Timothy Ryan Harrison, and ending Rachel Lynne Vanderberg, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of April 10, 2019.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Fitzpatrick, Byrnes, Brink, Daigle, Klimow, Gunter, and Gilmore nominations and all nominations on the Secretary's Desk in the Foreign Service en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 187 and 215.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The bill clerk read the nominations of John Barsa, of Florida, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and Richard C. Parker, of North Carolina, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Barsa and Parker nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

TRIBUTE TO ALVIN H. PERRY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today it is my high honor to pay tribute to a genuine Kentucky hero. As a member of the greatest generation, Alvin H. Perry of Wilmore, KY, personifies the greatest values of our Nation. In the Second World War, he fought with the Allied forces of freedom to defeat one of the greatest evils the world has ever known. In doing so, Alvin earned the lasting admiration of his countrymen and the gratitude of the free world.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-day, the largest amphibious invasion in world history, the French Republic will express its thanks and respect to Alvin in a special way. At a ceremony in Wilmore, the Consul General of France responsible for Kentucky Guillaume Lacroix will present Alvin, now 95, with his nation's highest distinction: the Legion of Honor Medal.

The American and French people share a unique bond of friendship. As our consequential ally during the War of Independence, our two countries stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the pursuit of liberty and equality. Years later, millions of American soldiers would fight in France to defend those same principles. More than 100,000 of them would make the ultimate sacrifice there, and tens of thousands of our heroic fallen rest in French soil forevermore.

There is perhaps no better display of this brotherhood among nations than the events during Operation Overlord. On the beaches of Normandy and across the French countryside, American forces once more came to the defense of our friends and our shared ideals. It was during the Battle of Normandy that PFC Alvin Perry and his 331st Infantry Regiment, 83rd Infantry Division, took their first steps onto the European continent fighting for the liberation of France.

During the battle, Alvin was wounded, struck with a bullet in his shoulder. He was unable to receive proper medical attention and, along with other members of his unit, was later captured by the enemy. Alvin spent the following 10 months as a prisoner of war near Munich, where he endured brutal conditions and forced labor in a Nazi camp. He struggled each day, relying upon aid parcels for survival. But through all his hardships, Alvin never faltered or resigned to defeat. At long last, it was the sight of an Allied tank that finally meant liberation for this brave soldier. It also marked the end of his wartime service. Like his father and brother who also served in uniform, Alvin bravely defended our democracy and our American way of life.

When Alvin returned home to Kentucky, he was adorned with the Prisoner of War Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal for his intrepid service in France. Now, after more than seven decades, Alvin will add another well-deserved decoration.

Originally founded by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the National Order of the Legion of Honor is bestowed only on those who render the highest levels of service to the French Republic and her people. Receiving the honor, Alvin joins a distinguished membership that includes Secretary of State Colin Powell, General George C. Patton, and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Our Nation's veterans deserve our utmost respect and gratitude, and I am grateful for the chance to honor this particular hero. So, it is my sincere privilege to congratulate Alvin for receiving this impressive distinction. Through his service and sacrifice, he has made us all quite proud. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me, the people of Kentucky, and the French Republic in thanking Alvin Perry for his service to the cause of human freedom.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent from votes number 128 and number 129 due to the birth of my granddaughter, Josephine Emily Durbin. Had I been present, I would have voted yea to waive the Budget Act with respect to the emergency spending to help the States and Territories impacted by storms and other natural disasters. I would have voted yea on passage of H.R. 2157, as amended by the Shelby-Leahy substitute amendment, as well.

NDAA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Democrats continue to propose thoughtful, effective solutions to the humanitarian crisis at our southern border.

In February, after the President finally ended his government shutdown, I helped write an omnibus appropriations bill that included $564 million for inspection equipment at ports of entry to detect lethal narcotics and $414 million for humanitarian assistance at the border.

Last week, I and a number of my colleagues are reintroducing a comprehensive bill to address the root causes of the humanitarian crisis coming out of the Northern Triangle. Our bill cracks down on cartels and traffickers, provides for in-country processing so that refugees can seek protection without making a dangerous northbound journey, expands third-country resettlement in the region, and eliminates immigration court backlogs.

I note with regret that the President and his political appointees in the Department of Defense have other priorities. They continue to take from our military and ignore our military's

readiness to build the President's medieval wall.

We all remember Donald Trump's idea that we need a 2,000-mile concrete wall from sea to shining sea and his claim that Mexico would pay for it. He said it some 200 times on the campaign trail and in the Oval Office.

When Mexico said no, the President told the military they would have to pay for it. On February 15, President Trump announced that he would go around Congress and build the wall with $6.1 billion that Congress gave to our military. After the announcement, the President was asked if he had consulted his military advisers first. He said that they told him some of the tradeoffs, but, ''It didn't sound too important to me.''

In March, Acting Secretary Shanahan took the first step: taking $1 billion appropriated by Congress for military pay and pensions to use for the wall. DOD told us that they had more money than they needed because the Army missed their recruiting goals.

At a hearing that same week, Secretary of the Army Mark Esper admitted that the Army hadn't budgeted for paying the salaries of the troops on the border, and they were short $350 million. Why didn't Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan take this $1 billion of extra funds and give some to the Army? His notification to Congress laid it out in disappointing detail. He labeled the wall a ''higher priority.''

It is incredible that these are the priorities of the President and Acting Secretary Shanahan: wall first, military last.

Then on May 10, Acting Secretary Shanahan did it again, but he took $1.5 billion from the military this time. The Washington Post headline the next day said it all: ''Pentagon will pull money from ballistic missile and surveillance plane programs to fund border wall.''

Once again, the Pentagon claimed that the funds were extra, that the Pentagon couldn't spend this missile defense money and surveillance money this year for various reasons. Once again, the ''higher priority'' was the wall.

But the Army isn't the only one in need. Each military service is blinking red. Last month, in a leaked memo, the head of the Marine Corps, General Neller, said that the President's decision was contributing to ''unacceptable risk to Marine Corps combat readiness and solvency.''

General Neller noted that the marines had already pulled out of three military exercises and were cutting back on combat equipment maintenance because there wasn't enough money to go around. He noted that Hurricanes Florence and Michael last year had done $3.6 billion in damage to Camp Lejeune and other Marine Corps property. He said that marines were living in ''compromised housing,'' with another hurricane season starting up this June. He also warned that he might also have to cancel more than a dozen additional exercises if the marines didn't get budget help. Once again, we are seeing the wall is first, and the military is last.

In an unusual move late last month, Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson published an op-ed highlighting the impact of several natural disasters on Air Force bases. In October 2018, Hurricane Michael inflicted $4.7 billion of damage on Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. In March 2019, a historic flood inundated Offutt Air Force base in Nebraska, submerging dozens of buildings. The Senate continues to work on an emergency supplemental to make a down payment on repairs at these bases, as well as at Camp Lejeune, but in the meantime, this $1.5 billion could have jump started repairs months ago. Once again, the wall came first, and the military came last.

In each case, the Pentagon didn't ask me to approve these transfers as it normally does. As vice chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I have different priorities, the ones I have mentioned, and so they went around me and the rest of Congress.

Also still to come is the $3.6 billion from cancelling important military construction projects. The damage continues to pile up. These harmful decisions will continue until my Republican colleagues side with our military over a campaign pledge. I hope they think long and hard about which one of those is more important.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, once again, our Republican colleagues are spending another week rubberstamping President Trump's extreme nominees.

Daniel Collins, nominated to a California Ninth Circuit seat, received a vote over the objection of both of California's Senators.

Before this year, a judicial nominee had never been confirmed over the objection of both home State Senators. Mr. Collins's confirmation marked the sixth time it has happened this year.

This Republican Senate has effectively killed the blue slip for circuit court nominations. This is a precedent that could come back to haunt each of our States. My Republican colleagues who are voting repeatedly to override home State Senators' objections may come to regret those votes someday.

I opposed the Collins nomination. I agree with Senators Feinstein and Harris that Collins has ''a history of taking strong litigation positions for no reason other than attempting to overturn precedent and push legal boundaries.''

I am particularly troubled by his extensive representation of the tobacco industry and his inadequate recusal commitment when it comes to matters involving his former tobacco industry clients.

The district court nominees scheduled for votes this week also have a long history of advancing extreme ideological views.

When it comes to abortion, North Carolina district court nominee Kenneth Bell once wrote in an op-ed, ''There is no middle ground.'' Missouri district court nominee Stephen Clark has spent much of his legal career litigating against reproductive rights and access to contraceptives.

Utah district court nominee Howard Nielson wrote a memo for the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, arguing that the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit torture, do not apply to civilians captured abroad.

DC district nominee Carl Nichols has advanced extreme views of Executive power, including arguing that Presidents and Presidential aides have absolute immunity from congressional process.

I opposed these extreme nominees, and I regret that the Senate's advice and consent process has become an exercise in Republican rubberstamping. This institution can and should do better.

ALBERTO CURAMIL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President I want to bring to the Senate's attention the story and the example of Alberto Curamil, an environmental activist who is a member of the indigenous Mapuche people in Chile's Araucania region. The Mapuche are Chile's largest indigenous group, and since the 1800s they have struggled to protect their culture, territory, rivers, forests, and natural resources against encroachment and destruction by settlers and energy companies that have often acted with impunity and the backing of the government. Mr. Curamil has dedicated his life to this cause. It is the existential struggle of indigenous people in scores of countries as the insatiable global demand for energy, arable land, water, timber, oil, gas, and minerals threatens their ancestral lands and way of life.

Several years ago, during a prolonged drought in Chile, the Ministry of Energy announced a plan for two large hydroelectric projects in Araucania, without consulting the Mapuche people who live there. The projects would reportedly divert more than 500 million gallons of water for power generation, severely limiting water flow and damaging the ecosystem of the Cautin River on which many of the Mapuche people depend for survival.

Mr. Curamil, who has three children, lives on the outskirts of the town of Curacautin. He is a farmer who raises animals. His wife teaches the Mapuche language. Fearing what the harm to the river would mean for his people, he organized Mapuche and non-Mapuche, environmental organizations, lawyers, and academics to try to stop the projects. In public protests and in court, they argued that the government had ignored Chilean law which