a foreign policy adviser to then-Senator Gary Hart. He worked in that role again when Senator Hart ran for President in 1984.

The fact is that the work of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy has never been more important and urgent. One of the great foreign policy challenges of our day is countering the poisonous ideology of violent extremist groups. Another is countering Russian propaganda and Russian meddling in Europe and central Asia. The Commission plays an important role in helping our Nation address these challenges, and we need people with the right experience and the right

judgment to serve on that Commission—people like Doug Wilson.

I am disappointed that this nomination of someone so eminently qualified—someone who has support on both sides of the aisle and from the Republican Vice Chairman of that Commission, Mr. Hybl—continues to remain on hold before this body. I don't know why. For some reason someone has objected to this moving forward. We don't know who that is. We don't know what their objections are.

That is one of the challenges we have in this body that needs to change if government is going to operate the way the people of this country expect.

So I am going to keep coming to the floor. I am going to keep trying to move Doug Wilson's nomination, as I have since June. I am hopeful that at some point the majority will hear these concerns and agree that we should approve him and make sure that this Commission is fully functioning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized, and following my remarks, Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania be recognized, followed by Senator SANDERS from Vermont, followed by Senator WARREN from Massachusetts, and followed by Senator ALEXANDER from Tennessee.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1878

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, this is somewhat of an unorthodox way to ask for a UC, but we are going to go through a process this afternoon talking about a bill called the Pediatric Rare Disease Priority Review Voucher Act, which expires on September 30 of this year.

All of those names I just mentioned have a stake in this particular debate and I am going to lead it off. Then, I am actually going to refer to my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator CASEY, my friend and coauthor of this legislation for the purposes of the UC motion, and then we will go from there.

Mr. President, I fell in love with my wife in 1968 and married her 48 years ago. We have had a great marriage. But in 2004, I fell in love with Alexa Rohrbach, the young lady to my left who you can see on the screen here.

Alexa had neuroblastoma, an incurable cancer of the brain. She came to Washington, DC, lobbying us to try to accelerate the research into rare diseases for children and to try to find cures for them. I got interested, and I went to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, PA, where Senator CASEY is so active. I am active in children's health care in Atlanta, and I saw many of the breakthroughs for cancer and other diseases of children. BOB CASEY and I got very interested in seeing what we could do to further the development of new drugs coming into the