

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

Emirates intervened in Yemen's ongoing civil war. As a result of that Saudi intervention, Yemen is now experiencing the worst humanitarian disaster in the world.

It is absolutely imperative that we call attention to the inhumane and horrific situation that is now impacting the people of Yemen, a small nation of 28 million people, one of the poorest countries on Earth.

According to the United Nations, Yemen is at risk of the most severe famine in more than 100 years, with some 14 million people—about half of that country's population—facing starvation. Already, as a result of this terrible war, according to the Save the Children organization, some 85,000 children in Yemen have starved to death over the last several years. Let me repeat that. According to the Save the Children organization, some 85,000 children in Yemen have already starved to death over the last several years, and millions more face starvation if the war continues. That is what we are looking at today.

In addition, Yemen is currently experiencing the worst cholera outbreak in the world, with as many as 10,000 new cases erupting every week, according to the World Health Organization. As you know, cholera is a disease spread by infected water that causes severe diarrhea and dehydration and will only accelerate the death rate as it weakens the ability of people to resist disease. The cholera outbreak in Yemen has occurred because Saudi bombs have destroyed Yemen's water infrastructure, and people there are no longer able to access clean water.

The fact is that the United States, with relatively little media attention, has been Saudi Arabia's partner in this horrific war. We have been providing the bombs that the Saudi-led coalition is using. We have been refueling their planes before they drop those bombs. We have been assisting with intelligence. In too many cases, our weapons are being used to kill civilians.

In August, as many will remember, it was an American-made bomb that obliterated a school bus full of young boys, killing dozens and wounding many more. A CNN report found evidence that American weapons have been used in a string of such deadly attacks on civilians since the war began. According to the independent monitoring group, Yemen Data Project, between March of 2015 and March of 2018, more than 30 percent of the Saudi-led coalition's targets have been non-military.

A few weeks ago, I met with several very brave human rights activists from Yemen, urging Congress to put a stop to this war. They told me clearly that when Yemenis see "Made in USA" on the bombs that are killing them, it tells them that it is the United States of America that is actively involved in this war. That is the sad truth. That is a truth we have to finally deal with, and I hope deal with effectively later this afternoon.

The message that the Senate should be sending to the Saudi Government and to the whole world is that we will not continue to support a catastrophic war led by a despotic regime that has a dangerous, destructive, and irresponsible military policy. No more—enough death, enough killing, enough destruction.

Above and beyond the humanitarian crisis—the worst in the world right now, destroying a small, poor country—that war has been a disaster for our national security and the national security of our allies. The administration defends our engagement in Yemen by overstating Iranian support for the Houthi rebels. While Iran's support for Houthi is of serious concern for all of us—and I do not minimize that—the fact is that the relationship has only been strengthened with the intensification of the war. The war is creating the very problem this administration claims to want to solve.

The war in Yemen is also undermining the broader effort against violent extremists. A 2016 State Department report found that the conflict had helped al-Qaida and the Islamic State's Yemen branch "deepen their inroads across much of the country." As the head of the International Rescue Committee, former British Foreign Minister David Miliband said in a recent interview: "The winners are the extremist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS." Just last week, the Wall Street Journal reported: "Nearly two years after being driven from its stronghold in Yemen, one of al Qaeda's most dangerous franchises has entrenched itself in the country's hinterlands as a devastating war creates the conditions for its comeback."

So this war is, without dispute, a horrific humanitarian crisis, but it is also a strategic disaster, benefiting terrorist groups like al-Qaida and ISIS.

Further, importantly, let us not forget that Saudi Arabia is an undemocratic monarchy controlled by one family. Sometimes we kind of pass that over. It is controlled by one family—the Saudi family. In a 2017 report by the conservative Cato Institute, Saudi Arabia, our ally in this terrible war in Yemen, was ranked 149 out of 159 countries in terms of freedom and human rights. That is our ally. That is the country with which we are putting our credibility on the line. For decades, as I think most Members of the Senate know, the Saudis have funded schools, mosques, and preachers who promote an extreme form of Islam known as Wahhabism.

In Saudi Arabia today, women are not second-class citizens; they are third-class citizens. Women still need the permission of a male guardian to go to school or to get a job. They have to follow a strict dress code and can be stoned to death for adultery or flogged for spending time in the company of a man who is not their relative.

Earlier this year, Saudi activist Loujain al-Hathloul, a leader in the

fight for women's rights, was kidnapped from Abu Dhabi and forced to return to her country. She is currently being held without charges. The same is true of many Saudi political activists.

Sadly, President Trump continues to proclaim his love and affection for the Saudi regime. The brutality and lawlessness of the Saudi regime, as everybody in this country now knows, was made clear to the entire world with the murder of the dissident Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, in the Saudi consulate in Turkey—right in their own consulate. Pathetically, as part of his continuing respect for authoritarian regimes—whether it is Putin or Russia or other regimes around the world—President Trump rejected the findings of the CIA's assessment that the Saudi Crown Prince was responsible for that murder. When given a choice between believing a despotic ruler in Saudi Arabia or our own Central Intelligence Agency, sadly, the President of the United States sided with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.

Lastly, let me raise an issue that many of my conservative friends—MIKE LEE, RAND PAUL, and others—have been raising, which is an important issue that I hope progressives pay attention to, which is that this war in Saudi Arabia was not authorized by the U.S. Congress. It was not voted on by the U.S. Congress and, therefore, is unconstitutional. Let us not forget that the Founding Fathers of this country put the awesome responsibility of war and peace into the hands of the Congress, not the President of the United States—not a Democratic President or a Republican President. Article I of the Constitution clearly states that it is Congress, not the President, that has the power to declare war.

The time is long overdue for Congress to take back that responsibility, which it has abdicated under Democratic and Republican leaderships.

If the Members of the House and the Senate want to go to war in Yemen, vote to go to war in Yemen. Don't let the President of the United States do it on his own.

Later this afternoon, as I understand it, there will be a resolution coming before this body as to whether we proceed to vote on ending U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war. That amendment is cosponsored by my friends Senator LEE of Utah, Senator MURPHY of Connecticut, and many, many others. This is an enormously important vote. This is a vote that says to the world: We are going to end the horrific humanitarian disaster that is killing tens of thousands of defenseless children in Yemen. It is a vote which says that we are going to stand for American values. It is a vote which says that the time is now to tell Saudi Arabia that we are not continuing to partner with them in this horrific crisis.

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

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

#### RECESS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:58 a.m., recessed until 12 noon and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. ERNST).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will come to order.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I rise today to voice my strong support for the nomination of Karen Dunn Kelley to be confirmed as the Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

Ms. Dunn Kelley is well qualified to serve in this critical leadership role at the Department of Commerce, which she has ably filled on an acting basis for the past year.

Ms. Dunn Kelley was already confirmed once this Congress, without opposition. She has served at the Department since August 3, 2017, as the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, a position to which the Senate confirmed her by voice vote.

Ms. Dunn Kelley has considerable economic and managerial expertise, cultivated through her more than 30 years of experience in the financial investment sector.

In her current capacity as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, she leads the Economics and Statistics Administration, which provides economic analysis and distributes national economic indicators.

She also serves as the Department's administrator of statistical programs, including the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Since being named as Acting Deputy Secretary of Commerce, she has been responsible for the management, coordination, and implementation of the Department's Strategic Plan, focusing on job creation and economic growth across the Department's 12 bureaus and agencies.

The Commerce Department's mission, as stated in its 2018–2022 Strategic Plan, is to “create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity.”

The breadth of activities the Department undertakes to accomplish its mission range from promoting commercial space activities to enhancing weather forecasting, and from fishery management and trade promotion to standards setting for emerging technologies, cybersecurity, and privacy, to name just a few.

The Department of Commerce deserves a well-qualified and experienced

leader to continue to foster the unprecedented economic growth we see today and preserve American leadership.

Throughout her career, Ms. Dunn Kelley has exhibited the kind of leadership that will ensure the Department of Commerce will continue its critical missions to promote economic growth, job creation, and innovation.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Dunn Kelley's nomination.

I yield the floor.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 2644

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I am proud to join the Senator from Arizona and the Senator from New Jersey on the floor today in calling for action on a bipartisan bill—a bill that has been crafted to protect our institutions and safeguard the rule of law in this country not just right now but for future Congresses and administrations as well.

Today, we will be asking our colleagues to give the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act the consideration here on the floor of the Senate that it deserves. This bill would do something simple but powerful: It would codify Department of Justice regulations that prevent the removal of a special counsel without good cause. That might seem like a small detail, but it is important. Independence is required to ensure that a special counsel can do his or her job and find the facts.

Our bipartisan bill would put this restriction in statute and give the special counsel a clear legal remedy. If removed without cause, the special counsel would have a 10-day period to take the case to a three-judge panel for expedited consideration. If the special counsel doesn't wish to contest his removal, it would proceed without interference.

Both Republicans and Democrats recognize that removal of the current special counsel without a valid basis would be a significant, even a catastrophic event. It would be a constitutional crisis that would threaten the Presidency and the rule of law. We can work together to prevent a crisis.

President Trump should be the first person to support this bill. He has raised concerns about oversight of the special counsel. He has accused the prosecutors of making partisan, politically motivated decisions. This act would ensure that regulations providing for supervision and oversight of the investigation are not just codified but strengthened. It would ensure that Congress gets a complete picture at the end of the investigation.

My colleagues Senators GRAHAM, TILLIS, BOOKER, GRASSLEY, and FEINSTEIN were instrumental in crafting this balanced legislation, and it passed the Judiciary Committee by a strong bipartisan margin of 14 to 7, 7 months ago. The time to take up and pass this bill in the Senate is now.

Some have questioned the need for this legislation. They have said the President would never fire Special Counsel Mueller, and I hope and pray they are right. I don't think it would be in President Trump's interest to remove the special counsel and certainly not in the interest of our country.

The President has repeatedly, publicly, and directly attacked the special counsel and his investigation. Just yesterday, he called his investigation a “phony witch hunt” that is “doing tremendous damage to our criminal justice system.” The President has already fired the FBI Director and forced the resignation of the Attorney General, citing grievances related to this investigation in both cases.

We have an Acting Attorney General not confirmed by the Senate, with no nominee in sight to conduct oversight of this investigation, which is unprecedented and not acceptable.

This bill addresses threats not just to this special counsel but future special counsels. I would ask my colleagues who are holding back this bill to consider whether they may wish it were the law in a Democratic administration as well. We should all appreciate the ways in which this protects the rule of law.

Let me close by quoting what my colleague Chairman GRASSLEY said when he expressed his view back in April that this should be considered by the full Senate during our Judiciary Committee markup on the bill:

In some ways, today's vote will say a lot about how each of us views our responsibilities as Senators. We took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, but we're not judges or Presidents. We are stewards of the legislative branch. The Founders anticipated that we would wield the powers the Constitution affords us with great ambition so that we could effectively check the powers of the other branches. This bill certainly does that.

I am confident that, if allowed to go to a vote, this bill would pass with more than 60 votes.

History will judge us for how we work together to confront the challenges that face our Nation. The rest of the world is watching. It is important to take up and pass this bill.

I now recognize my colleague, a cosponsor of this legislation, the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, thank you very much.

I want to thank my colleagues from Arizona and Delaware for being here today and for their leadership. I join them in asking the Senate to pass the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act by unanimous consent.

The Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act is a bipartisan bill. Again, I repeat, this is about the legislative branch asserting a commonsense check and balance on Presidential overreach. It is not divided along party lines; it is a bipartisan bill.