

# U.S. POLICY IN YEMEN

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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## U.S. POLICY IN YEMEN

TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Isakson, Paul, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We might talk a little openly about another topic before we introduce you, but thank you so much for being here.

We, as you know, introduced legislation last night to update and replace the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs a week in advance of when we planned to have a markup.

Senator Menendez and I talked at the last hearing about the best way to make sure members were up to date. I do want to point out that just this Congress we had a hearing on June the 20th about authorizations for the use of military force with Bellinger and Hicks. On August the 2nd, we had a closed hearing with Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Mattis on the same topic, August 2nd. On October 30th, we had the authorization for use of military force from the administration's perspective by Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Mattis, and then on December the 13th, we had another hearing with Stephen Hadley, Christine Wormuth, and John Bellinger. It was those hearings that then developed the principles that I then gave to Senator Cardin at that time, and that is what we have been working off to create an AUMF. So those hearings created the body of work that we now have.

In addition, since I have been the lead Republican, we had a hearing in 2015 with Secretary Kerry, Secretary Carter, and General Dempsey. We had one in December of 2014 with Secretary Kerry, and we had one again May 21, 2014, with Stephen Preston and Mary McCloud.

So when we did the bipartisan Syria AUMF, we had a working meeting where we all sat down and went through it and people were able to talk openly about it. That is what we propose to do here on Wednesday, to have an all-members meeting, staff meet-

ing, sit in a room and walk through it just like we did last time we did a bipartisan AUMF which would give people time to write amendments before amendment deadline.

So to me, having another hearing felt like to me—I know it is and I have talked to Senator Menendez since—felt like a stall tactic, when really we have hearing'ed this thing to death. The hearings are what developed the principles that caused us to come to this bipartisan agreement.

So I hear you, but I cannot imagine—we have got a week. The text is out. I am glad to spend however many hours people want to spend on Wednesday walking through in a closed session. So I guess I am not understanding. When we did the Syria—when we wrote it that day and passed it. Let me say one more time. We wrote it that day and passed it. So I guess I am confused as to why this appears—feels to be rushed.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, if I may.

The CHAIRMAN. Of course.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, you know, we have a history of working collaboratively with you.

But an AUMF is the single most significant vote. An authorization for the use of military force is the single most significant vote a Member of Congress can take because it is about sending and committing our sons and daughters to war and to actions and risking their lives. So it is a very momentous occasion.

Now, I appreciate the chairman's recital of hearings that have been had in concept about what an AUMF should look like. But the reality is in the past we have had specific hearings on a specified AUMF to be marked up before we actually voted on it.

We got the final version last night, and it seems to me that the full implications and details of the text should be publicly vetted before a vote, so that the Congress is not creating unintended consequences or ways the AUMF could be misused in the future, as some of us believe the ones in 2001 and 2002 have been used.

I think the administration should be heard on it. It must take responsibility for executing war and sharing their views on the text. And right now, we do not have their views at all. We did when we voted on those other ones.

And I think the American people deserve the opportunity to hear the full arguments about the implications of the text, since it involves sending their sons and daughters into war for possibly many years to come.

Now, I think that our request for a hearing is not stalling. As I have said to you privately and I will say here publicly, I have no problem getting to a markup on that AUMF. I have cast votes for AUMFs. So I am not fearful of having a determination. When I think the AUMF is a correct one, I will vote for it, and when I think it is improper or not properly drafted, I will vote against it. But I think this is the singular most important thing we can do, and I do not think it takes an inordinate amount of time to get some thoughts both from the administration, as well as from non-administration witnesses. All can be done at one hearing in one day, and then members could think about the testimony they have heard on the specific AUMF that is being voted on and have an op-

portunity to prepare their amendments, should they believe there should be some.

I compliment you and Senator Kaine on trying to come to a draft that seeks to move the issue forward, but I think this is a momentous vote and I think it needs the appropriate attention. So it is not about stalling. Let us get that straight. It is about a thoughtful consideration of what this specific AUMF says, what it means, looking at all the implications of it, coming to an understanding of it, and then thoughtfully being able to draft amendments and cast the final vote. I think I express the concern of many of my members on my side who feel that way, and so that is why I wrote you the letter that I did.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me see if I can get an administration official up here on Wednesday, and we will see what we can do. I think we might actually be better off having them maybe down in the SCIF, which is what we did on the Syria piece. I do not care where we do it. And then, obviously, when we have a markup, the public will be watching, and everyone can understand the implications. But let me see what I can do about potentially having someone from the administration here on Wednesday to walk through it.

Senator MENENDEZ. I would urge you—it would be very good to have an administration witness, and from my perspective, I believe most of it can be done in public. We are not talking about actions specific.

And secondly, I would urge you to consider some analysis outside of the administration of the specific text. All could be done at the same time, and I think that would be a good way to move forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Duly noted, and we will see where it goes. We will keep talking.

Again, I want to say one more time I doubt there has ever been as many hearings in advance to develop principles to bring people together around an AUMF in advance. Actually there has been so much preparatory work done on this. I think people understand the implications. We talked about all these publicly. But I hear you and I understand you have members of your caucus that are pushing for that to occur, and I realize that.

So I thank you for the way you work with us most of the time.  
[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. We feel the same way about you, Mr. Chairman, most of the time.

The CHAIRMAN. I know you do. I know you do.  
[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So with love, we thank Acting Assistant Secretary Satterfield, Assistant Secretary Karem, and Mr. Jenkins for joining us here today. This hearing will examine U.S. policy towards Yemen, particularly in light of the growing concern within Congress regarding the civil war and its dire humanitarian consequences.

According to the United Nations, more than 22 million people, roughly three-quarters of the population, need humanitarian aid and protection, and 18 million people are food insecure. Last year, there were over 1 million suspected cases of cholera.

While Yemen has always faced significant socioeconomic challenges, a civil war, which began with the Houthis' armed takeover

of much of the country in 2014 and their overthrow of Yemen's legitimate government in January 2015, has plunged the country into a humanitarian crisis. Iran's support of the Houthi rebels and the intervention of Saudi-led forces to restore Yemen's deposed government, which began in March of 2015, have been particularly devastating. In over 3 years of conflict, thousands of civilians have been killed. Airstrikes have hit schools, weddings, and hospitals. Humanitarian groups cannot reliably provide aid due to movement constraints, and uncertain port access has slowed commercial imports of food and fuel.

Of course, Saudi Arabia is a longtime U.S. partner, but partners must be candid with each other. So I have raised my concerns regarding—as many people here have—Saudi Arabia's conduct in Yemen with senior Saudi officials, including the Crown Prince, on multiple occasions in this last year. I know that many of my colleagues have done the same thing, as I have mentioned, and I urge them to continue doing so, as I will.

But at the same time, Saudi Arabia has a right to defend itself from more spilling across its border. For nearly 2 years, the Houthis have fired Iranian-manufactured ballistic missiles into Saudi territory. In recent months, they have aimed these missiles at Riyadh. At least hundreds of Saudis have been killed in the fighting, and millions live under constant threat of attack. So resolving the conflict in Yemen means helping Saudi Arabia address its legitimate security concerns to prevent entrenchment of an Iranian-armed group on its southern border.

As the committee considers ways to support effective U.S. policy on Yemen, I look forward to hearing our witnesses provide details on what the U.S. is doing diplomatically to encourage resolution of the conflict. I also hope our witnesses will explain the nature of U.S. support to the Saudi-led coalition, including relevant authorities and what can be done to address the humanitarian situation.

With that, I ask the ranking member if he wishes to make any opening comments. I am sure he does, and I look forward to hearing those.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this important hearing and inviting witnesses from the State and Defense Departments, as well as USAID.

Given our committee's jurisdiction over the execution of U.S. foreign policy and the State Department in particular, it is fundamentally necessary that we receive testimony from the very administration officials executing that policy, not just outside experts.

Last month marked the third anniversary of the current conflict in Yemen. Statistics of the scale of the human suffering defy imagination. 22.2 million Yemenis, more than 80 percent of the entire population, require humanitarian assistance. The loss of more than 50 percent of Yemen's nighttime electricity, a key condition for maintaining hospitals, water supply systems, and communications. Eight million Yemenis are on the brink of starvation, the largest cholera outbreak in modern history.

This hearing is particularly timely given the debate the Senate recently held on the U.S. military support to the Saudi-led coalition. This hearing is also relevant given the visit of the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, to the U.N. Security Council yesterday to brief on Yemen, as well as the reports of a new Saudi coalition offensive.

As we consider U.S. policy on Yemen, we do so in a regional context, acknowledging U.S. relations with critical partners. Saudi Arabia has endured SCUD and ballistic missile attacks from Yemen on a scale that no American would ever accept. Iranian-backed Houthi fighters have launched attacks aimed at Saudi populations, economic infrastructure, and defense installations. There have also been attacks aimed at U.S. naval craft. This is unacceptable, dangerous, and counter to U.S. interests.

The threats coming from Yemen did not suddenly appear, but after years of brewing tensions between various factions within Yemen, Iranian fingerprints are all over the escalation in the Houthi illicit terrorist activities.

To be clear, the terrorist threat in Yemen does not excuse the conduct of the Saudi coalition, which bears significant responsibility for the scale of civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. But there are other actors and stakeholders in this conflict, including Iran, al Qaeda, and ISIS, and all are implicated in violations of the Law of Armed Conflict, international humanitarian law, and human rights abuses.

Instead of a comprehensive strategy to push back on Iranian malign interference in Yemen and the spoiler role that Russia is playing, as I have pointed out in numerous other contexts, this administration is actively dismantling the State Department and underfunding our assistance programs, the very entities that have the potential to play critical roles in moving towards a political settlement and addressing the humanitarian crisis.

Last month, the Senate debated one element of U.S. policy, the provision of limited military support, including refueling, intelligence, and advice to the Saudi coalition. I appreciate the commitment of Senators Lee, Sanders, and Murphy in calling for a debate and vote on that one element.

In explaining my vote against discharging the resolution from the committee, I encourage my colleagues to expand the aperture of the debate. I want to understand our broader operations and policy objectives before seeking to end or change just one element. Absent a compelling articulation of how continued U.S. military support to the coalition is leveraging movement towards a political track and negotiation to end the war, it is reasonable to expect that the next vote on U.S. military support may have a different outcome.

Specifically, what steps is the administration taking diplomatically and politically to end the war?

What types of assistance are appropriate in assisting our partners in the legitimate defense needs?

What is the administration doing to alleviate the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, and what more can the Saudi-led coalition do?

Given the increasing lethality and sophistication of Iranian support to the Houthis in Yemen, how does the conflict in Yemen factor into the administration's strategy to counter Iran?

Finally, I would like to hear some clear statements from our witnesses as to whether there is a military solution to this conflict. And unless our witnesses are going to surprise us with a new announcement, the answer has been for years and continues to be no.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, it would be difficult to consider this hearing without addressing the administration's actions in Syria over the weekend. In my view, what connects this weekend's military strikes against Assad's chemical weapons facilities and this administration's approach to Yemen is the alarming absence of a strategy. President Trump's over-reliance on the military arm of our government, coupled with his antagonizing, defunding, and dismantling of our diplomatic and assistance arms, will lead to only one dangerous outcome, that we will have nothing left other than military force to address conflict and promote our interests.

I am not opposed to the appropriate and authorized use of military force, but before we send our uniformed men and women into battle and ask them to be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, we should always be able to tell them and the American people what the stakes are and that we have exhausted our diplomatic tools.

I am still waiting for the broad articulation of strategy in the region and understanding how U.S. military support to the Saudi coalition is helping us in moving towards the ultimate goal of a negotiated settlement that prioritizes saving lives and ending the suffering of innocent Yemeni civilians. And I hope today's hearing can help us understand that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Our first witness is Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Ambassador David Satterfield. Ambassador Satterfield is one of our most distinguished diplomats. He most recently served as Director General of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai Peninsula and previously served as U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon. Thank you for being here.

Our second witness is Robert Jenkins who serves as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. Mr. Jenkins recently marked 20 years at USAID and previously served as the Director of the Office of Transition Initiatives. Thank you for being here.

And our third witness is Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Robert Karem. Very protocol-oriented. I wanted to make sure our civilian guys were first. I want you all to know that. Prior to his Senate confirmation last year, Mr. Karem served as national security staff of Vice President Cheney and then as National Security Advisor to the House Majority Leaders Eric Cantor and Kevin McCarthy.

We thank you, all three, for being here. If you would, if you could summarize in about 5 minutes, we would appreciate it. If you have any written materials that you would like to be part of the record, we will make them so. And with that, if you would just go in the order introduced, we would appreciate it. And again, thank you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID M. SATTERFIELD, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY, NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, members of the committee. I appreciate this opportunity once again to appear to testify on this important subject, and I would ask that the submitted written remarks be entered into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Defeating ISIS in Yemen, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, countering Iran's malign activities in that region, and above all, reducing the extraordinary suffering and hardship of the Yemeni people—all of these goals hinge on the resolution to the Yemeni conflict. To that end, the United States firmly believes that the only possible solution to this conflict is a negotiated political settlement under U.S. auspices.

I want to be clear on this point. Our military support to the Saudi-led coalition advances important U.S. national security and diplomatic objectives. Further, Iran's support, its provision of sophisticated weaponry to the Houthis, both exacerbates this conflict and its attendant suffering and advances Iran's regional ambitions. The Houthis have repeatedly used Iranian ballistic and cruise missile technology and, as we saw as recently as April 11th, have targeted Riyadh's international airport, Aramco facilities, and Red Sea shipping lanes.

U.S. military support serves a clear and strategic purpose: to reinforce Saudi and Emirati self-defense in the face of intensifying Houthi and Iranian-enabled threats and to expand the capability of our Gulf partners to push back against Iran's regionally destabilizing actions. This support, in turn, provides the United States access and influence to help press for a political solution to the conflict.

Should we curtail U.S. military support, the Saudis could well pursue defense relationships with countries that have no interest in either ending the humanitarian crisis, minimizing civilian casualties, or assisting and facilitating progress towards a political solution. Critical U.S. access to support for our own campaign against violent extremists could be placed in jeopardy. Through diplomatic and military-to-military engagements, we regularly emphasize the strategic importance and legal obligations to comply with the Law of Armed Conflict, including the obligation to take all reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of harm to civilians. And we assess that progress has been made as a result of our engagement and efforts over the past 6 months.

During his meeting with President Trump, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman agreed that a political resolution to this conflict is ultimately necessary to bring greater stability to the region and to meet the needs of the Yemeni people. The new U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, has just completed initial consultations with key parties to the conflict, and we are welcoming him in the State Department very shortly. I am and my colleagues will be meeting with him for a discussion of where he sees how we assess next steps to resolution of the conflict. Our goal col-

lectively is to create a framework before entering into comprehensive negotiations, which the U.N. would then convene.

When those formal negotiations do begin, it is important to note Saudi Arabia does have vital national security concerns that have to be addressed by the Houthis. The Saudis will have to make compromises of their own, and we have been quite clear on this point. The Houthis will likely retain a political role in Yemen. That is a fact and it has to be reflected in any negotiating process. And a durable commitment to peace will have to involve the buy-in of all key Yemeni parties.

We all agree the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is unacceptable. The U.S. and its allies have worked assiduously over the past 6 months to lead the coalition, led by the Saudis, to take positive steps on this subject. Last month, the Saudis and Emiratis provided nearly \$1 billion to Yemen's humanitarian response appeal.

On January 22nd, the Saudi-led coalition announced elements of a plan that envisages the expansive use of other ports beyond Hudaydah and Saleef and overland points of entry to broaden options for importing humanitarian assistance and commercial goods into Yemen. We support this. More has to be done, and we are pressing the Saudis and the coalition to take additional steps to facilitate and expedite access to the Port of Hudaydah. We will do all in our power to assure humanitarian and commercial needs are met in Yemen so that this crisis from its humanitarian standpoint can be alleviated to the maximum extent possible.

And I thank you again for the opportunity to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Satterfield follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR DAVID M. SATTERFIELD

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. The Administration shares your belief that ending the conflict in Yemen is in our national security interests.

As you all have heard, as a response to the heinous and unlawful use of chemical weapons, on April 13, the militaries of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom executed strikes on three chemical weapons facilities involved in the development, production, and storage of chemical weapons in Syria. These strikes were focused on degrading Syria's chemical weapons capabilities, setting back its chemical weapons research and production program, and deterring the further use of chemical weapons, consistent with U.S. and our allies' policy on Syria, and were taken after considerable deliberation and international consultations and coordination.

The United States has tried repeatedly to use all diplomatic, economic, and political tools to stop the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons as Assad's supporters turn a blind eye and has chosen to use force as a last resort. Russia has stood in the way of every effort, vetoed key accountability efforts, blocked the Joint Investigative Mechanism, and has failed to live up to its guarantee in regard to the 2013 Framework Agreement that Syria would cease all use of chemical weapons and fully declare its entire stockpile for verifiable destruction. And, Iran acts malignly in Syria—pouring resources and militias to support Assad and advance its regional ambitions. Against this backdrop, the targeted military action by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom against military targets connected to the Syrian chemical weapons program was justified and legitimate as a measure to deter and prevent Syria's illegal and unacceptable use of chemical weapons. This targeted military action sends a powerful message to the Syrian regime, Russia, Iran, and international community that chemical weapons will never be tolerated and there will be consequences for their use.

Defeating ISIS-Yemen and AQAP, countering Iran's nefarious activities in the region, and reducing the suffering of the Yemeni people, all hinge on the resolution of this conflict. AQAP, ISIS-Yemen, and the IRGC are manipulating the security

vacuum created by the conflict to expand their influence in Yemen. While the international community must do all it can to mitigate humanitarian suffering, the only way to truly end the humanitarian crisis is by ending the conflict. To that end, the United States firmly believes that the only possible solution to the conflict in Yemen is a negotiated political settlement under U.N. auspices.

I wish to be clear; our military support to the Saudi-led Coalition supports important U.S. national security and diplomatic objectives. Further, Iran's provision of sophisticated weaponry to the Houthis both exacerbates this conflict and advances Iran's regional ambitions. The Houthis have repeatedly used Iranian ballistic missile and cruise missile technology and, as we saw as recently as April 11, have targeted Riyadh's international airport, Aramco facilities, and Red Sea shipping lanes. Moreover, the Houthis launch rockets along and into Saudi Arabia's southern border on an almost daily basis. Over 80,000 U.S. citizens live in Saudi Arabia. In this context, U.S. military support serves a clear purpose: to reinforce Saudi and Emirati self-defense in the face of intensifying Houthi threats and to expand the capability of our Gulf partners to push back against Iran's regionally destabilizing actions. This support, in turn, provides us access and influence to push for a political solution to the conflict.

Curtailing U.S. military support would not persuade the Saudi-led coalition to abandon its air campaign. If we curtail U.S. military support, the Saudis could well pursue defense relationships with countries that do not have an interest in ending the humanitarian crisis, minimizing civilian casualties, or making progress towards a political solution. Critical U.S. access to support for our own campaign against violent extremists could be placed in jeopardy. We are serious about working to reduce collateral casualties. U.S. advisors have provided training to senior Saudi military personnel, including on the importance of adhering to the law of armed conflict (LOAC). Through diplomatic and military-to-military engagements, we regularly emphasize the strategic importance and legal obligations to comply with the LOAC, including the obligation to take all feasible precautions to reduce the risk of harm to civilians. We assess that progress has been made over the past 6 months.

The Saudis accept that a political solution to the conflict in Yemen must be attempted and have asked for U.S. support in renewing a political process. During his meeting with President Trump, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman agreed that a political resolution to the conflict is ultimately necessary to bring greater stability to the region and meet the needs of the Yemeni people. New U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, just completed initial consultations with the key parties to the conflict, including the Republic of Yemen Government and the Houthis. The goal is to create a framework for success before entering into comprehensive negotiations, which the U.N. would convene. Saudi leadership has engaged with Griffiths.

Martin Griffiths will be in Washington tomorrow. I will chair an interagency meeting with him in which we get his views on the way forward and then work with the Coalition to push ahead on a political process. We will be consulting closely with the U.K., the Saudis, and the Emiratis in coming weeks.

When formal negotiations do begin, it is important to note that Saudi Arabia has vital national security concerns that must be addressed by the Houthis. The Saudis have consistently articulated an end-state for Yemen as a complete cessation to cross-border ballistic missile attacks; a secure, stable Saudi-Yemeni border; blunting Iran's influence in the country; and a stable Yemeni government able to provide for its people. We support these ends as well. The Houthis, to date and during several months of negotiations in 2016, have been unwilling to provide meaningful assurances regarding Saudi Arabia's legitimate security concerns.

The Saudis, of course, have to make compromises of their own, and we will continue encouraging them to do so. The Houthis will likely retain a political role in Yemen. However, it is important to note that this is not a one-sided process. The Houthis will have to make clear commitments to respect Saudi security. A durable commitment will have to involve the buy-in of key Yemeni parties, including the Republic of Yemen Government, the Houthis, and other local Yemeni actors.

We all agree the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is unacceptable. However, the U.S. and its allies have persuaded the Coalition to take incremental, but positive steps. Last month, the Saudis and Emiratis provided nearly \$1 billion to Yemen's humanitarian response. This complements the U.S. government announcement of an additional \$87 million (more than \$854 million since the beginning of fiscal year 2017) and an additional \$1 billion in pledges from other donors. We also worked with the World Food Programme (WFP), the Saudi-led Coalition's Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Cell (EHOC), authorities in Dubai, and others to facilitate delivery of the four U.S.-funded WFP mobile cranes, which arrived in Hudaydah port on January 15. The cranes began offloading supplies at the port on February 9. These

four 60-ton cranes have the potential to improve throughput capacity at the port by as much as 40%, and may cut vessel discharge time in half from approximately one week to 3–4 days. We also welcomed the announcement on February 6 from the Saudi-led Coalition that it had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Yemen Government to fund and install cranes at the ports of Aden, Mukalla, and Al-Mokha. Beyond humanitarian assistance, we are also providing economic and development assistance to help restore critical health services, and access to education repair community infrastructure, and provide help for the revival of production and commercial activities, the collapse of which is a major factor contributing to the wide-scale humanitarian disaster.

On January 22, the Coalition announced elements of its Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations (YCHO) plan. Part of the YCHO plan envisions expanding the use of other ports and overland points of entry to broaden options for importing humanitarian assistance and commercial goods to Yemen. Building the capacity of Yemen to import more goods is a worthy long-term endeavor and we welcome the Coalition's efforts on that front; meanwhile, we continue to stress that increasing capacity through other ports or via land routes cannot replace key Houthi-controlled ports such as Hudaydah and Saleef, given immediate humanitarian needs. Of course, we agree that more must be done and are pushing the Saudis to take additional steps to increase access—not nearly enough ships are dropping off supplies at Hudaydah port. This is due primarily to uncertainty regarding the port's status and long clearance processes. We continue to urge the Coalition to make a clear statement to shippers that Hudaydah port will remain open. However, even here, progress is being made: The Saudis have increased their engagement with the U.N. Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) and are working to improve internal clearance times and procedural hurdles in coordination with the U.N. and WFP. The head of YCHO plan's implementation affirmed to us a continued commitment to improve access.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about ongoing efforts to end the conflict and mitigate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.  
Mr. Jenkins.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT JENKINS, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. JENKINS. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak here today alongside my distinguished colleagues from State and the Department of Defense.

I would ask that my written comments be submitted for the record.

Administrator Green likes to paraphrase your fellow Senator, John McCain, when he asks our agency, “The world is on fire. What are we going to do about it?” At USAID, we strive to put out those fires. Unfortunately, right now Yemen is the single largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and we are working hard to put the fires out there, along with our interagency colleagues, other donors, and our partners on the ground.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is manmade. The current conflict has been ongoing for more than 3 years. Violence between the Houthis and the Yemeni Government, both backed by military support from regional powers, have devolved into a civil war among multiple factions. Meanwhile, more than 75 percent of the country or more than 22 million people, need humanitarian assistance. To put that into perspective, that is more than the combined populations of Tennessee, New Jersey, and Indiana.

For nearly 4 years, Yemen has wavered on the edge of famine. 17.8 million Yemenis are food insecure, including more than 460,000 children who are severely malnourished. Food that does make it inside is prohibitively expensive, and as over half the population is unemployed, this dramatically affects what basics people can afford, basics such as food and water. Many Yemenis must resort to increasingly severe coping mechanisms such as child marriage just to get by.

This food crisis is made worse by the fact that Yemen is currently facing the world's largest cholera outbreak with more than 1 million suspected cases due to contaminated drinking water, unsafe hygiene practices, the lack of sanitation services, and a crippled health care system.

The conflict has also led to the collapse of the economy, which was already one of the poorest in the region. The government has not been able to regularly fund the operating budgets of key ministries like the Ministry of Health, degrading basic services like medical care, sanitation, and education.

In the face of these needs, the United States continues to mount a robust humanitarian response working with our partners to reach millions with lifesaving aid. Over the last 6 months, our partner, WFP, has reached an average of 7 million people each month with emergency food assistance. We also worked to deliver four U.S.-funded cranes to the Port of Hudaydah, which was badly damaged by the conflict.

USAID is supporting medical services to people in need. We are also providing hygiene kits, safe drinking water, and improved access to sanitation services to fight malnutrition and stave off disease.

For children especially, the toll of conflict can have lasting effects. Our mobile protection teams provide treatment to children throughout the country.

USAID is also providing technical assistance to the Central Bank of Yemen to help restore basic functionality of core services.

We are also rehabilitating water systems, getting children back to school, and providing school supplies.

In addition, the U.S. coordinates closely with other donors, including the United Kingdom, the European Union, and we particularly welcome the recent pledges from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait of more than \$1 billion towards the humanitarian response in Yemen.

Despite our best efforts, access remains a major challenge in Yemen. To reach people in need, relief workers must navigate active conflict zones, checkpoints, bureaucratic impediments, and heavily damaged infrastructure. The vast majority of goods come through Yemen's ports, so their operations are critical for both humanitarian and commercial goods. We continue to call on all parties in the conflict to allow free and unfettered access for humanitarian goods into and throughout Yemen in order to save lives and reduce suffering.

While the United States remains committed to relieving the suffering of the Yemeni people, humanitarian alone cannot solve this conflict. This will only come through a comprehensive political agreement. We look forward to a day when there is a lasting polit-

ical solution in Yemen that will allow the fighting to end and enable the country to develop its own path to self-reliance.

Addressing the complex crisis in Yemen requires all of our government's tools: humanitarian assistance, and the three D's of development, diplomacy, and defense. That is why I am grateful you have called all of us here today, and I am happy to take your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jenkins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT JENKINS

Senator Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, alongside my distinguished colleagues from the Departments of State and Defense. Our Administrator, Mark Green, likes to paraphrase your fellow Senator John McCain, when he asks of our Agency, "The world is on fire. What are we going to do about it?" We at USAID strive to put out those fires. Unfortunately Yemen is now the single largest humanitarian crisis in the world and we are working hard to put out the fires there. Along with our interagency colleagues, other donors and our implementing partners who work tirelessly every day in Sana'a, in Taiz, in Aden, we have sought to address these dire needs, which I will speak to today. We are also looking towards a day when there is a lasting, political solution in Yemen that will allow the fighting to end and enable the country to develop its own path towards self-reliance. Until that day comes, we must do all that we can to alleviate the human suffering we see in Yemen, as both a moral and national security imperative.

The humanitarian crisis we see in Yemen today is exacerbated by the Yemeni Government's collapse in parts of the country. The current conflict has been ongoing since Houthi attacks against the Yemeni Government began nearly four years ago. This violence between the Houthis, armed by the Iranian regime, and Yemeni Government forces, backed by military support from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has devolved into a civil war amongst multiple, growing factions, driven in part by regional powers. Political instability, a security vacuum, and fractured governance have allowed extremist groups to expand their areas of influence. Meanwhile, more than 75 percent of the country—or more than 22 million people—need humanitarian assistance. To put that into perspective, that's more than one and a half times the entire populations of Tennessee and New Jersey, combined.

The ongoing conflict has resulted in an estimated 10,000 civilian deaths and is also the reason why 2 million people are still unable to return home after fleeing for safety. Fighting has hampered commercial trade, which is devastating in a country that traditionally imports 90 percent of its food and most of its fuel and medicine. Infrastructure has been destroyed, leaving 16 million people without access to clean water or working toilets. Salaries aren't getting paid. These conditions are unlikely to change unless until there is durable political resolution to the conflict. It is imperative that all parties to the conflict protect civilians and aid workers, who work at great personal risk to assist people in need.

LOOMING FAMINE IN A MAN-MADE CRISIS

Food insecurity in Yemen has wavered on the edge of famine for more than 3 years largely due to the war's impact on import trade and financial system. Of the 17.8 million Yemenis who are food insecure, there are more than 460,000 children who are severely malnourished. Food that does make it to market is increasingly expensive, with some items doubling in price as supplies are unpredictable. As over half the population is unemployed, these price increases dramatically affect the amount of basic necessities people can afford, including food and water. As the conflict goes on, the worst-affected households are forced to take sell assets and incur debt; eventually, they could experience famine conditions even without additional disruptions to imports and humanitarian assistance.

Despite these dire conditions, humanitarian actors on the ground are providing food assistance to millions every month, across the country, and this has helped keep Yemen from falling over that edge. For all the hungry Yemenis, who do not know how they will afford bread or who are dependent on food aid, being on the edge is tragic enough.

## HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS

Four years of conflict have disrupted more than Yemen's food supply. During a major food crisis like this, preventable disease is often the leading cause of death. In many cases, diseases like cholera also inhibit the ability to treat malnutrition, and must be treated first.

The ongoing conflict has left Yemen's health system heavily reliant on humanitarian aid to maintain routine services. Half of the health facilities are not fully operational and more than 16 million people are unable to access basic health care.

Yemen is currently facing the world's largest cholera outbreak. There are more than 1 million suspected cases and the outbreak has claimed the lives of nearly 2,300 people. Contaminated drinking water, unsafe hygiene practices, a lack of sanitation services, and a crippled health care system are big contributors to the rise of cholera in Yemen. Although new cases have been declining since October, the rainy season could lead to resurgence. And while there are considerable emergency efforts to contain the current outbreak, until the conflict subsides and longer-term prevention programs can address these underlying conditions that enable cholera to spread, the probability of future outbreaks remains high. These conditions also make fertile ground for the spread of other diseases. Diphtheria—a highly infectious respiratory disease that mainly affects children—has also taken hold and has reached more than 1,400 suspected cases.

## EROSION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL SYSTEM

The conflict has eroded Yemen's infrastructure and financial system, in a country that was already amongst the poorest in the region before the recent crisis. Between 2015 and 2017, Yemen's economy contracted by over 47 percent, according to official Yemeni government sources. Yemen is facing a major liquidity crisis and the banking system is in turmoil. Oil and gas exports, which were previously a key source of foreign exchange, have largely come to a halt and public expenditure has fallen steeply. Vulnerable Yemenis are forced to resort to increasingly desperate measures, such as child marriage, in order to secure household financial needs. This is aggravated by the Central Bank of Yemen's (CBY) lack of capacity and connectivity with Houthi-controlled Sana'a, which precludes it from performing basic functions and addressing larger monetary policy challenges. For example, the CBY is unable to manage monetary circulation across the country, perform basic banking supervision functions, or conduct transparent foreign exchange operations. As a result, salaries to more than 1 million government workers, including doctors and sanitation workers, haven't been paid consistently in 20 months, leaving a quarter of the population without a regular income. The government hasn't been able to regularly fund the operating budgets of key ministries, like the Ministry of Health, severely degrading the very fabric of basic services like medical care, sanitation, and education.

The effect on Yemenis' livelihoods and ability to support themselves and their families has been dire. Businesses have laid off over half their workers and agricultural activity—one of the main sources of employment for Yemenis—has been slashed in half. According to the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, up to 45 percent of households have lost livestock, either selling them off intentionally to cover other basic or due to animal diseases.

The conflict is also throwing the future of Yemen's youth into jeopardy: Up to 2,500 schools can no longer be used because they are destroyed, damaged, host displaced families, or are occupied by the warring parties. These and other challenges have left 2 million children—over a quarter of Yemen's school-aged children—without access to schooling.

## UNITED STATES RESPONSE

In the face of these needs, the United States and our partners are able to reach millions of people with life-saving aid, and the United States continues to mount a robust humanitarian response. Since the start of Fiscal Year 2017, USAID has provided more than \$800 million in humanitarian assistance. Over the last 6 months, USAID's partner the World Food Programme (WFP) has consistently reached an average of 7 million people each month with emergency food assistance. These programs provide in-kind food aid, food vouchers, and nutrition services.

We also helped deliver four U.S.-funded mobile cranes to assist in throughput at Hudaydah port to replace cranes that were damaged from the conflict. The cranes arrived in Hudaydah port on January 15th and after obtaining required customs clearance and insurance, they offloaded their first supplies on February 9th. These cranes can increase port capacity by as much as 40 percent and cut vessel discharge time in half.

In response to the ongoing health crisis in Yemen, USAID is providing medical supplies, and supporting mobile health clinics to bring much-needed emergency medical services to people in need. We are also providing hygiene kits, safe drinking water, and improved access to sanitation services to fight malnutrition and stave off disease. USAID is supporting 70 cholera treatment centers and 110 oral rehydration centers to ensure that people get the medical attention they need, and has provided nearly 7.4 million water purification tablets—enough to provide safe drinking water to nearly 838,000 people for one month.

For children especially, the toll of conflict can have lasting effects. Our mobile protection teams provide treatment to children throughout the country.

In addition, the U.S. coordinates closely with other donors, including the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and The European Committee on Humanitarian Operations (ECHO). The U.S. particularly welcomes the recent pledges from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait of more than \$1 billion to fund the humanitarian response in Yemen. Contributions from other countries ensure that more needy Yemenis receive life-saving aid and complement the support provided by the United States.

There is no doubt that our humanitarian programs are saving lives. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), without the large-scale, international humanitarian assistance currently being provided to partners in Yemen, the food security situation would be significantly worse across Yemen. FEWSNET also predicts a credible threat of famine this year, if imports decrease and markets are further restricted.

Humanitarian assistance is critical in Yemen, but on its own will not prevent the collapse of key social and economic institutions, stem the tide of conflict, or build the resilience of Yemen to future shocks. For this reason, USAID is also expanding its assistance beyond emergency needs to better align with the scale of the crisis and help put the country on a path to recovery and prevent continued dependence on humanitarian aid. We are doing so under the umbrella of a flexible, strategic approach that emphasizes adaptability and learning and in close coordination with USAID's humanitarian offices and with other donors.

To address the financial and longer-term needs, USAID is providing technical assistance to the CBY to help restore basic functionality in its core services. We are also working at the local level to help Yemenis restore their access to income in sustainable ways through livelihood and employment generation activities. Through our partners, we're helping improve basic health services like childhood immunization, primary and health care for mothers and children. We're also rehabilitating water systems, restoring access and re-entry to basic education along with providing school supplies, and providing psychosocial support for children impacted by the crisis that has interrupted their childhood.

Looking forward, if there are openings in the future, we are preparing a series of additional activities that would support stabilization and restoration of essential services in Yemen, as well as address community level fragility and social cohesion. By addressing these underlying conditions, we can empower Yemenis to build a sustainable future.

#### ONGOING CHALLENGES TO PROVIDING AID

Despite the efforts by USAID and its partners operating on the ground, we face significant challenges in providing assistance to those in need. To reach these people, our humanitarian partners navigate active conflict zones, checkpoints, bureaucratic impediments, and heavily damaged infrastructure. The biggest challenge we face is access. Because of the security concerns, armed actors, and shifting lines of conflict, relief workers have a very difficult time gaining access to those who need help the most.

Another challenge is the ability for importers to bring in commercial goods, critical to the meet the needs in this country that relies so heavily on commodities from elsewhere. Since Yemen has traditionally imported 90 percent of its food and most of its fuel and medicines, overall and imported the majority through Yemen's largest port, Hudaydah, keeping this port open is critical to both humanitarian response and commercial imports. With millions of people in Yemen on the brink of famine, a closure of the largest port Hudaydah would have dire consequences in an already critical situation. While the port is now open, import levels at all of Yemen's Red Sea ports have yet to recover following November 2017 Coalition-imposed closures, as commercial shipping companies remain concerned about the potential reinstatement of port restrictions and the Houthis continue attacks against Red Sea shipping. We continue to call on all parties to the conflict to allow unfettered humani-

tarian access into and throughout Yemen, in order to save lives and reduce suffering.

THE PATH FORWARD FOR YEMEN

While the United States remains committed to relieving the suffering of the Yemeni people, humanitarian assistance alone cannot provide a solution to this conflict. This solution will only come through a comprehensive political agreement, and we fully support the work of our colleagues at the State Department, and the U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen toward that end. Addressing the complex crisis in Yemen requires all of the U.S. Government's tools: humanitarian assistance, and the three D's of development, defense, and diplomacy, so I'm grateful that you've called us all before you today. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.  
Secretary Karem.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT S. KAREM, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. KAREM. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. As a former Senate and House staffer, it is a particular honor to get to appear before you, although I must say it is somewhat more nerve-racking to appear on this side of the dais.

I would ask that my prepared opening statement be introduced for the record. I have what is, I hope, a mercifully brief introductory comment to make.

As Secretary Mattis has said many times, our goal in Yemen is an end to the conflict through a United Nations-brokered settlement. The conflict in Yemen affects regional security across the Middle East and threatens U.S. national security interests, including the free flow of commerce in the Red Sea. Just this month, the Houthis attacked a Saudi oil tanker in the Red Sea, threatening commercial shipping and freedom of navigation in the world's fourth busiest maritime chokepoint, the Bab el Mandeb.

This conflict has unleashed a humanitarian toll on Yemeni civilians, as my colleagues from the State Department and USAID have already mentioned. This is why Secretary Mattis believes strongly that the efforts of the new U.N. Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, to bring all sides of the conflict to the negotiating table are so important. Indeed, we need a stable, inclusive government in Yemen to provide security to the Yemeni people and to reduce and ultimately eliminate terrorist state safe havens that are being used by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, and ISIS in Yemen.

A political solution to the Yemen conflict will also reduce the chaos that Iran has exploited to advance its malign agenda. With help from Iran, the Houthis have launched more than 100 ballistic missiles and countless rockets into Saudi Arabia directed at major population centers, international airports, military installations, and oil infrastructure. In the last month alone, the Houthis have launched more than 13 ballistic missiles and long-range rockets into Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Chairman, I would invite you and all of the members of the committee to visit the Iranian materiel display at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling to see firsthand the Iranian-manufactured ballistic

missile that was launched at Riyadh International Airport in November 2017, as well as other evidence of Iran's support to the Houthis and its efforts to destabilize the region. Yemen has become a test bed for Iran's malign activities.

Mr. Chairman, the Defense Department is currently engaged in two lines of effort in Yemen. Our first line of effort and our priority is the fight against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS in Yemen, two terrorist organizations that directly threaten the United States, our allies, and our partners.

To combat AQAP and ISIS, U.S. forces, in coordination with the U.N.-recognized Government of Yemen, are supporting our regional counterterrorism partners in ongoing operations to disrupt and degrade their ability to coordinate, plot, and recruit for external terrorist operations. Additionally, U.S. military forces are conducting airstrikes against AQAP and ISIS in Yemen, pursuant to the 2001 authorization for the use of military force, to disrupt and destroy terrorist networks.

Our second line of effort is the provision of limited, non-combat support to the Saudi-led coalition in support of the UN-recognized Government of Yemen. This support began in 2015 under President Obama, and in 2017, President Trump reaffirmed America's commitment to our partners in these efforts. Fewer than 50 U.S. military personnel work in Saudi Arabia with the Saudi-led coalition advising and assisting with the defense of Saudi territory, sharing intelligence, and providing logistical support, including aerial refueling. The objective of this support is to build our partners' capacity and enable them to defend themselves and maintain their own security.

As I noted before, Houthi missile attacks pose a very real threat to Saudi Arabia and the UAE and to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. The Houthi rebellion, facilitated by Iran, also continues to pose a threat to the Yemeni people. In addition to exacerbating the civil conflict, the Houthis use child soldiers, disrupt and commandeer the distribution of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, and exploit the deliveries of aid for their own financial purposes.

With regard to noncombatant casualties, U.S. military support to our partners is always geared towards mitigating noncombatant casualties. U.S. advisors provide best practices on avoiding collateral damage and U.S. aerial refueling allows coalition aircraft to spend more time in the air giving our partners time to validate targets, practice tactical patience, and reduce the risk of noncombatant casualties. We also continue to urge the coalition to allow full access to humanitarian and commercial goods and are encouraged by recent steps that our partners have taken to provide more than \$1 billion in humanitarian relief.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Karem follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT KAREM

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on our Yemen policy. I welcome discussion on this important issue.

## STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

As Secretary Mattis has said many times, our goal in Yemen is an end to the conflict through a United Nations (U.N.)-brokered settlement. The conflict in Yemen affects regional security across the Middle East and threatens U.S. national security interests. We need a stable, inclusive government in Yemen to provide security to the Yemeni people and to reduce and ultimately eliminate terrorist safe havens that are being used by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in Yemen (ISIS-Y) to plot against the American people and our allies and partners. Finding a political solution to the Yemen conflict will also help counter Iran by reducing the chaos in which it thrives. Ultimately, Iran has fueled and exploited this conflict, and ending it will help to reduce opportunities for Iran's malign activities.

The Administration's policy goals in Yemen are to prevent terrorist attacks on U.S. interests and allies, end the civil war, avoid a regional conflict, mitigate the humanitarian crisis, help defend Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity, and protect the free flow of commerce in the Red Sea. We support the new U.N. Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, in his attempts to revive the U.N.-led peace process in Yemen.

President Obama first directed U.S. military support to the Saudi-led Coalition in 2015, after the Houthis, along with forces aligned with former Yemen President Saleh, broke their truce with the internationally-recognized President of Yemen Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, and stormed the Presidential palace in Sana'a. President Hadi escaped and fled to Aden and ultimately to Saudi Arabia. At President Hadi's request, Saudi Arabia formed an international coalition to help restore government control, and DoD began providing limited, non-combat support to that Coalition. The U.N. Security Council also passed Resolution 2216, condemning the takeover of Sana'a and calling on Houthi-Saleh forces to turn over looted weapons, withdraw from Sana'a, and begin political discussions.

The Houthis, supported by Iran, continue to pose a threat to the Yemeni people, to the Coalition, to Americans in the region, and to regional security. In addition to exacerbating the civil conflict, the Houthis use child soldiers, disrupt the flow of commercial goods, and charge additional tariffs and taxes on essential goods for their own financial gain. The Houthis also directly threaten the security of Saudi Arabia. To date, the Houthis have launched more than 100 ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia, directed at major population centers, international airports, and military installations, including bases where U.S. forces are present. They have also fired countless rockets into southern Saudi Arabia and continue to occupy Saudi territory along the Yemeni border. Just this month, the Houthis attacked another Saudi oil tanker in the Red Sea, threatening commercial shipping and freedom of navigation in the world's fourth busiest maritime chokepoint. For Saudis and Emiratis, whose citizens are under attack or threat of attack from Iranian-backed forces, the conflict in Yemen is a core national security interest.

## COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

The Department's first line of effort in Yemen is the fight against terrorist organizations that threaten U.S. national security interests in the region and at home. AQAP continues to pose a significant threat to the American people by plotting attacks against the homeland, while ISIS-Y aims to use the ungoverned spaces of Yemen to plot, direct, instigate, supply, and recruit for attacks in the region.

To combat AQAP and ISIS-Y, a small number of U.S. forces, in coordination with the internationally-recognized Government of Yemen, are supporting our regional counterterrorism partners in ongoing operations to degrade the groups' abilities to coordinate external terrorist operations and blunt their aspirations to use Yemen as a safe haven for terror plotting. Additionally, U.S. forces are conducting airstrikes against AQAP and ISIS-Y pursuant to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, to disrupt and destroy terrorist leadership networks and limit their freedom of maneuver within the region. Our partners provide critical assistance to our counterterrorism efforts and, like us, they are determined to rid Yemen of these terrorist groups while setting the conditions for a stable environment that does not provide safe haven for terrorist groups or activity.

## U.S. SUPPORT TO THE SAUDI-LED COALITION

Our second line of effort includes providing limited, non-combat support to the Saudi-led Coalition in support of the internationally-recognized Government of Yemen. This support began in 2015 under President Obama, and in 2017, President Trump reaffirmed our commitment to our partners in their efforts. Fewer than 50 U.S. military personnel work in Saudi Arabia with the Saudi-led Coalition advising

and assisting with the defense of Saudi territory, sharing intelligence, and providing logistical support, including aerial refueling.

U.S. forces are not participants in the civil conflict in Yemen and are not engaged in hostilities against the Houthis. U.S. military support to the Coalition is consistent with the National Defense Strategy. We are working to support our partners' military efforts to defend themselves and maintain their own security. This support helps improve our bilateral and regional partnerships, bolster our partners' defense, and increase burden sharing.

We are focused on helping the Coalition avoid civilian casualties in Yemen. We recognize that this conflict has taken a drastic toll on the Yemeni people. We believe that working with our Saudi and Emirati counterparts helps mitigate the risk of civilian casualties. U.S. military advisors are focused on helping Coalition forces implement best practices and procedures to reduce civilian casualties and collateral damage. Aerial refueling allows Coalition aircraft to spend more time in the air, thus giving our partners time to validate targets, practice tactical patience, and reduce the risk of civilian casualties.

We are seeing incremental improvements to our partners' processes and procedures. The Coalition has incorporated the No Strike List into its target development procedures, stopped the use of cluster munitions, changed its rules of engagement to incorporate U.S. best practices, and increased its use of precision-guided munitions, which help decrease civilian casualties and collateral damage. We can only help avoid unnecessary loss of life if we continue to engage with these partners to improve their practices.

#### U.S. EFFORTS TO MITIGATE THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The U.S. government is also working to mitigate the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict. The United States has provided more than \$854 million in humanitarian assistance since October 2016, including nearly \$87 million in additional funding this month. We are also providing \$55 million in economic and development assistance, which have been notified to Congress, to help lay a foundation for Yemen's recovery, including through programs to support livelihoods, rehabilitate critical infrastructure, such as water systems, and restore access to education so children can learn and prepare for their future. The U.S. government continues to urge all parties to allow humanitarian and commercial goods, including fuel, to enter Yemen and move unhindered throughout the country, while also allowing humanitarian workers to move freely and safely to deliver assistance.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF REDUCING OR WITHDRAWING U.S. SUPPORT

DoD strongly opposes any reduction or withdrawal of U.S. support to the Saudi-led Coalition. It bears repeating: we can only help influence a positive outcome in Yemen by engaging with our partners. To leave our partners to face this threat without our support would risk greater escalation and attendant harm to civilians. Further, if we hope to encourage a political settlement, we must have influence with our partners in the region. Our support shows we take seriously our partners' struggle against a real security threat to the region—thereby strengthening our broader argument that only a political solution will end the conflict.

With Iran's support, the Houthis have exacerbated this civil war and raised the risk of a larger regional conflict. The Houthis have used, with Iranian material and expertise: (1) sophisticated ballistic missiles to attack major Saudi population centers; (2) missiles to attack commercial vessels in the Red Sea; (3) explosive boats to attack military vessels in the Red Sea; and (4) explosive UAV attacks against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia. Consistent with the National Security Strategy's call to neutralize Iran's destabilizing activities, DoD is committed to working with our partners and allies to prevent proliferation from Iran. Mr. Chairman, I invite you and the other members of the committee to see first-hand evidence of Iranian complicity by visiting the Iranian Material Display at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling. This display includes the Iranian-manufactured ballistic missile launched at Riyadh International Airport in November 2017, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and explosive boat components.

#### CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by emphasizing our respect for Congress's important oversight role in the use of military force. We have shared the Administration's legal analysis regarding U.S. non-combat support to the Saudi-led coalition, and I would like to reiterate that U.S. forces are not engaged in hostilities in the civil conflict in Yemen.

Instead, we view our U.S. military support to the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen through the lens of the National Defense Strategy. As our partners help us with our strategic priorities in the region—especially in countering AQAP, ISIS-Y, and other violent extremist organizations—we enable them to combat the current highest threat to their security, attacks against their territory. Working with our partners to mitigate and reduce the risks of a regional conflict will also create opportunities to counter the regional purveyors of instability, namely Iran.

In this light, withdrawing our support to the Saudi-led Coalition could threaten our other defense relationships and weaken our global reputation as a reliable partner. This would constrain the U.S. military's ability to foster long-term relationships, to increase interoperability, to promote burden sharing, and to build strong security partnerships throughout the world.

I ask for your continued support to the Department as we work to enable our partners.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you all for being here.

And with that, I will defer for interjections along the way. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you.

I want to thank all three of our witnesses from State, USAID, and the Department of Defense for your work. You have outlined goals for the United States, including ending the civil war through diplomacy, because as you point out, that is the only way we are going to have a lasting peace in Yemen, the security of our partners, particularly the security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to recognize the Iran malign influence and dealing with that, and addressing the humanitarian crisis, including civilian casualties, and the response to the civilian population.

So, Mr. Karem, I want to start with you in regards to the U.S. military assistance that we give to the Kingdom. You said that is to embolden their capacity and to reduce noncombatant casualties.

Last March, the CENTCOM Commander, General Votel, stated that the United States Government does not track the end results of the coalition missions it refuels and supports with targeting assistance.

So my question to you is how do you determine that we are effectively reducing the noncombatant casualties if we do not, in fact, track the results of the Kingdom's military actions?

Mr. KAREM. Senator, thank you.

It is correct that we do not monitor and track all of the Saudi aircraft aloft over Yemen. We have limited personnel and assets in order to do that, and CENTCOM's focus has obviously been on our own operations in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in Syria.

Senator CARDIN. I understand that. But my question is our stated mission is to reduce noncombatant casualties. If we do not track, how do we determine that?

Mr. KAREM. So I think one of our stated missions is precisely that. There are multiple ways that I think we do have insight into Saudi targeting behavior. We have helped them with their processes. We have seen them implement a no strike list, and we have seen their capabilities improve.

Senator CARDIN. So the information is based upon what the Saudis tell you how they are conducting the mission rather than the after-impact of the mission?

Mr. KAREM. I think our military officers who are resident in Saudi Arabia are seeing how the Saudis approach this effort.

Senator CARDIN. You know, obviously, the proof is in the results, and we do not know whether the results are there or not. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. KAREM. I think we do see a difference in how the Saudis have operated in Yemen.

Senator CARDIN. I understand how they operate, but we do not know whether in fact that has been effective. The United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts on Yemen concluded in recent reports that the cumulative effect of these airstrikes on civilian infrastructure demonstrates that even when precautionary measures were taken, they were largely inadequate and ineffective. Do you have any information that disagrees with that assessment?

Mr. KAREM. Senator, I think the assessment of our Central Command is that the Saudi and Emirati targeting efforts have improved with the steps that they have taken. We do not have perfect understanding because we are not using all of our assets to monitor their aircraft, but we do get reporting from the ground on what is taking place inside Yemen.

Senator CARDIN. I understand that. And I would just caution you to be reserved as to how effective you are in that if you do not have direct information about it. The U.S. reputation is on the line, and we expect you to know if you report something. If you cannot report it, fine, but do not make statements that you cannot back up. That would be my caution to the way you advertise it.

I want to ask you one other question, if I might, on Iran's influence. How effective have we been in stopping the Iranian influence in that region? It seems like they are extremely active.

Mr. KAREM. I think it is extraordinarily difficult given the breadth of Iran's access throughout the region and how aggressive the Iranians have been over many, many years to put in place surrogates and access and influence and—

Senator CARDIN. So we are not effective?

Mr. KAREM. No. I think we are increasingly effective. The United States cannot do it alone, and in the case of Yemen, we are trying to help our partners better combat—

Senator CARDIN. So we think the Iranians are less effective supporting the Houthis today than they were 3 months ago or 6 months ago or a year ago?

Mr. KAREM. I think we are getting better at mobilizing an international effort to put pressure on Iran—

Senator CARDIN. Are we better today than a year ago with the Iranians?

Mr. KAREM. I think the Iranians are under more pressure today, but their ability to operate remains a significant point of concern for the United States.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Thank you for your testimony.

Ambassador Satterfield, I guess some people, when they think about our strategy, might question the idea of our strategy. If your son was shooting off his pistol in the back yard and doing it indiscriminately and endangering the neighbors, would you give him more bullets or less? And we see the Saudis acting in an indis-

criminate manner. They have bombed funeral processions. They have killed a lot of civilians. And so our strategy is to give them more bombs not less. And we say, well, if we do not give them the bombs, somebody else will. And that is sort of this global strategy that many in the bipartisan foreign policy consensus have. We have to always be involved, and we always have to provide weapons or someone else will and they will act even worse.

But there is, I guess, a lot of examples it does not seem to be improving their behavior. You can argue that it is marginally better since we have been giving them more weapons, but it seems the opposite of logic. You would think you would give people less or you might withhold aid or withhold assistance to the Saudis to get them to behave. But we do sort of the opposite. We give them more aid.

What would your response be to that?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, when I noted in my remarks that progress had been made on this issue of targeting, minimizing, or mitigating civilian casualties, that phrase was carefully chosen.

And to elaborate further on my colleague's remarks, Robert Karem, we do work with the Saudis and have particularly over the last 6 to 9 months worked intensively on the types of munitions the Saudis are using, how they are using, how to discriminate target sets, how to assure through increased loiter time by aircraft that the targets sought are, indeed, clear of collateral or civilian damage. This is new. This is not the type of interaction that we had with the Saudis during the time when those——

Senator PAUL. And yet, the overall situation in Yemen is a disaster.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. The overall situation is extremely bad, Senator.

Senator PAUL. So I guess that is really my question. We ought to rethink, and I think from a common sense point of view, a lot of people would question giving people who misbehave more weapons instead of giving them less.

On another question, which I think is a broad question about what we are doing in the Middle East in general, you admitted that there is not really a military solution in Yemen. Most people say it is going to be a political solution. The Houthis will still remain. We are not going to have Hiroshima. We are not going to have unconditional surrender and the good guys win and the bad guys are vanquished.

The same with Syria. Most people said for years, both the Obama administration and this administration, probably even the Bush administration, this situation will probably be a political solution. It is not going to be complete vanquishment of the enemy.

We are also saying that in Afghanistan. I guess my point, as I think about that, as I think about the recruiter at the station in Omaha, Nebraska, trying to get somebody to sign up for the military and saying, please join. We are going to send you to three different wars where there is no military solution. We are hoping to make it maybe a little bit better. I think back to Vietnam. Oh, we are going to take one more village. If we take one more village, they are going to negotiate and we got a little bit better negotia-

tion. I just cannot see sending our young men and women to die for that, for one more village.

You know, the Taliban have 40 percent in Afghanistan. When they get to 30 percent, they will negotiate; and it will have been worth it for the people who have to go in and die and take those villages? I do not think it is worth one more life.

The war in Yemen is not ours. We talk all about the Iranians have launched hundreds of missiles. Well, yes, and the Saudis have launched 16,000 attacks. Who started it? It is a little bit murky back and forth. The Houthis may have started taking over their government, but that was a civil war. Now we are involved in it. Who are the good guys? Are the Saudis the good guys? Are the others the bad guys? Thousands of civilians are dying. Seventeen million people live on the edge of starvation.

I think we need to rethink whether or not military intervention, supplying the Saudis with weapons, whether all of this makes any sense at all or whether we have made the situation worse.

I mean, humanitarian crisis. We are talking about, oh, we are giving them money. The Saudis are giving them money, and I am like, okay, so we bomb the crap out of them and then Saudis give them \$1 billion. Maybe we could bomb less. Maybe part of the humanitarian answer is supplying less weapons to a war. There is a huge arms race going on. Why do the Iranians do what they do? They are evil, or maybe they are responding to the Saudis. Who responded first? Who started it? Where did the arms race start? But if we sell \$300 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia, what are the Iranians going to do? They react. It is action and reaction throughout the Middle East. And so we paint the Iranians as the evil monster, and we just have to correct the evil monster. But the world is a much more complicated place back and forth.

And all I would ask is that we try to get outside our mindset that what we are doing is working because I think what we are doing has not worked, and we have made a lot of things worse. And we are partly responsible for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

There is nothing like making a small speech.

The CHAIRMAN. That was very small by Senate standards, but thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Karem, after hearing the answers to Senator Cardin's line of questioning, I come to the conclusion that we are not measuring success in a way that is meaningful. If you do not know what civilian casualties are—we do not measure it, as General Votel says—and you said, yes, we do not track all civilian casualties from Saudi operations, but we have seen them improve targeting behavior. Well, that in and of itself is not a way to define a measurement of how we are succeeding in reducing civilian casualties. So I find that pretty alarming. It is information I wish I had known before.

Let me ask Secretary Satterfield. Why has the administration not used CAATSA authority to impose sanctions on Iran for its weapons transfer to the Houthis?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We have sanctioned extensively all of the Iranian entities and individuals who are associated with the proliferating behaviors that include the transfer of weaponry—

Senator MENENDEZ. Telling me about all the ways we have sanctioned Iran—of course, I am very familiar with that. But can you cite to me the specific CAATSA authority that was used to sanction Iran for weapons transfers to the Houthis?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, they were sanctioned under other extant authorities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I would like you to submit that for the record to see what that is.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We can do that, Senator.

[The Committee Received No Response From Ambassador Satterfield.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe that U.S. support for coalition bombings in Yemen have been an effective way to counter Iranian influence in the region?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. I believe that the support that we have provided to the Saudi-led coalition has advanced the Saudis' ability to defend themselves against Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps-enabled Houthi launches into the heartland of Saudi Arabia. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. So helping the Saudis is how we, in part, counter Iranian influence is what you are telling me.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. It is indeed, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this. Secretary Mattis recently said that U.S. policy is calibrated to achieve a negotiated settlement in Yemen. I would like to understand more about this calibration. There are reports that the Saudi coalition will soon start operations to seize the Port of Hudaydah, the main port of humanitarian and commercial goods into Yemen. Would this operation accelerate prospects for a political solution in your view?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. It would not, Senator, and we have been exceedingly clear with the governments of Saudi Arabia, as well as the Emirates.

Senator MENENDEZ. Will the administration provide military support to the coalition if it starts operations to seize the port?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We have made clear that the port is to be left fully operational.

Senator MENENDEZ. Other than the rhetorical support for a negotiated settlement, what is the administration specifically doing to facilitate a negotiated settlement?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, over the course of the past year, but particularly since October of last year, we have worked extensively with the United Nations, with the Saudis, with the Emiratis, as well as with all Yemeni parties to try to establish the basis for a resumption of talks, the talks that collapsed in 2016. The political picture on the ground in Yemen has changed radically with the death, the killing, of Ali Abdullah Saleh, with the fragmentation of the General People's Congress. All of that, while tragic in many of its dimensions, has provided a certain reshuffling of the deck that may, we hope, allow the United Nations to be more effective in its efforts.

But throughout this, we have underscored to all the parties, the Saudis and the Emiratis in particular, the UN must have the ability to conduct negotiations as it chooses with those whom it chooses

and where it chooses to try to advance a political settlement, and we will provide all possible support for that.

Senator MENENDEZ. So we are depending upon the UN to be the solution to this process.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. The international community has placed its support in the United Nations as the best party positioned to try to broker a resolution.

Senator MENENDEZ. And the administration endorses that U.N. process.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We do, indeed, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. It is a new day for the U.N. and the United States.

Now, let me ask you this. While significant culpability is attributable to the Saudi coalition for the role in the deepening humanitarian crisis in Yemen, the Houthis also bear responsibility. Do you agree with that?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. I do, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. In your view, what actions have the Houthis undertaken in Yemen that block humanitarian access and violate international humanitarian law?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, the Houthis routinely predate aid deliveries coming through land crossings as well as through the ports of Hudaydah and Saleef. By predation, I mean a variety of measures: skimming, removing, looting aid from convoys, taking taxes repeatedly from the drivers and personnel of the convoys. The Houthis profit mightily from all commercial as well as humanitarian goods that enter Yemen from any sources.

The Houthis, in addition, control the telecommunications networks of Yemen from which they also extract revenues. They are a predatory body, but they are also part of the political situation and must be part of the political solution.

Senator MENENDEZ. Finally, have the Houthis demonstrated commitment or will to proceed with a negotiated settlement of the conflict, to your knowledge?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. The Houthis have told the United Nations, they have told other parties that they do wish to participate in a political resolution. It is the testing of that proposition that is the challenge before the United Nations and all of us.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, they say the most dangerous person in Washington is a Senator that just returned from a fact finding mission overseas. More dangerous is a Senator who has a Yemeni out in the anteroom that he has been talking to all morning long. So a lot of the things I am going to ask I am going to act like I know what I am talking about, and I think I do. But I have a young lady out there who works with CARE USA, which is headquartered in Georgia, who has been working with me on this, and some of the things I want to bring out I think will help answer some of the questions that have been referred to by these gentlemen.

Number one, apparently there are about 22 million Yemenis who are in need of aid, either medical aid or nutritional aid or some type of other assistance in aid. And there are only 26 million people

there. So it is almost 90 percent of the population. Would you agree with that? Anybody? Is that about right?

Mr. JENKINS. Yes. All the numbers that we have for Yemen are imprecise given the situation. And we look at about 29 million people as the full population, and over 76 percent of them need humanitarian assistance.

Senator ISAKSON. Whatever the numbers, it is big and it is the vast majority of the country.

And the port is the biggest single problem in getting humanitarian aid into Yemen. Is that not correct?

Mr. JENKINS. We have been calling on all parties to make sure we can have free and unfettered access through all roads and all ports, but Hudaydah Port is the primary point of access for up to 80 percent of the cargo that goes into the country.

Senator ISAKSON. I am told it is the biggest problem, and it is getting bigger.

Mr. JENKINS. It is not getting bigger, sir. In fact, the worst moment came in November of last year when there was a coalition-led, coalition-enforced closure of the Red Sea ports. Since then, we have seen improvements. There is a ways to go, but things have been improving as of late.

Senator ISAKSON. Mr. Karem, at the end of the long speech made by Senator Paul, who I have great respect for—we disagree on certain things, but he was making a good speech and I enjoyed it. But he did not ask questions.

I want to ask a question following up on what he said. He was basically saying we have sent a lot of our soldiers into battle and battles—winning or losing did not make any difference because we never finished the drill and that we have in Afghanistan and we have in Yemen and we have other soldiers deployed right now who are in battles that we are not going to win but we are going to just bring it to a draw. Is that a fair way to say it?

Is there any other way to get a recalcitrant people or people who are working against political solutions to the table other than a military challenge if you do not have a military challenge to force them to the table?

Mr. KAREM. I think you have to use all elements of power to bring people to the negotiating table. Sometimes that will be predominantly military. Sometimes it can be financial. Sometimes it can be diplomatic. In the case of Yemen, I think all of these things probably apply.

But I think there is a difference between Afghanistan, where the United States has tens of thousands of soldiers who are supporting the Afghan Government, and Yemen, where we are not a party to the conflict and are not engaged in hostilities except for our relatively narrow counterterrorism efforts.

Senator ISAKSON. But there is no question—I am speaking for myself now—that at some point in time when you get to solving the problems of a conflict overseas that we are in one way or the other or observe one way or another through the U.N., that some ability for military force, to be an effective force to bring about a solution, helps you get to the table to get a diplomatic solution rather than ending up having a war to solve it or, worse than that, some kind of civil war to solve it.

Mr. KAREM. Yes, I agree. And more importantly, all of the parties who are fighting in Yemen believe—

Senator ISAKSON. What is the background of the U.N. Special Envoy that has just been named? Is it an American?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. No. He is a U.K. national, Senator. He has been involved throughout his life in international peace work, a variety of institutions, most of them in the UK who bring together negotiators, work on international solutions to problems like this.

Senator ISAKSON. We need to give him and the U.N. the help and encouragement we can to get that done because ultimately that is going to—you know, special envoys usually are an alternative to solving the problem. They just say we did something like what happened in South Sudan and the PCA there. But I hope we will work in every way possible to move them forward at the U.N. and move the Special Envoy forward to help bring that to a conclusion.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. That is our intent, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. And just on behalf of the USAID people—I mean, the CARE USA people are out in the anteroom and my friends from Atlanta. CARE does a tremendous humanitarian NGO mission all over the world in lots of places, and they are doing a tremendous one in Yemen. It is horrible when you get a situation where they cannot even get well-intended aid and medical supplies to the people who need it because we do not have enough security to even get them that access. I have been to Darfur and seen what that can mean. It is horrible. So I hope we will do everything we can to get the NGOs that are trying to get the aid to the 23 million Yemenis who are deep trouble nutritionally and health-wise to them as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing and thank you to our witnesses for being here to testify and for your efforts to address the crisis in Yemen, which has truly taken a horrific toll on millions of innocent men and women there and particularly children.

I am disappointed that the Senate has not yet made a decisive statement about the need to influence Saudi-led operations and to protect those innocent civilians in Yemen. I think it is long past time we send a message to the leadership of Saudi Arabia that we have high expectations for our allies, particularly those who are receiving military support.

So, Ambassador Satterfield, do you believe that the Saudi-led coalition is engaged in urgent and good faith efforts to negotiate an end to the civil war in Yemen?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, the Saudi-led coalition, primarily Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, accept at the highest levels the proposition that there is only ultimately a political solution to this conflict. And that was reiterated most recently by Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman during his visits here in Washington.

We operationally try to implement that rhetorical understanding in terms of the active support which the U.N. needs from both the

Emirates and the Saudis for their mission to be successful. Now, over the course of the past 6 months, from a crisis point in October and November when things looked very dark indeed, we have, indeed, seen a more receptive approach by the Saudis, by the Emiratis certainly to this concept of supporting, genuinely supporting and facilitating the UN's mediating efforts. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. That is good to hear.

Mr. Jenkins, you talked about pledges I think you said from the UAE and the Saudis—did you mention anyone else—of \$1 billion in aid. Has any of that aid actually been forthcoming to date?

Mr. JENKINS. Yes, thank you for the question.

On April 3rd in Geneva, there was a pledging conference where over \$2 billion was pledged against the \$3 billion that the United Nations is looking for, for this year. Of that, Saudi Arabia and UAE pledged \$920 million, and as of this week, all of that has arrived within the bank accounts of the United Nations, which we are very happy to see. Kuwait also pledged a significant amount, as well as the UK and the EU. All of this is very heartening for us as we look at the vast needs to see that now with all the pledges, when they come in—that is two-thirds of the appeal. This long into the year, that is very heartening. However, there is going to continue to be great needs and need for more assistance.

Senator SHAHEEN. And how long is it going to take to get that aid out into the field so it is helping people?

Mr. JENKINS. So we are very thankful, particularly because the Saudis and the Emirates have provided all of this money to the United Nations Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance, UNOCHA. UNOCHA is now going to disburse it among the various U.N. agencies, which they will do very quickly.

Senator SHAHEEN. I think you all talked about the importance of a political solution in Yemen as being the ultimate goal. Ambassador Satterfield, you talked about the Houthis needing to be part of any negotiation. Who else needs to be at the table in order for a political solution to really work?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, I have, over the past 40 years, seen many complex, almost Hobbesian crises in the Middle East. I have to tell you the Yemen situation is one of the most complex in terms of the numbers of parties, sub-parties, and then fundamental internal divisions, the south, the north, the legacy of the 1993 forced reunification. All of them in one way or another are going to need to have a voice. They are going to need to be represented. The Houthis are but one, in the north a very significant one, but one of those parties.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Jenkins, Secretary Karem, who else do you think should be at the table in addition to the Houthis and the Yemenis?

Mr. JENKINS. I would echo what U.N. Secretary-General Guterres has said. What is necessary right now is a dialogue across Yemen, an intra-Yemen dialogue that can help support a larger peace negotiation.

Senator SHAHEEN. And who is going to lead the dialogue?

Mr. JENKINS. We are very happy that Martin Griffiths has started his work. We think he needs time and space to show results,

and we want to be as supportive as we can across the interagency of his efforts.

Senator SHAHEEN. Secretary Karem.

Mr. KAREM. I agree with Secretary Satterfield and Mr. Jenkins that you are going to need to bring a number of parties resident inside Yemen together, and then there are also the external players who I think are already in touch with Mr. Griffiths.

Senator SHAHEEN. So does that include Iran as being one of the players at the table to negotiate?

Mr. KAREM. I have seen precious little evidence that Iran is interested in a negotiated solution in Yemen or in Syria or elsewhere.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do we think that the Houthis will actually negotiate in good faith if they continue to believe that Iran is going to support them in their activities?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, our policy has been premised on two things: the first, creating that all-encompassing, all-embracing political process in which the Houthis do have a voice and will participate in the outcome as well. The second is to curtail, constrain, mitigate, roll back the extraordinary Iranian support being provided to the Houthis directed at Saudi Arabia. It only emboldens a party not to negotiate as effectively as possible. So we are working on both those lines at once.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Young—and before going to him, since you brought up this hearing is in response to requests by members, we will mark up before the Memorial Day holiday the bill that you all put forth. Thank you for your leadership on that and on the AUMF itself and know that from my perspective, it is getting in a very, very good place. We thank you all for working with both of us and for taking leadership on making sure we do speak strongly, as you mentioned.

Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Secretary Satterfield, I would like to pick up on Senator Menendez's line of questioning about the administration's support for the coalition should an attack occur on the Port of Hudaydah. You did not respond directly to that answer. You indicated you have repeatedly encouraged—the United States has repeatedly encouraged the Saudis, the Emiratis, and other members of the coalition not to strike the Port of Hudaydah. Is our support conditional upon a non-attack on the Port of Hudaydah? Yes or no, sir.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, I will be quite explicit. We have told the Emirates and the Saudis there is to be no action undertaken that could threaten the ports of Hudaydah and Saleef—

Senator YOUNG. It sounds like encouragement to me.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. —or any routes to and from the port for delivery of assistance.

Senator YOUNG. Will our support continue should the Saudis or Emiratis bomb the Port of Hudaydah?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We would not view such an action as consistent with our own policy upon which our support is based.

Senator YOUNG. Will our support continue should the Saudis or Emiratis or another member of the coalition bomb the Port of Hudaydah?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, you are posing, with all due respect, a hypothetical. We would have to see the circumstances in order to give a response to that question beyond what I have already told you.

Senator YOUNG. So it is not conditional. Our support would not be conditional on the continued allowance of food, fuel, medical supplies, and other humanitarian assistance into the primary port of Yemen.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, you and I have talked back in those dark days of October and early November. When we told the Saudis explicitly that if there was not an immediate lifting and a sustained lifting of any constraints on access through Hudaydah and Saleef Port, not just of humanitarian goods but commercial goods as well, that it would be exceedingly difficult to maintain the type of support for the coalition that had existed, and that view has not changed.

Senator YOUNG. I will continue.

Mr. Jenkins, your testimony is compelling. You put forward a number of facts and figures, which I would like you to underscore. Perhaps I can elicit a few more. This will go very quickly, but I think it is very important for all listeners to fully appreciate the gravity of the situation in Yemen.

Approximately how many people, Mr. Jenkins, require humanitarian assistance in Yemen?

Mr. JENKINS. 22 million people.

Senator YOUNG. What percent of the population is that?

Mr. JENKINS. Approximately 75 percent.

Senator YOUNG. Was the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance increased from last year?

Mr. JENKINS. It increased by, we are estimating, 3.5 million people.

Senator YOUNG. And how much has it increased?

Mr. JENKINS. About 3.5 million people.

Senator YOUNG. How many are severely food insecure?

Mr. JENKINS. 17.8 million.

Senator YOUNG. How many children are severely malnourished?

Mr. JENKINS. 460,000.

Senator YOUNG. How many people lack access to clean water and working toilets?

Mr. JENKINS. We estimate it to be around 16 million people.

Senator YOUNG. Does Yemen face the largest cholera outbreak in the world?

Mr. JENKINS. It does.

Senator YOUNG. How many cholera cases have we seen in Yemen?

Mr. JENKINS. A suspected over 1 million cases.

Senator YOUNG. And how many lives has that cholera outbreak claimed?

Mr. JENKINS. Almost 2,300.

Senator YOUNG. And, Ambassador Satterfield, do you agree with Mr. Jenkins' assessment of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Absolutely, sir.

Senator YOUNG. So when we confront such horrible humanitarian suffering, I think we feel a moral imperative to act. I certainly do.

Mr. Jenkins, in your prepared statement, you go further than that, echoing testimony of David Beasley, Matt Nims, and others. You write we have a national security imperative to do all we can to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Yemen.

Mr. Jenkins, very briefly, why do you believe we have a national security imperative to alleviate this humanitarian crisis?

Mr. JENKINS. So when USAID provides humanitarian assistance, we are projecting both the generosity of the United States and also what our government and people are all about. We do that because it is the right thing to do but also because it does protect our national security to make sure that these places are stabilized, that deaths are kept at a minimum, and that suffering is alleviated.

Senator YOUNG. So on March 14, I convened a subcommittee hearing on why food security matters. I encourage anyone interested in Yemen and food security issues to review the transcript of that hearing or the video of that hearing.

The hearing made clear there is a strong evidentiary and scholarly basis to conclude it is in America's clear national security interest to address food insecurity, among other types of—you know, whether it is medical aid and so forth.

Retired Marine Corps Lieutenant General Castellaw testified at that hearing that food crises grow terrorists.

Mr. Jenkins, do you agree we should expect all parties to the conflict to undertake measures to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen by increasing access for Yemenis to food, fuel, and medicine, including through Yemen's Red Sea ports, the airport in Sanaa, and external border crossings?

Mr. JENKINS. Absolutely.

Senator YOUNG. And to be clear, does that include the Saudis?

Mr. JENKINS. Absolutely.

Senator YOUNG. Ambassador Satterfield, you write in your prepared statement, quote, "the administration shares your belief that ending the conflict in Yemen is in our national security interest." Mr. Ambassador, based on this administration position, do you believe we should expect all parties to the conflict to undertake an urgent and good faith effort to conduct diplomatic negotiations to end the civil war in Yemen?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We do, sir.

Senator YOUNG. And should that include the Saudis, sir?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Absolutely it should.

Senator YOUNG. And then lastly, Ambassador Satterfield, in your prepared statement, you emphasize the importance of adhering to the Law of Armed Conflict, including the obligation to take all feasible precautions to reduce the risk of harm to civilians.

Mr. Ambassador, do you agree it is important and appropriate for the U.S. to continue to press the Saudi-led coalition to take demonstrable action to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from its military operations in Yemen?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. I do, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, for holding this important hearing on the world's greatest humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing conflict in Yemen.

And I would like to thank our three witnesses both for appearing before the committee and for your service in this difficult challenge confronting us with so many other pressing challenges in the Middle East, not just this crisis in Yemen but also our military action against Syria over the weekend.

I am just going to echo what Senator Menendez said at the outset, that it is more important than ever that the administration formulate and deliver a comprehensive strategy to the Congress and the American people so that we can better engage with and understand and judge what is the path forward in terms of confronting and restraining Iran's aggressive behavior, which I think is a central cause of this ongoing conflict in Yemen and is a critical driver of Bashar al Assad's barbarism in Syria. And I will insist that we need to hear more from the President and his team represented here by way of a comprehensive strategy in the near future. But let us today continue to drill down on some of the specifics of this particular conflict if we could.

Humanitarian access first. Senator Young asked a number of questions admirably. He has been very engaged on the issue of humanitarian access through ports. Let me just add, if I could, a question about the closure of Sanaa's airport because of military strikes led by the Saudi coalition. Sanaa's airport has largely been closed to humanitarian relief and assistance and to those who might seek to leave for medical purposes.

How can we address Saudi Arabia's legitimate security concerns around that airport and its use for the importation of weapons while at the same time making it possible for civilians trapped in Houthi-controlled areas to get medical care, to get food, to get clean water. Ambassador Satterfield, if you would start us off.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, you have singled out exactly the reasons why Sanaa airport should be fully opened for movements in and out, not just for humanitarian, so labeled, purposes but general purposes as well. How best to assure that the genuine concerns of Saudi Arabia are met? There are a variety of regimes that have been put successfully in place to, for lack of a better word, sterilize or assure that cargos and people moving in and out of the airport are what they ought to be without significantly diminishing the ability of the airport to function.

We, the United Nations have repeatedly proposed such regimes. Some have worked partially. The airport has a greater level of operation today than it did if we go back to early and mid-November, but more needs to be done. We believe the mechanisms are out there. The U.N. is willing to participate in them, and we think they can be made to work.

Senator COONS. Thank you for that answer.

Let me talk just a little bit more about water shortages, as several of you have spoken to. Both the Houthis and the Saudis have blocked deliveries of water to civilians and destroyed water infrastructure, which has, in large part, contributed to water scarcity, to the world's greatest cholera outbreak. Do you believe access to

and control over water is one of the drivers of the conflict in Yemen? And how does that exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, and what can we best do to tackle the access to clean water challenges?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, in Yemen control over water resources is not one of the primary drivers of the conflict. Yemen is blessed with a variety of water supplies not found elsewhere in the Middle East.

The problem with water—and I will defer to my colleague from AID—is the elimination of reliable electricity supplies to purification in water treatment plants, appropriate sewage disposal. It is a very basic phenomenon, but it stems from restrictions on electricity delivery which, in turn, are the product of some damage to transmittal lines, but more importantly, lack of consistent supplies of affordable fuel.

Senator COONS. Mr. Jenkins.

Mr. JENKINS. The Ambassador nailed it on that one.

Basically when you see or hear about fuel not getting to where it needs to go in Yemen, that immediately correlates itself to people not being able to pump the water that they need, not being able to fuel the generators that keep the lights on in hospitals. And water is a critical, critical problem for the humanitarian situation.

Senator COONS. Let me ask, if I might, one last question. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, has been cited as one of the more lethal terrorist organizations in the world. Do you think AQAP is a greater threat to the United States now than it was at the beginning of the conflict back in September of 2015? Have we had any successes in degrading their capabilities? And most importantly I think from a security perspective, given the quote Senator Young just shared with us that food crises grow terrorists, what about our alignment, our strategy, our engagement might make us less secure today as a result of the conduct of the last 3 years?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, as you know, we had a relatively sizeable presence in Yemen prior to the conflict focused with the legitimate Government of Yemen in going after AQAP because of the specific threat it poses to the homeland. That presence and our activities were significantly undermined by the collapse of the government and the outbreak of civil war in 2014 and 2015. We have made strides in reconstituting our efforts through our local partnerships, first with the legitimate Government of Yemen, as well as with other partner forces who are on the ground.

But AQAP remains a significant threat. They have benefited from the civil war that has created open territory and safe areas for them. But as the Emiratis in particular have made progress in helping the Government of Yemen maintain control in certain areas, it has denied more area to AQAP. We, nevertheless, have continued to have to take a number of strikes against this very significant terrorist threat, and so it remains a challenge. But we are making progress.

Senator COONS. Thank you all. The same conclusion is it is clearly both in our humanitarian interest and in our national security interest to reach a resolution of this conflict as soon as is possible. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses for your testimony.

In the briefing documents that we were given for this hearing today, a comment was made, as the war continues, the risk of it spreading beyond Yemeni territory appears to be growing. You would agree with that, Ambassador Satterfield?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Only in the sense that Iranian proliferation, which has taken advantage of this conflict, is a broader threat than just in Yemen.

Senator GARDNER. Secretary Karem, would you agree with that?

Mr. KAREM. I agree with Ambassador Satterfield.

Senator GARDNER. In a letter from, I think, General Counsel William Castle, Department of Defense Acting General Counsel, to Senator Schumer and McConnell, it was talking about the extent of U.S. involvement. To quote the letter, "the United States provides the KSA-led coalition defense articles and services, including air-to-air refueling, certain intelligence support and military advice, including advice regarding compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict and best practices for reducing the risk of civilian casualties." Is this the extent of our involvement?

Mr. KAREM. That is the extent of our involvement with respect to the support of the coalition's efforts in the civil war. We obviously provide different support with respect to CT operations using different authorities.

Senator GARDNER. Ambassador Satterfield?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We provide a variety of humanitarian, as well as political support and engagement. But, yes, it is an accurate accounting of our military support and intel support for the coalition.

Senator GARDNER. What is a ballpark personnel figure that we have right now involved with Yemen?

Mr. KAREM. I believe we have roughly 50 personnel in Saudi Arabia, but they are conducting a variety of activities, including I think largely helping on the ballistic missile threat.

Senator GARDNER. Ambassador Satterfield, I was late to the hearing. We schedule hearings around here at the same exact time, so I had a couple of other hearings to attend prior to joining this one.

Ambassador Satterfield, so you may have done this already. Could you just lay out quickly our administration's goals as it relates to the conflict in Yemen?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Our goals are to facilitate primarily through support for the United Nations but also through our own direct engagement with key Yemeni parties, with the Saudis, with the Emiratis a comprehensive political resolution or a process which has the prospect of producing such a resolution and, in that process, reduces the level of conflict.

It is also a policy goal to limit, roll back Iranian influence and projection of Iranian force through the Revolutionary Guard Corps, particularly in the form of support for Houthi challenges to Saudi sovereignty.

Senator GARDNER. Secretary Karem, I think you had made a comment. I want to make sure I get it right here. So you can correct me if I am wrong. You said there is precious little evidence

that Iran is interested in any kind of a settlement. Does that kind of paraphrase what you said?

Mr. KAREM. Yes, although I would really say Iran benefits from continuing the conflict. They are fueling the conflict as they are in Syria and elsewhere.

Senator GARDNER. So, Ambassador Satterfield, given what Secretary Karem has said and our objectives, we do not really seem to be gaining anywhere at this point.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We have, in fact, a more promising political scene in Yemen today. We believe it is a better prospect for the new U.N. Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, to work in. We see a greater degree of Emirati and Saudi support, genuine support, being proffered for him than was the case a year ago with his predecessor.

On the Iranian side, we are working actively to address the ability of the Iranians to proliferate particularly missiles into Houthi hands. That is an ongoing process, which we hope can bear fruit in the not distant future.

Senator GARDNER. The United Nations report recently said that the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen has now eroded to the point that it is doubtful whether it will ever be able to reunite Yemen as a single country. Do you agree with that?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. The future of Yemen on that macro level, single country, two states as it was prior to 1993, is a matter for Yemenis to decide and undoubtedly will be one of the issues addressed in any comprehensive peace process is one of the issues which the UN has been grappling with. But more fundamentally than that meta question is the simple issue of how do you construct a political process that brings and keeps all of the parties, including the Houthis, in the game, offers them a stake in the outcome of the game, and sees through the process a diminishing of the level of violence and disruption to civilian life. That is the challenge.

Senator GARDNER. Ambassador, you mentioned proliferation. Could you describe for me the entities inside Iran that are engaged in weapons proliferation? Or actually a better question is have they been designated or sanctioned under the May 2012 Yemen executive order?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. They have, indeed, sir. It is the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the associated entities working through and with the Corps.

Senator GARDNER. The Jerusalem Post recently reported a German company provided Iran with dual-use goods that ultimately were used in the recent Syrian chemical weapons attack. Is there a risk of Iran proliferating this kind of attack in Yemen as well or in Saudi Arabia?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. I am not sure in this forum we could go into significant detail about Iran's potential chemical weapons capabilities. We are obviously very concerned that they have taken the step that they have to provide long-range ballistic missile capabilities for the Houthis to fire at civilian populations.

Senator GARDNER. Have we seen evidence of chemical agents in Yemen?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. We would have to brief you in a closed session I think, sir.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Admitting that you made a mistake is a very difficult thing. America's biggest foreign policy mistakes come when we make a decision for military engagement and then we do not allow for facts on the ground to educate us about a mistake that we have made. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different set of results. And I feel like that is where we are 5 years into a conflict in which nothing has changed except for the worse. The Houthis control effectively the same amount of the country that they did at the outset. The humanitarian nightmare has gotten even worse, and yet we are still sitting here today talking about a peace process blossoming out of a reality on the ground that does not look very different than it did a year or 2 years ago.

And so, Mr. Satterfield, let me pose this theory of the case to you. I have great respect for you, but I really do think that this impression that you are giving the committee that the Iranians do not want to come to the table and the Saudis and the Emiratis do is spin because the reason that we are asking you questions about reports of an assault on Hudaydah is that the Saudis have made it pretty clear to everyone that has asked them that they are not going to come to the table until the military battle lines on the ground inside Yemen change and that until they get the Houthis back on their heels militarily, they are not going to come to the negotiating table. And yet, you are telling us that you think that the Saudis are going to engage even if, after 5 years of trying to get the battle lines to be different, they have no success.

So why are the Saudis going to come to the table today if for 5 years they have trying to move the battle lines without success? The reason we are asking you these questions about Hudaydah is that they have communicated to us that they are planning an assault on Hudaydah as a means of trying to change the dynamics in anticipation of a negotiation.

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, the last 3 years that this conflict has endured have not just shown a status quo. It has been a worsening of the situation with respect to military picture. The posture of the Houthis is strengthened today in comparison to what it was 3 years ago. The presence of opposing non-Houthi forces, Ali Abdullah Saleh, the General People's Congress, is significantly more diminished or fragmented. The presence of other elements, Islah, other actors, Ali Mohsen, in this conflict have less influence to bring to bear. Now, that may appear to be more of a chaotic mix and thus more difficult to bring to a resolution. Perhaps out of some sense of optimism, I choose to see it differently. It is a situation in which the hope that somehow military force alone could compel the Houthis as a unique party to come to the table on reduced terms is illusory. And we use exactly those terms with the Saudis and Emiratis.

Senator MURPHY. But that has been the Saudi position for the last 5 years, that military pressure, continued military pressure, an average of 15 airstrikes a day for 3 years consecutive is going to bring the Houthis to the table. That has been the theory of the case from the Saudi coalition's perspective. Correct?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. It is the Saudi position that military force needs to be continued to apply. Our response to the Saudis at the highest levels has been that application of force has not been and is not predictably likely to be successful in achieving that—

Senator MURPHY. And we have been unsuccessful in changing their mind for 5 years, and we expect things to change.

Mr. Jenkins, we are comparing the current state of humanitarian relief to a moment in time last fall when virtually no relief was getting through. That is not the proper comparison or at least a useful comparison.

So let me just quote from a recent U.N. report that suggests that today half as many vessels are getting into Hudaydah and Saleef as before the blockade and that on average, the Saudi inspection process is adding 100 days to relief supplies getting into these ports despite the fact that we have a U.N. verification process that is taking a look at these ships as well.

Why do the Saudis need to continue to look at every single ship that comes in, chilling the interest in humanitarian supplies, adding additional time when we have a U.N. process that so far has shown no evidence of not actually being able to conduct these inspections?

Mr. JENKINS. So, Senator, it is true that throughput at the Port of Hudaydah has not yet gotten back to the level we saw before the October-November enclosure. And there has been a very chilling effect on shippers, particularly shippers using containerized vessels who do not want to take the risk of going to Hudaydah and also because they do not know how long it will take to go through clearance.

However, we have been working very carefully—the State Department, USAID, other donors—with the coalition to reduce the time that the EHOC process—that is the coalition's Evacuation Humanitarian Assistance Operations Cell. In the month of April 3rd, we got that down to about 3 to 4 days. So it is not 100 days. There has been a lot of work done getting the communication between that process and the U.N. verification and inspection mechanism process together. The U.N. system, UNVIM, gets back within 48 hours on a determination of whether or not a vessel actually needs to be searched or not, and then it goes through the EHOC process. We have seen, particularly in the last 6 weeks, significant progress on that, and we are looking forward to reducing those times even more.

What we do need is we need shippers in the region to know how long it will take and that will, hopefully, get more shipping back into Hudaydah Port, particularly compartmentalized cargo.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing.

And thank you for the testimony.

Following up on Senator Coons' questions with regard to AQAP, it strikes me—it is difficult. We are working at kind of cross purposes there. Can somebody give me an assessment of AQAP and their position relative to their ability to project force for the homeland, as was mentioned, now versus 2 years ago? What position are they in?

Mr. KAREM. Senator, off the top of my head, I cannot give you a good indication of their current strength now versus 2 years ago. I think we did see at the beginning of the conflict and in the early years of the conflict a real diminution of the pressure we were able to apply on them. In the last year, we have been able to apply much more pressure. As General Votel testified just last month, we took over 100 strikes, in coordination with our partners, against AQAP in Yemen last year. So we are putting significant pressure on them, but as I said, they continue to plot and plan to conduct terrorist attacks.

Senator FLAKE. We have been able to do that still without impacting the effort against the Houthis.

Mr. KAREM. There is some geographical separation in where these threats are based, and so my understanding is that they are separated. But, nevertheless, because we require support from the Government of Yemen and other local partners, everything is connected. And so it is a very complicated situation. It is also why we are worried about the longer this civil war rages, the harder it will be to establish the conditions for us to bring it in to the threat that AQAP poses.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ambassador Satterfield, as you know, the Senate has taken several votes in recent history that would impact our ability to work with our Saudi partners on this issue. Most recently we voted on a resolution that would have required the President to withdraw all forces deployed in support of the Saudi coalition. The chairman just mentioned new legislation that we will be considering that looks to certain certifications that will be met.

What is your view on this legislation? Will it help? Is it a hindrance? How is it viewed by the administration?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, I have just seen the text of the proposed resolution and we will be reviewing that and responding.

Senator FLAKE. Any other thoughts on this type of certification? Sometimes some say it is easy to have a certification list depending on what snapshot in time you look at. You mentioned you wanted to comment.

Mr. KAREM. I have not seen the text of the legislation. I would say I think there are some concerns that we have had with hard conditionality. I think we are very happy to come up here to talk about the progress we are making and the kinds of pressure and conversations we are having with our partners to improve their targeting and their application of the Law of Armed Conflict, but worry that hard conditionality, in part because the Houthis get a vote, could negatively affect our efforts to influence their behavior.

Senator FLAKE. Ambassador Satterfield, if we were asked to certify right now if Saudi Arabia was working earnestly to achieve a political settlement allowing humanitarian aid to pass into Yemen

and protecting civilians in Yemen in order for U.S. support for their efforts, could we make that certification now?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, you will understand if I respond to that hypothetical were that a condition of assistance, the administration would carefully consider on all bases how best to respond. But I am not able to do so now.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Karem, General Votel, the Commander of the U.S. Central Command, recently called Iran's arming of the Yemeni rebels with ballistic missiles a, quote, "growing threat, which I think poses a significant danger not just to Saudis and Emiratis, but poses a risk to us." Can you explain why we should accept DoD's circular logic that once the administration at the political level inserts itself into a conflict, American service members are exposed to risks which then justifies continued U.S. participation in the conflict? It is a never-ending circle.

Mr. KAREM. Senator, I think that even if the United States was not involved in helping our partners in Yemen, even if we were not involved in conducting efforts against AQAP in Yemen, Iran's development of ballistic missile capabilities, transference of these ballistic missile capabilities would pose a threat to the United States, not just because it poses a threat to our partners in the region, be that the UAE or Saudi Arabia or Israel, but because there are hundreds of thousands of Americans who live in the Middle East. I believe there are nearly 100,000 Americans who live in Saudi Arabia. So the Iranian-backed Houthis' willingness to fire ballistic missiles at populated areas in the Middle East I think poses a threat not just to our partners but to us.

Senator MARKEY. Okay, but when we provide refueling service to Saudi coalition aircraft, do we have any say in the operation that those aircraft are conducting? In other words, do we know for a fact or can we assert that the Saudi coalition aircraft we refuel are engaging only in counterterrorism strikes and not in anti-Houthi operations?

Mr. KAREM. Senator, I believe we know that they are conducting counter-Houthi operations. As I mentioned earlier and as I think General Votel testified, we do not monitor every flight. We do not have the personnel or assets to do that given our other obligations.

I would want to correct the impression that we do not follow and do not track civilian casualties in Yemen. Obviously, we have intelligence reporting and also reporting from NGOs who are on the ground. And it is a range of information we have that leads us to believe that our partners have improved their capacity in limiting civilian casualties.

Senator MARKEY. Yes, but of course, the more that we are involved, the more at risk—as General Votel says, it poses a risk to us. So we are getting in deeper and deeper here. And we again we have not had the decision made by Congress in terms of the level of our intervention.

Does the United States in any way provide advice on what targets Saudi coalition aircraft target?

Mr. KAREM. We provide advice with respect to how to conduct targeting. We do not provide advice on specific targets is my understanding.

Senator MARKEY. It is your understanding that when the planes take off after being refueled by the U.S. and that you are helping them make general targeting decisions, that you do not think that the United States has any idea where these planes are going and what they are going to hit. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. KAREM. As I said, we do not monitor and track individual aircraft. We have a general idea, obviously, that—

Senator MARKEY. Do we have a policy which we express to the Saudis with regard to the targets that we do not want to have hit? Do we tell them expressly?

Mr. KAREM. I think we have been very clear with our partners about their obligations under the Law of Armed Conflict to avoid non-combatant casualties—

Senator MARKEY. And what level of confidence do you have that they have abided by that?

Mr. KAREM. I think we have a growing level of confidence. I would, though, defer to assessments from our intelligence services who I believe—

Senator MARKEY. So you are saying it is a high confidence that they do not do it. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. KAREM. I think we have a high degree of confidence that their targeting processes have improved—

Senator MARKEY. No, no. Is it a high level of confidence that they are not hitting civilian targets? So you have a high level of confidence that they are not hitting civilian targets.

Mr. KAREM. I think, unfortunately, our experience is that it is impossible to have a 100 percent record at avoiding civilian casualties in war.

Senator MARKEY. So you think there is only a 1 percent chance that they are hitting civilians. Is that what you are saying? Because it is not 100 percent you are saying, but 99 percent confident that they are not?

Mr. KAREM. I am saying they have made improvements in their efforts to avoid civilian casualties in large part because of the support that we have provided. In the absence of U.S. support, I would not be so confident that that level of assurance would continue.

Senator MARKEY. Do you have any sort of quantitative evidence to support that assertion?

Mr. KAREM. Yes. I believe that we have reporting about the number of strikes that have been taken, and I think there is intelligence reporting and public reporting about the level of civilian casualties.

Senator MARKEY. So that is quantitatively determined and available to this committee?

Mr. KAREM. I am sure in closed session that there are materials that are available.

Senator MARKEY. Materials that go to the quantitative evidence.

Mr. KAREM. I believe so, yes, sir.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. [presiding]: Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for your service.

An estimated 10,000 Yemeni civilians have been killed by Saudi airstrikes. Last year, Saudi Arabia claimed it would engage in a \$750 million multiyear training program through the American military to help prevent the accidental killing of civilians in the Saudi-led air campaign against the Houthi. When the Saudis say multiyear, how long is it going to take to get the Saudi military to stop accidentally killing civilians?

Mr. KAREM. Senator, as I said, I think we have seen clear indications that they are making progress, but war is incredibly difficult and it is impossible for any military to promise it can conduct military operations without any risk to civilian casualties. Our belief is that by continued partnership with the Saudis, that we can help improve their capabilities. If we do not provide that kind of support, there are others who will who do not care about civilian casualties. The Russians do not similarly provide the kind of training and advice with respect to civilian casualties that the United States does.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Do any of the other panelists want to comment on that?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, yes. Building on Secretary Karem's remarks, there are two challenges posed through coalition military activities in Yemen. One is collateral civilian casualties. We have worked over this past year in a manner that from both an anecdotal and a qualitative fashion we believe have achieved demonstrable progress. And there is, indeed, in another setting summary information available on why we make that statement.

But there is another aspect, which has been addressed by many of the members of this committee as well, which is the military campaign against the Houthis—that is, against military Houthi targets—and whether that is an effective means of producing a peace resolution. We do all in our power as a partner of the Saudis in mitigating civilian casualties, but we also counsel the Saudis and have done so at the highest levels of the government that the military campaign against Houthi military targets is not, in our view, an effective way of bringing about a peace settlement.

They are two different issues, but they combine to the same place, which is a political resolution vice a military resolution is necessary here.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Mr. Satterfield and Mr. Jenkins mentioned that the lack of access to clean water is due to the lack of fuel or energy to pump the water. How much would the international community need to contribute to fix this problem and restore access to clean water and meet basic nutrition and sanitation needs?

Mr. JENKINS. Thank you. Not being able to put an amount on it, the issue is the access. If access is free and unfettered through both the ports and road networks inside and in the road networks throughout, shortages of fuel should not exist.

Senator UDALL. Are there currently requests in the foreign operations budget to help provide these resources to do what I was asking about?

Mr. JENKINS. There is no request specifically. We use contingency funding in the International Disaster Assistance account,

and we do not specify even by country, leaving us maximum flexibility to respond to whatever needs we can globally and within Yemen. So there is no specific request for that.

There is a fuel mechanism now set up through the United Nations specifically for the importation of fuel through Hudaydah Port for the use by humanitarian actors on the ground.

Senator UDALL. Please let us know if additional resources are needed.

There have been considerable reports from human rights watchdogs and the Associated Press that detainees have been tortured. The United Arab Emirates have been implicated in these allegations. What is your assessment of the UAE involvement in the torture of detainees, and what action has the State Department taken to address this issue?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, in this session, we are engaged with the UAE authorities on these allegations with respect to what may or may not have occurred and what steps need to be taken to provide a satisfactory level of assurance that there is no such practice going on.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator Menendez for a follow-up question.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Ambassador Satterfield, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act directed the administration to mandatorily impose sanctions on Iran for its violation of the international arms embargo. In the past year, the U.N. Panel of Experts on Yemen informed the Security Council of Iran violating the arms embargo.

As a result of the U.N. information, has the administration imposed any additional sanctions as required by CAATSA?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, I will respond to your question in writing.

[The Committee Received No Response From Ambassador Satterfield]

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Is that because you do not know the answer?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. I do not know the specific answer. We will respond in detail.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay, because your earlier answer to me is unsatisfactory insofar as that from my view, since you gave me that answer is that there have been no specific mandatory sanctions placed on Iran as a result of the violations of arms embargo, this being one element of it. So I am of the view that when we pass something here in the Senate 98 to 2, and overwhelmingly in the House, that that is the law of the land and the law needs to be implemented, especially against an adversary which we are so concerned about in the region. So I look forward to that answer.

Senator GARDNER. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Jenkins, historically roughly 90 percent of the food that goes into the country of Yemen has come in from the outside. It is imported into the country, and a significant amount of their fuel and medicine is as well. 70 to 80 percent of those imports come in through the Port of Hudaydah.

With that in mind, what would be the implications, the humanitarian consequences of an attack on the Port of Hodaydah by the Saudi-led coalition?

Mr. JENKINS. With the temporary closure of Hodaydah back in October and November, we saw that an extended closure of the port would be catastrophic to the humanitarian needs in the country.

Senator YOUNG. Can you throw some numbers? I do not know if there are internal projections about, over a certain period of time, the impact that would have on the number of people that would succumb to disease and hunger and so forth.

Mr. JENKINS. So I do not have numbers offhand. I do know that the vast majority of people within that—or the majority of people in need in that 22 million number live in the northern part of the country that are accessible best and easiest by Hodaydah Port. There is no way to take Hodaydah out of the equation and get anywhere near the amount of humanitarian and, more importantly even, commercial goods into the country.

Senator YOUNG. I have a related question to both you, Mr. Jenkins, and Ambassador Satterfield relating to the clearance process, which was discussed a bit earlier. But what more can I, as a Member of the United States Senate, do to be helpful in ensuring that there is a more expeditious delivery of food, fuel, and medicine through the ports?

Ambassador SATTERFIELD. Senator, your efforts, the efforts of your colleagues in this body and on this committee have been exceedingly helpful in allowing the administration to send a message from whole of government regarding the very specific concerns we have over any limitations, restrictions, constraints on the ability of both humanitarian and commercial goods, specifically to include fuel, to have unrestricted and expeditious entry into Yemen. And that messaging, which comes from us, the executive branch, also comes from this body, is extremely important.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I want to thank you personally, Ambassador Satterfield. You did reference our previous conversations and work on this. And I am glad you are on the beat. You bring great credit upon yourself and the Department of State and represent our country quite well in this difficult situation.

I would like to summarize some of the things I elicited in my earlier round of questioning. Mr. Jenkins agreed we should expect all parties to the conflict to undertake measures to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Ambassador Satterfield said we should expect all parties to undertake an urgent and good faith effort to conduct diplomatic negotiations to end the civil war there. And Ambassador Satterfield said we are right to continue to press the Saudi-led coalition to take demonstrable action to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from its military operations in Yemen.

So for my colleagues, as they review the transcript of this hearing, I think it is important that they note that all three of those statements reflect the certification requirements in Senate joint resolution 58, which Senator Shaheen, Collins, and Coons helped me introduce last week.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Young.

Thank you, Ambassador Satterfield. Secretary Karem, thank you very much. And, Mr. Jenkins, thank you for your time and testimony and sharing your expertise with us.

For the information of Senators, the record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, including for members to submit questions for the record. We would ask the witnesses to return answers to those questions submitted for the record as quickly as possible.

With the thanks of this committee, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF MR. ROBERT JENKINS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* As was noted in the hearing, the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 75% of Yemen's population of 30 million needs assistance, an increase of 3.4 million from last year. How is U.S. foreign assistance being spent in Yemen? How much is actually needed to address the humanitarian crisis? Do NGOs have the access they need to provide humanitarian aid? How is the Saudi government reacting to the humanitarian crisis?

*Answer.* As one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid to Yemen, the United States has provided more than \$854 million in humanitarian assistance since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2017. This life-saving assistance includes food, safe drinking water, treatment for malnutrition, emergency medical care, shelter, legal aid, psychosocial support, and improved sanitation and hygiene kits to fight the spread of diseases, among other assistance.

According to the U.N., approximately \$2.96 billion is needed to provide assistance to the 13.1 million people targeted for assistance in 2018, out of the 22 million people who are in need of humanitarian aid. On April 3, international donors pledged more than \$2 billion to support the U.N. Humanitarian Response Plan. If realized, the pledges would account for two-thirds of the response plan. The United States welcomes the Saudi-led Coalition's \$930 million contribution to the U.N. in early April. However, the U.S. Government continues to emphasize that unrestricted access for all humanitarian and commercial imports through all ports is necessary for averting famine and helping millions of people in need.

Ongoing conflict, general insecurity, and bureaucratic access impediments—including restrictions on ground movements and on the importation of humanitarian and commercial goods—pose the most significant challenges to relief operations. Although Red Sea ports have re-opened, concerns about future restrictions and clearance delays have created a chilling effect, stopping shipments from returning to a level that can meet needs. The flow of commercial goods is also a humanitarian imperative. Given the scale of the crisis and that Yemen traditionally imports 90 percent of its food and most of its fuel and medicines, humanitarian aid alone cannot address the needs—commercial imports must continue and increase to pre-conflict levels. Despite these challenges, the U.S. Government's partners continue to provide life-saving assistance to millions of people.

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##### RESPONSES OF MR. ROBERT JENKINS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* Is there any evidence of large scale diversion of humanitarian assistance going into Yemen by any party to the conflict—including the Houthis?

*Answer.* Diversion occurs when cash or in-kind assistance does not reach the intended recipient. While there are access constraints in Yemen, including delays in clearing humanitarian aid through the ports, the U.S. Government has not received evidence of any large-scale diversions. Information received from the U.S. Government's trusted U.N. and non-governmental organization partners and other sources does not support, and in many cases refutes, allegations of systemic diversions of humanitarian aid.

Humanitarian aid provided by the United States is intended for the millions of children, women, and men in need in Yemen, and there is no acceptable level of aid diversion. The United States takes any allegations of diversion of humanitarian assistance very seriously, and we follow up with every alleged incident of diversion reported. The U.S. Government requires implementing partners to have proper safeguards and risk mitigation systems in place to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most. USAID also supports a third-party monitor—an oversight tool in countries where we have a restricted presence—conducting independent verification of humanitarian activities and reporting back directly to USAID.

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RESPONSES OF HON. ROBERT S. KAREM TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* According to a March 2016 piece in Foreign Affairs, a Hezbollah commander told the authors “After we are done with Syria, we will start with Yemen, Hezbollah is already there,” and added, “Who do you think fires Tochka missiles into Saudi Arabia? It’s not the Houthis in their sandals, it’s us.” Is Hezbollah supporting the Houthis? If so, how? Do you believe that once the Syrian civil war ends, Hezbollah will shift its focus to Yemen? Is Hezbollah in Yemen at the direction of Tehran?

*Answer.* As we have seen with Iran’s support to Lebanese Hizballah, Tehran is providing advanced weaponry to the Houthis in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions. With Iranian support, the Houthis are launching increasingly sophisticated missiles at Saudi civilian sites and population centers, increasing the risk of a broader regional conflict. I can provide additional details in a classified setting.

*Question.* As was noted in the hearing, the U.N.’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 75% of Yemen’s population of 30 million needs assistance, an increase of 3.4 million from last year. How is U.S. foreign assistance being spent in Yemen? How much is actually needed to address the humanitarian crisis? Do NGOs have the access they need to provide humanitarian aid? How is the Saudi government reacting to the humanitarian crisis?

*Answer.* The U.S. Government is providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and other conflict-affected populations in Yemen. U.S. Government activities focus on addressing the health and nutritional needs of those most affected by the conflict. Access remains a key impediment to the provision of humanitarian aid. In addition to exacerbating the civil conflict, the Houthis disrupt and commandeer the distribution of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, and exploit aid deliveries for their own political and financial gain. Saudi Arabia is one of the largest humanitarian assistance donors to the people in Yemen. Just last month, Saudi Arabia and the UAE provided nearly \$1 billion in assistance to the U.N.’s Yemen Humanitarian Fund. We do believe the Saudis can do more to address Yemen’s humanitarian concerns and we continue to work closely with them on this important issue.

*Question.* Up to this point, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has committed very few ground forces to its fight in Yemen, focusing almost exclusively on the air war. It is starting to look like this approach has accomplished as much as it can and it might be time for the Saudi government to reconsider its approach to the situation. Are we now in a stalemate, with neither the Saudis nor Houthis able to defeat decisively the other? Could an introduction of Saudi ground forces change the situation? Does a lack of Saudi ground forces indicate that Riyadh lacks the resolve to do what it would take to win the conflict and end the humanitarian crisis?

*Answer.* We continue to reiterate to our partners that there is not a military solution to this conflict, and we are hopeful that the new U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, will be able to revive negotiations towards a political settlement that would preserve Yemen’s unity and end the humanitarian crisis. At the same time, we are working with Saudi Arabia to improve its capacity to defend its own sovereignty and security as the Houthis continue to launch missile attacks on major Saudi population centers.

*Question.* Is a unitary Yemen possible after years of civil war? What would need to happen to create a stable and unitary Yemen? What would be the consequences for Yemen and the region if the country re-split?

*Answer.* We continue to believe that a unified Yemen is in U.S. interests, and essential to closing the political and security vacuum that AQAP and ISIS are exploit-

ing. A split would divide the majority of Yemen's population from its natural resources, which risks creating incentives for future conflict and would undercut U.S. counterterrorism efforts. DoD strongly supports the efforts of U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths as he works to advance a political resolution to the conflict that addresses the core concerns of key Yemeni political actors.

RESPONSES OF HON. ROBERT S. KAREM TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

*Question.* Has the Houthi threat to U.S. naval vessels in the Persian Gulf increased or decreased over the course of the Saudi-led war in Yemen?

*Answer.* Houthi forces, with Iranian backing, remain a significant threat to both commercial and naval vessels in the Red Sea. Iran has expanded its support to the Houthis since the start of the war and allowed the Houthis access to new technologies. As recently as April 3, Houthi forces attacked a Saudi oil tanker off the coast of Yemen. DoD continues to work closely with our partners in the region to counter this threat.

*Question.* Has U.S. involvement in the Yemen war increased the threat of Houthi direct fire on U.S. forces or U.S. naval vessels? Has the U.S. taken direct fire from Houthi targets?

*Answer.* The Houthis have attempted to broaden the conflict to a regional war, including with missile attacks on major Saudi population centers and on commercial and naval vessels in the Red Sea. U.S. forces reserve the right to act in self-defense, and DoD responded to an incident in October 2016 when Houthi insurgents launched anti-ship cruise missiles that threatened U.S. navy warships in the international waters of the Red Sea. U.S. forces have not been introduced into hostilities or situations where hostilities are imminent in the civil conflict in Yemen. Aerial refueling of Coalition aircraft conducting counter-Houthi operations occurs outside of Yemeni airspace. U.S. military forces do not accompany or participate in the movement of Coalition forces in counter-Houthi operations in Yemen. U.S. military forces conducting counterterrorism operations in Yemen are geographically isolated from Houthi-controlled areas.

*Question.* In October 2016, the U.S. took strikes against radar facilities in Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen to defend U.S. naval ships in international waters. These strikes were justified based on Article II, self-defense. The Administration has also said that U.S. engagement in support of the Saudi war against the Houthis does not constitute hostilities because the U.S. is not taking direct fire. Can you explain the Administration's reasoning that it does not need an AUMF to support the Houthi war in Yemen because U.S. forces are not taking fire and then justify a response to the threat direct fire under Article II?

*Answer.* The exchange of fire in October 2016 was an isolated instance. U.S. personnel have not engaged in such exchanges of fire against Houthi forces since October 2016. Acting DoD General Counsel provided a detailed analysis to Senator McConnell on February 27 outlining the legal authorities underpinning DoD activities in Yemen. Additional legal analysis on the radar strikes was communicated in a letter from President Obama to Congress on October 14, 2016.

*Question.* Should these episodes increase in frequency, will the Administration request an AUMF from Congress? In the counter-Houthi context, how does the Administration define U.S. "engagement in hostilities?"

*Answer.* The United States does not seek to become an active combatant in the Yemen civil war. Were that policy to change, the Department would urge consultation with the Congress on the nature of any future involvement. It has been the longstanding view of the Executive Branch that "hostilities" for the purposes of the War Powers Resolution refers to "a situation in which units of U.S. armed forces are actively engaged in exchanges of fire with opposing units of hostile forces." U.S. forces have not engaged in any such exchanges of fire with Houthi forces since acting in self-defense in October 2016. U.S. forces always retain the right to respond in self-defense to hostile acts or demonstrations of hostile intent, including any such threats or attacks by Houthi insurgents.

*Question.* Does the Department of Defense believe that mid-flight refueling and aerial targeting assistance constitutes the accompaniment of "regular or irregular military forces of any foreign country or government when such military forces are engaged" per the War Powers Resolution? Does refueling help the movement of foreign forces engaged in a military conflict?

Answer. U.S. forces do not currently command, coordinate, accompany, or participate in the movement of Coalition forces in counter-Houthi operations in Yemen. No U.S. forces accompany the Saudi-led Coalition when its military forces are engaged, or when an imminent threat exists such that they could become engaged in hostilities. Accordingly, U.S. forces supporting the Saudi-led Coalition in its counter-Houthi operations have not been introduced into hostilities or situations where hostilities are imminent.

*Question.* Are U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia participating in assisting, advising, or refueling missions eligible for combat awards or imminent danger pay, deemed in a tax-free status, or accruing “combat leave?” Does DoD’s administrative system view them as being in a “peacetime” or “wartime” environment in their current assignment?

Answer. For certain administrative pay and benefits purposes, Saudi Arabia has been regarded as a combat zone since January 1991. The Internal Revenue Service considers all combat zones, as declared by the President, to be tax-exclusion zones. Personnel supporting U.S. military efforts in the Arabian Peninsula are in a tax-free status. Combat awards are conditions-based awards. U.S. forces advising the Saudi-led Coalition are not involved in hostilities, therefore are not eligible for combat awards for this mission.

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RESPONSES OF HON. ROBERT S. KAREM TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* Compared to the previous year, has the number of civilian casualties from the Saudi-led coalition air campaign increased or decreased?

Answer. All parties to the conflict are responsible for civilian casualties. We are aware of NGO and media reports of alleged civilian casualty events, but we are unable to independently verify all of these reports. We assess the Saudi-led coalition air campaign resulted in fewer casualties than it otherwise would have without U.S. advisory support. DoD continues to work with Saudi Arabia to improve its capacity to defend itself while mitigating the risk to noncombatants. U.S. advisers assess Saudi Arabia has made improvements in its conduct of the war over the past year, including use of an expanded No-Strike List and more stringent rules of engagement and increased attention to efforts to mitigate risk of harm to civilians.

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RESPONSES OF HON. ROBERT S. KAREM TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

*Question.* Compared to the previous year, has the number of civilian casualties from the Saudi-led coalition air campaign increased or decreased?

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*Question.* There are multiple reports that the UAE is training thousands of local militia fighters. Who are the local forces that UAE is training? Are there any indications that they have ties to Al Qaeda (AQAP) or ISIS? What are threats to U.S. interests from the Emirati support to these Salafist militias?

Answer. The UAE has longstanding ties to southern Yemeni tribes, some of which have been recruited in an effort to counter AQAP and ISIS. This bottom-up security approach has produced notable counterterrorism successes. U.S. counter-AQAP and counter-ISIS efforts in Yemen are facilitated by our close cooperation with Emirati and partner forces.

*Question.* On March 20, several members of the Senate Armed Services Committee sent a letter to Secretary Mattis indicating they were not given a notification DoD is required to submit to SASC and to this committee, concerning the 2016 promulgation of an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between the United States and Saudi Arabia. This ACSA is the legal basis for U.S. refueling assistance to the Saudi air campaign in Yemen, is it not? If not, what is the legal un-

derpinning of the assistance? A 1998 letter from DoD to then Senate Armed Services Chairman Nunn says only that Saudi is eligible for an ACSA, not that DoD has signed one. When did DoD notify Congress of its ACSA with Saudi Arabia? Although the ACSA was promulgated in May 2016, U.S. support to the Saudi coalition's air campaign began in March 2015. What bilateral agreement governed U.S. logistical assistance for the first year of the Saudi coalition's intervention in Yemen? Was Congress consulted on this previous agreement? Why did DoD fail to notify all members of the Senate Armed Services Committee about this ACSA, given its direct relevance to ongoing U.S. involvement in the Yemen conflict? The law requires that any assistance provided pursuant to this authority be reimbursed with "reciprocal provisions of logistic support, supplies, and services by such government." According to public reports, DoD has been unable to account for reimbursement of the inflight refueling assistance that has been provided to the Saudi-led coalition. Can you provide a full accounting of reimbursements by both the UAE and Saudi Arabia for inflight refueling assistance provided since March 2015?

Answer. The Department is currently gathering information so we can provide a response to Senator Blumenthal's letter on this issue.

