

bill passes the House of Representatives. None of them come before the Senate for a vote—no healthcare bills, no immigration bills, no anti-gun violence bills.

I get it that the bills that pass the House probably can't pass a Republican-led Senate, but why are we not even trying? Who is in charge here? The special interests who want nothing to happen, the gun lobby, the health insurance companies or are we in charge? We are the ones who were elected. We are the Members of the U.S. Senate. We could choose to have these debates, hash out our differences, and see if there is a proposal that 60 of us could agree on that would do something about this unacceptable level of gun violence that plagues this Nation on a daily basis.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday on the floor I said I don't believe President Trump will follow through on his threat to impose tariffs on Mexico. Why? First, because the President has a tendency for bluster. There are many examples of the President taking a maximalist position before eventually backing off and announcing some different solution. Nine times out of ten, after a few months, everyone realizes that the so-called solution isn't real and doesn't work, but the President needs a way out of his bluster. That may well be true with the tariff issue.

Second, most Senate Republicans oppose the President's idea of slapping tariffs on Mexico. They know how that could destabilize our economy and Mexico's and that it could actually make the migration problem worse.

Publicly, the President has continued the tough talk on tariffs with Mexico—he responded to my statement on the floor with a tweet last night—but ultimately I continue to believe he will back off. That has been his MO. When he does, I would urge him to consider a real solution to the border problem, not some fake solution that he and the Mexicans announce, and then it does nothing—they don't follow through, it doesn't have effect, whatever.

Here is a commonsense policy that will actually reduce the problems at the border: Many of the migrants that

arrive at our southern border are fleeing untenable situations—gang violence, drug cartels, corruption, domestic abuse, economic depravity. If you are starving, if you are worried that your child will be mugged, if you are worried that your daughter will be raped, you ain't staying there. The governments of those countries have failed to provide safety or security for people living within their borders in Nicaragua, in Honduras, and in El Salvador. Their citizens—or some of them—feel compelled to embark on a dangerous 1,000-mile journey on foot rather than stay put because staying put is even worse for them.

These are not evil people. The President would like to make them all out to be drug dealers or criminals. Most of them are poor people who are trying to escape the dangers created by the problems of gang violence, economic hardship, social oligarchy.

We Democrats have crafted legislation that would help address the problems in those three Central American countries that are causing the migrants to flee in the first place.

First, we would allow asylum seekers to apply for asylum within their own countries. That thousand-mile trek across Mexico is dangerous. It is often expensive. You have to pay a coyote or buy off drug dealers or other criminals. Let them apply in Honduras, in El Salvador, in Guatemala and not amass at the border. Second, we provide significant security assistance to Central American countries to build their capacity, crack down on the gangs and drug cartels and human trafficking that is endemic in those countries, and we would increase the number of immigration judges and personnel to reduce the current backlog of cases at the border.

These policies make eminent sense, and unlike the President's plan to impose tariffs on Mexico, our proposals do not threaten the U.S. economy. We would urge our Republican colleagues to join us in this commonsense solution.

When the President inevitably retreats from his tariff threat—which may be as soon as this afternoon—we should proceed on these commonsense policies, not some fake thing that sounds good in an announcement and then goes away like we have seen over and over again when the President conducts foreign policy—North Korea being one of the most notorious examples.

Over the past year, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, despite some positive domestic reforms, has too often acted like a brute in the Middle East rather than a stabilizing force.

I understand that Saudi Arabia worries about Iran. I share those concerns about the Iranian Government, but the Saudis have all too often reacted in the wrong way. In Yemen, the Saudis are fighting a proxy war that has resulted in untold human suffering and the slaughter of innocents of many chil-

dren. Internally, the Saudi Government has conducted a widespread campaign of political repression, including the imprisonment of women's rights campaigners. We all know how the Saudis were responsible for the vicious torture and chilling murder of a journalist and American resident Jamal Khashoggi.

Despite these gross violations of international norms and values, the Trump administration has just cozied up with Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman and offered almost no criticism.

We have just learned, according to reports, that the Trump administration approved seven transfers of American nuclear technology to the Saudis, including two after Khashoggi's murder. Now the administration is using its favorite tool, claiming emergency powers to justify another 22 arms sales to the Saudis and others, including precision-guided munitions for Saudi's operations in Yemen.

Has the Trump administration lost all perspective when it comes to Saudi Arabia—providing excuses and cover for the brutal murder of a journalist and American resident, aiding and arming the Saudis in a human rights tragedy in Yemen, which will only come back to hurt him in the long run. What are we doing here?

Congress has already voted, in bipartisan majorities, to unwind America's involvement in Yemen, which, of course, the President vetoed, and now we ought to vote to disapprove these arms sales.

The chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Senator GRAHAM, urged by our ranking member of Foreign Relations and our leader on this issue, Senator MENENDEZ, has thankfully announced the bipartisan effort to do just that. I strongly support that effort.

Let me say, my Republican friends, over the last years of the Obama administration, bitterly complained about the way President Obama used Executive authority. The amount of Executive authority used by President Obama could fit in a thimble compared to the abuse of Executive authority by President Trump. Yet it seems, in the past, our Republican colleagues who so criticized Obama for much less have been totally silent when President Trump abuses Executive authority, but now maybe there are some green shoots.

Maybe some of our Republican colleagues in the Senate are waking up to the idea that in America we have a three-branch government, not a one-branch government, and maybe some of our Republican colleagues are recognizing that and beginning to act—the possible green shoots. Two instances; one is tariffs. Our Republicans don't like these tariffs. Will they have the guts, if the President implements them, to oppose the President? We will see.

Now, on Saudi arms sales, a number of Senate Republicans are beginning to