

**WAND believes that the federal budget is more than just a set of numbers. The budget is a fundamental reflection of our nation's values, hopes and priorities.** Smarter choices in Pentagon spending would result in cost savings that could help avoid harsh cuts in other areas that invest in our future, create jobs and ensure healthy secure communities. Pentagon spending discipline that emphasizes strategies to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century security threats will best ensure sustainable national security now and for generations to come.

**This Year's Budget and Pentagon Spending in Context:**

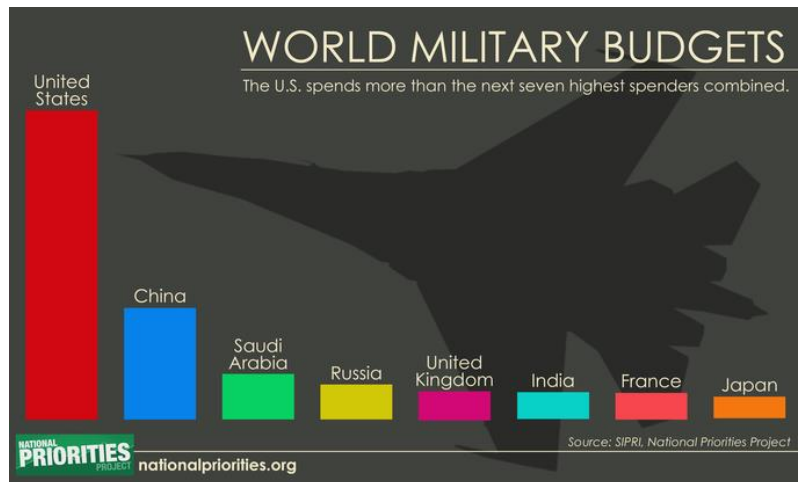
In the President's proposed FY 2017 budget, Pentagon spending (including spending at the Department of Defense (DOD), war spending and spending on nuclear weapons) accounts for 53% of the discretionary budget that Congress appropriates each year.

All other programs like education, infrastructure, health care, homeland security, veterans, foreign aid and more make up the remaining 47% of the discretionary budget. Approximately one third of this funding flows to the states where it is an essential component of state budgeting decisions.

Overall Pentagon spending is higher than it was during Vietnam or at the peak of the Cold War.

The Defense Department is the only major federal department that has not conducted a financial audit.

U.S. military expenditures are roughly the size of the **next seven largest military budgets** around the world, combined.



**Some key elements of the Pentagon budget being debated this spring:**

**War Spending Slush Fund**

Added on to the Pentagon's budget is Overseas Contingency Operations at about \$59 billion. This is really a war spending slush fund that is not subject to the budget caps now restricting all of discretionary spending. More and more things that used to be in the Pentagon's budget have moved to this slush fund — even if they have no direct connection to current combat efforts. By the way, this extra \$59 billion for the Pentagon is more than many federal agencies' entire budgets. In fact, it would come in as the fifth largest spending federal agency in the government. Recently, lawmakers have pushed to add 18 billion of the war spending slush fund to a myriad of weapons systems and programs.

**Nuclear Spending on Overkill**

We are poised to spend an estimated trillion dollars over the next three decades on rebuilding and upgrading the U.S. nuclear arsenal. This year the President's budget requested approximately \$6 billion on recapitalization and another \$20 billion on the sustaining the current arsenal, which consists of a so-called triad – submarines, bombers and missiles. Additionally, the National Nuclear Security Administration budget focuses expenditures for nuclear weapons activities on nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal at the expense of nuclear security and terrorism prevention investments. This year's budget increases weapons activities by 4.5 percent and reduces spending on nuclear security by nearly seven percent. It's particularly disappointing to see these dollars flowing to lock in a huge U.S. nuclear arsenal for the rest of the century in light of President Obama's 2009 commitment to "seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons," and his recent visit to Hiroshima, Japan where he strongly affirmed that we can "chart a course that leads to the destruction of these stockpiles." Nuclear weapons don't address 21<sup>st</sup> century threats, instead they add to global insecurity. As former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry puts it, "I believe that the risk of a nuclear catastrophe today is greater than it was during the Cold War — and yet our public is blissfully unaware of the new nuclear dangers they face."

**What's Happening - The Budget Process and Pentagon Spending**

In February, the President released his budget request for Fiscal Year 2017 (which will begin October 1, 2016). Even while both the House and Senate have failed to agree to a Budget Resolution, the appropriations subcommittees have begun working on twelve separate spending bills. It is expected that a stop-gap continuing resolution may be needed to fund the government because it seems unlikely that Congress will complete work before leaving for election activities. In May and June both the House and Senate considered the National Defense Authorization Act which sets policy and budget authority for the DOD, war spending and nuclear weapons. The week of June 13, the House will consider the Defense Appropriations bill that appropriates money for the Department of Defense. The Senate is also expected to take up its version of the Defense Appropriations bill later in June.

## **TALKING POINTS ON BUDGET PRIORITIES & PENTAGON SPENDING**

### **Too much Money for the Pentagon**

- Year after year Pentagon spending takes over half of the discretionary budget that Congress appropriates. This leaves less for investments needed to create jobs and meet needs in our communities, like first responders, teachers, bridges, roads, rails and safe water pipes. [Recommend that you use most relevant local examples.]
- In an era of fiscal challenges, the Pentagon should exercise a little budget discipline as well. Something defense officials including Defense Secretary Ash Carter have repeatedly acknowledged.
- President Obama is proposing to spend more on the military than President Reagan ever did.
- Pentagon spending is higher than it was during Vietnam, and the peak of the Cold War.

### **Waste and lack of oversight at Pentagon**

- Every other major federal agency has successfully completed a financial audit. It's inexcusable that the Pentagon has never been audited. Taxpayers deserve to know where their money goes and how it's being used across the board.

### **War Spending and the Slush Fund - Overseas Contingency Operations or OCO**

- At \$59 Billion (President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2017) this **separate war spending fund** would be the 5<sup>th</sup> largest federal agency in the government. And some lawmakers want to add more.
- We cannot afford more war on the nation's credit card. Congress can and should responsibly appropriate funding to keep us safe by eliminating waste within the Pentagon's existing budget.
- Lawmakers and the Pentagon have been using the **war budget as a slush fund and a gimmick** to circumvent agreed to spending caps and with items that should be in the Defense Department budget.
- Blindly allocating billions in **war funds** without specific details about how those funds will be used can only lead to wasteful spending and more open-ended war.
- After long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we should prioritize spending tax dollars on providing care for veterans, and focus on ending and preventing wars.

### **Misguided priorities will not address 21st century threats or needs.**

- Current threats will not be solved by buying systems like the **costly F-35** riddled with safety and workability problems, or the **oversized nuclear arsenal**. Many weapons programs were conceived of years ago and have no use against the threats we face today.
- We are planning to spend **a trillion dollars building up the nuclear weapons arsenal** over the next 30 year, but our



troops won't be a dime's bit safer or better equipped and threats like cyber security and terrorism will not be addressed.

### **Jobs/Economy**

- Pentagon spending actually ranks last as a way to create jobs when compared to investing the same amount in healthcare, clean energy, or education.
- Pentagon waste hinders job production and investments in education and infrastructure at home.
- We will strengthen our economy and our national standing by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary spending.
- It is irresponsible to cut programs that strengthen our economy and benefit American families while turning a blind eye to obvious areas of potential saving in Pentagon spending

### **Security Needs a Different Approach**

- The Pentagon cannot solve all of the problems—in fact more weapons and war usually lead to more weapons and war. Security is more effective when combining diplomacy, economic statecraft, and military power in a complex world.
- The big problems of the world—violence against women, climate disruption, civil conflicts, poverty, racial and ethnic inequities,—can only be solved by working together. Military force alone will not solve America's problem. The budget and the focus of U.S. leadership should reflect that.
- Rather than investing a trillion dollars in the next generation of nuclear weapons, let's invest in the next generation of humans. With a trillion dollars for affordable college, millions of American families and our country would be stronger and more competitive.