

Funding for the US Military: Public Barred from National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Senate Committee Markup

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Media Disinformation](#),
[Militarization and WMD](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

It appears to have been no coincidence that when President John F. Kennedy's [spoke](#) to the American Newspaper Publishers Association on April 27, 1961, ten days after the [failed Bay of Pigs invasion](#), he tacitly referred to the Joint Chiefs and the CIA who had orchestrated the Cuban invasion and then lied to gain his approval for military action.

In that speech, Kennedy expressed what became a quintessential JFK quote:

"[the very word 'secrecy' is repugnant](#) in a free and open society and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths, and to **secret proceedings**. We decided long ago that the **dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweigh the dangers which are cited to justify it.**"

On May 24th, the [Senate Armed Services Committee](#) (SASC) met behind closed doors and approved the massive 1140 page National Defense Authorization Act ([NDAA S 2987](#)) of 2019 by a 25-2 vote which authorizes 'funding and provides activities for the US military.' At the same time, the Committee's 10 page [Executive Summary](#) and its [654 page Committee report](#) were released explaining 'details' of the \$716 billion legislative package.

While the Committee dutifully heard [public testimony](#) on the NDAA including Department of Defense [Secretary James Mattis](#) and [Gen. Joseph Dunford](#), Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on April 26th, once the SASC subcommittees began their mark up on May 21 and May 22 and the Full SASC met to begin its two day mark-up on May 23 and May 24th, all SASC consideration of the NDAA was [declared "SECRET"](#) as committee doors were sealed shut preventing all public and press attendance.

CLOSED: SCHEDULE FOR ARMED SERVICES FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

Date: Wednesday, May 23, 2018

Time: 09:30 AM

Agenda

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. [with a 12:00 p.m. break for lunch]

Full Committee.

CLOSED. Room SR-222

Thursday, May 24, 2018

9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. [with a 12:00 p.m. break for lunch]

Full Committee.

CLOSED. Room SR-222

If markup is not completed on Thursday, May 24, then:

Screenshot from US Committee on Armed Services

There is, of course, a stark difference between public testimony at a legislative [hearing](#) which generally focuses on gathering information and opinions on the pending legislative; while a 'markup' is when the elected body debates, amends or rewrites the proposed legislation. It is when the public gets to see its electeds in action; asking intelligent questions, exhibiting a grasp of the issues and otherwise strutting their stuff so the folks back home know there is a vigorous participant with their sleeves rolled up...or not.

In fact, the word "SECRET" is not included in the Senate's official [Glossary of Terms](#) although 'closed session' may be invoked for obvious sensitive matters such as Impeachment. So let's assume that the SASC mandarins decided in a massive overreach of their Constitutional authority to hold **every single word, every utterance, all 1140 pages worth of discussion and debate** of the committee mark up in complete and total SECRECY making no careful thoughtful distinction as to what truly constitutes a 'national security' matter - there is no public record available on the SASC website of the committee members discussing or making that determination.

The SASC website offers no video of either the subcommittees or the full committee meeting going through the motions of formally declaring their meetings SECRET under the guise of national security, much as Kennedy forewarned more than fifty years ago. In fact, there is no video available for public view at all proving that the SASC even met on the prescribed dates, that a quorum was present or that they conducted the business they claim to have conducted. Is it beyond the realm of possibility that a conference call linking all

SASC members substituted for a real-time old-fashioned, public committee meeting?

Neither is there a video on the SASC website of any of the debate or discussion that took place during the mark up nor evidence of the 25-2 roll call vote which precludes us from knowing who the two opposing votes were. In other words, every iota of debate or amendments offered and every vote taken as well as all discussion were conducted in SECRET which sounds more like a Banana Republic or an authoritarian state of which the US frequently accuses other countries.

There is little doubt that the American public would have benefited from SASC discussion on certain unmentionables like DOD's missing [\\$2.3 Trillion](#), [DARPA projects](#), the military role in [cyberspace](#), the "[secret space](#)" program and [weaponizing](#) space, [cost overruns](#), military monitoring of [extraterrestrial flights](#), long term impacts of [AI](#) or other '[dark' op](#) programs - but wasn't that always part of the intent.

While the Executive Summary reads like preparation for modern day Punic Wars, it is the shortest and easiest read of the available documents. Once you get past the militaristic mumbo-jumbo, consists mostly of a compilation of funding targets. Here are some items that caught my attention:

- \$69 B Overseas Contingency Ops
- \$7.6 B Assorted F35 Funding
- \$5.2 B Afghanistan
- \$1.2 B R&D for AI, space and emerging technology
- \$850 M Train/equip Iraqi forces to counter ISIS
- \$500 M Israel's Iron Dome, Arrow and David's Sling weapon systems
- \$300 M Train/equip 'vetted' Syrian opposition
- \$200 M Ukraine 'legal security assistance'

as well as increased funding for the following:

- \$150 M DOD research w/commercial tech industry and academia
- \$110 M Space Constellation efforts
- \$ 75 M University research
- \$ 20 M Quantum Information Sciences
- \$ 15 M DARPA Microelectronics research

Meanwhile, the full House Armed Services Committee (HASC) met in a public yet tightly controlled setting on May 9th to [mark up](#) their version of the NDAA with a [publicly available video](#) of the entire committee meeting using an [expedited](#) voting process to address hundreds of amendments.

One of the House NDAA amendments which passed [unanimously](#) on May 24th was that no AUMF (Authority for Use of Military Force) exists that gives the President authority to launch a military strike on Iran.

*

Renee Parsons served on the ACLU's Florida State Board of Directors and as president of the ACLU Treasure Coast Chapter. She has been an elected public official in Colorado, an environmental lobbyist for Friends of the Earth and a staff member of the US House of Representatives in Washington DC. She can be found on Twitter @reneedove31. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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