

## *National Defense Authorization Act Cut the Military Budget – Address Our Real Needs*

July 17, 2020

Since 2016, defense spending has increased by close to 20%. Trump is now asking for a record-breaking \$731 billion, and the Senate Armed Services Committee has proposed a National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2021 that *increases* Trump's request to over \$740 billion.

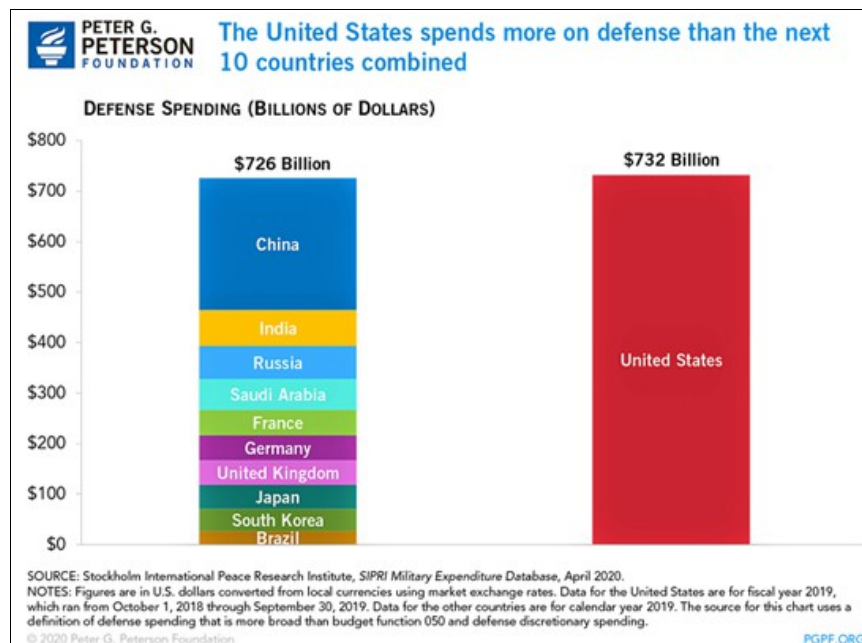
Yet the pandemic, climate, and economic crisis that threatens us today cannot be addressed by a new generation of nuclear weapons, F-35 fighters, another aircraft carrier, or a Space Force. Therefore, Indivisible SF urges you to redirect as much national security spending as possible towards the real emergencies that we are actually facing.

### **Cut Defense Spending**

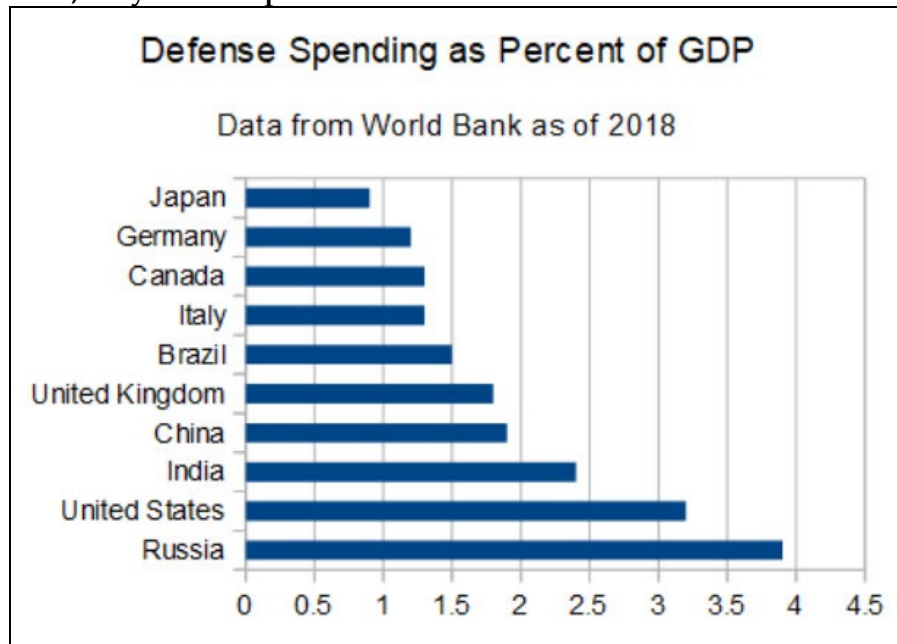
For far too long, “defense” has been narrowly defined as fighting, or preparing to fight, armed human enemies. But in our modern world that definition excludes many of the most serious dangers that we must defend against today – climate catastrophe, virus pandemic, economic collapse, and toxic pollution, to name just four. These threats are real and immediate, and we need to address them by shifting funds and priorities from the Pentagon to domestic crises.

Decade by decade, the military has consumed an ever-increasing portion of federal resources while money for healthcare, education, housing, food security, infrastructure, and clean water & air has declined. With more than 30 million people unemployed, more than 28 million people without health insurance, more than 500,000 homeless; with schools deteriorating, hospitals closing, and critical infrastructure crumbling, spending on narrowly defined “defense” is far too high, while domestic spending and investment is far too low.

**The U.S. spends more on military and war than the next 10 nations combined.**



Of the big economies, only Russia spends more of its Gross Domestic Product on its military:



These enormous expenditures do not make us safer, healthier, or more secure:

- The size our armed forces and the paucity of non-military alternatives encourage policy-makers to resort to force as the *first* rather than the *last* option – a reflex that makes us less safe and less secure.
- Expenditures for national security (as traditionally defined) are the main cause of our growing deficit because it leaves less money for investments in people, education, and infrastructure that grow the economy, provide more jobs, and thereby increase tax revenue. Studies have consistently shown that dollar-for-dollar domestic investment creates more jobs than defense spending.
- Pentagon spending has become a form of corporate welfare. So much so that Congress now funds (or over-funds) weapons systems and programs – such as the V-22 Osprey – beyond what the Pentagon has requested.

Given the partisan gridlock in Congress, we know that significant changes in defense spending are unlikely until after the election. So instead of engaging in fruitless tinkering with caps and small trade-offs, we believe it's time for you to put forward a vision for the future by boldly calling for real and meaningful changes. Therefore, we ask you to insist on significant overall spending reductions in the FY2021 NDAA. For example:

- Reduce and cap overall national security spending at no more than 2% of GDP.
- End unwinnable wars that serve no feasible purpose (e.g. Afghanistan).
- Close unnecessary and redundant foreign and domestic military bases.
- Reduce over-reliance on for-profit private-contracting for basic military services.
- End “use-it-or-lose-it” contract-spending policies.
- Eliminate the unnecessary and destabilizing Space Force.
- Cancel the nuclear weapon modernization program.
- Cancel the failed F-35 fighter and the unneeded B-21 bomber programs.
- Cancel the next missile & attack submarines and the next Ford-class aircraft carrier.

- Significantly scale back acquisition of land-based combat vehicles.
- Eliminate the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget and bring legitimate war-fighting expenses back under the normal Department of Defense (DoD) budget.

## Accountability and Honest-Accounting

The Pentagon continues to fail its legally-required audits; they can neither track nor account for the funds they already have. The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 required annual audits and financial statements for *all* federal agencies. Every agency except the Department of Defense (DoD) has complied with that law. DoD failed its first-ever agency-wide audit in 2018; it tried (and failed) again in 2019, and in doing so, uncovered 1,300 new deficiencies. Recent accountability failures include:

- Awarding a \$7 million cloud-computing contract to a 1-person company
- Losing track of \$800 million in construction projects
- Inability to track parts for the \$1.4 billion F-35 Fighter program

Moreover, defense contractors are allowed to continue business-as-usual even after they are found guilty of price-gouging, inadequate or poor-quality goods & services, abusing programs, and improperly disseminating classified information.

Therefore, Congress must exercise aggressive and sustained oversight to track and account for national security spending by:

- Directing the Secretary of Defense to commission independent audits of DoD financial systems by independent public accountants to ensure that they meet applicable federal requirements and continue to do so until they pass.
- Requiring that defense contractors who have committed proven fraud, abuse, misuse, or price-gouging, be subjected to civil and criminal penalties significant enough to deter such behavior rather than being simply factored into their profit calculations as a normal “cost of doing business” with the Pentagon.
- Amending section 2302(b)(8)(B) of title 5, United States Code, to permit and protect whistle blowers who report fraud, waste, or abuse to the Inspector General of an agency, a supervisor in the employee's direct chain of command, or to some other designated official.

## Climate Crisis

Fires, floods, storms, hunger, rising sea levels and economic disruption are real and immediate threats. The growing Climate Crisis is America's most serious long-term national danger, far more so than corrupt governments in Venezuela, rebels in Yemen, Iranian mullahs, desert terrorists, Russian expansionism and Chinese geopolitical ambitions. Our defense-spending must be redirected to meet the climate emergency. Therefore, to the greatest extent possible, the national security budget must be repurposed towards defending against catastrophic climate change by bolstering our defenses against global warming, reducing the ongoing pollution of our air, land, and water, and mitigating its economic consequences.

- Instead of spending \$1.7 trillion over a decade to develop new and more deadly nuclear weapons, defense scientists should be finding methods of taking greenhouse gasses out of the atmosphere.
- Instead of buying more F-35s at \$94 million each, that money should be used to shift military installations from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources such as solar & wind.

- Instead of \$13 billion for a new aircraft carrier, those funds should be used to protect bases and essential civilian infrastructure from catastrophic floods and rising sea levels.
- Since the U.S. military is the world's largest producer of global-warming emissions, instead of spending billions on corporate-welfare and boondoggle programs, Congress and the DoD should focus on significantly reducing the Pentagon's carbon footprint.
- Instead of creating an unnecessary and internationally destabilizing Space Force, defense research should focus on ways to defend the American people from droughts, fires, famines, and species-collapse caused by climate change.

## **End Police Militarization**

We're tired of politicians who stoke voter fears for their partisan gain. We no longer have patience for rhetoric about "Wars" on Crime, Drugs, and Terror. The truth is that police and military serve different and incompatible roles. The purpose of the first is to maintain community safety and peace; the role of the second is to repel hostile invaders or organized mass-violence by internal enemies such as the Confederacy in 1860. Strategies, tactics, training, and equipment of armies have no place in domestic police work, and "War on..." approaches to social ills and criminal behavior have made serious problems worse – not better.

In 1990, as part of the "War on Drugs," the NDAA of that year established the 1033 Program to provide military equipment to civilian police forces. Since then, the militarization of police has metastasized like a cancer – drones, armored vehicles, explosives, helicopters, grenade launchers, and large-caliber weapons.

We've seen military-type responses to people who are peacefully and legally protesting, and occupying-army strategies applied to poor and nonwhite communities. Yet equipping police with military equipment has done nothing to reduce crime or protect law enforcement officers from violence – just the opposite. Battle-equipment and war-mentalities inevitably alienate and infuriate the people they are used against, leading to greater violence, increased suspicion of law enforcement, and less crime-prevention, detection, and reduction.

Therefore, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to:

- Refuse to reauthorize or continue funding the 1033 program.
- End all programs that provide military-style battle-training for police.
- Enact clear prohibitions against using the armed forces to suppress nonviolent protests.

## **Additional Specific Policies and Priorities for We the People**

We also urge you to call for:

- A prohibition against any use of force in or against Iran without explicit congressional authorization.
- Revising the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force to include a "sunset" termination date, a clear and specific expression of mission objectives, targets, and geographic scope, and reporting requirements to increase transparency and ensure proper Congressional oversight.
- Repealing the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq.
- Prohibiting the export of munitions and war-fighting equipment and materials to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states until six months after the civil war in Yemen has ended.

- Requiring the President to report to the House and Senate Defense and Foreign Relations committees within 48 hours any incident in which American armed forces are involved in an attack or hostilities in offensive or defensive capacities.
- Prohibiting any expenditure of DoD funds for construction of a border wall.
- Prohibiting any expenditure of DoD funds to detain immigrants or house children separated from parents.
- Requiring prior congressional approval for providing U.S. military assistance to federal agencies within the Department of Homeland Security.
- Amending the federal criminal code (18 U.S.C. 431) to prohibit the President, Vice President, and members of the president's cabinet, or anyone acting on their behalf or for their benefit, from holding or entering into a contract or agreement with the U.S. or any of its agencies.
- Prohibiting federal employees from discriminating for or against employees, interns or applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or handicapping condition.
- Eliminating provisions that prohibit, restrict, or limit withdrawals of U.S. troops or American military aid in or to Europe (particularly Germany), South Asia (particularly Afghanistan), East Asia (particularly South Korea), West Asia (particularly Yemen, Saudi Arabia, or the Gulf States), and Africa (particularly Niger and Djibouti).
- Limitations on presidential authority to use the Insurrection Act against peaceful protests or for personal or partisan purposes.
- If the FY2021 Intelligence Authorization Act is incorporated into the NDAA – as has been done with the Senate bill – Senator Warner's "Foreign Influence Reporting in Elections" amendment must be restored.

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