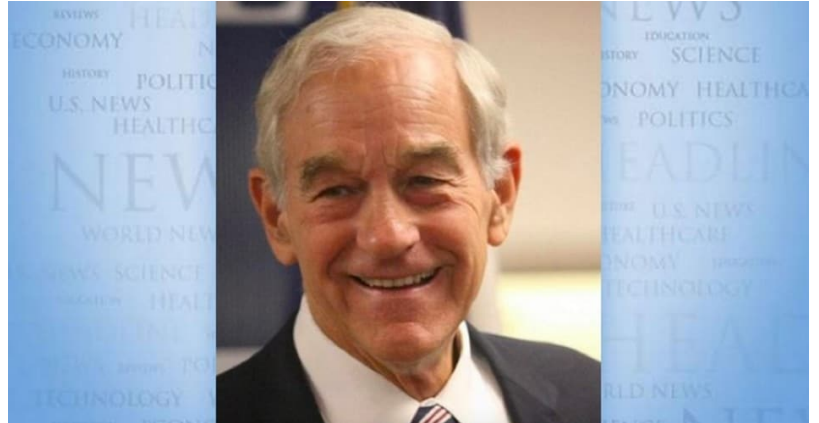




Congress' 'Gift' to America This Christmas

Just before leaving town for Christmas break, the US House gave Americans a last-minute holiday gift: a nearly trillion dollar military spending bill filled with lots of goodies for the special interests and the military-industrial complex. Unfortunately, the rest of America got nothing but coal in its stockings.

With Constitutionalists like Rep. Thomas Massie on the House Rules Committee, Speaker Johnson made the unusual move of bringing the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) under suspension of the rules, which bypasses the Rules Committee but requires two-thirds of the House to pass the bill.



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Considering that Speaker Johnson tossed into the “must-pass” bill yet another extension of Section 702 of the FISA Act, it’s unsurprising that he wanted to rush the bill through without the possibility of amendment. Section 702 allows the government to intercept and retain without a warrant the communications of any American who is in contact with a non-US citizen. It is clearly a violation of the Fourth Amendment which is supposed to protect Americans against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Section 702 was “legalized” under President George W. Bush during the “War on Terror” after it was revealed that Bush was using the National Security Agency to illegally spy on Americans. We were told at the time that government must be granted these authorities because we were under threat from terrorists. It would just be a temporary measure, we were promised, and then the authority would expire. That was fifteen years ago and here we are re-authorizing the government to continue to violate our liberties.

As with the rest of the violations of our civil liberties after 9/11, like the PATRIOT Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the TSA, the federal government soon turned its terrorism-fighting tools inward, targeting Americans rather than foreigners who we were told wanted to harm Americans. That’s why the FBI’s so-called domestic terrorism watchlist continues to expand to include Christians and those skeptical of big government.

So rather than debating whether we want a government more like East Germany than the one our Founders imagined, Section 702 was tossed into the military spending bill.

The NDAA also contained a \$600 million gift to the corrupt government of Ukraine. As opposition to further spending on Ukraine’s failed war with Russia increases in the House, Republican leadership decided to add what may be the last parting gift to the military-industrial complex. As with most foreign assistance, however, Ukraine will likely see very little of this money. Most of it will be laundered through the military contractors and lobbyists who line every corner of the Beltway.



Written by [Ron Paul](#) on December 18, 2023

The NDAA also pushes us further toward confrontation with China, authorizing more than \$100 million to train Taiwan's military and a further nine billion dollars to continue sending US military ships to harass China in its backyard.

I believe Speaker Johnson is intelligent, with a bright future in House leadership. He has inherited a broken system and a legislative body that operates without any guiding principles. I sincerely hope he will begin to listen to the increasing voices in the House who are questioning the warfare-welfare state. We are more than 33 trillion dollars in debt, with interest payments on that debt dwarfing all other government spending. A crash is coming. There is no time for more "business as usual."

Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This [article](#) originally appeared at the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity and is reprinted here with permission.



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