Shadow Wars Get Big Bucks in Last-Minute Defense Bill

By Spencer Ackerman  December 22, 2010  |  5:49 pm  |  Categories: Paper Pushers, Beltway Bandits, Politicians

Fighting (or pretending to fight) al-Qaeda on behalf of the U.S.? Congress is your private Santa.

Defying Beltway expectations, both chambers of Congress approved a $724.6 billion defense bill for the current fiscal year. Congress was feeling generous, and the money lavished on the United States’ proxies shows it.

The big winner is Pakistan. The $400 million Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund, which provides helicopters, night-vision equipment and training to the Pakistan’s Army and Frontier Corps, gets another re-up. There’s also $1.6 billion to reimburse Pakistan (and some other nations, but really Pakistan) for “cooperating in contingency operations in Afghanistan,” which must come as a surprise to U.S., Afghan and Pakistani troops.

This cash appears to be yet another U.S. down payment for the Pakistanis to invade North Waziristan, something they’re currently pledging to do the week after never.

Don’t forget Yemen, the New Pakistan. Yemen’s counterterrorism force in the Ministry of Interior alone will
get $75 million “in equipment, supplies and training.” Last year, the entire U.S. aid package to Yemen’s military was $155 million; it goes to show what an offer to look the other way while U.S. cruise missiles fly can buy a regime.

U.S. Special Operations Command, the principle on-the-ground liaison to these nations’ counterterrorism forces, wins out as well. Not only does the command get the full $9.8 billion it asked for, but Congress raised the special forces’ line item from $40 million to $45 million “to provide support to foreign forces, groups, and individuals assisting in ongoing operations.” That’s going to come into play in Yemen, where new teams of CIA operatives and elite troops from the Joint Special Operations Command are expanding the U.S.’ reach against al-Qaeda’s local affiliate.

And all that’s just in the open budget. The so-called “black budget” — that is, the intelligence budget, which included $27 billion in military intelligence last year — undoubtedly has even more for the shadow wars.

As this collection of conflicts mutates far beyond what began in Afghanistan a decade ago, a different provision in the new budget is especially noteworthy: The Defense Science Board must “conduct a review and evaluation of DOD’s strategy to counter violent extremism.” With all the cash being thrown around in these clandestine battles, you’d hope that was a strategy that was already in place.

Photo: U.S. Special Operations Command

See Also:

- [Pentagon Bulks Up Yemen’s Arsenal as Shadow War Grows](http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/12/shadow-wars-get-big-bucks-in-last-minute-defense-budget/)  
- [3 GIs Killed in Pakistan. Now Can We Start Treating This Like a War?](http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/12/shadow-wars-get-big-bucks-in-last-minute-defense-budget/)  
- [60 Dead as Helos, Drones Strike in Pakistan (But Don’t Call it a Massacre)](http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/12/shadow-wars-get-big-bucks-in-last-minute-defense-budget/)  

Tags: Cash Rules Everything Around Me, CIA, Defense Science Board, Pakistan, Politricks, Somalia, Special Operations Command, T is for Terror, Yemen

Also on Wired.com

- [Decoder Ring: Using Social Media to Find a Missing Person](http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/12/shadow-wars-get-big-bucks-in-last-minute-defense-budget/)  
- [Controversial Firm Snags Another Billion-Dollar Afghan Police Deal](http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/12/shadow-wars-get-big-bucks-in-last-minute-defense-budget/)  

Related Topics:

- Afghanistan
- Al Qaeda
One wonders if the people writing this article were conscious during the 1990s. The phrase, "As this collection of conflicts mutates far beyond what began in Afghanistan a decade ago," explains a lot about the foolish opposition to so much of this war by those who opposed us in the last World Conflict. The current world conflict did not begin in Afghanistan, and it will not end there. It began at least 12 years ago, when the International Islamic Front declared world-wide war.

It is not a "collection of conflicts,"...it is all a single conflict, with several theaters of action, just as in all World Wars.

Its plans were being openly touted on the internet no later than 1996, and it saw its first large-scale violence *inside* the US in 1993, in the *first* assault on the World Trade Center. It seems that many desire to ignore the point that we are engaged in a World War. If you ignore the euphemism of the term “Cold War”, and admit that what Stalin’s early 1946 speech to the Polituro declared was world-wide war by “the socialist camp”, then that conflict is properly called WW III, and this one WW IV.

The unwillingness of the US political community to name the third world conflict as what it was, a World War, stretched it out and allowed “the socialist camp” time to kill millions more people than necessary before their assault on industrial society around the world collapsed. That unwillingness excluded the focused purpose that declared war gives, with a willingness to contribute all the resources needed. That was singularly lacking in “The Cold War” till 1981. Eventually, even the disguises of “National Liberation Fronts” and similar fantasies wore thin, and barely enough focus came into being that WW III was won by industrial society, in spite of those here who desire its defeat even today.

We seem to be caught yet, in the net of lies that made declaring WW III for what it was politically impossible, because of our own unworthiness. It is woven, apparently, by people believing the same ideology as our WW III assailants. As a young lady in a class on Geopolitics, opposed to *both* the invasion of Afghanistan *and* a future invasion of Iraq, hissed at me in 2002, …”the Cold War *isn’t* over!”

As long as such people get any more respect than, say, Bonapartist Monarchists would, today, then media will listen to them and provide cover for the next wave of reaction against the continuing industrial revolution. They will defocus purpose, and extend the time anti-industrial reactionaries have available to kill, just as in the last World War.

… annnnnd, here’s where our author reveals he doesn’t understand the difference between an authorization and an appropriations bill, i.e. American Government 101.

There is no “money” in a defense authorization bill. This represents the ceiling for funds to be spent, not an actual appropriations, i.e. actual cash. Wait until the next CR in March to see what REALLY gets spent on all
Posted by: Swag | 12/23/10 | 10:34 am |

@daveinva: When you take the OCO into account, I doubt the military will have any problem spending $725B in the next two years.