

Commission on Military, National and Public Service
2530 Crystal Drive, Suite 1000, Room 1029, Box #63

Arlington Va, 22202

Attn: RFI COMMENT - Docket # 05-2018-01

ISSUE OF AUMF IMPACTING MILITARY, NATIONAL AND PUBLIC SERVICE

1. July 24, 2017, Scott Roehm of the Constitution Project attended a House Foreign Affairs Committee Meeting convened by Representatives Ed Royce and Eliot Engel on "Authorization for the Use of Military Force and Current Terrorist Trends". In a published letter, Scott Roehm identifies the Constitution Project as committed to "...restoring the division of war powers set up in the Constitution which makes clear that Congress is the branch of government vested with the power and responsibility to declare war". He goes on to describe the ways Congress has failed in this responsibility including ways in which both President Obama and President Trump have "...stretched the 2001 AUMF far beyond the breaking point". A coalition of human rights, civil liberties and faith groups support the Projects' effort to revive the Constitutional intent of the role of Congress and the need to rein in the Executive Branch.
2. On September 26, 2017, Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois reinforces this effort as she states in an Opinion Editorial of the Wall Street Journal, "...US troops need to know that they have the moral support and legal backing of their country, Congress hasn't given them that". Further she states, "...by ignoring the AUMF for 16 years, all of us, not just lawmakers, fail to do their part of the shared responsibility of being an American citizen".
3. The Women's March on the Pentagon, scheduled for October 20/21 2018, will be comprised of American Citizens who are taking that responsibility. They oppose the draft for men and women. They declare the draft is a harsh burden on the poor, while benefiting the wealthy and powerful. Congressional abdication of responsibility in deciding on war, deprives citizens of vital representation and moral/legal protection.

ISSUE OF POVERTY AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS , EROSION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. In the UN report on **EXTREME POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**, presented at the 38th session of the Human Rights Council June 18 to July 6, 2018, in one of the opening statements cites: "The United States now has one of the lowest rates of intergenerational mobility of any of the rich countries. Zip codes, which are usually reliable proxies for race and wealth are tragically reliable predictors of a child's future employment and income prospects. High child and youth poverty rates perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of poverty very effectively and ensure that the American Dream is becoming the American Illusion. The equality of opportunity, which is prized in theory is a myth, especially for minorities and women but also for many middle class white workers."
2. Try thinking of your children or grandchildren being forced into Military Conscription, as you ponder these facts documenting the neglect of veterans: A) Twenty veterans die by suicide EACH DAY, a 22% higher rate than matched civilian rate (according to the Veteran's

Administration) B) over 40,000 veterans are homeless on any given night according to the US Dept of Housing and Urban Development. Over 15,000 veterans stay in places that are not suitable for human habitation. C) 1,465,807 live under the official US poverty level (Census Bureau), almost 1.5 million veterans require benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program....previously known as Food Stamps.....currently being slashed in funding. D) Over 370,000 veterans are unemployed according to the US Dept of Labor. Unemployment is higher for younger veterans between the ages of 22 and 34 than civilians. E) according to the Veteran's Administration, there are 318,000 appeals of veterans benefits pending nationwide with an average wait time of over 2 years.

3. A constantly expanding Defense budget and concomitant slashing of social welfare programs along with a taxing structure that benefits the wealthy will continue to generate severe social/economic inequalities.
4. Before considering any "career", "volunteer" or "draft" pathway in Military/National/Public service we need to acknowledge we have a government that has gone Rogue. We have to acknowledge the issues, as Smedley Butler, a US Marine Corps General and two time winner of the Medal of Honor who wrote War is a Racket in 1935, and as President Eisenhower reminded us in his warning about the Military Industrial Complex in his Farewell address in January, 1961. We need to inform ourselves of the true nature of a country that spends more on war, less on social needs, and consistently violates human rights through militarization of its police, mass incarceration/school to prison pipeline, indifference to youth seeking higher education, policies ignoring women's rights not to mention indifference to refugees displaced by militarism and issues of climate chaos/environmental decline ignored.....and sadly....there is even more. We need to ask/demand to understand where is our Democracy.

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Arlene Hickory 6/28/18