

States will benefit because we are injecting this kind of money. In Ohio last week, \$550 million was sent to the State from the Federal Government to these children, to these families. And for most of these families—the wealthiest people don't get this—it is 90 percent; 9 out of 10 families do, but they have children.

This money goes directly into these communities. They are going to be spending this money at the local grocery store, the local hardware store, to fix their car so they don't miss work, and maybe take their kid once in a while to a restaurant. So the money is not going to be put in a Swiss bank account. It will be spent in local communities, making a difference. That is sort of the big picture.

The joy of working on this bill and starting—I started working on this in 2013, joined by MICHAEL BENNET and Senator BOOKER, and then, since he came, Senator WARNOCK and Senator BALDWIN and Senator OSSOFF have been helpful and Senator WYDEN, the chair of the Finance Committee. The joy of this is to see how this affects individual families' lives.

So a couple of weeks ago, before the checks were sent out, I did a series of roundtables in Defiance, in Findlay, in Ryan, in Cleveland, in Dayton, in Toledo, in—where else?—in Youngstown, and in Cincinnati, and I just asked families: What are you going to do with this money? Many families didn't know it was even coming; the word wasn't out yet. I just heard some interesting comments. But then after the checks were sent out, I also heard stories, and here is what this means to families:

One mother said: You know, for the first time, I can now send my son to camp for a week, to a summer camp—for the first time in her life.

A father said: You know, I am now going to be able to buy for my daughter—she loves fastpitch softball. She is really good. I am going to be able to buy her the equipment to do that.

A number of families said: We are now in a position where we can actually, without scrounging—so many American families can barely afford their rent. Twenty-five percent of American families pay half their income in rent. Think about that. One out of four renters pays half their income in rent. One thing goes wrong in their lives—their car breaks down—they can end up being evicted.

So what this \$300 per child or \$250 per child—for a lot of families, it just relieved the anxiety of the difficulty of putting together the money they need to pay their rent, because the last week of a month for many families is different from the first three because, the last week, they start making cuts and not spending as much money on food, all the things they have got to do to pay their rent. Look, this is going to alleviate—it is going to lift that burden off so many families.

Other families who are a little more affluent but still, you know, hanging

on to being middle class are now able, they told me, to put \$100 aside every month. Because of this child tax credit, because of the largest tax cut for working families ever, they are going to be able to put aside \$100 a month for their child to go to Ohio State or to Denison or to Cleveland State or to Sinclair Community College in Ohio.

So all the kinds of things—and you know, Madam President, I know you have, in Wisconsin, have thought about this. The best thing about this is, you know, it is not Senator BALDWIN or Senator SCHUMER or Senator MCCONNELL or President Biden—it is not them saying to a family: OK. Here is some money. Here is where you are going to spend it. We are going to help you with this. We are going to help you. It is trusting these families. This \$250 a month or \$300 a month these families get, they get this money, and they decide what is best for their family.

It is still, frankly, Madam President, inexplicable to me that everybody on this side of the aisle voted no, every single one of them. They had two chances. They voted no on an amendment on the bill, and then they voted no on the bill to give the largest tax cut for working families ever.

We all know around here—it is no secret—that this side of the aisle likes tax cuts; they just like them for rich people. But they always argue: You know, if we cut taxes on the rich, it will trickle down; it will help everybody. Well, there is kind of no evidence for that, but they keep doing it because they know that it plays really well with their rich contributors.

But this is what tax cuts are really about. The child tax credit puts money in people's pockets, it gives them the choice on how to spend those dollars on behalf of their families, and it helps the community because there is more money in the community. We know that, and we know that the best kind of infrastructure, the best way to build infrastructure in this country is to build a foundation for families.

I am for this bill that we are considering now: water, sewer, highways, bridges. I want to do that, but I want to build a foundation for families, too, not just the physical—a better highway system, a better water and sewer system—but I want to give families broadband. I want to give families a little bit of money like this does. I want to build and help families with housing because then that foundation—these families can launch their children into a more prosperous future, and that is, to me, what this is all about. That is why the child tax credit is the most important thing I have ever worked on in my career, and I think it is one of the most important things Congress has done in a quarter century.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. BROWN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The majority leader.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I close the Senate, I want to inform the Senators where we are today.

First, I want to thank all of the Senators who voted to proceed today. The bipartisan group is still finalizing the text of their agreement, which will be the substitute amendment, with a non-partisan legislative counsel.

Once they are finished—this is a big job—the text will be reviewed, and then I will immediately offer the text of the bipartisan infrastructure agreement as the substitute amendment, making it the base bill, as I have promised. As soon as the bipartisan group finalizes the text of the substitute amendment and it becomes the base bill, we can start voting on amendments and make further progress on the bill over this weekend.

The Senate will resume session tomorrow at 11 a.m.

This is a really important bill, and I know all the parties want to make sure it is done right.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a morning of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

AFGHAN SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISAS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, nearly 20 years ago, the United States invaded Afghanistan to prevent that country from being exploited as a platform for terrorism and extremism. In doing so, the U.S. worked side-by-side with international and Afghan forces to remove the Taliban from power, facilitate democratic elections, build democratic institutions, and promote human rights throughout Afghanistan. Because of these efforts and the commitment and dedication of the Afghan people, the Afghanistan of 2021 is far different than the Afghanistan of 2001. And now that Afghanistan has made this progress, we must work with our Afghan partners to do everything in our power to preserve these gains and leave a stable country behind us. It is both a moral obligation and a national security priority that we do so.

As U.S. troops withdraw from Afghanistan, the safety and security of our Afghan allies who put their lives on the line to help our servicemembers and diplomats must be a top priority. This is about fulfilling a sacred promise that we made to those who served the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan. It is a service that many Afghans have already paid for with their lives. Like U.S. personnel, our Afghan partners

died on the battlefield alongside Americans. But unlike our own servicemembers, when the Afghans went home, they were not safe from danger.

Earlier this year, National Public Radio shared the story of “Mohammad” and his family. “Mohammad” is not his name, but a pseudonym used because of the threats made upon him and his family by the Taliban. Mohammad was an interpreter who served his country and the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan. For this, the Taliban threatened him and his family. They labeled him a traitor and forced him to seek safety in the United States through the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program. Mohammad was murdered by the Taliban in January, shortly after his visa to the U.S. was approved—10 years after he applied. Last month, his family finally arrived in the United States—to safety—but they did so without Mohammad. His wife and six children are here without their father, who gave his life in service to his country and the U.S. mission.

Unfortunately, Mohammad’s story is not unique. The Taliban has made their intentions clear. They call in the dead of the night and leave notes affixed to houses: “We know who you are and will kill you.”

The Taliban’s brutality against vulnerable populations like our Afghan allies has increased over the last several months, but as the U.S. withdrawal nears completion, conditions on the ground have become all the more dangerous. If the United States does not act quickly to uphold its promise to these Afghans, our opportunity to get our partners to safety will pass us by. U.S. action must start with bolstering the program that was supposed to protect Mohammad, the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa—SIV—program, and include a secure and efficient evacuation of our partners by the Biden administration.

There has long been bipartisan support for the Afghan SIV program in Congress, which I originally championed with the late Senator John McCain. John personally understood the need to fulfill our moral obligations to our partners and the strategic value in taking care of our allies. His example of bipartisan leadership continues today, and it has served the SIV program well: There is bipartisan, bicameral determination to take action. That is why Senators ERNST, DURBIN, WICKER, and I introduced the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2021 and why I am pleased that Congress has taken decisive action to pass this language with the supplemental budget appropriations bill. President Biden signed the bill into law today. These actions provide additional visas and make urgently needed process fixes to the program, which maintains broad bipartisan support across the political spectrum. This is necessary to help the U.S. fulfill its obligation to our Afghan partners, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because of

what it means for U.S. credibility in future engagements. We must send a strong message to our current and future allies: If you stand by our side on the battlefield, we will have your back.

However, these improvements to the process are just the first step in ensuring our Afghan allies do not suffer for their service. The Biden administration must now take immediate steps to implement this legislation and provide for the safety of Afghan SIV applicants. Congress has demonstrated that there is bipartisan support for immediate action to protect and support our Afghan SIV applicants and friends. Our allies around the world are watching.

There is no easy answer on Afghanistan. But one thing is clear: We cannot leave our Afghan allies behind. With this legislation now law, we must concentrate all U.S. efforts on supporting and protecting those who worked with the U.S. Government, as well as those whose work is diametrically opposed to the views of the Taliban, such as women’s equality advocates. To not do so is to make a grave moral and security mistake.

I look forward to continuing to work with the administration and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in support of our friends in Afghanistan.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam 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. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
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. 21-53, concerning the Army’s proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Thailand for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$83.5 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,

HEIDI H. GRANT,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 21-53

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 Thailand.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$71.5 million.

Other \$12.0 million.

Total \$83.5 million.

Funding Source: National Funds

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Three Hundred (300) Javelin FGM-148 Missiles.

Non-MDE: Also included are Enhanced Producibility Basic Skills Trainers; missile simulation rounds; Security Assistance Management Directorate (SAMDM) Technical Assistance; Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions (TAGM) Project Office Technical Assistance; contractor lifecycle support; spares manuals; batteries/chargers; gunner training; ammunition officer training; OCONUS Modified Level 2 Maintenance Training; System Inspection and Check Out (SICO); and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (TH-B-WHL, TH-B-WHI).

(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 Articles or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: July 30, 2021.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Thailand—Javelin Missiles

The Government of Thailand has requested to buy three hundred (300) Javelin FGM-148 Missiles; and fifty (50) Javelin Command Launch Units (CLU). Also included are Enhanced Producibility Basic Skills Trainers; missile simulation rounds; Security Assistance Management Directorate (SAMDM) Technical Assistance; Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions (TAGM) Project Office Technical Assistance; contractor lifecycle support; spares manuals; batteries/chargers; gunner training; ammunition officer training; OCONUS Modified Level 2 Maintenance Training; System Inspection and Check Out (SICO); and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated cost is \$83.5 million.

This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a Major Non-NATO Ally in Southeast Asia. The Javelin Weapon System will replace the obsolete 106mm Recoilless Rifles that the Royal Thai Army (RTA) acquired as part of the Military Assistance Program (MAP) from the Vietnam era. This proposed sale will allow the RTA to modernize their light anti-tank capability and maintain its current force posture, as well as enhance interoperability with the U.S. during operations and training exercises. Thailand is a strategic partner committed to contributing to regional security.

The proposed sale will improve Thailand’s capability to meet current and future threats by improving Thailand’s long-term defense capacity to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thailand 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.