

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. 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. 23-54, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Romania for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$120.5 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. 23-54

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 Romania.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * \$75.5 million.

Other \$45.0 million.

Total \$120.5 million.

Funding Source: National Funds.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Sixteen (16) Assault Amphibious Vehicles, Personnel Variant (AAVP-7A1)

Three (3) Assault Amphibious Vehicles, Command Variant (AAVC-7A1)

Two (2) Assault Amphibious Vehicle, Recovery Variant (AAVR-7A1)

Sixteen (16) 50 Cal Machine Guns (Heavy Barrel)

Five (5) 7.62 mm M240B Machine Guns

Non-MDE: Also included are MK-19 Grenade Launchers; M36E T1 Thermal Sighting Systems (TSS); supply support (spare parts); support equipment (including special mission kits/Enhanced Applique Kits (EAAK)); training, unclassified technical manuals, technical data package, engineering and technical support and assistance (including Contractor Engineering Technical Services (CETS)); and other related elements of program and logistics support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (RO-P-L-WL).

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

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

(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: July 27, 2023.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Romania—Assault Amphibious Vehicles

The Government of Romania has requested to buy sixteen (16) Assault Amphibious Vehicles (AAVs), Personnel Variant (AAVP-7A1); three (3) Assault Amphibious Vehicles, Command Variant (AAVC-7A1); two (2) Assault Amphibious Vehicles, Recovery Variant (AAVR-7A1); sixteen (16) 50 Cal Machine Guns (Heavy Barrel); and five (5) 7.62 mm M240B Machine Guns. Also included are MK-19 Grenade Launchers; M36E T1 Thermal Sighting Systems (TSS); supply support (spare parts); support equipment (including special mission kits/Enhanced Applique Kits (EAAK)); training, unclassified technical manuals, technical data package, engineering and technical support and assistance (including Contractor Engineering Technical Services (CETS)); and other related elements of program and logistics support. The total estimated program cost is \$120.5 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Ally which is an important force for political and economic stability in Europe. It is vital to the U.S. national interest to assist Romania in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defense capability.

The proposed sale will improve Romania's capability to meet current and future threats by modernizing and ensuring Romania's continued expeditionary capability to counter regional threats. Romania will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment and services into its armed forces.

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

A principal contractor has not been determined for potential sale. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of U.S. Government personnel but will require the assignment of one (1) contractor representative to Romania for approximately one (1) year to deliver AAVs, related equipment, and support.

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-54

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The mission of the Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) is to maneuver surface assault elements of the landing force and their equipment from assault shipping during amphibious operations to inland objectives and to conduct mechanized operations and related combat support in subsequent operations ashore.

a. The AAV-7A1 family of vehicles includes the personnel variant, which carries troops in amphibious operations from ship to shore, through the surf zone, and to inland objectives. The AAVP-7A1 provides protected transport of up to 25 combat-loaded personnel through all types of terrain.

b. The Command Variant, AAVC-7A1, is an armored assault amphibious full-tracked landing vehicle. The vehicle provides a mobile task force communication center in amphibious operations from ship to shore through surf zone to inland objectives.

c. The Recovery Variant, AAVR-7A1, is an armored assault amphibious full-tracked vehicle. The vehicle is designed to recover

similar or smaller size vehicles. It also carries basic maintenance equipment to provide field support maintenance to vehicles in the field.

d. The 50 Cal Machine Gun (Heavy Barrel) is the standard weapon for the AAVP-7A1.

e. The 7.62 mm M240B Machine Gun is the standard weapon for the AAVC-7A1 and the AAVR-7A1.

2. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

3. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures that might reduce weapon system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

4. A determination has been made that Romania can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Government of Romania.

CUBA

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, on May 24, 2023, Congressman JIM MCGOVERN spoke on the House floor about the distressing situation in Cuba, and I want to associate myself with his remarks. He expressed his deep disappointment and frustration, which I share, with the current policy of the United States toward Cuba that amounts to little more than a continuation of the failed policies of the previous administration.

If the consequences of our policy were benign, perhaps one could ignore what is happening on that tiny island of 11 million people. But, as Congressman MCGOVERN described, it is anything but benign. Our policy is contributing, directly and indirectly, to widespread hardships and hunger in Cuba that caused some 313,000 Cubans to abandon the island last year alone, seeking entry to the United States.

As any objective observer of Cuba knows, since long before the Castro revolution, the Cuban people have suffered continuous deprivations and humiliations. Political oppression and severely limited economic opportunities, punctuated by recurrent natural disasters, have circumscribed their lives. Through it all, they have persevered, propelled by their extraordinary ingenuity, national pride, and innate resilience. However, the mass exodus of Cubans in the past two years illustrates how dire the situation has become.

This is by no means the first time that large numbers of Cubans have risked their lives to seek refuge and a better life in the United States, but none were on the scale of recent years. Several factors have led to the current calamity, including punitive Cold War sanctions reimposed by the previous administration and unfortunately kept in place by the current administration.

The Cuban Government's mismanagement of the economy and its reluctance to fully unleash and energize Cuba's fledgling private sector, the global COVID pandemic and economic downturn, and the cutbacks in oil imports from Venezuela have all played a role in the Cuban people's plight.

However, there also are several deeply flawed U.S. policies which enable Cuban authorities to continue to deflect blame for their own failures onto the United States. They have compounded the misery of average Cubans and damaged our relations with partners in the hemisphere. These policies must change.

First, Cuba must be removed from the state sponsors of terrorism list. We will continue to have profound differences with the Cuban Government over the importance of democracy and protection of human rights. But the designation as a state sponsor of terrorism is based on a determination that a government has "repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism," not on differences of opinion about democracy or association with unsavory governments. Removing Cuba from this list, as President Obama did, will bolster Cuba's growing private sector and enable American commercial investment, trade, and travel to Cuba. Both are critical to the future prosperity of the Cuban people. The Biden administration should expeditiously complete any necessary review to remove Cuba from the terrorism list.

Second, the administration should waive the extraterritorial sanctions under title 3 of the Helms-Burton Act, which drew the ire of our hemispheric allies when it was enacted in 1996 and have been waived by all previous Republican and Democratic administrations, save one. Cubans continue to flee the island out of desperation, and we cannot credibly claim to "stand with the Cuban people," while supporting policies designed to cripple their economy and increase their daily hardships.

Finally, we should continue on the path of improving relations between our two governments, including by sending an ambassador to Havana. U.S. engagement with a foreign country does not ascribe legitimacy to its government. If that were the case, we would recall our Ambassadors and close our Embassies in dozens of countries. Our isolationist policy is helping to expand malign Chinese and Russian influence in Cuba, not prevent it. Engagement creates opportunities to cooperate when it is in our national interest and to actively defend universal rights and freedoms. Notably, engagement provides the United States the ability to more effectively counter the influence of our adversaries who seek to exploit the vacuum created by our absence.

None of us condone the repressive policies and practices of the Cuban Government but there are serious consequences to our policy of unilateral

isolation. History has shown that regardless of how difficult life is in Cuba, the Cuban authorities will take whatever measures they deem necessary to crush public dissent to maintain control, as we saw in the wake of the historic street protests of July 11, 2021. Hundreds of brave protesters continue to languish in Cuban jails.

For years, Senator Patrick Leahy worked to replace an anachronistic, failed, punitive policy toward Cuba with one based on common sense and in accordance with our national interests. His efforts played a central role in President Obama's decision to restore diplomatic relations and engagement with Cuba in 2015. That policy was producing unprecedented, positive results for the Cuban people until it was unfortunately reversed. I urge the Biden administration to continue the work Senator Leahy and President Obama began. It is the only policy worthy of the United States.

SUPREME COURT ETHICS, RECUSAL, AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, last week, I voted to advance the Supreme Courts Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act out of the Judiciary Committee, as I believe that strong judicial ethics are critical to maintaining public trust in our judiciary. I rejected amendments unrelated to ethics reform to maximize prospects for successful passage of this measure, but I am willing to consider the nongermane amendments offered if put forward as stand-alone measures or as amendments to germane legislation.

NATIONAL MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing July as National Minority Mental Health Month. Since 2008, Congress has declared this month as National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in honor of author, journalist and teacher Bebe Moore Campbell, a national agent of change who passed away in 2006.

Thanks to President Biden, through the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, millions of Americans have been able to seek out help with nearly 5 million calls, texts, and chats that have been answered over the past year.

Unfortunately, mental health is a subject that often still has stigma attached to it, even though mental illness touches the lives of millions of Americans each year.

This month provides an opportunity to bring awareness and recommit us to tackling longstanding health disparities and improve the public's awareness of the health challenges that disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Mental illness can have a devastating impact on an individual's overall health and

quality of life. Racial and ethnic minorities often suffer from poor mental health outcomes due to multiple factors, including lack of access to quality mental health care services, cultural stigma surrounding mental health care, discrimination, and overall lack of awareness about mental health.

Today, because of historical injustices across our society, including those in the healthcare system, communities of color continue to face health disparities that result in poorer quality of life and lower life expectancies when compared to their White counterparts. For people of color who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender—LGBT—these disparities are often exacerbated. In 2021, according to estimates, only 39 percent of Black or African-American adults, 25 percent of Asian adults, and 36 percent of Hispanic/Latino adults with any mental illness were treated, compared to 52 percent of non-Hispanic White adults.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Health Administration, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans report experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder—PTSD—at double the rate of non-Hispanic White Veterans—20.5 percent compared to 11.6 percent.

In 2020, suicide was the leading cause of death among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders aged 10 to 19; it was the second leading cause of death among those aged 20 to 34.

Mental illness also has a significant impact on our country's economy. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—CDC—the economic cost of mental illness in the United States was more than \$300 billion in 2021. Fewer than half of those in need, however, receive any mental health care in the United States. This is simply unacceptable. Stigma, cost, and other barriers, such as limited capacity in some areas to serve all those in need, prevent many individuals from receiving necessary mental health care. It is imperative that we act to improve access to high-quality, evidence-based mental health care services in our country.

Maternal mental health has been an enduring issue that has stricken women across the Nation. The types of disorders are vast, though the most common include depression, anxiety, and psychosis. The consequences of leaving such disorders untreated are dire, as they impact not only the mother, but her child, and the community, as well. While all women are potentially susceptible to maternal mental health disorders, there is an evident disparity in the rates at which certain racial and ethnic groups are affected. Around one in seven women suffers specifically from postpartum depression, though mothers of color possess rates at around 38 percent, nearly double that of White mothers. Despite this alarming statistic, these mothers of color are still less likely to receive