

about the future of this globe and that we are leaving something awful to our children and grandchildren.

Going further, in the President's budget, hundreds of billions would be slashed from Federal housing assistance, student loan forgiveness, and Federal disability insurance. Nutrition assistance to hungry families, long on the President's chopping block, would see another round of severe cuts. Food—food for children. They are poor. Take it away. Is that what this country stands for? Is that what our Judeo-Christian tradition stands for? Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

If you are an American struggling with student loan debt or health problems or housing costs or hunger, the President's budget says you are out of luck. Meanwhile, if you are a millionaire or a billionaire or a corporation or a Big Oil wildcatter, the President's budget says you are in luck.

When it comes to taxes, the President thinks the tax cuts should be extended for an additional 10 years. So, so much for this deficit reduction that the Republican Party used to stand for. Now it is clear. A few years after the tax cuts—2 years after them—the deficit is increasing. It hasn't produced that dramatic increase in revenues that everyone talked about. But let's do it for 10 years. No Republican should complain to Democrats about deficit reduction when we are talking about things that matter to average middle-class people, like Medicare and Medicaid, when the tax cuts are proposed for 10 years.

So the budget reveals once again where President Trump's priorities truly lie: not with the working Americans he touts in his speeches but with the ultrarich and the corporate elites he rewards with his policies. It can't be discarded soon enough.

One more point—I said it the night of the President's State of the Union. I said the truth serum will be his budget. Let's see if the President, for once, is telling a little bit of the truth.

The budget shows all the rhetoric is one way, and the actual budget is another. How long will the American people stand for this man's hypocrisy—blatant? I have never seen it in a President—Democrat or Republican—before.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Mr. President, now, on whistleblowers, in the aftermath of the President's impeachment trial, the President has begun dismissing members of the administration who testified in Congress, including Lieutenant Colonel Vindman and Ambassador Sondland. The President also dismissed LTC Eugene Vindman. This was vindictive, nasty, typical of President Trump, and for no other reason than he was the brother of LTC Alexander Vindman.

This morning, senior adviser to the President Kellyanne Conway said these were not likely the last of the firings. This is a textbook case of witness retaliation. Not only is the retaliation against Lieutenant Colonel Vindman,

the anonymous whistleblower, and others like them shameful; it is also illegal. It is illegal. All Federal employees have the right—the legal right—to make protected disclosures to Congress and to inspectors general anonymously and free from reprisals. Even the Founding Fathers were concerned about whistleblowers and protecting them.

This country is being turned inside out, and too many people are going along. If something is going on that is wrong in government, don't we want to encourage government employees to bring that forward? Don't we? Well, not President Trump, because he is the government, and what is good for him—or what he thinks is good for him—he thinks is good for America, even when they diverge.

So the rights of whistleblowers are being challenged like never before, creating a chilling effect among those who in previous administrations might have come forward to expose abuses of power, waste, and fraud. Whistleblowers save the taxpayers money. Again, it used to be bipartisan. The Senator from Iowa has always been defending whistleblowers, but all of that goes away now that Trump is President. Without the courage of whistleblowers and the role of inspectors general, the American people would never have known how the President abused his power in Ukraine.

Now the President is taking steps to punish anyone who came forward, out of spite and out of a desire to prevent future whistleblowers from potentially reporting on the President's misconduct. Make no mistake about it, the President is conducting a deliberate campaign to intimidate anyone who might blow the whistle on his conduct or the conduct of those under his direction. He feels this cannot be tolerated.

So today I sent a letter to all 74 inspectors general in the executive branch, requesting that they immediately investigate any and all instances of retaliation against anyone who has made or in the future makes protected disclosures of Presidential misconduct to Congress or to an inspector general.

Members of the administration take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution. Some of them bravely stepped forward to tell the truth about the President's efforts to solicit foreign interference in the 2020 elections, and for that, for telling the truth under oath—which the President didn't allow his allies to do—for these people doing their patriotic duty to their country, they are being summarily dismissed from their jobs by a vindictive President.

Our Founders believed that truth was fundamental to the government and, indeed, the survival of the Republic. As the President takes steps to punish anyone in his administration who tells the truth, it is incumbent on the independent watchdogs in our government to protect whistleblowers like Lieuten-

ant Colonel Vindman and others who put their lives and livelihoods on the line to protect our freedoms. I was glad to hear the Chief of Staff say that Vindman, within the military, was protected. At least there is some honor left in this government.

NOMINATION OF ANDREW LYNN BRASHER

Mr. President, now, about the nomination of Mr. Brasher, now that the impeachment trial of the President is over, Leader McCONNELL is wasting no time getting us back to what seems to be his primary goal: rubberstamping unqualified and extreme judicial nominations.

This week the Senate will consider the nomination of Andrew Brasher to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Brasher's primary qualification to sit on the Federal bench seems to be the 6½ months—6½ months—he spent on the district court in Alabama. Let me repeat that. Senate Republicans installed Brasher as district court judge less than 7 months before moving to elevate him to an appellate court. I have never heard of anything like this. The Senate majority is asking us to promote a candidate for circuit court judgeship who has less than a year of experience as a judge. But he is not just unqualified. Maybe they are promoting him so quickly because they love the fact that his views are so wildly out of the mainstream. As Alabama's solicitor general, Brasher fought against women's reproductive rights, which three-quarters of Americans believe in; commonsense gun safety laws, which 90 percent of Americans believe in; and marriage equality, which the majority of Americans believe in. He employed farfetched legal theories that were overruled by the courts, including Justice Scalia. Mr. Brasher shamefully spent his career defending voter suppression efforts. So less than 1 week after covering up the President's attempt to cheat in the next election, Senate Republicans are moving forward to reward a nominee who supports voter suppression. Both actions smack of contempt for the democratic process and a blatant disregard for the franchise of American citizens, the thing many of our young men and women have died for throughout the century—the right to vote.

Mr. Brasher's nomination to the circuit court is another disgrace—an absolute disgrace—to our Federal judiciary. Every Senator should vote against it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Kevin Cramer, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Todd Young, John Boozman, David Perdue, James E. Risch, Lindsey Graham, Roger F. Wicker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 46, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 35 Ex.]

YEAS—46

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Grassley	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Burr	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Lankford	Shelby
Collins	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Loeffler	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	McSally	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Perdue	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Casey
Booker	Cardin	Coons

Cortez Masto	King	Shaheen
Duckworth	Leahy	Sinema
Durbin	Manchin	Smith
Feinstein	Menendez	Stabenow
Gillibrand	Merkley	Tester
Harris	Murphy	Udall
Hassan	Murray	Van Hollen
Heinrich	Peters	Warner
Hirono	Reed	Whitehouse
Jones	Rosen	Wyden
Kaine	Schumer	

NOT VOTING—13

Bennet	Klobuchar	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Markey	Toomey
Graham	Paul	Warren
Hoeben	Sanders	
Kennedy	Schatz	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 46, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 2:15 tomorrow, all postcloture time on the Brasher nomination be considered expired. I further ask that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action. Finally, I ask that following disposition of the Brasher nomination, the Senate vote on cloture motions with respect to the Kindred, Schelp, Kness, and Halpern nominations, and if cloture is invoked on any of these nominations, the confirmation votes occur on Wednesday, February 12, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. 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. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. 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. 20-02 concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Australia for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$990 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,

CHARLES W. HOOPER,
Lieutenant General, USA, Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 20-02

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 Australia.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$690 million.
Other \$300 million.
Total \$990 million.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Up to two hundred (200) AGM-158C, Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASMs).
Up to eleven (11) ATM-158C LRASMs Telemetry Variant (Inert).

Non-MDE: Also included are DATM-158C LRASM, Captive Air Training Missiles (CATM-158C LRASM), containers, support and test equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, U.S. Government and contractor representatives technical assistance, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (AT-P-ANT).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(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: February 7, 2020.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Australia—Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASMs)

The Government of Australia has requested to buy up to two hundred (200) AGM-158C, Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASMs); and up to eleven (11) ATM-158C LRASM Telemetry Variant (Inert). Also included are DATM-158C LRASM, Captive Air Training Missiles (CATM-158C LRASM), containers, support and test equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, U.S. Government and contractor representatives technical assistance, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support. The total estimated cost is \$990 million.