

pressure Ukraine to interfere on President Trump's behalf in the 2020 election. In furtherance of that scheme, OMB illegally withheld security assistance for Ukraine under Mr. Vought's leadership, which violated the Impoundment Control Act according to the independent and nonpartisan Government Accountability Office. GAO even stated that OMB's stonewalling of their inquiry had "constitutional significance" due to the undermining of legislative branch oversight. During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Vought could not even explain why OMB stonewalled GAO's inquiry by refusing to turn over relevant documents requested by GAO and then failed to provide a reason for withholding these documents in response to my questions following the hearing.

Mr. Vought is among those responsible for the Trump administration's disastrous response to the COVID-19 pandemic. OMB dragged its feet on requesting urgently needed resources to respond to the pandemic, which led to deadly shortages of key supplies. Due to insufficient guidance from OMB and the Office of Personnel Management, Federal agencies are moving forward with haphazard plans to bring teleworking employees back into offices in ways that needlessly risk spreading COVID-19 among Federal workers, their families, and surrounding communities.

OMB is responsible for preparing the President's budget, and Mr. Vought has advanced budgets that would pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations by slashing support for healthcare, education, and nutrition assistance. The Trump administration would have been even less prepared for COVID-19 if Congress enacted the cuts in these budgets to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mr. Vought personally called for cutting the CDC budget as recently as March 10, 2020, when the pandemic was sweeping the country. At that time, Mr. Vought insisted that he would not send a budget amendment to reverse these cuts. The administration was forced by circumstances to submit such a budget amendment shortly thereafter.

The Senate should not reward this record of failure and lawbreaking by confirming Mr. Vought's nomination.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the question is, Shall the Senate advise and consent to the Vought nomination?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 131 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—45

Baldwin	Harris	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Rosen
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Jones	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Sinema
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Braun	Murray
Burr	Schatz

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I rise to address the administration's plan to

withdraw some 10,000 troops from Germany, and I rise to advance a bipartisan amendment to slow that process down and potentially even to stop it.

The administration explains that Germany needs to get to 2 percent of its spending on military matters, a direction I support. Germany is already at 1.5 percent and is on track to get to 2 percent.

By all appearances, the withdrawal of 10,000 troops in Germany is a very bad idea. First of all, it is a slap in the face at a key ally, a friend, and a great country. This country is an economic powerhouse. It is dynamic and productive people who have created that economic vitality. It has been driven to global leadership not by virtue of having cheap labor or polluting the air with pollutants or CO<sub>2</sub>.

China buys more from Germany than Germany buys from China. Why? Not because Germany threatens China but because Germany is making products that China wants. It is a democracy noted for its strong, steady, and firm leader. Germany pays an equal share to the United States into NATO, and NATO, of course, has preserved peace in Europe for over 70 years.

Now is also a time to draw our friends closer and to link arms with our allies, in part because of China's ambition to become the dominant player on the Earth, to displace the West, to displace the United States, and to supplant democracy with authoritarian despotism. China brutally represses its minorities. The Uighurs, we read, even today are being forced into labor. China invades sovereign lands and nations of its neighbors. It is propagandizing our children here through Confucius Institutes. It steals technology in our country and other countries in the West, and it attacks our cyber bases relentlessly day in and day out.

Its military procurement is equal to that—or nearly so—of the United States. Even though we spend far more money than they do on military, as reported, our procurement budgets procure about the same amount of military hardware.

Of course, the tip of its spear is its economic predation. China has attacked one industry after another, and through subsidy and predatory pricing techniques, it has driven western businesses out of business. In my view, to divert China from that dangerous path, we need allies—allies like Germany.

Now, there is a second reason that I am opposed to this idea of withdrawing troops from Germany, and that is, it is a heck of a time to give a gift to Russia. We just learned about Russia's support of the Taliban—even reports that they may have been paying bounties for killing Americans. Russia has stepped in to support some of the world's worst actors, like Assad and Maduro. It has invaded Georgia and Ukraine, and it violates nearly every arms agreement it enters into.