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 **SAUDI ARABIA:
THE APPARENT
MORAL CHOICE MAY
NOT BE MORAL**

By Steve Bakke  December 24, 2018



In my December 20 opinion letter, I shared my thoughts about the difficulty of choosing the right, and moral, reaction to the Saudi government's murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. How should we react, both diplomatically and morally, to this situation? There is the obviously immoral action of the murder itself, combined with the exploding humanitarian tragedy taking place in the Saudi led war in Yemen.

The undertones causing confusion include the impact of our actions on stability in the mid-east, and the probable expanded humanitarian tragedy if the Islamist Houthi government permanently rules Yemen. The U.S. is supporting the Saudis, and other mid-east allies, in fighting the Houthis who ousted the legitimate, elected Yemen government. All the while, Russia is waiting on the sidelines to befriend any allies we reject.

I believe that making good choices in international relations requires recognizing a sad reality. That reality is that sometimes there's not a best moral choice. Sometimes the right decision is choosing the least damaging of several horrible choices.

To the letter writer on December 21 who suggested I was over-complicating a simple moral choice, I say: Dangerously naïve opinions like that are the cause of many of our problems.