

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

March 19, 2018

The Honorable John J. Sullivan
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Deputy Secretary Sullivan:

As a Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I write regarding the U.S. visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. This visit presents an important opportunity to reinforce and deepen the U.S.-Saudi strategic partnership. I also believe it critical for the Administration to use the high-level meeting to raise specific challenges in our relationship: the war in Yemen, the GCC dispute with Qatar, and the state of human rights in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These three issues serve as roadblocks in the U.S.-Saudi relationship, and I urge the Administration to be frank with the Crown Prince in pursuit of stronger ties based on shared values and interests.

1. **War in Yemen:** Three years into this conflict, Yemen remains what the United Nations has called “the world’s worst man-made humanitarian crisis.” Despite recent steps taken by the Saudi military to reduce civilian harm from Saudi-led coalition airstrikes, we continue to see reports of scores of civilian casualties. Additionally, while the Saudis’ Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations plan seeks to address the vast humanitarian needs throughout the country, the only way to truly address the crisis is to end the war. Unfortunately, both sides lack incentives to end the conflict, and the Saudi-led coalition does not appear to be taking any serious steps to negotiate. As a major supporter of coalition military efforts through mid-air refueling, intelligence sharing and missile sales, it is incumbent on U.S. authorities to work with the Saudis to take the necessary steps to reach a political solution to the conflict.

I strongly urge you to press the Crown Prince for his plan to bring about an end to the war in Yemen. I also urge you to request the Crown Prince to work with the international community to investigate fully and fairly all allegations of Saudi coalition airstrikes that struck civilians nowhere near military targets.

- 2. GCC-Qatar Crisis:** I am very disappointed by the continued standoff between our GCC partners, including Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Notwithstanding any legitimate grievances between the countries, it is important the Gulf remain united in light of Iran's aggression throughout the region. While CENTCOM leadership has assured Congress that U.S. operations have not been impacted by the crisis, I am concerned that continued efforts to isolate Qatar work directly against U.S. interests. In addition, I am deeply concerned by reports from human rights groups that multi-national families that have been unnecessarily and arbitrarily separated by the isolation campaign.

During the visit, I ask that the Administration urge the Crown Prince to quickly bring this period of untimely tension in the Gulf family to a close and emphasize that we will be looking to the Crown Prince for active leadership in ushering Qatar back into the fold.

- 3. Human Rights:** Over the last two years, the Crown Prince has championed efforts to implement economic and social reforms, some of which has been specifically designed to increase the rights of women. However, I remain concerned about many reports of institutional discrimination against religious minorities, continued gender inequality, and the arbitrary detention and trumped-up persecution of political and human rights activists.

American alliances across the globe have proven most resilient and effective when they are rooted in a shared understanding of human freedom. The Administration should send a clear signal to Crown Prince Mohammed that the U.S.-Saudi partnership can be placed on firmer footing by taking meaningful steps in this area. I urge you to seek firm and measurable commitments to aggressively improve the human rights landscape in the Kingdom.

I urge the Administration to use the opportunity presented by Crown Prince Mohammed's visit to raise the issues I have outlined in this letter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress