

China in order to reach an agreement at the G20.

Let me be clear to the President. Backing off on China for some quick handshake agreement without substantive—real, deep, substantive—commitments, will be seen as a victory by no one. It will be seen as capitulation. It will be seen as weak to cave on tariffs this early before China starts to feel the real pressure and come to a real, deep, and long-lasting agreement that is worth having.

So, Mr. President, don't back down on China. American jobs and American wealth are at stake. You have headed out on a correct course, but you have to follow through. All too often this administration starts out doing something and then backs off. It cannot happen.

I am worried—deeply worried—because I love America and I want us to be No. 1 economically, as well as in every other way. I fear that Trump's eagerness to make a deal—any deal, just like he did with North Korea in Singapore—will be devastating to the long-term interests of the United States. Now that we are finally putting the screws to China, we cannot relent for the sake of a photo-op at the G20.

Yes, our actions will cause some pain, but in the long term, there is much more gain than pain. If we ever needed to do something, it is now. I don't agree with treating Canada or Europe the same as China. That is for sure. But China is a different, different breed of economic cat, and they are robbing us, stealing from us, doing everything they can to become No. 1 economically at our expense, not in a fair competitive way but in a way that is one-sided.

So today, I will be sending a letter to President Trump with some colleagues laying out this position, saying to the President: Please, don't back off on China. American jobs and American wealth depend on it.

YEMEN

Mr. President, later this morning, the Senate will receive a classified all-Senators briefing from Secretaries Pompeo and Mattis on the conflict in Yemen, Saudi Arabia's role in that conflict, and the recent murder of U.S. resident and Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi. This is an important and timely briefing, but there is a gaping hole.

I am concerned and disappointed that President Trump has reportedly forbidden CIA Director Haspel from attending today's briefing. Without her presence at the briefing, there will be no one from our intelligence community.

Director Haspel has heard the Turkish audiotape of the murder, and her Agency has also reportedly made conclusions about the role of various Saudi leaders. Members of this body have a right to hear from Director Haspel. No offense to Secretary Mattis and Secretary Pompeo, but it was the CIA that had jurisdiction to find out what exactly happened, and, according

to press reports, they did. Now Congress is not going to get the briefing.

What is the White House trying to hide?

Well, we all know that President Trump seems to favor the Crown Prince to an extent that he will look the other way at the greatest of transgressions, but it is even a further step down the road of darkness, lack of sunlight to prevent the CIA from giving us their conclusions.

Members of this body have a right to hear from Director Haspel, and her absence today speaks volumes—volumes—about the White House's intention for congressional oversight in Saudi Arabia.

President Trump has gone to extraordinary lengths to avoid criticizing the Crown Prince and the Saudis for the Khashoggi murder, drawing grotesque moral equivalencies and controverting well-known facts to avoid placing blame. It seems so similar to what he has been doing with Putin and Russia, looking the other way for reasons that don't serve America's interests or security.

It has been a shameful abdication of moral leadership from the President. It must give comfort to autocrats everywhere: Go ahead. Behave despicably, and the United States, at minimum, will look the other way and may even pat you on the back.

We have strength for a lot of reasons. We have a strong military. We have a great economy. We have a wonderful people. But one of the reasons we have strength is that we have been the shining city on the hill. We have been the country that has guided doing the right thing in morality and has tried to spread that around the world.

Donald Trump is taking a giant step backwards, and that is not just an abstract concept or something that would be a nice thing to do. It hurts economically, militarily, and security-wise when we don't maintain being that shining city on the hill.

So Leader McCONNELL has rightly called the Saudi murder operation "abhorrent." I hope he agrees with me that Director Haspel should be made available to Congress on this issue. I would ask him to join with me in asking her to come in the same kind of closed, SCIF, intelligence-protecting session.

Relatedly, possibly as early as this afternoon, we expect to have a vote in relation to the Lee-Sanders Yemen War Powers Resolution. Even though they are not here at the moment, I want to applaud the sponsors for their steadfast commitment to this important issue. I will support their resolution once again.

The conflict in Yemen, exacerbated by Saudi Arabia's intervention and its reckless tactics, must be brought to an end. The Yemeni people have endured unending suffering. The United States should once again be the moral leader and lead the diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.

NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR

Mr. President, late this afternoon, the Senate will likely vote on whether to consider the nomination of Thomas Farr for the Eastern District of North Carolina. I have spoken repeatedly—last week, this week—on the floor about what an absolute disgrace it is to have his nomination before us. What a further disgrace it would be if our Republican colleagues march in lockstep approving this awful nomination.

Mr. Farr has been chief cook and bottle washer with North Carolina's invidious and despicable efforts to prevent people, particularly minorities, from voting.

Generations of Americans have agitated, protested, marched, and even died trying to expand the right to vote, regardless of race or gender. Our soldiers, when they are fighting overseas, some of them making the ultimate sacrifice, are defending democracy and the right to vote, among other things. For the Senate in 2018 to elevate a man to the Federal bench who has worked to limit the franchise and gain the electoral system would be a black mark on this body—a black mark on this body.

Adding insult to jury, this is a judicial district that is 27 percent African American. Two African Americans, both women, were nominated in the past. The Republican Senators from North Carolina blocked them with the blue slip, a practice that the leader has abolished with Chairman GRASSLEY, which is a shame in itself. But now to elevate this man to the bench is an insult to African Americans and all Americans—all Americans.

It is amazing to me, utterly amazing—and you see a lot of things around here that you don't believe these days—that the Republican majority is moving forward with this nomination. I hope my colleagues on the Republican side, even at this late hour, take time to study his career. I believe they will find that he is unworthy of the Federal bench, and I hope at least a brave few will join with Democrats this afternoon to reject this awful, awful nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I have two topics. I want to talk in a moment or two about National Adoption Month, but before I do that, I want to talk just a minute about Russia's continued outrageous behavior in Ukraine and the most recent incident where Russia has manufactured another crisis in order to take advantage of whatever situation they think the moment is ripe for. Clearly this has been allowed to go on for too long.

While Ukraine is not a member of NATO, I think NATO countries—including ours—have a great interest in what is happening in Ukraine with Putin's continued aggressive behavior. We had a joint session—the only joint session where the President of Ukraine has spoken—a few years ago. He made the point that they appreciated the humanitarian help, but I thought the most telling moment in that speech was when he said: We appreciate the humanitarian help, we appreciate the blankets, but you can't fight the Russians with blankets.

That was the time under the Obama administration when we were not giving Ukraine either the defensive or offensive capacity they needed. President Trump has made a different decision, which I support, in helping the Ukrainians defend themselves.

I also support whatever we can do at this moment to let it be known to Putin that we are supportive of Ukraine's efforts to have an independent, democratic government, that we will continue to be supportive of that and we will continue to be helpful in that effort, and President Putin had better be careful that he doesn't take one step too far. In fact, he has already taken steps further than should have been allowed. Those steps—the seizure of Crimea, the invasion of eastern Ukraine by people who were clearly Russian soldiers in plain green uniforms—should not have been allowed. The President has to deal with that, but we need to deal with that in a way that gives Ukraine all the help they need in dealing with that themselves.

Whether the President should make that point by not meeting with Putin or whether he should make that point by meeting with Putin and clearly expressing not only our concern but our absolute rejection of the efforts the Russian Government has made toward Ukraine in an aggressive way, I don't know. I do know that it is time for us to be very clear about how we feel about that and emphasize our continued commitment to the NATO countries along the Russian border, that we absolutely will respond if there is any aggression toward those NATO countries. Frankly, we should be aggressive in our efforts to help Ukraine defend itself.

OBSERVING NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. President, I want to move now to the reason I scheduled this time today and talk a few moments about November as National Adoption Month. As November draws to a close, I also would point out that every month should be adoption month.

I am pleased to work with my colleague and cochair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, Senator KLOBUCHAR. We looked forward to passing this resolution supporting National Adoption Month. This is the fourth year we have worked together on this resolution. I thank all of my colleagues for their unanimous support for this resolution as it passed earlier this week.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption is the largest bipartisan, bicameral coalition in the Congress. We have our friends leading on the House side, and we have this opportunity for many of us to join together on the Senate side. The idea is that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable home with a loving family. That is something on which I think everyone can agree. In fact, year after year, we have that agreement in the Senate and the House.

Unfortunately, right now there are more than 400,000 children in the U.S. foster care system and more than 100,000 children waiting in that system to be adopted. They don't have the benefit of a permanent family they can call their own. There are many more children all over the world who need families and who are in settings no one would believe to be ideal.

For those charitable institutions that reach out to have a place for children to go when their mother or their family can no longer keep them, we are grateful. For those families who create a home in the foster system in my State and around the country, we are grateful as well.

There are over 13,000 children in foster care in Missouri. I would like to share a couple stories of people in foster care who would like to have a family become their permanent family, a family they would always know they were secure in and a part of.

Brooklyn is a creative girl in the fourth grade who loves arts and crafts. She is an active girl. She likes to play outdoors. She makes friends easily. She is inquisitive by nature. She loves to ask questions and discover how things work. Brooklyn needs a home.

Levelle is a sixth grader who is an adventure seeker, animal lover, and Lego enthusiast. He has a knack for math and science, and he wants to work at the Children's Hospital when he grows up. Levelle would like a permanent home.

Kiara and Devin are siblings who hope to be placed together. Kiara loves music and singing her favorite songs. When she isn't singing, Kiara loves reading a good book or playing outdoors. She wants to be a surgeon or a lawyer and a full-time foster parent when she grows up. She knows how important her foster family has been for her. She would like to have a family who she knows she would always be able to relate to in a more permanent way. Her brother Devin is also a sixth grader and enjoys learning and playing sports. He especially loves puzzles and figuring out how to put things together. He would like to figure out how to put a family together and be part of that along with his sister. He likes singing, playing, and reading. The two siblings have a lot of fun together and would like to have a forever family.

There are a lot more stories to share. That is why, during National Adoption Month, it is important to think about how year in and year out we are look-

ing for ways to make it easier for families to come together in a permanent way.

Nearly a quarter of the people living in our country have considered adoption. Many of those have misperceptions and concerns about adoption. A lot of people believe that foster care adoption is expensive if they adopt out of the foster care system. In reality, there is almost no cost to adopting from foster care. Financial support is available. In many cases, adoptive parents can get that support to make their adoption of a new family final.

Ensuring that adoption remains a viable option for families is central to our efforts in the adoption caucus. This week, Senator KLOBUCHAR and I will be introducing the Supporting Adoptive Families Act to provide adoptive families additional tools and supportive services to help them achieve a successful adoption and to prevent adopted children from reentering the foster care system.

Since National Adoption Day started in 2000, more than 70,000 children have been adopted into permanent homes. I myself am an adoptive parent, and I look forward to seeing more people have the experience of what happens when you change somebody's life and they change your life.

I hope more families will take this time not only during National Adoption Month but also during the holidays to consider adoption. I can say without exception that one of the most rewarding things you could possibly do is create that environment. My wife and I have benefitted from it and our son has benefitted from it, as have his brothers and sisters and others in our family.

It is an important time to think about ways to reach out and make a permanent difference in people's lives. It is frankly hard to imagine a greater way to make a more permanent difference than considering adoption. Senator KLOBUCHAR and I and others in the adoption caucus would certainly encourage people who are thinking about adoption, as kids need a safe and permanent family.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

YEMEN

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you.

Mr. President, later this afternoon, I believe, we will be voting on one of the more important foreign policy issues that we have voted on in a very long time. This, of course, deals with the U.S. involvement in the war in Yemen.

In March of 2015, under the leadership of Muhammad bin Salman, who was then the Saudi Defense Minister and is now, of course, the Crown Prince, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab