

today. And, today, tens of thousands of Palestinians are sleeping out in the cold as winter sets in.

What is also quite unbelievable is that over 70 percent of the housing units in Gaza have now been damaged or destroyed.

Let me repeat that. It is really quite unbelievable. It is a war that has gone on for 3 months—only 3 months—and 70 percent of the housing units in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed.

Unbelievably, according to a study by Professor Robert Pape of the University of Chicago, what that statistic of 70 percent destruction in housing means is that what is going on in Gaza after 3 months of war has surpassed the destruction that took place in Dresden during World War II.

I think when any person in America who knows anything about history or anybody around the world thinks about the city of Dresden, what comes to mind is the horrific bombardments that took place by U.S. and British Air Force and the destruction in the city. Those attacks during World War II took place over 2 years. The destruction in Gaza after 3 months, in terms of housing, is worse than what took place in Dresden over 2 years.

Now let me say a word about another horrific reality that is taking place in Gaza. So, above and beyond the death and destruction caused by bombs and the Israeli military campaign, what we are now looking at is the reality that Israel has made it extremely difficult from the very start of this war for food, water, medical supplies, and fuel to get into Gaza. This is no great secret. I think everybody knows it. The result of it is that, right now as we speak, starvation and hunger are a reality for the women, the children, and the men in Gaza—starvation.

The United Nations reports that more than 90 percent of the population there faces “acute food insecurity” and that virtually every household is skipping meals many days. Gaza is at risk of widespread famine in the coming weeks and months. Hundreds of thousands of children go to sleep hungry every night, and desperate Gazans—I think we have pictures of this—are mobbing the few U.N. relief trucks that can reach beyond the border crossing. These are hungry people who see a truck full of food, and they are attacking that truck and eating the food as quickly as they can.

Gaza’s healthcare system has collapsed, with little electricity, water, medicine, or fuel. Only 11 of Gaza’s 36 hospitals are able to function at all, and those that remain open can barely care for the patients who go to them.

The lack of sanitation and the destruction of the infrastructure there is leading to disease. In overcrowded U.N. facilities, thousands of people must share a single shower, and more than 220 people have to share a toilet. That is just a small piece of the horrible reality that is taking place in Gaza right now.

Now, some people may say: Well, you know, war is terrible, and this is war, and there is always collateral damage in war. But this is not just another war; this is wholesale destruction in an almost unprecedented manner. It is clear to me that the Netanyahu right-wing, extremist government in Israel is now waging this war in a deeply reckless and immoral way.

In other words, we all know that war is horrible and that we have to do a lot better than we are doing right now in trying to eliminate war on this planet. In war, there is always collateral damage, but something more is going on here right now.

I would mention to the Presiding Officer that many senior figures in the Netanyahu government have said things that only deepen the profound concern we should all feel about what is going on in Gaza today.

Several of these government officials have talked openly about reestablishing Israeli settlements in Gaza.

The current Intelligence Minister, among other senior officials, openly talks of permanently displacing Palestinians from Gaza.

The Defense Minister declared a “total siege” at the start of the war.

The Heritage Minister posted a picture of the devastation, saying Gaza was “more beautiful than ever, bombing and flattening everything.” All that destruction makes Gaza more beautiful than ever.

Another Israeli lawmaker said:

The Gaza Strip should be flattened, and there should be one sentence for everyone there—death. We have to wipe the Gaza Strip off the map. There are no innocents there.

I could go on and on with other terrible quotes from leading officials in the rightwing government of Netanyahu.

Given all of this—given the scale of the destruction, the unprecedented level of destruction, and the extent of use of U.S. arms in this campaign, including thousands of massive, 2,000-pound bombs—Congress must act to conduct real oversight. That is what the law is about, and that is why I hope we are going to have widespread support for the 502B resolution I will be offering next week.

The United States, whether we like it or not, is deeply complicit in what is going on in Gaza right now. Those are our weapons that are killing women and children in huge numbers, that are destroying homes in huge numbers, that are causing massive levels of injury, that are resulting in the hunger and the lack of medical care the people of Gaza are now experiencing.

I have supported Israel for many years, and many of my colleagues have as well. I don’t think there is any debate in Congress that Israel has a right to live in peace and security—something that has not always been the case. They have been subjected time and again to horrific terrorist attacks. They have the right to live in peace and security, but I do not believe we

are doing Israel any favors by ignoring what their policies are doing right now. Friends have to be prepared to tell friends the truth, and if Israel is a friend of ours, as it is, we have to tell them the truth. The truth is that, all over the world, people are outraged by Netanyahu’s campaigns and destruction against the Palestinian people in Gaza.

The Biden administration has urged Israel to change its tactics and to be more targeted in its military operations and to protect civilians. We have heard the President say this over and over again. We have heard Secretary Blinken say this over and over again. But the Netanyahu government clearly has not listened, and they have continued their very destructive war in violation of international law. Their war is in violation of international law. In my view, that approach is simply unacceptable and is not something we should be supportive of. In my view, the United States must end our complicity in what is going on in Gaza right now.

What this resolution is about, again, is not cutting one nickel of aid to Israel. That is not what this resolution does. And you don’t have to agree with me in terms of what I perceive is going on in Israel today. You can disagree with me completely. All this resolution does is ask for more information from the State Department, which allows us to determine whether or not Israel is violating international law. This is information Congress should have. Whatever your views on the war may be, this resolution should be something you can support. We are asking the State Department for information. That is what we are doing. That is all this resolution does.

If you believe that the military campaign in Gaza by Israel has been indiscriminate, as I do, then we have the responsibility to ask that question. If you believe that Israel has done nothing wrong, that what they are doing is consistent with international law, which is what the Israeli Government says, then the information coming from the State Department should buttress your belief.

So let me conclude by saying that we are not all likely to agree on the Israeli-Palestinian situation anytime soon, and we will have more chances to debate these issues if and when we consider a foreign aid supplemental bill, but asking for more information as to how American arms and security assistance are being used, particularly amid the level of death and destruction we are seeing in Gaza right now, should not be controversial. In fact, it is exactly what our job is.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The majority leader.

CLOSURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the closure motion with respect to the Mehalchick nomination be withdrawn.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in 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.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I was unavoidably absent on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, for rollcall vote No. 2. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on confirmation for John A. Kazen, of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, rollcall vote No. 2; PN1020.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. 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 still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that 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,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
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. 23-91, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Australia for defense services estimated to cost \$250 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

MIKE MILLER,

James A. Hursch, (for Director).

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-91

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 A* \$0
Other \$250 million.
Total \$250 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: The Government of Australia has requested to buy services to support the Tomahawk Weapon System, including the below non-Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Major Defense Equipment: None.

Non-MDE: General Tomahawk Weapons System support services; logistics support management; material support; engineering technical support; management of technical data; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

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

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: (AT-P-LGJ).

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

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: None.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: January 10, 2024.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Australia—General Tomahawk Weapons System Support Services Uplift

The Government of Australia has requested to buy services to support the Tomahawk Weapon System, including general weapons support services; logistics support management; material support; engineering technical support; management of technical data; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$250 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States. Australia is one of our most important allies. The strategic location of this political and economic power contributes significantly to ensuring peace and economic stability in the Western Pacific. It is vital to the U.S. national interest to assist our ally in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defense capability.

The proposed sale will allow Australia to better utilize the Tomahawk Weapon System it is procuring and ensure appropriate weapon pairing is evaluated to identify defined targets more precisely. It will also assist and contribute to Australia's joint maritime weapon technology development, analysis, and implementation; support multiple lines of effort to enhance interoperability and interchangeability with the United States; and uplift joint warfighting operational effects.

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

The principal contractor(s) will be determined as the Government of Australia identifies its specific annual and quarterly requirements for weapons uplift support. There are no known offset agreements in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Australia.

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

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. 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,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
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. 22-54, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Egypt for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$200 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 22-54

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 Egypt.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$0 million.
Other \$200 million.
Total \$200 million.

Funding Source: Foreign Military Financing (FMF).

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: Foreign Military Sales case EG-B-VIT was below congressional notification threshold at \$41.9 million for non-Major Defense Equipment (MDE) light tactical vehicle chassis and fleet build. The Government of Egypt requested that the case be amended to include additional chassis and non-MDE items and services. This case amendment will increase the total case value above the non-MDE notification threshold, and thus notification of the entire case is required.

Major Defense Equipment: None.

Non-MDE: Included are 4-Man REV1-B Rolling Chassis with 190 horsepower (HP) diesel engines upgraded to 205HP Turbo-charged engines; training for chassis assembly process, operations, and maintenance; spare and repair parts; testing equipment; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (EG-B-VIT).

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