

Recently Jane Mayer's book, "Dark Money," has gotten a lot of attention. It focuses on the extent to which the Koch brothers specifically use the caverns for subterranean dark money to mess around in our politics. Following up on the use of conservative think tanks, we have an early—I guess you would say "strategizer" of this effort quoted as saying:

It would be necessary to use ambiguous and misleading names, obscure the true agenda, and conceal the means of control.

That is the background. This whole development of the think tank is described here this way:

In the 1970s, with funding from a handful of hugely wealthy donors . . . as well as some major corporate support, a whole new form of "think tank" emerged that was more engaged in selling predetermined ideology to politicians and the public than undertaking scholarly research.

To use her phrase, it was "the think tank as disguised political weapon."

That is part of what we are up against.

"Democracy in Chains," a book by Nancy MacLean, looks back at some of the early history through which the Koch brothers and others funded this operation. It points out that "the Koch team's most important stealth move, and the one that proved most critical to success, was to wrest control over the machinery of the Republican Party, beginning in the late 1990s and with sharply escalating determination after 2008."

What made them want to do this? I will read. The Koch cadre identified the public's embrace of environmentalism as a problem early on. They then pulled together—

a circle of less-known Koch-funded libertarian think tanks driving what two science scholars describe as systematic environmental "misinformation campaigns." They spread junk pseudoscience to make the public believe that there is still doubt about the peril of climate change, a tactic they learned from the tobacco companies that for years sowed doubt about science to keep the public from connecting smoking and illness.

The Koch team by then could count on its Club for Growth to fund primary challenges to ensure that the party line on environmentalism would be maintained by Republican members of Congress. . . . "We're looking at a party," the economist and columnist Paul Krugman rightly points out, "that has turned its back on science at a time when doing so puts the very future of civilization at risk."

Backing up that chokehold on federal action is what one reporter called a "secretive alliance" between red-state attorneys general and fossil fuel corporations.

Again, we link back to my earlier remarks. One of the red States' attorneys general who link up with the fossil fuel corporations is none other than our EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt.

She concludes it this way:

To put all this another way: if the Koch-network-funded academics and institutions were not in the conversation, the public would have little doubt that the evidence of science is overwhelming and government action to prevent further global warming is urgent.

I will close with a return to Jane Mayer, whose research on this whole dark money problem that bedevils our democracy has been nothing less than heroic, in my view. She wrote recently:

If there was any lingering doubt that a tiny clique of fossil-fuel barons has captured America's energy and environmental policies, it was dispelled . . . when the Trump Administration withdrew from the Paris climate accord. . . . [A] majority of Americans in literally every state wanted to remain within the agreement, and . . . the heads of many of the country's most successful and iconic Fortune 100 companies, from Disney to General Electric, did, too. . . . Yet . . . a tiny—and until recently, almost faceless—minority somehow prevailed.

How this happened is no longer a secret. The answer . . . is "a story of big political money." It is, perhaps, the most astounding example of influence-buying in modern American political history.

It is focused now on climate change because climate change is—and I quote her again here—"a direct challenge to the most powerful industry that has ever existed on the face of the Earth. There's no depth to which they are unwilling to sink to challenge anything threatening their interests."

That is a pretty good description by a lot of very well-regarded, and some in cases, Pulitzer Prize winning and award-winning writers and researchers about where we are. The result of all that is the gridlock that these interests have bought and paid for in Congress on this critical issue and an administration that is driven by fossil fuel interests to roll back all regulations that impinge on fossil fuel profits. Using that screen these authors have talked about—and that I have talked about—of think tanks and foundations and public relations firms and trade associations and, of course, those rivers of dark money flowing through subterranean political caverns, this industry—the fossil fuel industry—has taken control of and disabled our American political system. That is a very inconvenient truth for those in our political system, but its inconvenience takes away nothing from its truth.

Thanks to these authors and researchers and many others like them—many others like them—the truth of what has happened is plain. It is not just plain in these books. It will be plain before the reckoning gaze of history. There will be a reckoning. History always looks back, ultimately. If you look at these books and you look at others and you look at the record of what has taken place and the reporting, there is no doubt that this is the biggest influence-buying operation of all time. Do we in Congress really want to be found on the side of this crooked apparatus when that reckoning comes? God, I hope not. It is time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that at 12:20 p.m. on Wednesday, April 11, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Ring nomination and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING DANIEL AKAKA

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant, a beloved statesman, and a gentleman of the Senate: Senator Daniel Akaka. On Friday, Senator Akaka passed away peacefully with his family gathered by his bedside. He leaves behind not only a strong record of legislative achievement, but a legacy of love and Aloha that animated his work here in the Senate.

Senator Akaka committed his life to public service. Whether as a soldier, educator, or Senator, he dedicated himself fully to the betterment of our Nation. After graduating high school in 1942, Senator Akaka enlisted in the Army Corps of Engineers, playing a key role in critical construction projects across the Pacific Theater during World War II. Senator Akaka's military service was a springboard to even greater opportunities, allowing him to finance a college education through the GI bill.

As a beneficiary of this historic legislation, Senator Akaka was perhaps the greatest advocate of our troops during his time here in the Senate, writing and spearheading passage of the 21st Century GI bill. He wanted our servicemembers to have the same opportunity he had to transition into civilian life, receive an education, and change this country for the better.

With help from the GI bill, Senator Akaka earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in education from the University of Hawaii. For nearly two decades, he worked in Hawaii's public schools, first as a teacher and eventually as a principal. Working in the trenches of America's public education system, Senator Akaka gained the

hands-on experience he would need as a legislator to take an active role in some of the most important education reforms of modern times.

After working as both a teacher and an administrator, Senator Akaka served as the chief program planner in the department of health, education, and welfare, and eventually served as the director of the Hawaii Office of Economic Opportunity. The sterling reputation Senator Akaka gained in State government helped launch his legislative career, and in 1976, the people of Hawaii elected him to the U.S. House of Representatives. He had a distinguished record as a Congressman before Hawaii elected him to the Senate in 1990.

In this chamber, Senator Akaka worked hard on behalf of our Native populations as the chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee. He also fought valiantly for our troops as the Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, ensuring that our men and women in uniform were well taken care of upon returning home.

Having served alongside Senator Akaka for more than two decades, I remember best the spirit of civility he embodied as a legislator. He was caring and kind, loving and loyal, genuine and generous to all. He represented the best of this body in his willingness to lay aside partisan differences for the good of the Nation. Although we were members of different parties, he was the kind of Senator you could work with, never letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.

I consider myself lucky to have known Senator Akaka and even luckier to have called him a friend. Today my prayers are with Senator Akaka's family and the people of Hawaii, whom he loved and served so selflessly for so many years.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17-24, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Qatar for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$300 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

GREGORY M. KAUSNER

(For Charles W. Hooper,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Director).
Enclosure.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-24

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Qatar.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$250 million.
Other \$50 million.
Total \$300 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

MDE:

Five thousand (5,000) Advanced Precision Kill Weapon Systems (APKWS) II Guidance Sections.

Non-MDE: Also included are five thousand (5,000) MK66-4 2.75 inch Rocket Motors, five thousand (5,000) High Explosive Warheads for Airborne 2.75 inch Rockets, inert MK66-4 2.75 inch Rocket Motors, Inert High Explosive Warhead for Airborne 2.75 inch Rockets, support equipment, spares, training, publications, engineering technical assistance, program management technical assistance, logistics support services, and other related elements of program support.

(iv) Military Department: U.S. Army (QA-B-WYX).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: QA-B-WYX, 19 Aug 14).

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: April 9, 2018.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Qatar—Five thousand (5,000) Advanced Precision Kill Weapon Systems (APKWS) and Related Equipment and Support

The Government of Qatar has requested a possible sale of five thousand (5,000) Advanced Precision Kill Weapon Systems (APKWS) II Guidance Sections. Also included are five thousand (5,000) MK66-4 2.75 inch rocket motors, five thousand (5,000) high explosive warheads for airborne 2.75 inch rockets, inert MK66-4 2.75 inch rocket motors, inert high explosive warhead for airborne 2.75 inch rockets, support equipment, spares, training, publications, engineering technical assistance, program management technical assistance, logistics support services, and other related elements of program support. The estimated total program value is \$300 million.

This proposed sale supports the foreign policy and national security objectives of

the United States. Qatar is an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Persian Gulf region. Our mutual defense interests anchor our relationship and the Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) plays a predominant role in Qatar's defense.

Qatar intends to use these defense articles and services to modernize its armed forces. This will contribute to Qatar's military goal by providing additional capability to its new AH-64E aircraft fleet. The APKWS will provide Qatar with a low-cost precision strike capability, decreasing collateral damage and expanding its options for counterterrorism operations. Qatar will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor involved in this program is BAE, Nashua, New Hampshire. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require two U.S. Government or contractor representatives to travel to the State of Qatar for a period of one week to train in assembly and Wing Slot Seal replacement.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-24

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The APKWS II All-Up-Round is an air-to-ground weapon that consists of an APKWS II Guidance Section (GS), legacy 2.75 inch MK66 Mod 4 rocket motor and legacy MK152 and MK435/436 warhead/fuse. The APKWS II GS is installed between the rocket motor and warhead and provides a Semi-Active Laser (SAL) precision capability to legacy unguided 2.75-inch rockets. The APKWS II is procured as an independent component to be mated to the appropriate 2.75-inch warhead/fuse; however, for this case the APKWS II will be delivered as an All-up-Round (AUR).

2. The GS is manually set with the appropriate laser code during loading and is launched from any platform configured with a LAU-68F/A, or similar launcher(s). After launch, the GS activates and the seeker detects laser energy reflected from a target designated with a remote or autonomous laser. The control system then guides the rocket to the target.

3. The only interface required with the host platform is a 28V Direct Current (DC) firing pulse.

4. APKWS II increases stowed kills by providing precise engagements at standoff ranges with sufficient accuracy for a high single-shot probability of hit against soft and lightly armored targets, thereby minimizing collateral damage. The APKWS II is capable of day and night operations and performance is many adverse environments.

5. All training for APKWS II is UNCLASSIFIED. The training required is: pilot training to effectively employ the APKWS II, ordnance handler for safe handling and preparation of the APKWS II and AUR, and maintenance training for replacement of the Wing Slot Seal (WSS).

6. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the State of Qatar.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the votes on the