

In the grant approval, President Biden's EPA said that Power Forward had to allocate this money to get rid of stoves and to put in heat pumps. They had to allocate the money—they had to spend it—in 21 days.

Now, that meant that Ms. Abrams' group, Rewiring America, which was part of the larger group, likely received or was supposed to receive a check for \$490 million, about a quarter of the total of \$2 billion, by the end of May 2024. And the other organizations, within 21 days, President Biden directed, were also supposed to receive their share of the money.

But get this: President Biden and his team directed these NGOs to distribute \$2 billion in 21 days, but the Biden administration also told Power Forward, within 90 days, to go take a course. You know what the course was? The name of the course was "How to Develop a Budget"—"How to Develop a Budget."

So President Biden gave Power Forward 21 days to spend the money but said: You have got 90 days to go take a course about how to put together a budget.

And why would anybody in the Milky Way give \$2 billion of taxpayer money to two organizations that had just been formed that, according to the IRS filings, had no accomplishments and one of them only had 100 bucks in the bank?

I think I know why. I certainly know what it looks like. I mean, this would be comical if it wasn't so odious—\$2 billion.

You know, the last 4 years under the last administration have been very difficult for America. The cost of everything has gone up. The cost of many things have gone up by 20 percent, and our wages didn't keep up. The average electricity bill in America went up 19 percent. The average Louisianian, because of President Biden's inflation, had to spend an extra \$890 a month—extra—for food and clothing and car notes, and they didn't get an \$890-a-month raise.

President Biden and my Democratic colleagues told us that the Inflation Reduction Act—I remember when it was passed. They said: If you spend \$1.2 trillion on the Inflation Reduction Act, it will be a lifeline to every family in America.

That is not what it looks like to me. It is starting to look like to me that it was really a slush fund—a slush fund for Washington insiders.

Now, I don't want to make accusations that are unfair. I think EPA Administrator Zeldin needs to get to the bottom of this. I believe in fairness. I believe in due process. Mr. Zeldin has announced that he is going to try to claw back as much of this \$2 billion and other moneys as he can. Again, I think he ought to do it fairly and accord everybody due process.

But you know what, if the shoe fits, wear it, Cinderella. Here is what I see. I see two organizations formed in the

last year or so of President Biden's administration—on their IRS filings, they say: We have no experience. We have no accomplishments.

One of them only has a hundred bucks in the bank. One of them—their senior counsel is Ms. Stacey Abrams, a well-known Democratic politician.

I see them asking the President of the United States and his EPA for \$2 billion cash to fight gas stoves and getting it—and getting it—to the exclusion of every other applicant who might have been able to use that money.

Now, this is just the beginning of the type of spending porn that President Trump and Mr. Musk are uncovering that people are screaming about.

I am going to repeat what I started with. There is nothing wrong with wanting to know what they do and did with our money. That is all President Trump and Mr. Musk are doing.

MAURITIUS AND CHAGOS ISLANDS

Mr. President, I want to spend 5 minutes talking about another subject because President Trump tomorrow has a very important meeting with Prime Minister Starmer of the United Kingdom.

This is the Indian Ocean. You have heard me talk about this. A group of islands right here are the Chagos Islands. This is China over here. Down here is another group of islands called Mauritius that I will talk about in a second.

Why do I talk about the Chagos Islands? Well, from 1715 to 1810, the Chagos Islands were owned by France. In 1814, France gave the Chagos Islands to the United Kingdom. At the time, the United Kingdom—after France gave the islands to them—not only owned the Chagos Islands, but the United Kingdom also owned Mauritius.

The United Kingdom administered both the Chagos Islands and Mauritius from headquarters in Mauritius. Mauritius never owned the Chagos Islands—never. They were always owned either by France or by the United Kingdom, which owns them today. The only connection Mauritius had with the Chagos Islands was that the United Kingdom owned both at the same time and administered the two groups of islands from headquarters in Mauritius.

After the United Kingdom acquired the Chagos Islands here, the United States of America built one of the most important military bases in the world on one of the islands called the Diego Garcia—hugely important. The United Kingdom helped, but we put up most of the money.

Now, Mr. Starmer, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has decided that he wants to give the Chagos Islands, with our military base, to Mauritius. He wants to give it to them.

We said: Wait a minute. We have a military base here. What about our military base?

Mr. Starmer says: Well, I am going to give all of the islands, including the military base, to Mauritius—even though Mauritius never owned them.

Now that Mauritius owns them, we are going to pay Mauritius \$9 billion over time—I want to be fair, over time—for a military base that we built. What? Why? Well, I will tell you why. Prime Minister Starmer feels guilty because the United Nations—actually, it is not the United Nations; rather, a group called the International Court of Justice, which is loosely affiliated with the United Nations, issued a ruling that criticized the United Kingdom for actually owning the Chagos Islands.

They said: United Kingdom, you are an anti-colonialist. You should feel guilty, you should feel bad, and you need give the Chagos Islands away. You need to give them to Mauritius even though Mauritius never owned them.

That is what is going on. That is all that is going on.

Now, how did this get started? The Prime Minister of Mauritius—his name was Prime Minister Jugnauth—sued in the International Court of Justice—he sued the United Kingdom. He said: Give me Mauritius and the military base.

He filed a lawsuit. The International Court of Justice, based in the Netherlands, issued a ruling in Mauritius's favor. It is an advisory opinion. It is not binding on anybody. But Mr. Jugnauth got what he wanted on behalf of Mauritius.

A few weeks later, Prime Minister Jugnauth got beat, and he was replaced by a new Prime Minister, whose name is Prime Minister Ramgoolam. Prime Minister Ramgoolam said: Not only do I want the Mauritius Islands, you are not paying us enough, United Kingdom and America.

According to news reports, he wants not only \$9 billion, he wants \$18 billion for our own military base.

He said: We will lease you the base that you built, which we, Mauritius, now own, back to you, but you have to give us between \$9 and \$18 billion.

Isn't that special? Isn't that special? That is what is going on.

Now, there is one other thing you need to know. Mauritius is very close to China. Mauritius has a very lucrative trade agreement with China, and you might be surprised to learn that after all of this has been developing, China all of a sudden is Mauritius's best friend. Do you know why? Because if Prime Minister Starmer does this, Mauritius is going to own the base. They are going to own the base.

Now, Prime Minister Starmer is going to meet with President Trump tomorrow to try to talk President Trump into agreeing to this. The Prime Minister of the U.K. has already said: If President Trump is not comfortable with me giving away an American military base—I want to giggle when I say that—if President Trump is not comfortable, I won't do it.

Here is what the Prime Minister is going to tell President Trump tomorrow. He is going to say, No. 1: Mr. President, we need to do this because it is the right thing to do.

The United Nations' International Court of Justice, which is comprised of

a bunch of weeny wokers, has issued an advisory opinion saying that we and the United Kingdom should feel guilty because we used to own Colonies.

Prime Minister Starmer is going to say: Mr. President, we need to give these islands away and your military base, Mr. President, because it is the right thing to do.

The second thing he is going to tell the President is that if we don't do it, China is going to get really mad. He is going to say: China is going to get really mad if we don't do this.

The third thing he is going to tell the President is that if we don't do this, the United Nations could cut off the telecommunications for our military base—like the United Nations is going to all a sudden, out of the blue, cut off the spectrum and the telecommunications for an American military base. They have no jurisdiction to do that, and they also don't have the oranges to do that.

There is one other thing I want to mention. I didn't mean to go on this long, but this is an important meeting the President is having. Remember I told you about the Prime Minister who started all this, Prime Minister Jugnauth? He got beat—you will recall me saying it—in 2024.

A few weeks ago, former Prime Minister Jugnauth was arrested. He was arrested for money laundering. The Mauritius authorities searched his house and the home of one of his closest associates, and do you know what they found? They found \$25 million in cash in various currencies. They found Rolex watches, they found Cartier watches, and they found United Kingdom visas. I am not saying that they are connected, but it is mighty interesting.

Here is what one of the generals who formerly worked for President Trump has said about this deal that stinks to high heavens—GEN Herbert McMaster:

Mr. President, it would put us, the United States, at a significant strategic disadvantage, especially at a time when China is trying to gain control of critical terrain and chokepoints around the world in this effort to create new spheres of influence.

So to President Trump, my President, tonight I say: Don't do it, Mr. President. Please don't do it. I don't care what Prime Minister Starmer promises you. The only reason he is doing this is because he feels guilty because the United Nations has said that the United Kingdom should be ashamed of its history and ashamed that it at one time owned Colonies.

People of the United Kingdom can feel what they want. That is none of my business. But we have an American military base there, and it is very important to defend the Indian Ocean against China.

Please, Mr. President—please, President Trump—don't let Prime Minister Starmer talk you into giving away an American military base that we need to combat China to another country that never owned it just because Prime Minister Starmer feels guilty.

I am sorry he feels guilty. He needs to go buy an emotional support pony. But he doesn't need to give away an American military base.

Mr. Trump, President Trump, please don't agree to this.

That is it. I am out of gas. My work here is done. This is important, this meeting with Prime Minister Starmer tomorrow. I don't want to lose a military base we need. So I appreciate your indulgence.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. 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.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Committee on Rules and Administration has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 119th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator PADILLA, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

RULES OF PROCEDURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 1. The regular meeting dates of the Committee shall be the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at 10:00 a.m., in room SR-301, Russell Senate Office Building. Additional meetings of the Committee may be called by the Chair as he or she may deem necessary or pursuant to the provision of paragraph 3 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Rule 2. Meetings of the Committee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in subparagraphs (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed followed immediately by a recorded vote in open session by a majority of the Members of the Committee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings:

(a) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(b) will relate solely to matters of the Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(c) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or

otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy, or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(d) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(e) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if:

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(f) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under the provisions of law or Government regulations. (Paragraph 5(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 3. Written notices of Committee meetings will normally be sent by the Committees staff director to all Members of the Committee at least a week in advance. In addition, the Committee staff will telephone or e-mail reminders of Committee meetings to all Members of the Committee or to the appropriate assistants in their offices.

Rule 4. A copy of the Committees intended agenda enumerating separate items of legislative business and Committee business will normally be sent to all Members of the Committee and released to the public at least one day in advance of all meetings. This does not preclude any Member of the Committee from discussing appropriate non-agenda topics.

Rule 5. After the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member, speaking order shall be based on order of arrival, alternating between Majority and Minority Members, unless otherwise directed by the Chair.

Rule 6. Any witness who is to appear before the Committee in any hearing shall file with the clerk of the Committee at least three business days before the date of his or her appearance, a written statement of his or her proposed testimony and an executive summary thereof, in such form as the Chair may direct, unless the Chair and the Ranking Minority Member waive such requirement for good cause.

Rule 7. In general, testimony will be restricted to five minutes for each witness. The time may be extended by the Chair, upon the Chairs own direction or at the request of a Member. Each round of questions by Members will also be limited to five minutes.

QUORUMS

Rule 8. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, a majority of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting of legislative measures.

Rule 9. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, one-third of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, including action on amendments to measures prior to voting to report the measure to the Senate.

Rule 10. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(2) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, two Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony under oath and one Member of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony not under oath; provided, however, that in either instance,