

attention among the Members of the body and the American people. Reviewing and approving arms sales across the world is a core function of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It is an integral exercise of congressional oversight of the executive branch, and it is legally mandated.

So as we consider Senator PAUL's resolution today regarding arms sales to Qatar and Bahrain, I would first like to make a few points of clarification.

First, the resolutions of disapproval before us today are completely unrelated to the administration's bogus "emergency" notification of the 22 sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the 22 resolutions I filed with a bipartisan group of Senators in objection to them.

Second, the resolutions before us today have already gone through the regular committee process. As is normal procedure, the administration notified us of these sales. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee then conducted our due diligence, after which we, in fact, agreed with the administration that these sales should go forward.

However, I do support the Senator from Kentucky's right to seek full consideration of them by the Senate. Given the administration's decision last month to completely flout congressional review over arms sales, I am supporting this motion in order to once again emphasize the importance of congressional oversight and due diligence.

With that in mind, I appreciate Senator PAUL's—as well as Senator GRAHAM's, Senator YOUNG's, and Senator LEE's—cosponsorship of my 22 resolutions of disapproval regarding the administration's so-called emergency arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

I am glad to know I am not the only one in this body disturbed by the President's willingness to bypass Congress and sell this weaponry without any consideration of the recent events that have strained our relationship with Saudi Arabia, and I certainly look forward to a more robust debate and vote on those sales next week.

But let me start by saying that I placed holds on specific sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates over serious, credible concerns that these weapons were being used to target civilians. Through the regular review process, I sought answers from the State Department about how these sales were promoting our interests and what steps we were taking to get guarantees from the Saudis and the Emiratis that these weapons were being used in a way consistent with our interests, with international humanitarian law, and with respect to human rights.

After the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi, the Department of State ceased engaging with me on these questions and did not respond to inquiries

about how these sales were furthering U.S. interests or about our relationship with Saudi Arabia. This is unacceptable. They could have engaged. They chose not to.

The bottom line is that we are a co-equal branch of government, and we cannot stay silent when any administration attempts to override or circumvent legally mandated oversight by Congress.

The United States sells a significant amount of weapons to Gulf countries, but given the rhetoric and behavior coming out of the administration, the last thing we should be doing is weakening our scrutiny over arms sales.

Let's remember why we pursue these sales in the first place. Arms sales are one of our many tools to promote American foreign policy and military objectives. We use arms sales to bring like-minded countries in line with our goals and to promote interoperability with American defense systems.

As the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I have always been diligent in reviewing every arms sale proposed by this administration, including these sales to Bahrain and Qatar. Through our standard process, I reviewed and cleared these sales for consideration by the Senate as part of our normal statutory procedures.

Now, let me turn to the particular sale to Bahrain, which I believe is in our interest at this moment. Make no mistake, I have serious concern about Bahrain's human rights record—concerns I have made clear to the Bahrain Government and to the State Department. I will be the first to say that Bahrain does not have a blank check for weapons systems from the United States. However, I am mindful that Bahrain hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. This package of upgraded F-16s and related munitions will help Bahrain effectively defend its territory, including U.S. Naval facilities, as well as participate in multinational efforts like the former coalition against ISIS in Syria.

Now, regarding the other resolution concerning Qatar, I note that Qatar has requested additional attack helicopters to fill its operational requirements, including enhancing their long-term defensive and offensive capability and the ability to protect key oil and gas infrastructure and platforms important to the United States and Western economic interests. Qatar faces threats from everywhere, not the least of which is Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Finally, I would note that Qatar continues to host U.S. Armed Forces at Al Udeid Air Base, providing critical support to U.S. national security capabilities in the region.

So while I support the Senator from Kentucky's rights to have these resolutions considered, it is for these reasons that I will ultimately support the sale to Qatar and Bahrain, as will most of my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 20 AND S.J. RES. 26

Mr. PAUL. Under the previous order, and pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Foreign Relations Committee from further consideration of S.J. Res. 20 and S.J. Res. 26, relating to the disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Governments of Bahrain and Qatar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motions are now pending and will be debated concurrently until the hour of 11:30 a.m., with 7 minutes each reserved for the chairman and the ranking member.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, the Middle East is a hot caldron, continuing and continually threatening to boil over. I think it is a mistake to funnel arms into these century-old conflicts.

There is no great certainty that the arms we send into the Middle East aren't one day used against our own soldiers. In fact, there is a real threat that someday our young soldiers will be sent to fight against the very weapons we send to these so-called allies.

It has happened. In Iran, to this day, they still have some U.S. weapons that are left over from the weapons the United States supplied the Shah. In Iraq, some of the weapons we gave them to fight Iran were still there when we returned to fight Saddam Hussein. In Afghanistan, some of the weapons we gave to the mujahedin to fight the Russians were still there when we returned to fight the Taliban. These weapons have a life of their own. It is not certain that they will not be used against us and often have been. Proliferating arms in the midst of chaos is a recipe for disaster.

It is hard to argue that sending arms into Libya and Syria has, in any way, advanced liberty. Dreamers often longingly speak of a peace plan for the Middle East. Maybe we should consider a peace plan that doesn't include dumping more arms into a region aflame with civil unrest, civil war, and anarchy.

The argument goes that we must arm anyone who is not Iran. We are told that, because of Iran's threat, the United States must accept selling arms to anyone who opposes Iran, even bone saw-wielding countries brazen enough to kill a dissident in a foreign consulate.

It doesn't matter how you act, how you behave, or whom you kill, we will still give you arms. What would happen if we just said no? What would happen if we simply conditioned arms sales on behavior? Are the Saudis so weak that Iran will run over them and run over the whole Middle East without our arms? Of course not.

The Saudis now spend more on their military than the Russians. The Saudis have the third largest amount of military spending in the world, only behind the United States and China. Saudi is No. 3. Saudi Arabia is spending the

third most on arms of anybody in the world. The Saudis and their Gulf allies spend eight times more than Iran. They are perfectly capable of defending themselves against Iran.

What are the Saudis doing with all the weapons we give them? For one, they are bombing civilians in Yemen. They have been using our bombs and, up until recently, they were refueling their bombers with our planes. We have no business in the war in Yemen. Congress never voted on it. It is unauthorized, it is unconstitutional, and we have no business aiding the Saudis in this massacre.

The Saudis have used these bombs to bomb a funeral procession. They wounded over 400 at a funeral procession—they wounded over 400 and killed 150. The Saudis recently bombed and killed 40 children on a schoolbus.

The Saudis, with our support, continue to blockade one of the main ports of Yemen. As a consequence of this blockade and the Yemeni civil war, 17 million people live on the edge of starvation.

In addition, the Saudis indiscriminately fed arms into the Syrian civil war. Even Hillary Clinton admitted this. In an email from Hillary Clinton to John Podesta, she wrote: “We need to use our diplomatic and more traditional intelligence assets to bring pressure on the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are providing clandestine financial and logistic support to Isis.”

Does anybody remember? We went to war with ISIS because of their horrendous violence and killing of civilians. We had to go back into Syria. Who was funding ISIS? Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Why in the world—what sane person would continue to send arms to countries that are giving arms to our enemies?

I introduced a bill which, unfortunately, will not get a vote today, and that is to quit arming terrorists. You say: Well, certainly you are not serious. Yes, I am serious. We send arms to terrorists. We send them, and there is a stopoff point—they stop off in Saudi Arabia, they stop off in Qatar, they stop off in Bahrain—but these arms are winding up in the hands of al-Qaida and radicals whom we say we are pledged to defeat and that our soldiers risk life and limb defending against.

Let's make sure no one misses this point. Hillary Clinton admitted that Qatar and Saudi Arabia were funding and arming ISIS. How insulting. Our brave soldiers are sent over there, risking life and limb, and we are supplying arms to the enemy.

Hillary Clinton sent another State Department cable. In this, it read: “Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qaeda, the Taliban.” That is whom we are fighting in Afghanistan.

So we are fighting al-Qaida everywhere. We are fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, and they are being aided and armed by Saudi Arabia. This is in-

sane. This policy makes no sense at all; that your dollars are buying weapons to be thrown into the Middle East to be spread among who knows whom.

Patrick Cockburn concludes the emails reveal “the State Department and US intelligence clearly had no doubt that Saudi Arabia and Qatar were funding Isis.”

To add insult to injury, there are now reports that the Saudi-led coalition that is bombing Yemen are giving American weapons to al-Qaida-linked fighters in Yemen, hardline Salafist militias, and anyone willing to fight the Houthis.

The problem with Congress is they are so obsessed with Iran, Iran, Iran that they can't understand they are giving weapons to people who are giving weapons to enemies of the United States. Because they so want to combat Iran, they are willing to turn away and give anybody in the Middle East anything they want because we say: We have to stop Iran—when, in reality, the big power there is Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms.

On the one hand, we are told that al-Qaida is the enemy that attacked us on 9/11, which they did. On the other hand, we are told to turn a blind eye and send more arms to Saudi Arabia and Qatar that end up winding up in the hands of al-Qaida and ISIS. It is completely crazy. What sane person would sell arms to a regime that kills, tortures, and imprisons their dissidents? The Saudis routinely behead and then crucify their opponents.

Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr was executed and crucified, and his nephew sits on death row accused of sending text messages to encourage people to come to a protest rally. In Saudi Arabia, if you insult the government or insult the King, you can be put to death. These are the people whom this Congress, this Senate, will shortly vote on sending your weapons to these people. It is insane. America needs to say: Quit sending our weapons to crazy people. Quit sending our weapons to ISIS. Quit sending our weapons to people who hate us.

How can this possibly be? Because people say: Oh, no, Iran. If we don't give money to Saudi Arabia, Iran will take over the world. Saudi Arabia spends eight times as much on their military as Iran. There is no danger of Iran taking over the Middle East with Saudi Arabia there. There is a great danger, though, if we keep funneling arms in there and fueling the arms race that the powder keg will blow up.

Since the 1980s, the Saudis are estimated to have spent \$100 billion exporting radical jihadism. This is a crazy ideology that preaches hatred of Jews, hatred of Christians, hatred of Hindus, and hatred of the West in general. This is whom they want to send weapons to: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain. They don't like us. They take our money, they take our weapons, but they don't like us. They don't like Christians. They don't like Jews. They don't like Hindus.

The Saudis fund tens of thousands of madrassas. Madrassas are religious schools that teach the radical form of jihadism that Saudi Arabia supports. There used to be a couple hundred in Pakistan. There are now tens of thousands of madrassas in Pakistan. At one particular madrassa, 80 percent of the students join the Taliban when they leave school.

Why in the world would we send arms to a country like Saudi Arabia that is funding madrassas that are sending soldiers that we have to fight against in Afghanistan? What kind of bizarre world do we live in that we are arming people who arm our enemies?

It has also been reported that the administration wants to give nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia. That is genius. News reports reveal that the administration authorized giving U.S. nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia weeks after Jamal Khashoggi's murder, weeks after Saudi Arabia was implicated and the CIA actually concluded that the Crown Prince of the country was responsible for the bone saw-dismembering murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

The administration says: Well, we should probably give them nuclear technology. Well, it is just going to be for energy purposes. One cannot overstate the calamity that awaits the Middle East and perhaps the world if Saudi Arabia should misuse peaceful nuclear technology in the pursuit of nuclear weapons. Without question, Iran would follow. A Middle East with three different countries with nuclear weapons is not something any sane person would want to contemplate.

Today's vote is not directly about Saudi Arabia. We will have another vote next week or in the near future about selling arms to Saudi Arabia, but, indirectly, today's vote is about the wisdom of proliferating arms in the Middle East. Today's vote is specifically about disapproving U.S. arms sales to Qatar and to Bahrain.

First, let's look at Qatar. Is Qatar a good actor in the Middle East? There are dozens of reports that U.S. weapons sold to Qatar wound up in the hands of al-Nusra. Who is al-Nusra? Al-Nusra is an al-Qaida-like affiliate of radical Islamists who hate the United States and hate Israel and would set up an extreme form of radical Islamist government. They are there to win. We didn't directly give them weapons, but we gave weapons to Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which gave weapons to al-Nusra in the Syrian civil war.

There are also reports that Qatar's weapons have been so indiscriminately distributed throughout the Middle East that many of these weapons have also wound up in the hands of ISIS. So al-Qaida, al-Nusra, and ISIS are getting weapons from Qatar. Where does Qatar get the weapons? From the United States.

The vote today is whether we should keep sending weapons to Qatar, which then sends them to our enemies, and

then we send our soldiers to the Middle East to fight against our own weapons. It is insulting; it is insane; and it needs to stop.

There are also reports that Qatar has been linked to support for Hamas. I am not talking about one report. I am talking about dozens and dozens and dozens. Hamas is violently trying to remove or obliterate the State of Israel, our ally, but we are going to give weapons to Qatar, which is giving weapons to Hamas, which has pledged to devastate Israel. Does that make any sense at all? Why would we give weapons to Qatar, which gives them to Hamas, which would attack our ally Israel? It makes no sense at all.

Former Under Secretary for Terrorism, David Cohen, writes: Qatar, a longtime U.S. ally, has for many years openly financed Hamas. Cohen also noted that Qatar allows fundraisers to solicit donations for al-Qaida and ISIS within Qatar.

Many sources claim that Qatar has also provided safe haven for al-Qaida leadership. Qatar is so distrusted that even the bone saw-wielding Saudis think it is unwise to sell arms to Qatar. The Saudis, no stranger to terrorism, cut diplomatic relations with Qatar over allegations that Qatar was supporting terrorism. They both have supported terrorism, and now Saudi Arabia is saying: Qatar is even worse than we are. We are bad. We give arms to terrorists. Sure we do, yes, but Qatar is even worse, so we are not going to give any arms to Qatar because Qatar is giving them to even worse people than we give them to.

In the chaotic aftermath of the overthrow of Qadhafi in Libya, there is civil war, there is chaos, and it is a breeding ground for terrorism. Qatar supports the faction opposed to the faction we support.

It could change next week. But as of now, we are going to give Qatar weapons today, and they are involved in Libya on the side opposite of what we are supporting.

Why would we give weapons to a country that opposes us in a civil war? There is a good question as to why we would be involved in the Libyan civil war at all and why we ever went over there to topple their government, but that is now water under the bridge. You have this chaos in Libya, where the United States is supporting one side and Qatar is supporting the other side. So why in the world would we give weapons to people who are opposing us in an armed conflict?

No one disputes that Qatar has armed al-Qaida and other radical groups throughout the Middle East. People say: Oh, we have a base there. They let us land. They let us do stuff. So we need to look the other way and not care that they continue to support al-Qaida, ISIS, al-Nusra, and other radical elements throughout the Middle East.

How much of a risk is it to sell arms to Qatar? Only time will tell. How much of a risk is it that in the future

our soldiers may fight against U.S. weapons that Qatar passes along to extremists? I think that is a very real risk. It has already happened, and it will continue to happen. If you do not condition armed sales on behavior, they will not change their behavior.

Some say: Oh, we have to do this. We have to have a base there. We have to do it.

They say that particularly with Bahrain. Bahrain is an island nation, a small nation. We have a big Navy presence there and thousands of sailors there. So they say: Well, it is our naval base. It is a stopping port. We need this naval base, so we are going to look the other way.

We look the other way for a country that is ruled by a monarchy composed of a minority. The Shia population, which is a form of Islam, is about 70 percent of the public. Twenty-five, thirty percent is Sunni, and that is the monarchy. If you are Shia, and you object to the government or you criticize the government, guess what—you are imprisoned.

There are currently 4,000 political prisoners in Bahrain. Bahrain bans any political opposition. One opposition leader, Sheikh Ali Salman, is in prison for life for speaking out against the government. Student leader Moosa Abdulla Moosa Jaafar was sentenced to death for protesting against government policy. Nabeel Rajab was given 5 years in prison for exposing and tweeting about torture in Bahraini prisons. Famous Bahraini football player Hakeem al-Araibi was arrested on his honeymoon in Thailand and held for 76 days by the Bahraini Government. In January of this year, the prominent Shia cleric, Sayed Majeed Al Meshaal, was arrested for criticizing extrajudicial killings by the Bahraini Government.

Should we be sending offensive weapons to a regime that uses violence to quell political dissent? Should we be funding a regime that is currently involved with the Saudis in bombing civilians in Yemen? Should we send offensive weapons to a country that has been indiscriminately killing civilians in Yemen? Should we send offensive weapons to a regime that tortures and unjustly imprisons and outlaws its political opponents?

The weapons that this Congress will send to Bahrain, to this minority monarchy, to this authoritarian government may someday wind up in the hands of revolutionaries. How long will it be until the powder keg of Bahrain has its own revolution?

We did this in Iran. We sent them to a ruler who didn't represent the majority in Iran, the Shah. We did it for a long time. But in the end, from the backlash that came in Iran and the downfall of the Shah, our weapons fell into the hands of people who hate our country. The same could happen in any one of these powder keg countries in the Middle East. The weapons we send to Bahrain today may well be in the

hands of revolutionaries in the near future.

The facts are not contested. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain have all allowed U.S. weapons to be funneled to radical Islamist groups throughout the Middle East. Dumping more weapons into the Middle East will not get us any closer to peace.

A “yes” vote today is a vote for sanity. A “yes” vote is a vote to quit sending arms to people who abuse human rights. A “yes” vote today is a vote against aiding and abetting the Saudi-led war in Yemen. A “yes” vote today is finally a vote for restoring Congress's proper role as a check on Executive power.

Our Founding Fathers were wary of granting any President too much power. James Madison wrote that the executive is the branch most prone to war. Therefore, the Constitution, with studied care, granted that power—the power to declare war—to Congress and not the President. I urge a “yes” vote today to help restore a semblance of the separation of powers that is necessary to preserve our great Republic.

Thank you.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Scott of Florida). The Senator from Montana.

REMEMBERING JEANNETTE RANKIN

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, last week, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of Congress passing the 19th Amendment. This week, coincidentally enough, we celebrate the birthday of the only woman to vote on the 19th Amendment, Montana's own Jeannette Rankin.

Jeannette Rankin, who helped women in Montana and Washington, earned the right to vote in 1914, 3 years before she became the first woman elected to Congress and 5 years before she helped pass the 19th Amendment, making her the only woman to vote for nationwide women's suffrage.

I say “nationwide” because before Congress passed the 19th Amendment, women had already won the right to vote in more than a dozen States, almost all of which were west of the Mississippi. And that was no accident.

The demands of frontier life were such that men and women often had to work side by side in order to meet those demands, and they still do that today. So it is no surprise that it was a western woman who led the effort on the House floor to pass a constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote.

As a freshman Member of the minority party, Rankin was denied the chairmanship of the newly established Woman Suffrage Committee, but she was named ranking member. The group went to work drafting a women's suffrage amendment on the morning of January 10, 1918. The Capitol was crowded with people to hopefully secure a seat in the House Gallery for the suffrage debate. Rankin opened the debate with an impassioned speech that

helped convince her colleagues in the House to pass the amendment. It was passed by the thinnest possible margin.

Unfortunately, the Senate failed to pass that amendment in that Congress, but Rankin's victory in the House marked a major milestone in the suffrage movement and laid the groundwork for the 19th Amendment's passage just 18 months later.

Today, in honor of her birthday on Tuesday and the suffrage centennial this past week, I would like to read an excerpt from that impassioned speech that Representative Rankin gave on the House floor more than 100 years ago.

Today, as never before, the Nation needs its women—needs the work of their hands and their hearts and their minds. Their energy must be utilized in the most effective service they can give.

Are we now going to refuse these women the opportunity to serve in the face of their plea—in the face of the Nation's great need?

Deep down in the hearts of the American people is a living faith in democracy.

Sometimes it is not expressed in the most effective way. Sometimes it seems almost forgotten.

But when the test comes, we find it is still there, groping and aspiring, and helping men and women to understand each other and their common need.

It is our national religion, and it prompts in us the desire for that measure of justice, which is based on equal opportunity, equal protection, equal freedom for all.

This proposed amendment should be passed as an act of right and justice to the women of America.

To my mind, this is one of the most important questions that has been presented to Congress since I have been a member.

One that has far more wide-reaching effect upon the people of the country—insofar as what the country stands for and what we stand for—than any other question since the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of our Constitution.

These are the people who are resting their faith in the Congress of the United States because they believe Congress knows what democracy means.

Can we afford to allow these men and women to doubt for a single instant the sincerity of our protestations of democracy?

How shall we answer their challenge, gentleman? How shall we explain to them the meaning of democracy if the same Congress that voted for war to make the world safe for democracy refuses to give this small measure of democracy to the women of our country?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT OF 2019

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am delighted to join Senator TESTER on the floor as ranking member of the Veterans' Committee, and he and I as chairman have worked together on many, many issues. And today, we are glad to come to the floor and tell the Senate how much we appreciate what they did last night in letting the unanimous consent motion pass to see to it that the blue water Navy legislation that we worked on for so many years became effective.

I could take a long time explaining it, but basically it is very simple.

Those who served in Vietnam and represented our country on the battlefields and at sea have been divided on the benefits they got for their service. Blue water Navy folks did not get service because it was not contemplated that they would have Agent Orange exposure by being on a ship, whereas our veterans who were on the ground got benefits because they were on the ground, and it was assumed that they did get exposure to Agent Orange.

The fact of the matter is, sailors on the ships could have been exposed to Agent Orange. So the veterans on our ships were really as equal in their opportunity to have gotten exposed to Agent Orange, so they should be equally open to getting the benefit.

Because of Senator TESTER's work, the testament and work of every member, the committee—I can't name anybody who didn't work on it at one time or another. Some negative, some positively—but all positive in the end because we were unanimous.

We passed blue water Navy and put to bed issues that affected our veterans for a number of years.

I just want to thank Senator TESTER immensely for his efforts, particularly in the end of last year we had a real battle to get it passed. We thought we had it passed, but we didn't at the last minute. It ended up in court and finally got a judge to rule our way and the veterans' way, and yesterday the Senate—by unanimously adopting the House bill which passed a month ago, the Blue Water Navy benefits are now available.

So I want to thank Senator TESTER, Senator BLUMENTHAL on the other side, Senator MURRAY just did a great job. On our side, Senator BOOZMAN did a great job. The ranking member on our side who is sitting next to me, Senator MORAN, did a great job.

Importantly, I want to talk about the staff for just a minute. Adam Reece is our new executive director of my staff. He has just done a great job to get this through.

From my staff, Amanda Maddox has worked hard to make it happen. Annabell McWherter, Jillian Workman, and Pat McGuigan did extraordinary work to see to it we got this done at the last minute and got it through.

So, on behalf of all the staff—for all the staff, minority and majority—on behalf of our veterans who risked their lives every day and a day or two after D-day when I happened to be with the President at Normandy to see the reenactment of that jump, it warms my heart to know that the Senate today is memorializing benefits that were intended a long time ago to go to those veterans who now will get it.

I thank everybody who worked on it, and I am encouraged by the positive vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, first of all, it is indeed a pleasure to be on the

Senate floor with the chairman of the VA Committee, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON. I think we all know we wouldn't be talking about the blue water Navy legislation, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, without JOHNNY ISAKSON.

JOHNNY has been an incredible leader on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee since he took it over, and I can't thank him enough for what he has done to make this a reality. It has been a long time coming. If there is anybody that deserves this to happen, it is the folks who served in Vietnam. Quite frankly, the sacrifice that they made during that war was like all other wars, and it was pretty darn incredible.

This victory is for the folks who were exposed to Agent Orange, and Agent Orange, by the way, is a herbicide that was not handled properly, and, quite frankly, causes real problems, and it has shown now that it causes real problems among the men and women who handled it, who were sprayed by it, who drank it, and who were exposed to it. So it is long past time that we deal with those folks in a way that meets their needs because of their sacrifice supporting that war.

I would just say that I come to the floor a lot, and I am disappointed in the U.S. Senate almost every day because they don't do what they need to do as far as checks and balances in this country. But today I come and I say thank you to the U.S. Senate. Thank you to the folks who didn't put a hold on this bill, who were able to push it through, because, quite frankly, this rights a wrong that has been perpetrated by a government that has ignored them for far too long.

Very quickly, since we do have the time, I just want to go through what this bill does. It ensures that veterans who served just off the shores of Vietnam are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange, just like those who served on land. The fact is that they were exposed. The fact is that now this bill recognizes that.

It restores VA benefits to literally tens of thousands of blue water Navy veterans who had their disability eligibility taken away back in 2002. It requires the VA to contact veterans who filed denied claims and who are now eligible for retroactive benefits. That means that for those folks who had their benefits taken away, the VA now needs to contact them and say: Look, the playing field has changed.

It extends presumption of Agent Orange exposure to veterans who served along the Korean DMZ, something we don't talk about much, and it expands benefits to include children born with spina bifida due to a parent's exposure in Thailand.

I have said this many, many times. Taking care of our veterans is a cost of war. That is why we need to be very careful when we send our troops into battle, because they are exposed physically and mentally to things that normal people are never exposed to.

For years, I have heard from veterans who were counting on us to pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act because, quite frankly, they weren't getting the benefits that they were promised when they signed up. When they were put in harm's way, the country turned their back on them.

They are veterans like Mike Stone from Kalispell, who served as a blue water sailor in 1974 and has since been diagnosed with a variety of illnesses linked to Agent Orange, like diabetes and heart disease. Now Mike Stone can receive the benefits he has earned.

This bill is for Mike and for so many veterans like him who have waited so long for the government to deliver. Once again, under the leadership of Chairman JOHNNY ISAKSON, we are able to live up to the commitment to justice for the blue water Navy veterans in Montana and across this country who have sacrificed to keep us safe and free.

I would urge the President to quickly sign this bill into law. It is the right thing to do, and I am proud that the Senate has finally done it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE S.J. RES. 20

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, fellow Senators, today, in a few moments, we are going to consider S.J. Res. 20, which is a joint resolution that it prohibits the sales of munitions to Bahrain. Actually, we are going to consider a motion to discharge, and the same is true of S.J. Res. 26, which is a joint resolution that prohibits the issuance of a letter of offer with respect to the proposed sale to Qatar of 24 helicopters.

I strongly urge my colleagues to consider these sales on their own merits and to avoid conflating these with unrelated controversies over the administration's recent emergency declarations. They are not related. They are different matters.

These sales—the two that we are talking about regarding Bahrain and Qatar—address the legitimate security interests of both countries and strengthen the U.S. partnerships with both countries and support shared efforts to deter Iran. Congress should support these sales. The news this morning of attacks on two more civilian oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman lend further weight to the conclusion that our allies and partners in the region need greater capabilities to share the burden of defense in support of our mutual security interests.

The State Department notified these sales in the standard process, and the chairs and ranking members of both House and Senate committees approved them last month.

The sale to Qatar is not related to the activities of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Denying this sale will not punish Saudi Arabia or influence its actions in Yemen, as Qatar ceased its participation in the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen 2 years ago. I think that is

very important because there is a lot of discussion up here, as there should be, regarding the hostilities in Yemen, but they are not related at all to the matters we are dealing with today.

Bahrain has not been implicated in any inappropriate strikes in Yemen and has focused on defensive operations, including border security. The Royal Bahraini Air Force patrols Saudi Arabia's borders to counter incursions from Yemen into Saudi Arabia. Just this week, we saw how real these threats are, as a missile from the Iranian-supported Houthis wounded 26 civilians at a civilian airport. Denying this sale will not punish Saudi Arabia or influence its actions in Yemen.

As the ranking member said regarding the resolution brought up last November, this vote is not Yemen, it is not Saudi Arabia, and it is not the UAE. It is Bahrain. Bahrain is a critical ally to us, and there is absolutely no question about that. These sales will help Qatar and Bahrain rightfully assume the burden of their own defense and relieve U.S. forces that have been providing support. The helicopters will enable the Qataris to provide for their own defense against threats to its vital infrastructure. The munitions are critical for Bahrain's F-16s and essential to any plans to defend Bahrain. The United States has critical and strategic interests in both of these matters.

In addition to Qatar and Bahrain taking increasing responsibility for their own defense, they are taking an increasingly prominent role in U.S.-led coalition operations. Importantly, Qatari fighters conduct joint air patrols with U.S. forces to deter Iran.

Qatar contributes more Naval forces to coalition patrols of the Arabian Gulf than any of its neighbors. Qatar C-17s have moved more than 3 million pounds of cargo in direct support of coalition operations in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan and is expanding its tanker fleet to become the No. 2 provider of coalition air refueling, ahead of the British.

Bahrain has also contributed to stability in the region. Bahrain has been the key mediator in opening relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Iraq and contributes to counter-mine, counter-piracy, and intelligence sharing in support of regional security.

The United States named Bahrain a major non-NATO ally in 2002, and since then, they have lived up to that designation. Bahrain holds 7,000 U.S. troops in its borders, including the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, and it is home to the only U.S. naval base in the Middle East.

For its part, Qatar hosts 10,000 U.S. forces and is home to the regional headquarters of U.S. forces, including air and special operations. Qatar provides access to key logistic nodes and overflight rights for U.S. aircraft. It has already invested more than \$8 billion to develop Al Udeid Air Base and is now providing more than \$3 billion to upgrade U.S. facilities there to meet

specific requirements of the United States. The Qataris are also providing \$200 million a year to sustain these facilities. Duplicating or recreating the facilities in Qatar would result in a sizable and needless bill to the U.S. taxpayer.

In recent years, Qatar and Bahrain have worked to strengthen cooperation with the United States on countering the financing of terrorism. As part of these efforts, Qatar has agreed to increase the sharing of information on terrorist financiers in the region, to place greater emphasis on preventing terrorist financing abuse in the charitable and money services business sectors, and develop a domestic designation regime in line with international standards. Bahrain, too, is a significant partner in cutting off terrorist financing and has assisted in blocking Iranian efforts to circumvent sanctions.

Meanwhile, the credibility of the United States as a partner of choice is on the line. If the United States cannot reliably sell its partners weapons that are vital for defense, these partners will turn by necessity to China and Russia.

The United States recently sent 1,500 more troops into the theater in protection of U.S. forces. As we ask partners like Qatar and Bahrain for their support in protecting their own forces, we should support them as they seek greater capabilities to protect themselves.

In November, this body concluded that blocking sales to Bahrain over an unrelated issue was inappropriate and did not make sense. I urge my colleagues in the strongest possible terms to reach the same conclusions in this case.

In closing, these sales should be considered on their own merits and should not be entangled with unrelated controversy. These sales address Qatar and Bahrain's legitimate security interests, strengthen U.S. partnership with Qatar and Bahrain, and, importantly, they deter Iran.

I support these sales. I urge my colleagues to do the same. As we can see from what I have said here, these sales are minimal, really, in the overall scheme of what these countries are doing to help us. We should show these countries that indeed we are reliable partners, we are good friends, and we deeply appreciate their efforts to promote the same interests the United States of America has in the region.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE S.J. RES. 20

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 20.

Mr. KAYNE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “nay.”

The result was announced—yeas 43, nays 56, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 161 Leg.]

YEAS—43

Baldwin	Harris	Peters
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lee	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Paul	

NAYS—56

Barrasso	Graham	Roberts
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Isakson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shah
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Sinema
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Manchin	Tester
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	Daines	McSally
Daines	Enzi	Tillis
Ernst	Moran	Toomey
Fischer	Murkowski	Warner
Gardner	Perdue	Wicker
	Portman	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The motion was rejected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE S.J. RES. 26

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 26.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “nay.”

(Mr. COTTON assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring the vote?

The result was announced—yeas 42, nays 57, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 162 Leg.]

YEAS—42

Baldwin	Coons	Hassan
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Cruz	Hirono
Booker	Duckworth	Kaine
Brown	Durbin	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Feinstein	Leahy
Carper	Gillibrand	Lee
Casey	Harris	Markey

Menendez	Reed	Stabenow
Merkley	Rosen	Udall
Murphy	Sanders	Van Hollen
Murray	Schatz	Warren
Paul	Schumer	Whitehouse
Peters	Smith	Wyden

NAYS—57

Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Burr	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Jones	Shah
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Sinema
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Manchin	Tester
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	Daines	McSally
Daines	Enzi	Tillis
Ernst	Moran	Toomey
Fischer	Murkowski	Warner
Gardner	Perdue	Wicker
	Portman	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The motion was rejected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Edward F. Crawford, of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Edward F. Crawford, of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, James E. Risch, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Kevin Cramer, Mike Braun, Pat Roberts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Edward F. Crawford, of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea.”

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

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 163 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Baldwin	Graham	Portman
Barrasso	Grassley	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Roberts
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Romney
Blunt	Hoeven	Rosen
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Boozman	Inhofe	Rubio
Braun	Isakson	Sasse
Brown	Johnson	Schatz
Burr	Jones	Shah
Capito	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cardin	King	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Shelby
Collins	Leahy	Sinema
Cornyn	Lee	Smith
Cotton	Manchin	Stabenow
Cramer	Markey	Sullivan
Crapo	McConnell	Tester
Cruz	McSally	Thune
Daines	Menendez	Tillis
Ernst	Merkley	Toomey
Fischer	Moran	Udall
Gardner	Perdue	Van Hollen
	Paul	Warner

NAYS—7

Duckworth	Harris	Warren
Feinstein	Hirono	
Gillibrand	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 92, the nays are 7.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last week, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and in just a few weeks, we will celebrate America’s independence on the Fourth of July.

It is important for us to pause and remember the contributions made by the men and women who wear the uniform of the U.S. military who fight every day to protect our freedoms.

The Senate Armed Services Committee just completed its markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 and voted overwhelmingly to send this legislation to the Senate floor. This is an annual event for us in the Senate. We pass the Defense authorization bill to ensure that crucial Department of Defense programs are continued, that America’s servicemembers are paid, and that our national defense is modernized to keep pace with the rapidly evolving threat landscape.

One of my top priorities in the Senate has been to ensure that America’s military men and women have what