

We have already had some successes in partnering with our closest neighbor in the crisis; that is, the Government of Mexico. I believe we can and should continue to build on some of the things we have already put in place.

We have already partnered with Mexico in recent years through programs like the Merida Initiative to combat drug trafficking, organized crime, and money laundering.

We have directed funds toward strengthening communities and empowering the Mexican criminal justice system and judicial system to combat the rampant culture of impunity.

We have collaborated on intelligence matters and cooperated on providing various forms of security.

The Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Affairs continues to work to develop programs to combat international narcotics and crime, especially in Central America, but U.S. funding for this program in Mexico has stagnated. Why? Because we somehow fixed the problem? No. It is because we have taken our eye off the ball once again.

Additional aid for these programs would help not only improve drug interdiction and train Mexican law enforcement and judicial personnel, it would help them help us work together to combat the threats of these transnational criminal organizations. We should begin to look at the effectiveness of these programs so we can take full advantage of the work they do and make sure they are modernized and are more efficient and more effective.

I was encouraged to see that the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Trump administration have already begun to negotiate new partnerships with Mexico to implement a new strategy to address some of the migrant flows from Central America. I appreciate Secretary Nielsen's and Secretary Pompeo's work with Mexican officials—primarily those associated with the incoming administration of President Lopez Obrador—toward an arrangement where migrants can seek asylum in the United States but wait in Mexico while their claims are being processed.

I look forward to attending the inauguration of Mexico's incoming President this Saturday with Vice President PENCE and other Members of Congress. I think this is—hopefully—a gesture that will be appreciated and reciprocated when it comes to our desire to work closely with this new administration to address many of the problems that I have talked about this morning.

Ignoring this problem is not going to make it better; it is only going to get worse. Working together—not just here in Congress but with the administration and our partners to the south—to secure our borders is the only path forward. Solving this crisis takes a whole-government strategy and one that looks at all pieces of the puzzle.

Instead of shutting down the government by refusing the President's re-

quest for border security measures, we need to get to work and fix our broken immigration system. I hope our friends across the aisle are ready to leave their criticism behind and join us in solving the problem.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Madam President, on another matter, I ask unanimous consent that the order with respect to the vote on Executive Calendar No. 626 be vitiated; that notwithstanding rule XXII, it be in order to proceed to the nomination the week of December 3; and that if the motion is agreed to, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate. I further ask that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and that the President be notified immediately of the Senate's action. I further ask unanimous consent that the pending cloture vote on the Kobes nomination occur at 12 noon today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

#### YEMEN

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, we saw yesterday that the vote on the Yemen War Powers Resolution has brought to light the broader issue of our alliance with Saudi Arabia. This is an issue that people have heard a lot about, obviously, in the last few weeks with the murder of a journalist, and the Yemen resolution vote has become a proxy over that matter.

I have been outspoken in the past about why it matters that we speak out strongly about and against the murder of this journalist, Khashoggi, but also that we talk more broadly about what we need to do about it and how it applies to our alliance with Saudi Arabia.

I want to tailor my comments today by briefly talking about exactly what the implications are based on the questions I get from people. Why does the murder of Khashoggi matter, and why should we care about it?

First, this is part of a pattern. The Crown Prince, who is effectively governing Saudi Arabia now, has been continually testing the limits of the world's patience and also the limits of our alliance. There is a pattern here. We have seen it. He kidnapped, over 2 weeks, the Prime Minister of Lebanon. He has fractured an alliance that once existed with the Gulf Kingdoms. All of it has implications on U.S. national security. So this is just one more escalation in a pattern of testing the limits of our alliance.

Then there are human rights. Why do human rights matter? For a practical reason, human rights matter. From a practical perspective, when human rights are violated, the result is a humanitarian crisis, as we have seen often around the world, which often leads to mass migration.

Let me they tell you something else a violation of human rights leads to: radicalization. When you violate a group of people, you mistreat them and abuse them; you leave them ripe for radicalization—for a radical group to come in and basically pull them in and say: We are the ones with the power, the weapons, and willingness to fight. Join us to go after your oppressors.

In fact, if you look at what is happening in Yemen, much of it and the Houthis comes from years of abuses against the Shia. It doesn't justify the radicalization, but it explains that, as it does what we have seen in Iraq and in Syria.

Here is one other thing that happens with human rights abuses. The abusers often get overthrown. Here is the problem. When an abusive government that violates human rights gets overthrown, the people who take over hate us because we have been supporting their abusers. These are practical reasons why human rights matter.

And there is a moral one. Perhaps in the ranking and order, that is the most important one—the moral one. It is because that is what makes us different from China and Russia and other countries around the world. This is what makes America different. In fact, I would say that the murder of Mr. Khashoggi is more about us. When it comes to our debate, it is about us. It is not just about him. It is about us and who we are and about whether we, as a nation, are prepared to excuse, overlook, or sort of brush away this horrifying incident because somebody buys a lot of things from us or produces a lot of oil.

Assuming we can mostly agree on that, the question is, What do we do about it? There is this false choice that has been presented to us. This false choice is that there are only two choices: Either ignore it or abandon and fracture the Saudi alliance. That is not true. There are other choices. It is not just either-or, those two. That is a false choice.

What I do believe is the wrong thing to do about it is to pull and yank away our support for Saudi operations in Yemen. Let me explain why. The first is, right now, the only hope of ending that is not winning an armed conflict; it is a peace negotiation. And the people who have to be at that table aren't just the Houthis but the deposed Yemeni President, who is in Saudi Arabia. If we yank our support, the chances of that peace happening diminish significantly. In fact, the Houthis probably say: The Saudis no longer have U.S. support; they are not as strong as they used to be; I think we can beat them; we don't need a peace deal. So it actually makes peace less likely.

The second thing, from a practical perspective, is that we will have less influence how the Saudis conduct the war, meaning that we will have no standing to have any influence whatsoever who they bomb, how often they bomb, and who they target. Some people argue that they will not have the

weapons to do it with. That is not true. If you don't think you can buy weapons from immoral and amoral regimes around the world, you are wrong; they can. If you think that somehow this will end their engagement, you are wrong. The reason they are involved in Yemen is that they feel it is an effort by Iran—and, rightfully, they feel this way—to encircle them.

If you look at it today, Iran is their enemy. Iran now controls large parts of Syria and is probably the closest government in the world to the Syrian regime to their northwest. Iraq is closer to Iran than it has ever been in the last 20 years to the north. Iran is to their east. Yemen would be to the south with the Houthis operating from there. They feel that they are being encircled by Iran. They are going to fight, whether we help them or not. We could lose our influence over how they do it.

I want to tell you one more thing that will happen. If we pull our support, the chances of a broader, catastrophic conflict increases dramatically. I will lay one scenario out for you. If we pull our support, the Houthis get confident, and they start launching rockets into Saudi Arabia, targeting civilian populations and members of the royal family and killing people.

The Saudis respond with disproportionate force or the same level of force, and we begin to escalate. They will not just respond against the Houthis. They may respond against the Iranian interests elsewhere. Suddenly, you have a real live shooting war that extends beyond this proxy fight. In response to that, the Houthis and Iranians use their presence on the coast and that port city to close off an important chokepoint, the Bab el-Mandeb, that choke point in the Red Sea that connects the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, where over 4.8 million barrels of oil a day go through. They start bombing oil tankers. They start hitting those, and all of a sudden, the world has to get engaged to open that up. This holds the real potential for a rapid escalation that could involve a much broader conflict than what we are seeing right now.

I know that many of my colleagues yesterday voted for this resolution out of deep frustration. It was a message to the administration that the way they handled this Khashoggi incident is unacceptable. I hope that message has been received. But this is the wrong way to do the right thing, and that is to ensure that we recalibrate our alliance with Saudi Arabia into one where they understand they can't just do whatever they want. The Crown Prince cannot do whatever he wants.

We have leverage in that regard. There is legislation that the Senator from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ, and others offered. In addition to that, there are things we can do. The leadership of the Foreign Relations Committee asked for the imposition of Magnitsky sanctions. That is a powerful tool. I assure you, there are people

in Saudi Arabia around the royal family, around the government, who deeply enjoy being able to invest and spend their wealth in the United States and around the world. They are going to care a lot if, as a result of this murder, they lose access to their money, to their property, to their visas. That is a real leverage point that we have.

We have additional tools: religious freedom sanctions and visa bans against other individuals who may not have been involved in the Khashoggi incident but, again, another leverage point.

We have leverage points in restricting U.S. investment. One of the biggest proposals the Crown Prince is making is that he wants to diversify their economy and encourage U.S. and Western investment into their economy. Placing restrictions on that investment is a significant leverage point.

We should use this opportunity to use those leverage points to achieve real changes in our alliance and real changes in their behavior. For example, the release of Mr. Badawi, an activist in Saudi Arabia who has been repeatedly flogged in the past and unjustly held in prison—he should be released. The release of Saudi women activists who have been tortured and sexually harassed while in custody—they should be released. Education reforms—Saudi Arabia should finally stop publishing these textbooks encouraging and teaching anti-Semitism and radicalization and dangerous religious notions and theologies that encourage violence against others. We should require them to restore the Gulf alliance and restore their relationship with Qatar. If they don't, we will. We should force them to stop funding these Wahhabi schools around the world, in which they are exporting radicalization.

All of these things need to happen. There may be other conditions we haven't thought of. These are real consequences that will begin to realign this alliance and make very clear that this is an important alliance, but it is not one that is unlimited or without restrictions or expectations on our part.

If we fail to do this, the Crown Prince will take further escalatory and outrageous actions in the future. He will keep pushing the envelope. This is a young man who has never lived anywhere else in the world. He is a Crown Prince, which tells you, not only is he wealthy, he has rarely faced disappointment in his life or ever not had something he wanted. He has never lived abroad. I think he is largely naive about foreign policy and thinks he can get away with whatever he wants because at home, he can. We have to make clear that with us, he can't.

You don't have to blow up the alliance to make that message clear. If we don't make that message clear, he will do more of this in the future, and one day, he may pull us into a war. One day, he may fracture the alliance him-

self because he goes too far. He needs to be stopped now. He needs to understand that there are limits or he will keep testing those limits. If we fail to do that at this moment, we will live to regret it, and its implications will be extraordinary, and it will be a gift to Iran.

That is my last point. What happened here has been a gift to Iran. What they have done has been a gift. Instead of weakening their enemy, they have empowered them. We do need to take positive action on this. We do need to take things that change and recalibrate this relationship, but yanking support at this moment from the Yemen campaign is the wrong way to do the right thing.

I hope that many of my colleagues, who yesterday voted to discharge this bill to the floor to send a clear message to the administration that they are unhappy with the response so far—I hope they will reconsider an alternative way forward that doesn't lead to these consequences I have outlined but allows us in the Senate to lead the way with the administration to reset this relationship in a way that avoids these problems in the future and lives up to our heritage as a nation whose foreign policy is infused with and supports the defense of human rights all over the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the nomination of Thomas Farr to the Eastern District of North Carolina. Those who sit on the Federal bench are bound to uphold the Constitution for all Americans, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or political leaning, but Mr. Farr cannot be trusted to defend equal justice under the law.

Working to disenfranchise voters with a particular hostility toward African-American voters has been his lifelong passion. Consider his work for Jesse Helms' 1990 Senate campaign. We all know Helms' record on race.

When the Justice Department brought a lawsuit against the Helms campaign for sending over 100,000 postcards to mostly African-American voters, falsely warning them that they were ineligible to vote and could be prosecuted for casting a ballot, it was Mr. Farr who defended the scheme. Yet, despite having served as the Helms' campaign attorney, Farr denied having any involvement with the postcards in his Senate questionnaire.

Mr. Farr claimed he did not "participate in any meetings in which the postcards were discussed before they were sent," but according to the former head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, Gerald Hebert, "the answers in [Farr's] questionnaire are contrary to the facts."

Mr. Hebert took contemporaneous notes while investigating the Helms campaign—notes that place Mr. Farr at