

We Could Solve Our County Budget Problems with Money from Our Bloated Military Budget

We want to thank the County Board for the work that it has done to create a budget under difficult circumstances, being constrained by an unfair state budget which does not fully return to Milwaukee County the money it takes away. We support the Fair Deal initiative.

However, a far greater misuse of our tax money occurs at the federal level where obscene amounts are spent on endless wars, unneeded weapons, waste and fraud. (The Defense Department has never passed an audit). If the military budget was decreased to the average level spent during the Cold War and the money saved was sent back to state and local governments, our state and local budget problems would disappear.

Look at the numbers. The average Cold War spending was \$350 billion.¹ Planned military spending in 2020 is \$750 billion. That's a difference of \$400 billion dollars. If we decreased our military budget by just half that amount, or \$200 billion annually, Milwaukee County's share based on our population would be approximately \$608 million dollars.²

Compare \$608 million with the \$28 million budget gap that existed at the start of the Milwaukee County budget process. This \$608 million equals half of our \$1.2 billion Milwaukee County budget! With \$608 million, we could address the root causes of poverty and crime, fix our infrastructure, and create a world class transit system.

Several national peace and social justice groups such as Peace Action and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) are calling on Congress to decrease annual military spending by \$200 billion³.

We also want to thank you, the County Board, for passing a resolution last November that advised Congress to reduce military spending and reallocate the money to programs that meet human needs. (see resolution on reverse side). The U.S. Conference of Mayors has passed similar resolutions.

We are now asking you to follow up on this excellent resolution and join us in asking Congress to support a \$200 billion reduction in military spending and send us our share, \$608 million dollars, to use to meet our unmet needs.

(Join our End the Wars Coalition. We meet on 3rd Wednesday, 7 PM, 1001 E. Keefe, Milwaukee
Call Peace Action for more info: 414-269-9525, peaceactionwi.org)

Notes

1) "*An Inadequate Budget Compared to Whom? Compared to What?*" by Winslow Wheeler, April 17, 2014, Project on Government Oversight (www.pogo.org). The \$350 billion is adjusted for inflation using 2015 dollars.

2) The U.S. population is 329 million. Milwaukee County's population is 1 million. ($1/329 \times \$200 \text{ billion} = 0.00304 \times \$200 \text{ billion} = \$608 \text{ million}$).

3) <https://www.peaceaction.org/news-posts/presidential-candidates-must-support-dramatic-pentagon-spending-cuts-funding-of-human-needs-instead-coalition-says/>

A RESOLUTION

Urging the United States Congress to reduce its fiscal outlays to the United States Department of Defense and reallocate those funds to domestic concerns with the goal of a more peaceful international system and enhanced domestic human fulfillment

WHEREAS, the United States as a Member State of the United Nations, has ratified the Charter of the United Nations which states, "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small..."; and

WHEREAS, Congress approved a \$686 billion military budget for Fiscal Year 2019, an increase of \$74 billion over 2018, and consumes an estimated 52% of the entire federal discretionary budget; and

WHEREAS, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the United States taxpayers in 2017 paid more for their military than the combined military expenditures of China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, India, France, the United Kingdom, and Japan; and

WHEREAS, according to the Political Economy Research Institute of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, spending \$1 billion on domestic priorities produces "substantially more jobs within the U.S. economy than would the same \$1 billion spent on the military"; and

WHEREAS, Congress should reallocate federal military outlays toward human and environmental needs: aid toward the goal of providing free, superior education from pre-school through college, end world hunger, convert the United States to clean energy, provide clean drinking water everywhere needed, build high speed trains between all major U.S. cities, finance a full-employment jobs program, and double non-military foreign aid; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors urges Congress to cut military spending, to the extent possible, and allocate the surplus toward domestic functions such as clean energy, transportation, and education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors request the County Clerk provide this resolution to federal elected officials who represent any part of Milwaukee County.

(Resolution adopted on November 11, 2018)

<https://www.peaceaction.org/news-posts/presidential-candidates-must-support-dramatic-pentagon-spending-cuts-funding-of-human-needs-instead-coalition-says/>

Presidential Candidates Must Support Dramatic Pentagon Spending Cuts, Funding of Human Needs Instead, Coalition Says

May 22, 2019

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The next president of the United States should embrace dramatic cuts in Pentagon spending – at least \$200 billion annually from the current \$716 billion – and reallocation of the money to human needs, a broad coalition of progressive organizations urged today in a letter sent to all announced presidential candidates.

The letter launches a new coalition initiative to shift fundamentally the debate over Pentagon spending and infuse the issue into the presidential campaign.

Speaking to the letter's purpose, Paul Kawika Martin, Senior Director for Policy and Political Affairs at Peace Action, remarked, "Spending more than half of discretionary taxpayer dollars on the Pentagon fails to make America safer at the cost of other vital needs like job creation, health care and solving climate chaos. At the same time, the U.S. short shifts funding for diplomacy, development and other tools that prevent wars in the first place. We need bold leadership to break the hold of what President Eisenhower deemed 'the military-industrial complex.'"

Under the banner of "Put People Over the Pentagon," the 22 groups say that "it's time to stop misdirecting hundreds of billions of dollars away from domestic and human needs to pad unnecessary budget lines for endless wars, failed weapons and the Pentagon's corporate handouts. Doing so will make our country stronger and more just."

The groups say that "Military spending should be reduced by at least \$200 billion annually, freeing up \$2 trillion or more over the next decade for domestic and human needs priorities. With those spending cuts, the Pentagon's budget would remain more than enough to keep America safe at a level well above our nation's post-World War II historical average."

The groups' agenda also urges that "the United States should never again go to war without congressional authorization, and Congress should not authorize military action without identifying revenue to pay for current and future costs, including taking care of injured veterans."

The groups state that "by adhering to our values and promoting international cooperation, we can prevent war, address the underlying causes of conflict and meet humanitarian imperatives."

Organizational signers of the call to "Put People over the Pentagon" include: 350.org, Center for Popular Democracy, Code Pink, Credo Action, Daily Kos, Demand Progress, Democracy for America, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Indivisible, Just Foreign Policy, MoveOn.org, National Priorities Project, Peace Action, Public Citizen, RootsAction, Social Security Works, United We Dream, Win Without War, Women's Action for New Directions and World Beyond War.

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