

joint combined planning cell, an operation center, to conduct military intelligence activities in partnership with Saudi Arabia.

Here is why this matters so much: It has a huge impact on the lives of the people in Yemen. It is very possible the planes we refueled are responsible for conducting a series of three airstrikes in Saada last month, killing 5 civilians and wounding 14 more, including 4 children, as well as paramedics trying to pull survivors out of the rubble after that first strike, or that the planes we refueled played a role in striking a hotel last August that turned the building's ceiling black with the charred blood of 50 farmers who were staying in that building. We know that the bombs we have sold to the Saudis are killing many civilians. It is time for us here to reckon with that fact.

A lot of Americans may not even know we are involved in this war. It has not been widely discussed. There are so many things going on across the planet at this time—so much going on in Syria, for example, that perhaps Americans in general are not paying attention. But we should be paying attention because of the carnage that is occurring: 10,000 civilians have been killed since this conflict began. The great, vast bulk of those civilians are dying from air strikes conducted by Saudi Arabia that we are supporting through intelligence and target assistance and refueling. Then there are the consequences of that bombardment. The result is just a tremendous humanitarian crisis.

The Saudis have been involved in blockading the ability to get humanitarian supplies into Yemen—food and medicine and fuel. This has resulted in what the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, has warned could become “the largest famine the world has seen for many decades.” Seven million Yemenis are on the verge of starvation because of this war that we are involved in and the related Saudi blockade of food and medicine.

About every day, 130 Yemeni children die from extreme hunger and disease—130 a day. One of the factors that is killing people is cholera. Since October of 2016—so roughly a little less than a year and a half ago—1 million Yemenis have contracted cholera. More than 2,000 have died from it. It is the largest cholera outbreak in recorded history. Let me say that again: 1 million Yemenis have contracted cholera, and it is the largest cholera outbreak in recorded history. So 7 million Yemenis are on the verge of starvation, 1 million have contracted cholera, and so many are dying because of this war we are involved in.

The death and destruction in Yemen is unimaginable, and the United States needs to take a hard look at the role we are playing—a role we are playing in violation of our Constitution and in violation of the War Powers Act of

1973. That is the issue we are going to be discussing here on the floor.

I know there is some popularity in saying: Let's not look at that humanitarian crisis and our role in it; let's just look at the relationship we have with Saudi Arabia and know that they have helped us in other cases—for example, the war on ISIS. Let's know that they are a good customer for many of our products and for many of our military products. But I say to my colleagues: This issue is bigger than simply a good marketplace or a good relationship with Saudi Arabia. This goes to our involvement, our culpability in the deaths of thousands of Yemenis and 130 children a day through bombs falling on them, through hunger, starvation, through cholera.

It is hard for me to think about this young child in this picture, this young Yemeni, who clearly is the victim either of cholera or starvation or some other consequence of this conflict. But imagine 130 of these children dying every day.

It is our responsibility to honor the Constitution, and it is our responsibility as humans on this planet to wrestle with the fact that our involvement is contributing to this vast humanitarian disaster. Let us not abdicate our responsibility on the basis of friendship with another nation based on the fact that they are a good market for our products or that we think they may be future partners in some other agenda. We have a direct responsibility in war and peace that we have not fulfilled, and this week, with this coming resolution tomorrow, is a point that we must wrestle with this. Let us wrestle with it and honor the Constitution and give some integrity to the 1973 War Powers Resolution.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 1865 be vitiated, and that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader, on Wednesday, March 21, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1865; further, that the only amendments in order be Wyden amendments Nos. 2212 and 2213; finally, that there be up to 4 hours of debate concurrently on the amendments, and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed, with a 60-vote affirmative threshold required for adoption of each amendment, the bill be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with no further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 54

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following

the resumption of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1865, on Tuesday, March 20, Senator SANDERS, or his designee, be recognized to offer a motion to discharge S.J. Res. 54; further, that there be up to 4 hours of debate, equally divided between the opponents and the proponents of the resolution, and that following the use or yielding back of that time the Senate vote in relation to the motion to discharge.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

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#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 471.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Nazakhtar Nikakhtar, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nikakhtar nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

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#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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#### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for 50 years, the Vermont State Housing Authority, VSHA, has helped make available secure, safe, and affordable housing in my home State of Vermont.