

MILITARY BUDGET FACT SHEET
Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War (KNOW)

FEDERAL BUDGET in General

MONEY IN= REVENUE (Tax Receipts)
MONEY OUT= EXPENDITURES (Government Spending/Public Investment)

DEFICIT/SURPLUS= Difference (plus or minus) between revenue and expenditure in one fiscal year. Reflects political decisions.

Current Deficit= \$1 Trillion (Before COVID-19)

NATIONAL DEBT= Accumulation of government borrowing over the years.

Current Debt= \$23 Trillion (Before COVID-19)

DISCRETIONARY BUDGET: Mostly personal and corporate income tax receipts, federal funds that Congress has the freedom to allocate. Military spending is part of the discretionary budget.

MANDATORY SPENDING/TRUST FUNDS: (Mostly earned benefit programs like Social Security and Medicare): Separate budgets mostly based on worker payroll taxes; protected and paid out from trust funds only, not the general discretionary budget. This mandatory spending is not in any way responsible for deficits/debt.

UNIFIED FEDERAL BUDGET: Combination of federal funds (general discretionary budget) and trust funds (mandatory spending). Created by LBJ to hide the true cost of the Vietnam War. Military spending takes up over 50 percent of the general discretionary budget, but is only 25 percent of the unified budget.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)/PENTAGON/MILITARY/WAR BUDGET

Base Budget: Federal Funds (Discretionary Budget) allocated to the DOD for salaries, training, equipment, facilities, operations, procurement of weapons, housing, research and development, etc. This budget funds all branches of the U.S. military. Base Budget for FY 2020= \$658.4 Billion

Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO): The invasions and military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan were originally funded by supplementary spending bills and not included in military budget figures. Starting in FY 2011, after the passage of the Budget Control Act (an attempt to cap overall federal spending) these wars were categorized as “overseas contingency operations” and included in the Pentagon budget. OCO budget for FY 2020= \$71.5 billion

Non-DOD Military Related Expenditures: Many military related spending items fall outside the DOD (Pentagon) Budget.

For example, nuclear weapons research, maintenance, modernization, cleanup and production is in the Department of Energy (DOE) Budget. DOE Nuclear Budget for FY 2020= \$25 billion

Other non-DOD military spending includes the Department of Homeland Security Budget (FY 2020= \$69 billion); the International Affairs Budget—the State Department, which includes the U.S. Agency for International Development, the financing of foreign arms sales and military-related development assistance (FY 2020= \$51 billion); the Veterans Affairs Budget (FY 2020= \$216 billion); FBI homeland security spending (FY 2020= 9 billion); the Intelligence Budget—17 separate agencies (FY 2020= 80 billion); and interest on the national debt due to past military spending (FY 2020= 156 billion).

ADD IT ALL UP: DOD Base Budget + Overseas Contingency Operations + Other Military Related Spending (Non-DOD) = Overall Military Spending

For FY 2020: DOD Base Budget (\$658.4 billion) + Overseas Contingency Operations (\$71.5 billion) + Non-DOD Military Related Expenditures (\$606 billion) = **\$1.3 Trillion** (much of this information comes from William Hartung and Mandy Smithberger, [Boondoggle, Inc.](#))

U.S. military expenditures are roughly the size of the **next [seven largest military budgets](#)** around the world, combined.

The *Sustainable Defense Task Force of the Center for International Policy* has conservatively identified cuts to the military budget that would result in savings of over [\\$1.2 trillion](#) over the next decade.

The June, 2019 Task Force report, *Sustainable Defense: More Security, Less Spending*, also makes the case for a more expansive view of national security:

The most urgent threats to U.S. security are non-military, and the proper national security tools ought to be non-military as well. The threats include [climate change](#), which undermines frontiers, leads to unpredictable extreme weather, and fosters uncontrollable migration...[global disease epidemics](#), which pose societal risks to all nations; [income and wealth gaps](#), which foster insecurity and conflict.

As we experience the spread of COVID-19, William Hartung makes a strong argument that to save lives, we must [shift Pentagon spending to public health](#).

WHY DOES THE U.S. SPEND SO MUCH MONEY ON THE MILITARY?

Three Major Explanations

(Prepared by Ron Kramer for *Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War* (KNOW)
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1. Strategic Foreign Policy (Empire)

At the end of World War II, the U.S. was in a globally privileged position. With 6% of the world's population, the U.S. held 50% of the world's wealth. American's strategic foreign policy was geared to maintain this disparity and an overall imperial domination. Military power held the key to preserving this exalted status by maintaining access to markets, cheap labor and critical resources such as oil (Michael Klare, in *Blood and Oil*, refers to the U.S. military as a "global oil protection service"). As Andrew Bacevich (*Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*) points out, to create a stable world order for the American empire, would "require the United States to maintain a global *military presence*, to configure its forces for global *power projection*, and to counter existing or anticipated threats by relying on a policy of *global interventionism*." This strategy, which has nothing to do with legitimate defense needs, explains why the U.S. has over 700 military bases ringing the world and why it has become a permanent war state that, at great expense, actually fosters instability, incites anti-Americanism and is a major cause of terrorism.

2. Institutional Self-Interests (The Military-Industrial Complex)

In his farewell address in 1961, President Eisenhower warned Americans to guard against the "unwarranted influence" of the military-industrial complex. The nation did not listen. The powerful intersection of private military contractors seeking corporate profits and a Pentagon establishment attempting to continually enlarge its domain and power within the government works to create high military budgets. The term really should be the *military-industrial-congressional complex*, for it is Congress that makes the military budget decisions and whose members also derive benefits in terms of bringing "pork" and jobs back to their home districts. It is no surprise that the DOD spreads contracts for weapons systems across as many Congressional districts as possible to build in support for its outsized budgets. The interlocking self-interested relationships between a permanent arms industry and a gargantuan national security state generates enormously wasteful military spending that again, has little to do with the legitimate defense needs of the country.

3. Cultural Narratives (American Exceptionalism and Patriotism)

A naked and brutal imperialism and an unmitigated greed for profits and power are ugly spectacles. Those who seek such goals often attempt to deceive themselves and others about the true nature of their actions. They engage in denial, invent justifications, and attempt to neutralize guilt. They create myths of morality and illusions of justice. Cultural narratives (stories) emerge that serve to normalize and make acceptable what others

would judge as criminal or deviant. Two cultural constructions in particular operate to hide the ugly truths about how the U.S. Empire and the military-industrial-congressional complex combine to produce a bloated, wasteful, and unnecessary war machine.

First, the mythic ideals of political leaders in the U.S. are usually drawn from a broad, historical, cultural narrative often referred to as *American exceptionalism*. This story generally portrays the U.S. as a nation of exceptional virtue, a moral leader in the world with a unique historical mission to spread “universal” values such as freedom, democracy, equality, popular sovereignty, and increasingly global capitalism. This credo summons the U.S.-and the U.S. alone-to lead, save, liberate, and ultimately transform the world, usually through military means. This “mission” is constantly used to justify the “defense” budget. We are the essential nation, the reluctant superpower. We are not imperialists; we are a force for good in the world. And that is why we must maintain our military might, no matter what the cost.

Second, the Vietnam War broke down the World War II cultural consensus about America’s role in the world and what it means to be patriotic. The anti-war movement of the 1960s claimed that peace was patriotic and that dissent from wrongful government policy is the highest form of patriotism. As Andrew Bacevich notes, “Patriotism, once a simple concept, had become both confusing and contentious.” In recent years, the political and military establishment has tried to restore the earlier concept of patriotism with the demand to “support the troops,” whose decision to serve and whose sacrifices demonstrate that old-fashioned patriotism is still alive and well. In practice, “supporting the troops” and demonstrating “patriotism” has found expression in an open-ended and unquestioned effort to provide the military with whatever money it requests; in effect, a blank check. And woe to the unpatriotic politician that refuses to provide the troops on foreign battlefields with all the material support they need to “defend our freedoms” because as you know, “freedom isn’t free.”

Epilogue

While many people remember President Eisenhower’s warning against the military-industrial complex in his Farewell Address, he gave another important speech earlier in his presidency that we in KNOW quote on a regular basis. On April 16, 1953 Eisenhower delivered his famous “Chance for Peace” speech in Washington, D.C. before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. As James Ledbetter (*Unwarranted Influence: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Military-Industrial Complex*) points out about the speech: “The president argued not merely that war was destructive and undesirable, but also that spending on war, even during peacetime, diverts resources that could be put to better use.” In the most memorable passage of the speech, Eisenhower said:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.