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U.S. GOVERNMENT
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118TH CONGRESS
2d Session
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPT. 118–404
Part 1

STANDING AGAINST HOUTHI AGGRESSION ACT

MARCH 5, 2024.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MCCAUL, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 6046]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 6046) to designate Ansarallah as a foreign terrorist organization and impose certain sanctions on Ansarallah, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Standing Against Houthi Aggression Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) It was reported by Reuters on March 21, 2017, that Iran, a designated state sponsor of terror, sent advanced weapons and military advisers to assist and support Yemen's Ansarallah, commonly referred to as the "Houthis".

(2) On January 19, 2021, the Trump Administration designated Ansarallah as a foreign terrorist organization and a specially designated global terrorist.

(3) On February 16, 2021, Secretary of State Blinken revoked the designation of Ansarallah as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219(a)(6)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189(a)(6)(A)).

(4) Since October 7, 2023, the Houthis have launched over 40 ballistic missile and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea, including direct attacks on United States sailors and taking an international ship and its crew hostage. This follows years of Houthi cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

(5) Houthi attacks on global shipping have caused many shipping companies to re-route to avoid the area, resulting in a de-facto blockade against Yemen, while also driving up shipping costs, disrupting supply chains, and negatively impacting the global economy.

(6) In addition to providing the Houthis with advanced conventional weapons and component parts, Iran and their Hezbollah proxies have also enabled the Houthis with financial support, training, and technical knowledge to manufacture weapons, including long range drones and ballistic and cruise missiles in Yemen, resulting in increased Houthi weapons stockpiles and illegal weapons proliferation throughout the region.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION AS FTO; IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.

(a) DESIGNATION AS FTO.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall designate Ansarallah as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189(a)).

(b) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall impose the sanctions described in paragraph (2) with respect to—

(A) Ansarallah; and

(B) any foreign person that is a member, agent, or affiliate of, or owned or controlled by Ansarallah.

(2) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President shall exercise all authorities granted under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in property and interests in property of Ansarallah or the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(B) INELIGIBILITY FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(i) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien described in paragraph (1) shall be—

(I) inadmissible to the United States;

(II) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(III) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et 16 seq.).

(ii) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The visa or other entry documentation of any alien described in paragraph (1) is subject to revocation regardless of the issue date of the visa or other entry documentation.

(II) IMMEDIATE EFFECT.—A revocation under subclause (I) shall, in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i))—

(aa) take effect immediately; and

(bb) cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the possession of the alien.

(3) PENALTIES.—Any person that violates, or attempts to violate, paragraph (2) or any regulation, license, or order issued pursuant to that subsection, shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(4) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this subsection.

(5) REGULATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this subsection.

(B) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not less than 10 days before the promulgation of regulations under paragraph (1), the President shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of the proposed regulations and the provisions of this subsection that the regulations are implementing.

(C) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(i) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

(6) EXCEPTIONS.—

(A) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this subsection shall not apply to any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) or any authorized intelligence activities of the United States.

(B) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this subsection shall not apply with respect to an alien if admitting or paroling the alien into the United States is necessary—

(i) to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations; or

(ii) to carry out or assist authorized law enforcement activity in the United States.

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

H.R. 6046, the Standing Against Houthi Aggression Act, requires the Secretary of State to designate Ansarallah (also known as the Houthis) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). H.R. 6046 also requires the President to impose property blocking and visa sanctions on Ansarallah and any foreign person that is a member, agent, or affiliate of, or owned or controlled by Ansarallah. The purpose of this legislation is to impose sanctions on the Houthis and their support network in order to compel them to stop their terrorist activities, and otherwise limit the resources the Houthis have available to conduct terrorist activities.

In 2014, after years of intermittent guerrilla war, the Houthis, a group of militants, launched a violent takeover of Yemen's capital, sending Yemen's internationally recognized government into exile and catapulting the country into civil war. Yemen's internationally recognized government requested assistance to fight the Houthis, prompting the intervention of a Saudi-led coalition of Arab countries. The war further undermined security in a country long plagued by sectarian and tribal violence.

The civil war has exacerbated Yemen's humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 377,000 people having died since 2014 according to the UN. About 70% of Yemenis still reside in areas under Houthi de-facto control where they are subject to gross violations of human

rights, including restrictions on freedom of movement, arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence, and being forced into fighting.

The Houthis responded to the intervention of Arab states by waging an increasingly violent campaign against them, mainly focused on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Since 2014, the Houthis have carried out hundreds of cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia using missiles and drones. In January 2022, shortly after seizing an Emirati ship in the Red Sea, the Houthis claimed responsibility for an attack against an airport and fuel depot in Abu Dhabi that killed three people.

Though Iran's links to the Houthis predate 2014, relations between the two have deepened significantly over the past decade and are "likely to endure," according to a recent Defense Intelligence Agency report. Iran (a U.S.-designated State Sponsor of Terrorism) and Hezbollah (a U.S.-designated FTO) have played a critical role in helping advance Houthi military capabilities, turning the Houthis into a well-armed, relatively sophisticated fighting force. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Hezbollah commanders have embedded themselves in strategic Houthi military institutions and have commanders on the ground advising the Houthis with critical intelligence, planning, and targeting support. Iran provides the Houthis with everything from precision guided missiles to long range drones, while also helping grow the Houthis' own indigenous production capabilities.

Since Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, which killed over 1,200 people, the Houthis have launched dozens of attacks on vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, threatening both civilian ships and U.S. troops. Iran and Hezbollah are, according to de-classified U.S. intelligence, directly involved in the Houthi campaign against international shipping. State Department official Tim Lenderking said in February 2024, "The sense we have is overwhelmingly that Iran is pushing on an open door here with the Houthis, aiding, abetting, sharing intelligence, helping them target ships, determining which are the more lucrative targets." The disruption caused by the Houthi attacks poses a serious threat to the global economy due to the Red Sea being one of the most important arteries in the global shipping system. As a result of Houthi attacks, ships are re-routing around the Horn of Africa, adding approximately 10 days in additional travel time and up to $1 million in fuel costs. Insurance premiums for ships using the Red Sea have increased tenfold since the attacks began.

On January 10, 2021, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that he would designate Ansarallah as an FTO and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), saying, "These designations will provide additional tools to confront terrorist activity and terrorism by Ansarallah, a deadly Iran-backed militia group in the Gulf region. The designations are intended to hold Ansarallah accountable for its terrorist acts, including cross-border attacks threatening civilian populations, infrastructure, and commercial shipping." Pompeo also said, "If Ansarallah did not behave like a terrorist organization, we would not designate it as an FTO and SDGT. It has led a brutal campaign that has killed many people, continues to destabilize the region, and denies Yemenis a peaceful solution to the conflict in their country. Rather than distance itself

from the Iranian regime, it has embraced the world's leading state-sponsor of terrorism even more."

On February 16, 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that he was revoking the FTO and SDGT designations of Ansarallah, saying, "the revocations are intended to ensure that relevant U.S. policies do not impede assistance to those already suffering what has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis." Even so, Blinken noted, "The United States remains clear-eyed about Ansarallah's malign actions, and aggression, including taking control of large areas of Yemen by force, attacking U.S. partners in the Gulf, kidnapping and torturing citizens of the United States and many of our allies, diverting humanitarian aid, brutally repressing Yemenis in areas they control, and the deadly attack on December 30, 2020 in Aden against the cabinet of the legitimate government of Yemen."

Notably, the Houthis continued their terrorist behavior even after the designations were lifted. For example, in October 2021, after Blinken removed the FTO and SDGT designations, the Houthis breached the former U.S. Embassy compound in Sana'a and forcibly detained several current and former U.S. Embassy Locally Employed Staff, Yemeni individuals who are or have been employed by the United States.

On January 17, 2024, Blinken announced that he would re-designate the Houthis as an SDGT, though with an unprecedented 30-day implementation window and significant carve-outs built in. Shortly thereafter, White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan issued a statement claiming that "if the Houthis cease their attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the United States will immediately reevaluate this designation." The Biden Administration has not reimposed the FTO designation on the Houthis. The FTO designation would make providing material support to the Houthis a criminal penalty with the full force of U.S. law, while the SDGT designation does not, making FTO designation a stronger tool to pressure the Houthis and their supporters to end their terrorist behavior, and to prevent further terrorist financing.

There has been strong bipartisan interest in re-designating the Houthis as an FTO. In November 2023, House Foreign Affairs Committee Member Rep. Michael Waltz led a bipartisan letter, signed by more than 40 Members of Congress, urging Secretary Blinken to re-designate the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

HEARINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(6) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee held the following hearings related to—and used to develop—the text of H.R. 6046 favorably reported by the Committee:

- The November 8, 2023 full Committee hearing titled, "Friend and Ally: U.S. Support for Israel after Hamas' Barbaric Attack" included discussion of the Houthis' role in regional escalation following Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel.
- The September 14, 2023 hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia titled, "Iran's Escalating Threats: Assessing U.S. Policy Toward Iran's Malign Activi-

ties" discussed Iran's support for the Houthis, including arming, training, and funding the Houthis.

• The June 13, 2023 hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia titled, "Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Request for Near Eastern Affairs," discussed U.S. foreign assistance in Yemen and the Administration's efforts to support UN peace negotiations between the Saudis and the Houthis.

• During the 117th Congress, the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, held a hearing on December 6, 2022 titled, "Confronting Yemen's Humanitarian and Political Crises Without a Ceasefire," that discussed a broad range of issues related to the Houthis and the conflict in Yemen.

• The Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia has continued its work on issues related to the Houthis and Yemen after the February 6, 2024 markup of H.R. 6046 with a February 14, 2024 hearing titled, "Iran's Proxy in Yemen: The Houthi Threat to Middle East Stability, Global Shipping, and U.S. Servicemembers."

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION AND VOTES

The Committee considered H.R. 6046 pursuant to notice, in open session, at a markup on February 6, 2024. By unanimous consent, McCaul amendment #18 (*in the nature of a substitute*) was considered base text for purposes of markup. The following, additional amendments were considered by the Committee:

• Dean amendment #39 to the ANS (*to add a national interest waiver, exception for humanitarian and peacebuilding activities, and exception for activities essential to civilian wellbeing*) was offered and withdrawn.

H.R. 6046, as amended, was ordered favorably reported to the House by a vote of 34 Ayes to 13 Noes.

• Ayes (34): McCaul, Smith, Wilson, Issa, Wagner, Mast, Buck, Burchett, Green, Barr, Jackson (TX), Kim (CA), Salazar, Huizenga, Radwagen, Hill, Davidson, Baird, Waltz, Kean, Lawler, Mills, McCormick, Moran, James, Self, Sherman, Connolly, Keating, Allred, Manning, Stanton, Moskowitz, Schneider.

• Noes (13): Meeks, Bera, Castro, Titus, Wild, Kim (NJ), Jacobs, Cherfilus-McCormick, Dean, Jackson (IL), Kamlager-Dove, Crow, Amo.

OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In compliance with Clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee reports that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under Clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the House of Representatives, are incorporated in the "Summary and Purpose" section of this report, above.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, TAX EXPENDITURES, AND FEDERAL MANDATES

Clause 3(c)(2) of House rule XIII is inapplicable because this bill does not provide new budget authority or increased tax expenditures.

H.R. 6046, Standing Against Houthi Aggression Act
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 6, 2024

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2024	2024-2029	2024-2034
Direct Spending (Outlays)	*	*	*
Revenues	*	*	*
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	*	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	*

Increases *net direct spending* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035?	< $2.5 billion	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes
		Mandate Effects	
Increases *on-budget deficits* in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2035?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	Yes, Under Threshold

* = between -$500,000 and $500,000.

H.R. 6046 would direct the Administration to designate Ansarallah (commonly referred to as the Houthis) as a foreign terrorist organization and to impose sanctions on any foreign persons or entities associated with the group. The bill also would require the Administration to report to the Congress on the regulations it issues to carry out the bill.

The Administration recently listed Ansarallah as a Specially Designated Terrorist Group. Under that designation, the Administration blocks any transactions involving assets associated with Ansarallah or its supporters that are in the United States or that come under the control of people in the United States. Designating Ansarallah as a foreign terrorist organization would expand those sanctions by prohibiting people and entities subject to the jurisdiction of the United States from providing it material support and restricting visas for its members.

People and entities who violate the prohibition on providing material support would be subject to civil or criminal monetary penalties. Those penalties are recorded as revenues, and a portion can be spent without further appropriation.

CBO estimates that, under H.R. 6046, more people would be denied visas by the Department of State, resulting in an insignificant decrease in revenues from fees. Although most visa fees are retained by the Department of State and spent, some collections are deposited into the Treasury as revenues. Denying foreign nationals entry into the United States also would reduce direct spending on federal benefits (emergency Medicaid or federal subsidies for health insurance, for example) for which those people might otherwise be eligible.

Using data about similar actions, CBO estimates that any additional sanctions would affect a small number of people; thus, enacting H.R. 6046 would have insignificant effects on revenues and direct spending, and would, on net, reduce deficits by insignificant amounts over the 2024–2034 period.

Based on the cost of regulations and reports similar to those required by the bill, CBO estimates that preparing those reports would cost less than $500,000 over the 2024–2029 period. Such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

H.R. 6046 would impose a private-sector mandate as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). Sanctions would prohibit individuals or entities in the United States from engaging in transactions involving assets and property that have been frozen. Those transactions are otherwise permitted under current law. The cost of the mandate would be any income lost because of the prohibition. CBO expects that because a small number of people or entities would be affected, the loss of income from any incremental increase in restrictions imposed by the bill would be small as well. CBO estimates that the cost of the mandate would fall well below the annual threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates ($200 million in 2024, adjusted annually for inflation).

H.R. 6046 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Emma Uebelhor (for federal costs) and Brandon Lever (for mandates). The estimate was reviewed by Christina Hawley Anthony, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the Congressional Budget Office cost estimate on this measure.

FEDERAL MANDATES

The Committee adopts as its own the identification, description, and assessment of federal mandates contained in the Congressional Budget Office cost estimate on this measure.

NON-DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Clause 3(c)(5) of House rule XIII is not applicable to this measure, as it is not a bill or joint resolution that establishes or reauthorizes a federal program.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of H.R. 6046 is to impose sanctions on the Houthis and their support network in order to compel them to stop their terrorist activities, and otherwise limit the resources the Houthis have available to conduct terrorist activities.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

H.R. 6046 does not apply to terms and conditions of employment or to access to public services or accommodations within the legislative branch.

NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEES

H.R. 6046 does not establish or authorize any new advisory committees.

EARMARK IDENTIFICATION

H.R. 6046 contains no congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as described in clauses 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of House Rule XXI.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title. This section identifies the short title as the "Standing Against Houthi Aggression Act."

Section 2. Findings. This section contains findings regarding: the Houthis' relationship with Iran, a State Sponsor of Terrorism; the Houthis' prior designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization; and the Houthis' ongoing attacks on international shipping.

Section 3. Designation as an FTO; Imposition of Sanctions. This section requires the Secretary of State to designate Ansarallah (also known as the Houthis) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. This section also requires the President to impose property blocking and visa sanctions on Ansarallah and any foreign person that is a member, agent, or affiliate or, or owned or controlled by Ansarallah, and then describes the property blocking and visa sanctions.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

The bill, as reported, does not propose to repeal or amend a statute or part thereof.

JIM JORDAN, Ohio
CHAIRMAN

CORRESPONDENCE

JERROLD NADLER, New York
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216
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March 1, 2024

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul:

I write regarding H.R. 6046, the Standing Against Houthi Aggression Act. Provisions of this bill fall within the Judiciary Committee's Rule X jurisdiction, and I appreciate that you consulted with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee agrees that it shall be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that forgoing further consideration of this measure does not in any way alter the Committee's jurisdiction or waive any future jurisdictional claim over these provisions or their subject matter. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees in the event of a conference with the Senate involving this measure or similar legislation.

I ask that you please include this letter in your committee's report to accompany this legislation or insert this letter in the *Congressional Record* during consideration of H.R. 6046 on the House floor. I appreciate the cooperative manner in which our committees have worked on this matter, and I look forward to working collaboratively in the future on matters of shared jurisdiction. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jim Jordan
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Gregory Meeks, Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Jason Smith, Parliamentarian

MICHAEL T. McCAUL, TEXAS
CHAIRMAN

GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK
RANKING MEMBER

One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2024

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Jordan:

Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 6046, the *Standing Against Houthi Aggression Act*, so that the measure may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will place our letters into our Committee's report on this bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Michael T. McCaul

MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman

CC: Hon. Gregory Meeks, Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Hon. Mike Johnson, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Hon. Jason Smith, Parliamentarian, U.S. House of Representatives

DISSENTING VIEWS

I have condemned and continue to condemn the violent Houthi militant movement for its provocative and unwarranted attacks against commercial shipping and U.S. Navy personnel in the Red Sea as well as against Israel earlier this year. I support the Biden Administration's recent related sanctions and actions and remain concerned about the continued humanitarian crisis faced by millions of innocent Yemenis. However, I oppose H.R. 6046 because the likelihood of unintended consequences on the Yemeni population are simply too great.

The Houthis seized control of Yemen's capital in 2014 and fought a prolonged war against a Saudi led military campaign that resulted in significant civilian death and destruction of much of Yemen's infrastructure. To this day, after years of bombing, ground combat, and impoverishment as a result of this war, millions of Yemeni civilians suffer near famine conditions, recurring disease including cholera outbreaks, medical goods shortages, and extreme economic hardship. 4.5 million Yemenis are currently internally displaced. Though a tenuous truce between Houthi militants and the Saudi military remains in place, Yemeni civilians have experienced little respite from years of hardship and remain dependent on outside humanitarian aid for even the most basic necessities to survive. Yemen is currently experiencing some of the highest malnutrition rates ever recorded and a staggering 17.6 million people are expected to face acute food insecurity in 2024.

Amidst all of this, Houthi militants have cynically sought to exploit the Israel-Hamas war following Hamas' brutal October 7th attacks on Israeli civilians, and the subsequent acute humanitarian crisis in Gaza. They have launched wave after wave of drone attacks on commercial ships and U.S. Navy vessels and long-range missiles at Israel. In response, the Biden Administration has launched numerous airstrikes against Houthi positions in Yemen as well as announced both individual sanctions designations on Houthi leaders and facilitators as well as the powerful Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) sanction. This action further sanctions the Houthis themselves and those facilitation and support networks, coordinated by Iran, which keep the Houthi militants armed and equipped. The Administration's SDGT announcement was accompanied by important general licenses for basic humanitarian assistance, including food, medicine, and other emergency aid operations.

H.R. 6046 forces the Administration to designate the Houthis a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), a designation that risks jeopardizing the very lifesaving assistance Yemeni civilians are dependent on for their survival. As a result of the sweeping legal implications of such a designation, many commercial shippers and humanitarian organizations would be unwilling to do any business in

Yemen given their vulnerability to severe criminal consequences, triggering a significant drop-off in the imports on which Yemen depends for nearly all its basic goods. While some may point to existing general licenses or provisions, the legal implications of an FTO designation renders such provisions moot without any such new statutory authorizations or exemptions. Finally, the Administration has made clear it opposes this bill given the likely humanitarian impacts and the fact that it already has the authority to implement such a designation per Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189).

A broad coalition of NGOs and humanitarian organizations also publicly oppose such an FTO designation without humanitarian provisions, which H.R. 6046 does not have. There is no disagreement about the reprehensible nature of Houthi violence both within Yemen and the Red Sea.

Committee Democrats remain steadfast and committed to opposing the violent statements and actions of Houthi militants against Israel, commercial shipping, and U.S. personnel, but H.R. 6046 inordinately and unnecessarily punishes millions of Yemeni civilians on the brink of perishing and provides no reasonable humanitarian exemptions for legitimate assistance to those most in need.

Sincerely,

GREGORY W. MEEKS,
Ranking Member.

○