



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on November 2, 2025

Pentagon Doesn't Know Whom It's Killing in Boat Bombings

The Trump administration can't — or won't — identify the [61 people the military has killed in the 15 alleged "narco-terrorist" boats it has sunk](#) in the last two months, congressional Democrats told journalists after a Thursday briefing.

The meeting with the House Armed Services Committee "was conducted by department policy officials but no military lawyers, who were pulled from the briefing shortly before it started," reported [Politico](#).

The Pentagon's answers to lawmakers' ongoing requests for legal justification for the strikes failed to satisfy Democratic committee members. They told reporters that "Republicans also pressed the administration officials for more information," *Politico* wrote.

According to [CNN](#):

Democratic Rep. Sara Jacobs of California ... said "the level of transparency was not OK" and added that "there's nothing that we heard in there that changes my assessment that this is completely illegal, that it is unlawful and even if Congress authorized it, it would still be illegal because there are extrajudicial killings where we have no evidence."

Politico recounted Jacobs' further remarks:

[The department officials] said that they do not need to positively identify individuals on these vessels to do the strikes, they just need to prove a connection to a designated terrorist organization or affiliate. When we tried to get more information, we did not get satisfactory answers.

Drug Bust

While the White House has suggested the strikes are aimed at stopping the flow of fentanyl into the United States — never mind that the vast majority of the drug is [smuggled in by land from Mexico](#) — the Pentagon briefers said the sunken boats were trafficking cocaine.

"They argued that cocaine is a facilitating drug of fentanyl," said Jacobs, "but that was not a satisfactory answer for most of us."

Representative Jason Crow (D-Colo.) told reporters the briefing failed to convince him the strikes are



The Independent/YouTube



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on November 2, 2025

going to achieve what the administration claims.

"We do need to get serious about the flow of drugs, but I heard nothing today that shows how they're actually going to end that," he said. "In fact, I have deeper concern leaving this briefing as to whether or not they even have a serious plan to do that."

Representative Seth Moulton (D-Mass.), meanwhile, had some very sharp words for Pentagon officials. "Am I leaving [the briefing] satisfied? Absolutely not," he told reporters. "And the last word that [I gave](#) [Rear Admiral Brian H. Bennett] was, 'I hope you recognize the constitutional peril that you are in and the peril you are putting our troops in.'"

Flouting Constitutional Convention

Jacobs claimed the administration only cited Article II of the Constitution, which makes the president the commander in chief of the armed forces, as justification for the killings. It does not, however, empower the president to undertake offensive military action without authorization from Congress. Nor does it give him the right to violate the Fifth Amendment's guarantee that "no person shall ... be deprived of life ... without due process of law."

President Donald Trump's approach toward accused drug smugglers mirrors that of China and Iran, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) told *Fox News Sunday* last weekend.

"They summarily execute people without presenting evidence to the public," he [argued](#). "So it's wrong." Yet this appears to be Trump's intention. "I don't think we're necessarily going to ask for a declaration of war," he [said](#), "I think we're just gonna kill people that are bringing drugs into our country."

Exclusive Opinion

Even when the administration deigns to speak to Congress, it doesn't always include all the requisite individuals. Democrats were excluded from a Wednesday briefing in which officials provided some senators with a Justice Department opinion contending that the boat strikes are legal.

Senator Mark Warner (D-Va.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, "said he had been personally promised the legal opinion ... by Secretary of State Marco Rubio," reported [The Hill](#).

Needless to say, Warner was furious. He said:

When an administration decides it can pick and choose which elected representatives get the understanding of their legal argument of why this is needed for military force and only chooses a particular party, it ignores all the checks and balances....

When you politicize decision making about putting our service members in harm's way, you make them less safe.

According to *Politico*, "Republican lawmakers said the meeting was meant to be an informal event to address specific lawmaker requests, and not a formal briefing for all members of the chamber."

That explanation did not soothe many rankled Democrats.

"It is totally unprecedented in my 15 years of service in the United States Senate that intelligence briefings on a matter of this consequence would be held for one party alone," fumed Senator Richard



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on November 2, 2025

Blumenthal (D-Conn.).

Indeed, as Warner pointed out:

If you've got a valid legal opinion, wouldn't you want to share it with every member? If you believe, I think the administration does, that we know these guys are bad guys, wouldn't you want to catch them and show the world the drugs and show their history of bad activities?

Headstrong of State

But Trump seems intent on doing whatever he pleases regarding the boat strikes, counting on compliance from a GOP Congress with a desire not to be seen as soft on drugs. He [told](#) Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recently, "Pete, you go to Congress, you tell them about it. What are they going to say, 'Gee, we don't want to stop drugs pouring in'?"



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.