

# US Supports Saudi-led War in Yemen: Bombing Civilians, Running Out of Bombs...

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Global Research, April 27, 2016

[RSN](#) 25 April 2016

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [US](#)

[NATO War Agenda](#)

## ***How broken is American government? Other senators A-OK with current killing patterns, or prefer increase***

It sounds a little like a joke (and in a sense it is): Two US senators introduce a [resolution based on fraudulent representations](#) of reality, seeking to make the president insist that **the Saudis bomb fewer civilians in Yemen**, and this darkly hilarious hoax is still better than anything the other 98 senators (and the whole House) are doing about the [US illegal war in Yemen](#). Our would-be heroic duo in the Senate doesn't actually oppose the US war on Yemen, even though they acknowledge its savage daily violations of international law (currently suspended [during a tenuous ceasefire](#)). Regardless, these two senators are simultaneously misrepresenting US participation in those ruthless crimes (which the rest of the Senate simply ignores and [the State Department trivializes](#)).

Following 15 years of special ops there, the US has been openly at war against Yemen for more than a year, in support of a genocidal Saudi coalition (mostly the Gulf Cooperation Council that President Obama met with privately recently). Once again, the US is in a war undertaken without Constitutional consultation with Congress, and without Congress raising a peep of an objection. This is a criminal war in which the US is at least accomplice to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The US drone war's toll on civilians arguably makes the US guilty of committing both sets of crimes.



At least five people lost their lives and many others were wounded after fresh Saudi airstrikes bombed a Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital. (photo: MEP)

Most of this is acknowledged in Senate Joint Resolution 32, which the senators introduced on April 13, after which it was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for further consideration possibly. Resolution 32 states in part:

Whereas the Panel of Experts established pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014) reported on January 22, 2016, that the military coalition led by the Government of Saudi Arabia in Yemen “had conducted **air strikes targeting civilians and civilian objects, in violation of International Humanitarian Law**, including camps for internally displaced persons and refugees; civilian gatherings, including weddings; civilian vehicles, residential areas, medical facilities, schools, mosques, markets, factories and food storage warehouses, and other essential civilian infrastructure such as the

airport in Sanaa, the port in Hudayadah, and domestic transit routes”....  
[emphasis added]

The same UN Panel of Experts cited in Resolution 32 also reported attacks on civilians by the Houthi-Saleh forces (usually referred to as the “rebels”) in Aden and Taiz, but the panel did not accuse the Houthi-Saleh forces of a systematic, countrywide campaign in violation of international humanitarian law. Yemen has been engulfed by civil war time and again in recent decades, but the current civil war is overwhelmed in brutality and carnage caused by the international aggression of the US/Saudi coalition. Theirs is the only bombing campaign in a largely defenseless country. The US/Saudi allies are responsible for most of the war’s 3000-plus civilian deaths and the destruction of at least three Doctors Without Borders hospitals among other atrocities.

Resolution 32 fails to acknowledge that this is a war that could not have begun without US blessing. The resolution obliquely acknowledges that this is a war that could not be fought without US weapons, or certainly not fought as easily and devastatingly. But the resolution does not oppose the war. The resolution seeks to leverage the Yemen war in favor of a preferred war elsewhere, in places where civilians might be more easily disregarded as would-be “enemy combatants.”

### **Senate response to criminally murderous war: use fewer bombs, maybe**

There is no peace movement in the US Senate. There is no anti-war movement in the US Senate. There is no anti-criminal-war in Yemen movement in the US Senate. There is no active anti-war-crimes movement in the US Senate. But there are two senators who have co-sponsored Resolution 32, the gist of which is to put pressure on Saudi Arabia to drop fewer bombs on Yemeni civilians unless they start dropping more bombs on ISIS, the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Resolution 32 is not a proposal designed to save lives, merely to take different lives in different places, and not necessarily fewer lives. Fortune Magazine reported the resolution with standard, unexamined foreign policy clichés and an [appropriate emphasis on the weapons business](#):

### **A major U.S. ally is in the crosshairs.**

The U.S. defense industry has sold at least [\\$33 billion](#) worth of weapons to its Persian Gulf allies over the past year as dual bombing campaigns against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and Houthi rebels in Yemen have depleted stores of aerial bombs and other munitions. But as civilian casualties mount in Yemen in particular, a bipartisan duo in the U.S. Senate is working to tighten the free-flow of weapons and cash between the U.S. and one of its most important Gulf allies. Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) introduced legislation on Wednesday [April 13] that would restrict the sale of U.S. aerial bombs and missiles to Saudi Arabia unless certain conditions are met.

Fortune has a funny way of seeing things: Saudi Arabia, without significant military risk, bombing civilians to the point of running out of bombs, is somehow seen as “in the crosshairs.” These so-called crosshairs are merely an empty threat by two senators to sell them fewer bombs. So long as the Saudis get the president to certify that they’ll bomb ISIS more, then everyone involved can go on about the business, the very lucrative business, of

random killing as usual, even if the Saudis don't bomb ISIS more. There is no purpose here beyond more killing, with little regard for who gets killed. Well, that's pretty much a summary of the post-9/11 American zeitgeist, isn't it?

### **Is the United States capable of governing honestly about anything?**

Senators Murphy and Paul falsely describe the American role in the war on Yemen this way in Resolution 32:

Whereas the United States Armed Forces provide dedicated personnel and assets to the armed forces of Saudi Arabia to support their military operations in Yemen, including over 700 air-to-air refueling sorties, and to assist with effectiveness and reduction of collateral damage....

This is true as far as it goes, but it minimizes complicity: how much bombing would be possible without air-to-air refueling? The answer to that question would provide a measure of direct US responsibility for bombing at will in a country with no air defenses.

The senators refer in deceitfully benign language to US personnel who "assist with effectiveness and reduction of collateral damage" the US/Saudi bombing raids. In reality, US personnel work side by side with Saudi counterparts in Riyadh, planning, authorizing, and assessing the bombing missions that began over a year ago and have produced a world-class humanitarian crisis. That result suggests that any effort to reduce collateral damage has been limited, incompetent, or both.

But the senators also deceive by omission. Resolution 32 omits the moral (if not legal) war crime that the US commits every time it supplies the Saudi coalition with a [cluster bomb, a devastating anti-personnel weapon](#), that leaves explosives littered around each bomb site, where they remain lethally dangerous, especially to children. That's why most of the rest of the world has banned cluster bombs, while the US and other rogue states have not. Senators Murphy and Paul, like their 98 peers, lack the courage even to admit they're on the wrong side of the law of war on this.

And while the senators acknowledge "the systematic and widespread blockade" that has substantially deprived Yemen of food, fuel, medicine, humanitarian aid, and commercial goods, they omit any hint of US participation in that blockade by land, air, or sea. The US Navy in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean reinforces the Saudi-dominated blockade. Yemen, the poorest country in the region, has long depended on food imports to feed its population of some 25 million. The result of the blockade, not unexpected, is that Yemen has been brought to the verge of mass starvation by the US/Saudi coalition. And the blockade further heightens the crisis by preventing Yemenis from leaving this nation-sized prison purgatory.

### **An elaborate, meaningless charade is better than nothing, right?**

The US has been militarily engaged in Yemen since 2000, when suicide bombers attacked the [US Navy destroyer Cole](#) while refueling at port in Aden. The attack killed 17 crew members and wounded 39. [US counter-terrorism operations in Yemen](#) since then have included Special Forces, an extended drone campaign, and the current US/Saudi war. In that time, the al Qaeda presence in Yemen has increased to control much of the eastern part of the country, including the port of Mukalla, where Saudi battleships control access from the sea. As of April 23, Saudi coalition forces, including a large contingent from the United Arab

Emirates, were [massing for an attack on Mukalla](#), according to UAE official media.

In almost identical press releases [from Sen. Murphy](#) and [from Sen. Paul](#), they define the intent of Resolution 32 as a means

to prevent the United States from continuing to support Saudi-led military campaigns in places like Yemen where Saudi Arabia's year-long campaign has led to a devastating humanitarian crisis and a security vacuum that has empowered our terrorist enemies al Qaeda and ISIS. The Murphy-Paul bipartisan legislation will require the President of the United States to formally certify that the Government of Saudi Arabia is demonstrating an ongoing effort to target terrorist groups, minimize harm to civilians, and facilitate humanitarian assistance before Congress can consider the sale or transfer of air-to-ground munitions to Saudi Arabia.

In other words, Resolution 32 is a Rube Goldberg contraption designed to give the impression of moral decency while leaving the reality of the US/Saudi war unlikely to be affected even in the unlikely eventuality that this proposal becomes law. (A [companion resolution](#) has now been introduced in the House, where it too will be sent to committee to await further action, if any.)

We pay senators \$174,000 a year (plus their perks and staff) and this is the best any of the hundred of them can suggest "to prevent the United States from continuing to support Saudi-led military campaigns in places like Yemen"? Seriously?

The conventional beltway banalities, the bipartisan deceits, the continuing failure of business as usual are worthless. We need someone who will stand up and say, simply: **US OUT OF YEMEN NOW**

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The original source of this article is [RSN](#)

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