

**Obsa, Efrata**

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**From:** Coleman, Norm B.  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2019 7:02 PM  
**To:** 'michael\_pawlowski@murkowski.senate.gov'  
**Subject:** Amb. Tueller on the Houthis

Dear Fish,

Knowing of Senator Murkowski's deep concerns regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, we wanted to bring to the Senator's attention this exchange between Senator Mitt Romney and Ambassador Matthew Tueller at the latter's confirmation hearing on March 6 to be the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. In the highlighted section of the exchange, the text of which is copied below, Ambassador Tueller directly addresses this issue.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Norm

**Senator Norm Coleman**

Senior Counsel

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**Sen. Mitt Romney:** "Thank you in particular for a lifetime of service to the greatest nation on Earth and the cause of freedom. The sacrifice that you have both made in very different ways, but enormous sacrifice putting yourself in harm's way and in danger, often being gone for long periods of time from your loved ones and the country of your heritage, that is most commendable and I feel it is an honor to be with you and an honor to have you willing to serve yet again in a place of great challenge. As we contemplate the outrage of what is occurring in Saudi Arabia and what has occurred there, as we contemplate the extraordinary harm and pain and suffering of civilians in Yemen, we consider much of that goes on in parts of the middle east, there is sometimes a sentiment amongst our members and the American people to

say why are we there? Why don't we just leave? Why don't we just get out of the Middle East and let the Sunnis and Shiites and Iranians and the Saudi's do what they will do and we will just stand back in our hemisphere and not worry about it? That is not a sentiment I share, but I'd be interested in the moments we have to hear from both of you as to why we are involved in the Middle East and why we are involved in Yemen? What the significance is of those things for the citizens of the United States?"

**Amb. Matthew Tueller:** "Thank you Senator. In the case of Yemen, the United States has an important interest and we want to ensure there are no terrorist groups that can arise in Yemen or use the territory there to mount attacks against us or our friends and allies. We want to make sure there is freedom of navigation through strategic waterways around Yemen. Much of the world trade passes through the Bab-el-Mandeb. And of course to contemplate that Iran or a hostile power would be able to control that, I think is of great strategic interest for the United States. We want to make sure our friends and allies in the region have secure borders and that they don't feel they are threatened by groups like the Houthis that can act on behalf of Iran as armed proxies in these countries. There is another important interest Americans have, and that is the humanitarian situation. We don't give into hopelessness and we don't give into cynicism. I think all of us react the same way when we see pictures, whether it is in Yemen or other parts of the world, where innocent civilians are suffering as a consequences of war or the actions of irresponsible governments. As the United States, we have an interest in mitigating that humanitarian challenge. One of the things I often feel badly about is because we have the relationships with Saudi Arabia and understandably we hold them to higher account. We do focus on the consequences of Saudi actions in terms, but almost 100% of the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen has been caused by the Iranian-backed Houthis that overthrew the government, destroyed the institutions of state, and cost approximately a 40% decline in the GDP of the country. I see very little reporting, for example, of the millions and millions of the mines the Houthis have planted around the country that, in fact, have caused more civilian casualties, and will continue to cause civilian casualties going into the future. That is a great concern and I think the American people need to be concerned about those issues. Thank you."

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**From:** Coleman, Norm B.  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2019 6:11 PM  
**To:** 'brennen\_britton@moran.senate.gov'  
**Subject:** Amb. Tueller on the Houthis

Dear Brennen,

Knowing of Senator Moran's deep concerns regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, we wanted to bring to the Senator's attention this exchange between Senator Mitt Romney and Ambassador Matthew Tueller at the latter's confirmation hearing on March 6 to be the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. In the highlighted section of the exchange, the text of which is copied below, Ambassador Tueller directly addresses this issue.

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**From:** Coleman, Norm B.  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2019 6:03 PM  
**To:** 'jason\_thielman@daines.senate.gov'  
**Subject:** Amb. Tueller on the Houthis

Dear Jason,

Knowing of Senator Daines' deep concerns regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, we wanted to bring to the Senator's attention this exchange between Senator Mitt Romney and Ambassador Matthew Tueller at the latter's confirmation hearing on March 6 to be the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. In the highlighted section of the exchange, the text of which is copied below, Ambassador Tueller directly addresses this issue.

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**From:** Coleman, Norm B.  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2019 5:57 PM  
**To:** Abbott, Steve (Collins)  
**Subject:** Amb. Tueller on the Houthis

Dear Steve,

Knowing of Senator Collins' deep concerns regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, we wanted to bring to the Senator's attention this exchange between Senator Mitt Romney and Ambassador Matthew Tueller at the latter's confirmation hearing on March 6 to be the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. In the highlighted section of the exchange, the text of which is copied below, Ambassador Tueller directly addresses this issue.

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