The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. Senate Panel Targets Russian and Chinese Threats in Massive Defense Bill

May 25, 2018



Aaron Bernstein / Reuters

The U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee passed its version of a $716 billion annual defense policy bill on Thursday, joining counterparts in the House of Representatives in labeling China and Russia as threats to the United States and its allies.

The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, includes measures targeting the two "strategic competitors," including a clampdown on trade rules and a ban on the Defense Department dealing with any entity that uses telecommunications equipment or services from Chinese companies Huawei Technologies and ZTE Corp.

Related article: U.S. Senators Find 'Ample Evidence' of Russian Campaign Against 2016 Election

One of the few pieces of major legislation passed by Congress every year, the NDAA is used as a vehicle for a broad range of policy measures, as well as determining everything from

military pay levels and benefits to which ships or aircraft will be modernized, purchased or discontinued.

The bill also extends a limitation on U.S.-Russian military cooperation, "expresses the sense of the Senate" that it is U.S. policy to strengthen the defense of allies and partners in Europe to deter Russian aggression and directs the Army to acquire a short-term capability to fill gaps in cruise missile defense, to defend against Chinese and Russian threats.

The Senate bill also seeks to beef up the U.S. response to cyber attacks, by mandating that the country employs "all instruments of national power," including its own cyber capabilities, to deter and respond to cyber attacks.

The 2019 NDAA is unlikely to become law for several months. The version passed by Senate Armed Services must be approved by the full Senate, where it can also be amended. And then it must be reconciled with the House bill, which passed earlier on Thursday by 351-66.

After negotiators from the House and Senate agree on a compromise NDAA, it must pass both chambers, and then be sent to the White House for President Donald Trump to sign into law or veto.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/05/25/us-senate-panel-targets-russian-and-chinese-threats-in-massive-defense-bill-a61573