## CP---Fund the Military

### Solves - 1NC

#### Funding key---weapons system modernization

Schake 4/5 (Kori Schake, Senior Fellow and Director of Defense Policy Studies, 4-5-22, “America Must Spend More on Defense”, Foreign Affairs, accessed 6-26-22, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2022-04-05/america-must-spend-more-defense> )//kp

BUILD BACK BETTER?

Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell used to say, “Show me your budget and I’ll tell you your strategy.” The Biden administration ’ s ability to produce a budget that funds its expansive strategy is a test of its seriousness —and it has been found wanting again. Congress had to step in after Biden’s first attempt last year, and his newly released budget asks for $773 billion, which doesn’t even keep pace with inflation.

Congress, by contrast, seems poised to raise the Defense Department’ s budget significantly. Representative Adam Smith, a Democrat from Washington and chair of the House Armed Services Committee, has said that “the Russian inva**sion of** Ukraine fundamentally altered what our national security posture and what our defense posture needs to be.” A **strategy** that **accounts for** Russian **aggression** in Europe will **necessitate** more forces and **different** kinds of **weaponry** than one solely focused on China. The Pentagon’s own accounting of its unfunded needs from the last budget amounts to $22 billion. Addressing that deficit would be a good place to start.

Restoring U.S. naval capabilities, which have stagnated in recent decades, should be another major priority as the United States moves to confront China. To start, policymakers should take up the Pentagon’s plan for a 500- ship navy and begin developing the industrial base needed to build it. The Pacific is predominantly a maritime theater, and Beijing’s fleet now surpasses what Washington has to defend its commitments in the region. Investing in shipbuilding could also provide some much-needed substance to the Biden administration’s concept of “ a foreign policy for the middle class ” by creating more jobs at home. Analysts estimate the cost of attaining a 500-ship navy at $34 billion per year for 30 years, totaling over $1 trillion. Making this investment will also result in a valuable expansion of the defense industrial base—the companies that build U.S. weapons and military systems.

The United States needs to expand the U.S. military to match Washington’s existing claims. The current U.S. military is sized to fight **only a single war**, as the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan revealed. Aligning strategy with reality should therefore be the focus of the defense planning process from start to finish. The price tag will be high: personnel costs for the current force comprise about 25 percent of the Defense Department’ s base budget. A force **capable of fighting two wars** would need roughly **double** the **current number of** 1.3 million **service members**, at a cost of about $160 billion per year.

The Defense Department also needs to adequately fund the construction and maintenance of military facilities and equipment, as the Pentagon tends to underfund or defer these problems when budgets are tight. The current figure for the maintenance and construction backlog is in the neighborhood of $140 billion. These delays have real consequences, including reducing the availability of important equipment and facilities. Navy dry docks, for instance, are more than 100 years old and in short supply (only one can hold a Ford-class aircraft carrier). As a result, U.S. shipyards are limited in how well they can service the fleet. U.S. forces are already too small for the existing strategy; Washington only limits them further by underfunding such logistical operations.

Finally, policymakers **need to reckon with** the **impending** wave of decisions about the **modernization** of existing weapons systems. The majority of conventional and nuclear weapons systems are approaching the end of their service lives, even with extension programs that stretched their use well beyond their original retirement date. Many **old systems are** also **bumping up against technological upgrades** designed **to keep** them **functional and interoperable** with newer platforms. In 2016, defense analyst Todd Harrison estimated the total cost of **developing new systems** to replace the old ones at $**130 billion across five years**. That number has only ballooned since then.

#### Funding solves---invest for a tech surprise!

Sayler 22 (Kelley M. Sayler, Analyst in Advanced Technology and Global Security, 4-6-2022, “Emerging Military Technologies: Background and Issues for Congress”, Congressional Research Service, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R46458.pdf> )//kp

**Funding** Considerations

A number of **emerging** military **technologies**, including hypersonic weapons and directed energy weapons, have experienced fluctuations in funding over the years. According to a U.S. government interagency task force on the defense industrial base, such “**fluctuations challenge** the viability of **suppliers** within the industrial base by **diminishing** their ability to hire and retain a **skilled workforce**, [achieve] **production efficiencies**, and in some cases, [stay] in business.” 174 Other analysts have noted that such fluctuations are often due to unavoidable tradeoffs between technology investment priorities or to questions about a given technology’s feasibility or maturity.175

Some analysts have suggested that, given the potential for technological surprise, **funding** for overall research and development **is inadequate**. Summarizing such views, technology expert Martijn Rasser notes that reducing overall research and development in order to enable “big bets” or heavy investments in a particular technology or technologies, can be a risky approach because “we just don’t know where the next breakthroughs will come from.” 176

#### Funding solves---ai specific ☺

---upon reflection, not the vibe

Vergun 21 (David Vergun, associate editor/writer at DoD News, 4-9-2021, “Artificial Intelligence Key to Maintaining Military, Economic Advantages, Leaders Say”, U.S. Department of Defense, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2567486/artificial-intelligence-key-to-maintaining-military-economic-advantages-leaders/#pop4996462> )//kp

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Michael S. Groen, director of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, and Robert O. Work, vice chair of the NSCAI, spoke to reporters at the Pentagon.

Work provided an overview of the report:

The United States does not have a strategy, organizational structure and resources to win the competition with China for effective implementation of AI, he said.

"So the first thing is we have got to do is to take this competition seriously, and we need to win it."

To win, AI must receive the necessary funding, at least 3.4% of the DOD budget. Those funds should then be channeled into priority areas as recommended by a steering committee consisting of the deputy defense secretary, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the principal director of national intelligence, he said, noting that a good first step was having the JAIC report directly to the deputy defense secretary.

That steering committee would also remove any bureaucratic obstacles and would oversee the development of a technology annex to the [National Defense Strategy](https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/National-Defense-Strategy/), Work said.

Also the department should set AI readiness performance goals by the end of this fiscal year, with an eye toward AI-ready implementation by 2025, he said.

Work noted that the U.S. is still the world leader in AI, but China is structured to rapidly advance with its strong government support to academia, the private sector and People's Liberation Army.

Identifying the right talent for AI, ensuring AI is used in an ethically responsible manner and forming international partnerships are other ingredients for successful AI implementation, Work said.

Groen said the department agrees with the report and is already implementing about 100 of recommendations that were given. Other recommendations would be included in feasibility studies.

"AI as a core tenet of defense modernization," Groen said. AI efforts will be fundamental to achieving quality networks and data services in a secure manner.

"We've created positive momentum for AI, and we continue to build on that now. But now comes the real critical test in any transformation. The hardest part is institutional change and change management of the workforce and practices and processes that drive a business. This step will not be easy, even within the Department of Defense, but it's foundational to our competitive success, our accountability and our affordability," he said. "We have a generational opportunity here for AI to be our future. We must act now. We need to start putting these pieces into place now."

AI isn't just important for the DOD's warfighting capabilities, it will also be a powerful driver of the American economy, Groen said.

#### Only funding solves modernization

Eaglen 5/16 (Mackenzie Eaglen, Senior Fellow at American Enterprise Institute, 5-16-2022, “$846 Billion: The Budget the U.S. Military Really Needs”, American Enterprise Institute, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/846-billion-the-budget-the-u-s-military-really-needs/> )//kp

While Pentagon leaders are busy [rejecting proposed additional funds from Congress](https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/hicks-wants-congress-avoid-budget-boosts-diverge-dods-plans) to meet ongoing requirements, politicians are dusting off their pocket constitutions to remind them [who gets the last word](https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/article-1/section-8/) on appropriations.

Since release of the fiscal year (FY) 2023 defense budget request, rising inflation has remained front and center for Congress. [Department of Defense (DoD) leaders were unclear](https://www.inhofe.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/inhofe-rogers-press-biden-administration-to-clarify-effects-of-inflation-on-pentagon-budget) under questioning about what their inflation estimates for 2022, 2023, and the five-year projections are. Even without exact forecasts, it was and is clear that the White House’s [budget](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/04/is-joe-bidens-new-us-navy-budget-illegal/) of $773 billion for the US military does not provide the growth above inflation necessary to simultaneously keep pace with rising personnel costs, [modernization priorities](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/03/ngad-the-6th-generation-stealth-fighter-that-could-change-everything/), and general warfighting readiness.

With the request now in Congress’s hands, the question is, [how much](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/04/why-joe-bidens-defense-budget-is-russia-and-chinas-dream-come-true/) does the Pentagon actually need?

The answer: around $846 billion for 2023.

A more realistic defense topline accounts for [genuine inflation](https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2022/04/inflation-new-sequestration/363879/), fully resources the [Unfunded Priorities](https://rollcall.com/2022/04/18/new-requests-bring-militarys-unfunded-priorities-above-21-billion/) of the armed forces and combatant commands, and provides [three percent real growth](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf) to meet rising security challenges and put a down payment on the national defense strategy.

Let’s do the math.

In [a response](https://www.inhofe.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/0502.22dodresponsetoinhoferogersinflationletter.pdf) to Senate and House Armed Services Committee Ranking Members Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) and Rep. Mike Rogers’ (R-AL) inquiry for transparency about inflation estimates, defense comptroller Mike McCord and the service secretaries responded. They stated that the Defense Department prefers to use the Gross Domestic Product chain-type price index (GDP-PI) for budget building, which they estimated to be 3.9 percent. While most Americans are likely familiar with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate, defense officials stated that it is “less useful for DoD since it measures changes in prices for consumer goods for a market basket of consumer goods and services.” Ironic, given that troops, their families and even the Pentagon itself are consumers buying various goods and services.

Both price indexes have increased radically over the past fiscal year, with the most recent estimates hitting [8.0 percent for GDP-PI](https://www.bea.gov/data/prices-inflation/gdp-price-index) and [8.3 percent for CPI](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm). Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin requested and the White House allowed an additional [$20 billion](https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3012264/dod-uses-chain-weighted-consumer-price-index-to-account-for-inflation/) to account for high inflation in 2023. The “extra” sums account for the $18 billion difference between 2.2 percent inflation that the Pentagon typically projects and the 3.9 percent assumed in this budget. But what about the open wound between 3.9 percent and [the very real—and growing—inflation rates today](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/05/11/inflation-biden-wishful-thinking/) that leave the defense budget bleeding out?

Since defense officials claim the GDP-PI “reflects the types of purchases the Department makes—large end items and contracted services,” Congress may use GDP-PI—but with a more accurate and realistic estimate. The [GDP-PI Q2-2021 to Q1-2022 inflation average](https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=19&step=3&isuri=1&1921=survey&1903=11#reqid=19&step=3&isuri=1&1921=survey&1903=11) is 6.8 percent. If there is any signal as to how far off-base the administration’s 3.9 percent estimate was, it is that the GDP-PI index has not been below 4.3 percent since 2020.

The 6.8% average estimate includes anywhere from five to 8 percent inflation over the four quarters, and still anticipates a gradual relief from today’s pressure over the next fiscal year. It is generously low, too, compared to “itemized” inflation rates for products like gasoline, which sits at [44 percent as of May 11, 2022](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm), especially when taking into consideration that the military is one of the world’s largest gasoline and fuel users.

The deflated $773 billion defense budget request—meaning stripped of the 3.9 percent inflation adjustment so there is not inflation “double dipping”—is $743 billion. Adding the more reasonable 6.8 percent inflation calculation to the deflated budget brings defense funding needs to $793 billion for next year.

However, defense officials said themselves that GDP-PI reflects “large end items,” while CPI is more accurate for average consumer goods. Troops and their families don’t live in supply chain vacuums as some weapons systems might with long lead purchases and select prices locked in years ago. This means uniformed personnel are confronting 9.4 percent inflation on food at home, 13.7 percent on housing energy, 5 percent on shelter, and the 44 percent previously mentioned on gas, just like the rest of us. So rather than using GDP-PI for Military Personnel costs (which include salaries and healthcare) that would restrict their buying power for daily life purchases, CPI would be more appropriate. Using a more honest 7.46 percent CPI estimate (the FY22 average so far) for military personnel raises the topline to $794.5 billion needed next year.

In addition to supplying inflation-adjusted requested funds, Congress will want to consider adding back the many programs that did not make it into the president’s defense budget request. Each year the armed forces and combatant commands submit Unfunded Priorities Lists (UPLs) that identify programs and mission requirements “[intended to support strategic objectives](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/IF11964.pdf)” that the White House chooses not to include. In other words, what the military needs and would spend money on to meet ongoing requirements if they received additional appropriations. For FY 2023, these requests total about $27.2 billion and by all accounts are for necessary requirements and not superfluous nice-to-have extras.

With the US military advantages gradually eroding in light of [China’s military expansion](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/05/chinas-j-20-stealth-fighter-an-f-35-killer-or-paper-tiger/) and rapid innovation, the United States cannot accept declining combat power at a time of heightened risk to buy the promise of future technologies. Fully resourcing the services’ unfunded priorities brings the total needed defense budget for 2023 to $821.6 billion.

While the budget increases with the above inflation and unfunded adjustments, it still does not grow. A defense budget of $821.6 billion in 2023 provides zero real growth; meanwhile military missions—and [bills for those missions](https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/dod-details-3b-proposal-deal-climate-change)—continue to expand under this administration.

To enable the military to tackle its modernization priorities and sustain conventional deterrence over the medium-term, [real budget growth is necessary](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf). Military leaders have [long called for three to five percent annual real growth](https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2017/06/13/dod-needs-3-5-percent-annual-growth-through-2023-top-officials-say/) to invest smartly in the defense strategy. The topline recommended in this analysis is the minimum to “maintain America’s military capabilities” at 3 percent real growth, totaling $846.3 billion for the next fiscal year.

Funding the military is neither an easy nor inexpensive undertaking, but the security of American citizens and the safeguarding of our national interests demand that Congress do so adequately. The president’s 2023 defense budget request failed to tackle inflation, provide for any modest real growth above inflation, or meet the full needs of the armed forces. $846 billion in FY 2023 is a more realistic down payment on matching defense investments against national security threats and should be the starting point as Congress builds a more accurate defense budget.

#### Funding’s key to readiness

Eaglen 5/23 (Mackenzie Eaglen, senior fellow at the American Enterprise and former on the congressionally mandated National Defense Strategy Commission, 5-23-2022, “The US defense budget’s latest casualty is readiness”, DefenseNews, accessed 6-28-2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/05/23/the-us-defense-budgets-latest-casualty-is-readiness/> \*\*some graphs omitted, I kept one because it looks cute\*\* )//kp

America’s military leaders state time and again that China’s forcible assault on Taiwan, and therefore our response to it, is a near-term challenge . Given the lengthy time to plan, program, [build](https://cimsec.org/20-years-of-naval-trends-guarantee-a-fy23-shipbuilding-plan-failure/) and field credible combat power, [a 2027 problem](https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/10/asia/us-pacific-commander-china-threat-intl-hnk-ml/index.html) is really one of today. Alarm bells should be ringing in Congress as the president’s latest defense budget cuts readiness.

Given that ongoing support for Ukraine is straining some key U.S. military supplies and munitions, everyone should be concerned the China fight would [demand even more](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf) and faster. As this Pentagon team is [plagued with “next war-itis”](https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2022/05/four-lessons-should-upend-pentagons-five-year-strategy/366695/) by [overly biasing research and development dollars](https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/defense-budget-masquerades-as-generous-while-shrinking-the-armed-forces/) to prepare for future wars over [purchasing from hot production lines today](https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/03/10/the-pentagon-must-pay-for-competition/), the result is the erosion of our few remaining competitive advantages.

For fiscal 2023, the administration requested $119.4 billion in readiness compared to the fiscal 2022 request of $109 billion. The 9.84% increase is a decrease in real terms. To simply match 2019 (pre-pandemic) purchasing power under the 2.2% inflationary estimates that the Pentagon and White House are using to tout a “record” budget, the military would need to invest $133.84 billion. That still would only be a flat budget under today’s inflation.

The Army, Navy and Air Force are confronting a $26 billion gap between what the budget request provides them once adjusted for inflation and the levels of funding they would need to maintain buying power at 2019 levels.

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

(American Enterprise Institute)

In 2013, similar across-the-board cuts came in the form of sequestration, or a self-imposed spending freeze that disproportionately harmed the military due to inaction by politicians on debt reduction. Uniformed leaders [**described the abrupt cuts**](https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/694480/sequestration-poses-biggest-threat-to-readiness-military-leaders-say/)**as the “biggest challenge to the military’s readiness.**” The result is not “tough but necessary choices,” but rather destructive early [decommissionings](https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2022/04/04/us-navy-reveals-ships-facing-potential-decommissioning-next-year/" \t "_blank) and [retirements](https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/1008625364/), along with [extended deployments](https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2021/07/18/eisenhower-returns-to-norfolk-after-double-pump-deployment/) and [unsafe work environments](https://www.businessinsider.com/american-military-bases-are-slowly-falling-apart-2021-8) for troops.

The administration is shooting itself in the foot by not sustaining the readiness of the very systems they seek to modernize. By overusing systems and facilities without adequate maintenance, they won’t be prepared for modernization upgrades once they become available. In other words, **lack of sustainment delays innovation implementation**.

For example, the latest budget request only funds weapon systems sustainment for the Air Force at 85% of requirements. Over the past four years, weapon sustainment dollars have fallen and been unable to match 2019 levels.

(American Enterprise Institute)

To advance future capabilities that provide for long-term readiness, the armed services need well-trained, knowledgeable warfighters who **have the capacity to integrate modernized systems into sustained arsenals**. Instead, the budget’s reductions come at a point when the operational tempo of the force continues to increase as capacity investments are falling.

The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office [clearly stated in a report just last year](https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-279.pdf) that “nearly 2 decades of conflict has degraded military readiness at a time when the National Defense Strategy calls for preparedness for great-power competition.” The administration [offers an NDS](https://media.defense.gov/2022/Mar/28/2002964702/-1/-1/1/NDS-FACT-SHEET.PDF) that maintains this call while producing a budget that further degrades U.S. armed forces by ignoring the realities Pentagon leadership seems to [acknowledge](https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2845661/china-remains-pacing-challenge-for-us-pentagon-press-secretary-says/): U.S. competition with China.

At the same time, as readiness and sustainment are tanking, [Pentagon reports](https://www.defensenews.com/news/pentagon-congress/2021/11/03/chinas-march-toward-a-world-class-military-and-how-it-threatens-taiwan/) that assess [the People’s Liberation Army’s and Navy’s strengths](https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2022/05/16/satellite-photos-show-possible-new-chinese-nuclear-submarine-able-to-launch-cruise-missiles/) have confirmed China developed and holds the world’s largest naval force, many of the most advanced missile systems, and more troops than the U.S. in order to harness them.

Considering we are crushed by ship and troop count, the remaining American advantage to Chinese defense forces is the credibility and capability of our service members and their weapons systems. American warfighters are the most well-trained and battle-tested individuals on the globe. For Air Force pilots alone, U.S. forces averaged 2.5 times the number of flight training hours per year than their Chinese counterparts. Unfortunately, the Biden administration’s budget proposal fails to fully consider this advantage.

Declining readiness means decreased training. To hone in on the Air Force pilot advantage specifically, this ratio is rapidly leveling. Required flight training hours — which keep airmen prepared and ready for battle — have continuously declined over the past five fiscal years. In FY19, the Air Force averaged 1.45 million hours of in-flight training in their respective aircraft; today, training is nearly 25% less, with 1.12 million hours requested in President Joe Biden’s FY23 request. This request slashes 24,000 hours in just one year.

(American Enterprise Institute)

Two years ago, [then-Defense Secretary Mark Esper said](https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2384489/secretary-esper-discusses-readiness-and-modernization-at-the-heritage-foundation/): “The bottom line is that each part of the readiness life cycle is vital to preparing and enabling our men and women in uniform to successfully execute their mission. The question we must answer is this: if called upon to fight tonight, are we ready?” His answer in 2020 was “yes.” Under proposed FY23 readiness levels, which fail to stem the downward trend, the answer could soon become “no.”

So what does Congress need to do to change the tide? Invest $142.4 billion in readiness for FY23 — a figure that adjusts for realistic inflation rates and adds 3% real growth that would allow the services to make small steps toward resurging readiness levels. Targeted investments should include pursuing restored Air Force flight training and the maintenance of the aircraft themselves, reducing the growing forward-fleet operations tempo in order to sustain readiness and prevent sailor fatigue, as well as improving basing and restoring the Army’s munitions stocks to ensure day-of fighting preparedness.

Modernization efforts should not come at the cost of our deterrence today. While [Russia inches toward NATO borders](https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/ukraine/) and [China repeatedly demonstrates its aggression toward Taiwan](https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2021/11/10/china-is-boosting-intel-gathering-capabilities-aimed-at-taiwan-says-new-report-from-taipei/), the U.S. cannot afford to leave readiness priorities underfunded. By failing to fully account for realistic inflation estimates and match pre-pandemic readiness investments, the White House is openly accepting more risk at a time of heightened security challenges around the world. To meet and defeat these challenges, Congress must also meet $142 billion in this budget cycle and continue growing readiness in the critical years ahead.

#### More funds for ai and cyber PLEASE!

Aderholt 5/9 (Robert Aderholt, Alabama’s 4th congressional district representative, 5-9-2022, “Our defense budget gap threatens America’s security”, The Hill, accessed 6-28-2022, <https://thehill.com/opinion/congress-blog/3482042-our-defense-budget-gap-threatens-americas-security/> )//kp

Since Russia invaded Ukraine at the end of February, the United States, and other nations, have been helping the Ukrainians resist by sending them billions of dollars of military equipment.

I have supported these efforts and am open to sending even more. While we as a country have stood up and led on this issue, I feel in many respects, since the end of the Cold War, we’ve gone adrift. This current crisis in Europe has shed an even bigger light on our own military shortcomings.

We are woefully unprepared to take on **China and Russia** head-to-head. Both have been heavily **investing in new technologies and** capabilities to achieve their particular goals. While Russia is struggling in Ukraine, they still have a massive stockpile of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons and advanced delivery systems.  Meanwhile, here in America we have just been pushing the status quo and trying to play catchup, i.e. hypersonic weapons.

While I certainly hope we never have to become involved in a war with either, [military war games show us performing badly](https://www.businessinsider.com/the-us-apparently-gets-its-ass-handed-to-it-in-war-games-2019-3), and in some scenarios, downright losing.

It doesn’t help that America showed weakness with [President Obama’s](https://thehill.com/people/barack-obama/)“red line” in Syria, offered no significant push-back to Russia’s annexation of Crimea, and President [Biden](https://thehill.com/people/biden/)hastily evacuated Afghanistan in a humiliating fashion. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping were watching closely.

We have time to correct these shortcomings, but it’s later than we think.

As a member of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, I am **calling for a dramatic** increase in our **defense** budget. It’s time. Our current spending is just over [3 percent of our Gross Domestic Product](https://www.statista.com/statistics/217581/outlays-for-defense-and-forecast-in-the-us-as-a-percentage-of-the-gdp/#:~:text=The%20statistic%20represents%20the%20U.S.,percent%20of%20the%20U.S.%20GDP.). Our current spending of almost eight hundred billion a year on defense is not even close to meet the challenges we have coming at us from China and Russia, North Korea and Iran.

Since the end of the Cold War, we have averaged around 4.4 percent of our GDP on defense spending. During the Cold War, it was closer to 8 percent.

I believe we are facing even greater challenges now than during the Cold War.  This difference between our current 3 percent of GDP and our average of 4.4 percent of GDP is what I call our “Security Gap.”

This “**Security Gap**” is keeping us from maintaining our leadership role. This “Security Gap” is **keeping us from** **staying** at least a **generation ahead of** our **foes in** **technology**, let alone keep up with them.

This “Security Gap” is keeping us from paying our men and women in uniform wages that compete better with the private sector.

This “Security Gap” is **keeping us from modernizing** our nuclear forces. It is keeping us from building the naval resources we need to stay ahead of China. It is keeping us from accelerating our missile defense technologies, and from accelerating our offensive and defensive capacities in cyberwarfare.

Peace through Strength should once again be our focus. More than 100 years ago [Theodore Roosevelt](https://thehill.com/people/theodore-roosevelt/)understood this when he said speak softly but carry a big stick. We must ensure that our military is the most powerful and most capable on the planet by **leveraging our technological capabilities**.

We must not only fund and accelerate development of new technologies such as hypersonics, advanced lasers, advanced missile defenses, smarter drones, etc., we must also increase our production of conventional weapons. At the end of the Cold War, we had $21 billion worth of weapons in our inventory. Today, that amount is down below one billion. We already have shortfalls in key conventional systems needed for Ukraine, and we are at [least a year behind in fulfilling weapons deliveries to Taiwan](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/03/taiwan-ukraine-howitzers-paladins-weapons/).

The United States must **work towards** the **domination of** warfighting domains such as space, **cyber and artificial intelligence**. This includes fully funding Space Command and making sure we dominate in space. Space Command and Space Force are some of the greatest ways for us to achieve new levels of superiority over the Chinese and Russians.

We also have not spent nearly enough money on U.S. **Cyber** Command. Their main mission has been to counter cyber threats to the homeland. But their **capabilities** to launch offensive operations have been **woefully underfunded**. Our cyber capabilities must remain the most robust in the world with a myriad of options for our cyber commanders to deal with any threat, anywhere.

We must also begin to strengthen our old alliances like NATO and to continue to make new ones in Southeast Asia. China is working relentlessly to build new alliances around the world, in particular the continent of Africa.  The Chinese have [invested billions of dollars in infrastructure in African nations](https://qz.com/africa/2125769/china-has-invested-23-billion-in-africas-infrastructure/).

If America creates leadership vacuums, the Chinese will be more than happy to fill them.

As long as I’m in Congress I will be fighting to ensure America has the military might to thwart any and all attempts to weaken this great nation.

We are talking about a significant, but necessary amount of money. I envision by 2026 our defense budget should be closer to $1.1 trillion, instead of the current presidential request for $773 billion.

In the past, when our nation has come under attack, whether it was Sept. 11 or Pearl Harbor, we have all immediately rallied to stand up and defend this nation.  But on both occasions, we found ourselves ill prepared, which left us vulnerable to attack in the first place.

In the 1970 film about the Pearl Harbor attack called “Tora Tora Tora,” one of the Japanese generals, in referring to the United States, is depicted as saying, “I’m afraid we have awakened a sleeping giant.”

Well, 80 years later, the world has become far too dangerous for us to ever be caught sleeping again.

Aderholt represents Alabama’s 4th District and is House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

### Solves - Modernization

#### Only funding solves modernization

Eaglen 5/16 (Mackenzie Eaglen, Senior Fellow at American Enterprise Institute, 5-16-2022, “$846 Billion: The Budget the U.S. Military Really Needs”, American Enterprise Institute, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/846-billion-the-budget-the-u-s-military-really-needs/> )//kpt

While Pentagon leaders are busy [rejecting proposed additional funds from Congress](https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/hicks-wants-congress-avoid-budget-boosts-diverge-dods-plans) to meet ongoing requirements, politicians are dusting off their pocket constitutions to remind them [who gets the last word](https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/article-1/section-8/) on appropriations.

Since release of the fiscal year (FY) 2023 defense budget request, rising inflation has remained front and center for Congress. [Department of Defense (DoD) leaders were unclear](https://www.inhofe.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/inhofe-rogers-press-biden-administration-to-clarify-effects-of-inflation-on-pentagon-budget) under questioning about what their inflation estimates for 2022, 2023, and the five-year projections are. Even without exact forecasts, it was and is clear that the White House’s [**budget**](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/04/is-joe-bidens-new-us-navy-budget-illegal/) of $773 billion for the US military **does not provide the growth** above inflation necessary **to** simultaneously **keep pace with rising personnel costs,**[**modernization priorities**](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/03/ngad-the-6th-generation-stealth-fighter-that-could-change-everything/)**, and** general warfighting **readiness**.

With the request now in Congress’s hands, the question is, [how much](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/04/why-joe-bidens-defense-budget-is-russia-and-chinas-dream-come-true/) does the Pentagon actually need?

The answer: around $846 billion for 2023.

A more **realistic defense** topline accounts for [genuine inflation](https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2022/04/inflation-new-sequestration/363879/), fully resources the [Unfunded Priorities](https://rollcall.com/2022/04/18/new-requests-bring-militarys-unfunded-priorities-above-21-billion/) of the armed forces and combatant commands, and provides [three percent real **growth**](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf) **to meet rising** security **challenges** and put a down payment on the national defense strategy.

Let’s do the math.

In [a response](https://www.inhofe.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/0502.22dodresponsetoinhoferogersinflationletter.pdf) to Senate and House Armed Services Committee Ranking Members Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) and Rep. Mike Rogers’ (R-AL) inquiry for transparency about inflation estimates, defense comptroller Mike McCord and the service secretaries responded. They stated that the Defense Department prefers to use the Gross Domestic Product chain-type price index (GDP-PI) for budget building, which they estimated to be 3.9 percent. While most Americans are likely familiar with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate, defense officials stated that it is “less useful for DoD since it measures changes in prices for consumer goods for a market basket of consumer goods and services.” Ironic, given that troops, their families and even the Pentagon itself are consumers buying various goods and services.

Both price indexes have increased radically over the past fiscal year, with the most recent estimates hitting [8.0 percent for GDP-PI](https://www.bea.gov/data/prices-inflation/gdp-price-index) and [8.3 percent for CPI](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm). Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin requested and the White House allowed an additional [$20 billion](https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3012264/dod-uses-chain-weighted-consumer-price-index-to-account-for-inflation/) to account for high inflation in 2023. The “extra” sums account for the $18 billion difference between 2.2 percent inflation that the Pentagon typically projects and the 3.9 percent assumed in this budget. But what about the open wound between 3.9 percent and [the very real—and growing—inflation rates today](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/05/11/inflation-biden-wishful-thinking/) that leave the defense budget bleeding out?

Since defense officials claim the GDP-PI “reflects the types of purchases the Department makes—large end items and contracted services,” Congress may use GDP-PI—but with a more accurate and realistic estimate. The [GDP-PI Q2-2021 to Q1-2022 inflation average](https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=19&step=3&isuri=1&1921=survey&1903=11#reqid=19&step=3&isuri=1&1921=survey&1903=11) is 6.8 percent. If there is any signal as to how far off-base the administration’s 3.9 percent estimate was, it is that the GDP-PI index has not been below 4.3 percent since 2020.

The 6.8% average estimate includes anywhere from five to 8 percent inflation over the four quarters, and still anticipates a gradual relief from today’s pressure over the next fiscal year. It is generously low, too, compared to “itemized” inflation rates for products like gasoline, which sits at [44 percent as of May 11, 2022](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm), especially when taking into consideration that the military is one of the world’s largest gasoline and fuel users.

The deflated $773 billion defense budget request—meaning stripped of the 3.9 percent inflation adjustment so there is not inflation “double dipping”—is $743 billion. Adding the more reasonable 6.8 percent inflation calculation to the deflated budget brings defense funding needs to $793 billion for next year.

However, defense officials said themselves that GDP-PI reflects “large end items,” while CPI is more accurate for average consumer goods. Troops and their families don’t live in supply chain vacuums as some weapons systems might with long lead purchases and select prices locked in years ago. This means uniformed personnel are confronting 9.4 percent inflation on food at home, 13.7 percent on housing energy, 5 percent on shelter, and the 44 percent previously mentioned on gas, just like the rest of us. So rather than using GDP-PI for Military Personnel costs (which include salaries and healthcare) that would restrict their buying power for daily life purchases, CPI would be more appropriate. Using a more honest 7.46 percent CPI estimate (the FY22 average so far) for military personnel raises the topline to $794.5 billion needed next year.

In addition to supplying inflation-adjusted requested funds, Congress will want to consider adding back the many programs that did not make it into the president’s defense budget request. Each year the armed forces and combatant commands submit Unfunded Priorities Lists (UPLs) that identify programs and mission requirements “[intended to support strategic objectives](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/IF11964.pdf)” that the White House chooses not to include. In other words, what the military needs and would spend money on to meet ongoing requirements if they received additional appropriations. For FY 2023, these requests total about $27.2 billion and by all accounts are for necessary requirements and not superfluous nice-to-have extras.

With the US **military advantages gradually eroding** in light of [China’s military expansion](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/05/chinas-j-20-stealth-fighter-an-f-35-killer-or-paper-tiger/) and rapid innovation, the **United States cannot accept declining** combat **power** at a time of **heightened** risk to buy the promise **of future technologies**. Fully resourcing the services’ unfunded priorities brings the total needed defense budget for 2023 to $821.6 billion.

While the budget increases with the above inflation and unfunded adjustments, it still does not grow. A defense budget of $821.6 billion in 2023 provides zero real growth; meanwhile military missions—and [bills for those missions](https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/dod-details-3b-proposal-deal-climate-change)—continue to expand under this administration.

**To enable** the military to tackle its **modernization** priorities and sustain conventional deterrence over the medium-term, [**real budget growth is necessary**](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf)**.** Military leaders have [long called for three to five percent annual real growth](https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2017/06/13/dod-needs-3-5-percent-annual-growth-through-2023-top-officials-say/) to invest smartly in the defense strategy. The topline recommended in this analysis is the minimum to “maintain America’s military capabilities” at 3 percent real growth, totaling $846.3 billion for the next fiscal year.

**Funding the military** is neither an easy nor inexpensive undertaking, but the security of American citizens and the safeguarding of our national interests demand that Congress do so adequately. The president’s 2023 defense budget request failed to tackle inflation, provide for any modest real growth above inflation, or meet the full needs of the armed forces. $846 billion in FY 2023 is a more realistic down payment on matching defense investments against national security threats and should be the starting point as Congress builds a more accurate defense budget.

### Solves – Emerging Tech

#### Funding solves---invest for a tech surprise!

Sayler 22 (Kelley M. Sayler, Analyst in Advanced Technology and Global Security, 4-6-2022, “Emerging Military Technologies: Background and Issues for Congress”, Congressional Research Service, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R46458.pdf> )//kpt

**Funding** Considerations

A number of **emerging** military **technologies**, including hypersonic weapons and directed energy weapons, have experienced fluctuations in funding over the years. According to a U.S. government interagency task force on the defense industrial base, such “**fluctuations challenge** the viability of **suppliers** within the industrial base by **diminishing** their ability to hire and retain a **skilled workforce**, [achieve] **production efficiencies**, and in some cases, [stay] in business.” 174 Other analysts have noted that such fluctuations are often due to unavoidable tradeoffs between technology investment priorities or to questions about a given technology’s feasibility or maturity.175

Some analysts have suggested that, given the potential for technological surprise, **funding** for overall research and development **is inadequate**. Summarizing such views, technology expert Martijn Rasser notes that reducing overall research and development in order to enable “big bets” or heavy investments in a particular technology or technologies, can be a risky approach because “we just don’t know where the next breakthroughs will come from.” 176

### Solves - AI

#### Funding solves---ai specific

Vergun 21 (David Vergun, associate editor/writer at DoD News, 4-9-2021, “Artificial Intelligence Key to Maintaining Military, Economic Advantages, Leaders Say”, U.S. Department of Defense, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2567486/artificial-intelligence-key-to-maintaining-military-economic-advantages-leaders/#pop4996462> )//kpt

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Michael S. Groen, director of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, and Robert O. Work, vice chair of the NSCAI, spoke to reporters at the Pentagon.

Work provided an overview of the report:

The United States does not have a strategy, organizational structure and resources to win the competition with China for effective implementation of AI, he said.

"So the first thing is we have got to do is to take this competition seriously, and we need to win it."

To win, AI must receive the necessary funding, at least 3.4% of the DOD budget. Those funds should then be channeled into priority areas as recommended by a steering committee consisting of the deputy defense secretary, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the principal director of national intelligence, he said, noting that a good first step was having the JAIC report directly to the deputy defense secretary.

That steering committee would also remove any bureaucratic obstacles and would oversee the development of a technology annex to the [National Defense Strategy](https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/National-Defense-Strategy/), Work said.

Also the department should set AI readiness performance goals by the end of this fiscal year, with an eye toward AI-ready implementation by 2025, he said.

Work noted that the U.S. is still the world leader in AI, but China is structured to rapidly advance with its strong government support to academia, the private sector and People's Liberation Army.

Identifying the right talent for AI, ensuring AI is used in an ethically responsible manner and forming international partnerships are other ingredients for successful AI implementation, Work said.

Groen said the department agrees with the report and is already implementing about 100 of recommendations that were given. Other recommendations would be included in feasibility studies.

"AI as a core tenet of defense modernization," Groen said. AI efforts will be fundamental to achieving quality networks and data services in a secure manner.

"We've created positive momentum for AI, and we continue to build on that now. But now comes the real critical test in any transformation. The hardest part is institutional change and change management of the workforce and practices and processes that drive a business. This step will not be easy, even within the Department of Defense, but it's foundational to our competitive success, our accountability and our affordability," he said. "We have a generational opportunity here for AI to be our future. We must act now. We need to start putting these pieces into place now."

AI isn't just important for the DOD's warfighting capabilities, it will also be a powerful driver of the American economy, Groen said.

## Aff

### 2AC – Funding Fails

#### Funding fails---mismanagement means programs are doomed

Negin 20 (Elliott Negin, Senior writer at UCS, 9-14-2020, “It’s Time to Rein in Inflated Military Budgets”, Scientific American, accessed 6-27-2022, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/its-time-to-rein-in-inflated-military-budgets/> )//kp

THE PENTAGON WASTES YOUR MONEY

There are plenty of reasons to cut the Pentagon’s budget, but its track record of profligate spending is among the most obvious. If the Pentagon were a private corporation, gross **mismanagement would have forced** it **into** **bankruptcy** years ago. **Dysfunctional internal controls**, **aided** and abetted **by** years of **lax** congressional and administration **oversight**, have enabled it to waste tens of billions of dollars annually, and the last **20 years** are **littered** **with** a parade of overpriced, **botched** and bungled **projects**.

In just the first decade of this century, the Pentagon was forced to cancel a dozen ill-conceived, ineffective weapons programs that cost taxpayers [$46 billion](https://www.military.com/defensetech/2011/07/19/46-billion-worth-of-cancelled-programs). They included the [Future Combat Systems program](https://www.defensenews.com/30th-annivesary/2016/10/25/30-years-future-combat-systems-acquisition-gone-wrong/), a fleet of networked high-tech vehicles that did not work; the [Comanche helicopter](https://nation.time.com/2012/05/25/real-lessons-from-an-unreal-helicopter/), which—after 22 years in development—was never built; and the 40-ton [Crusader artillery gun](https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-2002-05-09-0205090111-story.html), which never even made it to the prototype stage.

To put this example of managerial malfeasance in context, these canceled programs collectively cost more than the federal government [spent](https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/budget) on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over the last five years.

At least the Pentagon killed those projects before they wasted any more money. All too often, it does not know when to pull the plug. The Army’s attempt to replace its outmoded Bradley tank is a case in point. Over the last 17 years, it has blown an estimated [$22.9 billion](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/army-decided-replace-bradley-fighting-vehicles-17-years-22b-ago-ncna1136141) on three flawed prototypes, but in February—just three weeks after rejecting the third failed design—it issued yet another request for proposals from defense contractors.

Then there are programs the **Pentagon** continues to **green-light with zero** **assurance they will** ever **perform as advertised**. Exhibit A: The Pentagon has wasted more than [$67 billion](https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/692136.pdf) since the late 1990s on a ballistic missile defense system that [has never been demonstrated to work](https://blog.ucsusa.org/elliott-negin/missile-defense-risks) in a real-world situation. A spawn of Ronald Reagan’s Star Wars fantasy, the system—based in Alaska and California—will never be able to defend the continental United States from a limited nuclear attack. Any country capable of launching a ballistic missile could easily foil the system with [decoys and other countermeasures](https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/decoys-used-missile-defense-intercept-tests).

Another prime example is the [F-35 Joint Strike Fighter](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/21/magazine/f35-joint-strike-fighter-program.html). Expected to cost [$1.5 trillion](https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/f35-fighter-jet-pentagon/) over its lifespan, it has the dubious distinction of being the Department of Defense’s most expensive weapons program of all time. The 490 **F-35s** built since the **first prototype** flew **20 years ago** continue to be [**plagued**](https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/aviation/a30718538/f-35-flaws/)**by** a **dozen** serious **flaws** and **nearly 900 software defects**, and roughly half of the fleet in 2017 and 2018 was grounded for maintenance. Regardless, the Pentagon still plans to buy [2,400 more](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/f-35-takes-flak-but-still-flying-high) F-35s over the next 25 years.

The F-35 is just one of the malfunctioning weapons systems on the Pentagon’s current [$1.8-trillion](https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-439#summary) shopping list of overpriced aircraft, missiles, ships, satellites and tanks. Other poor performers include the $22-billion [Zumwalt destroyer](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/after-sinking-billions-its-stealth-destroyers-navy-needs-more-money-keep-them-afloat), a warship without a mission; the $30-billion [littoral combat ship](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/navy-spent-30b-16-years-fight-iran-littoral-combat-ship-ncna1031806), which the Navy is already mothballing because it is virtually unusable; and the Air Force’s problem-plagued $43-billion [KC-46 refueling tanker](https://www.defensenews.com/air/2020/06/09/the-air-force-delays-a-full-rate-production-decision-for-the-kc-46/), which offers little improvement over current refuelers.

But it is not only exorbitant hardware that picks taxpayer pockets. Pentagon administrative costs are also out of control. A January 2015 report by a federal advisory panel found that the **Pentagon could save**[**$125 billion**](https://www.defensenews.com/2015/01/23/dod-business-panel-proposes-125b-in-savings/) in administrative waste by **streamlining** its **bloated bureaucracy**. That sum alone is 15 times more than the [$8.3 billion](https://thehill.com/policy/finance/488521-trump-reverses-on-request-to-cut-cdc-niaid-funding) the Trump administration proposes to spend in the next fiscal year to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention during one of the worst pandemics in modern history.

#### More funds exacerbate existing ineffectiveness

Manjoo 1/13 (Farhad Manjoo, New York Times columnist, 1-13-2022, “We Must Stop Showering the Military With Money”, The New York Times, accessed 6-22-2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/13/opinion/military-budget-build-back-better.html> )//kp

Last month, Senator Joe Manchin, the West Virginia Democrat who has frustrated much of President Biden’s policy agenda, released [a statement](https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-statement-on-build-back-better-act) confirming what he’d been hinting for weeks. He [would not vote](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/19/us/politics/manchin-build-back-better.html) for the Build Back Better Act, the Democrats’ $2.2 trillion 10-year plan to address climate change and invest in child care, health care and education. Manchin argued it would increase inflation, harm the electricity grid and hamper national security and was simply just too “mammoth” and “sweeping” to support.

“I have always said, ‘If I can’t go back home and explain it, I can’t vote for it,’” he [said](https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-statement-on-build-back-better-act).

I don’t doubt the political wisdom of Manchin’s pledge to support only what he can explain. I do wonder, though, how he applies his maxim to a far more mammoth, more sweeping piece of the federal budget: the nearly three-quarters of a trillion dollars that we are spending this year on a military that has become the [epitome of governmental dysfunction](https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2021/11/the-pentagons-yearly-blank-check/), [self-dealing](https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2022/01/the-bunker-the-pentagons-revolting-door/) and overspending.

Of course, I’m only kidding. I don’t actually wonder about Manchin’s stance on showering the Department of Defense with more money than it asks for, even [more than it seems to know what to do with](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-25/pentagon-has-returned-unused-128-billion-to-the-u-s-since-2009). Right around the time he was bayoneting Build Back Better, [Manchin](https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-applauds-senate-passage-of-national-defense-authorization-act-secures-west-virginia-priorities) joined 87 other senators — Democrats and Republicans — in rubber-stamping another [gargantuan budget](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/15/us/politics/defense-spending-bill.html) for the Pentagon. They allocated $768 billion for the military in 2022, roughly $24 billion more than the White House requested from Congress.

Given all the challenges we face at home, does it make any sense to keep spending so many hundreds of billions on the Pentagon? And even just in terms of fighting wars, can anyone be satisfied with the way the military is managing its funds? The Pentagon has never passed an audit and says it may not be [able to until 2028](https://www.npr.org/2021/05/19/997961646/the-pentagon-has-never-passed-an-audit-some-senators-want-to-change-that).

In 2020 the U.S. military’s budget accounted for [almost 40 percent](https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs_2104_milex_0.pdf) of the world’s military expenditures. This level of **spending** has long been **excessive**, but after a pandemic that has claimed the lives of more Americans than [any](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/12/02/covid-19-has-killed-more-americans-than-civil-war-how-do-we-memorialize-them/) [war we fought](https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf), **continuing to throw money at the militar**y is an act of **willful disregard for** the most **urgent threats** we face.

According to a [projection by the Congressional Budget Office](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-02/56970-Outlook.pdf#page=10), Congress is projected to spend about $8.5 trillion for the military over the next decade — about half a trillion more than is budgeted for all nonmilitary discretionary programs combined (a category that [includes](https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/non-defense-discretionary-programs) federal spending on education, public health, scientific research, infrastructure, national parks and forests, environmental protection, law enforcement, courts, tax collection, foreign aid, homeland security and health care for veterans).

You don’t have to be a pacifist to wonder if this imbalance between military and nonmilitary spending makes sense. When we face so many other major challenges — from climate disasters to political instability and insurrection — shouldn’t we ask whether it remains wise to keep handing the military what is effectively a blank check? Are such lavish resources even good for national defense, or might the Pentagon’s **near-bottomless access to funds** have **encouraged** a [culture of waste](https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2016/01/millions-of-dollars-wasted-in-afghan-extractives-program/) **and** **indulgence** that **made it easier to blunder** into Iraq and contributed to its failures in [Afghanistan](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/09/world/middleeast/afghanistan-war-cost.html)?

This gets to what’s most frustrating about the Pentagon’s enormous budget: the halo of protection it enjoys in our political culture. Despite the Pentagon’s numerous missteps, our representatives too rarely ask how much money for the military may be way too much money for the military. We have long national debates about [whether it makes sense to spend on things like parental leave](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/23/paid-family-leave-how-lawmakers-could-compromise-on-build-back-better.html) or college tuition, but lawmakers seldom expect such rigor from the Defense Department. For example, why should we [keep building aircraft carriers](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/weapons/RS20643.pdf) — each of which costs [about $1.5 billion a year to operate](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files?file=2021-05/57088-AppendixA.pdf) — when we’ve already got most of the world’s fleet of active aircraft carriers? (We’ve got 11; no other nation has more than two, though China may be [launching a third](https://www.csis.org/analysis/signs-point-chinas-third-aircraft-carrier-launching-soon) soon.)

There is ample evidence that Congress’s reluctance to ask basic questions of the Pentagon has **harmed**, rather than helped, the **military’s effectiveness**. Consider the boondoggle that is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program — the plan the Pentagon conceived [in the 1990s](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/21/magazine/f35-joint-strike-fighter-program.html) to build a new plane, which is expected to cost taxpayers [more than $1 trillion](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/12/opinion/f-35-fighter-jet-cost.html) over its 60-year life span. A [recent audit](https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-226) from the Government Accountability Office found that even the Pentagon’s extended timeline for when the plane might finally go into full production is “not achievable,” and there were more than 850 “open deficiencies” in the project as of November 2020. I wonder if Manchin could explain to his constituents how tolerating such a level of mismanagement is good for our security.

I also wonder if Manchin could explain the staggering size and top-**heaviness of** the **Pentagon’s staffing** — why the [ratio of enlisted troops to officers is declining](https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2021/12/the-bunker-star-creep/) across the U.S. forces, [**clutteri**ng the chain of command](https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Publications/Article/1325984/are-there-too-many-general-officers-for-todays-military/) with layers of bureaucracy. A 2015 internal study found that the Pentagon [employed](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/pentagon-buries-evidence-of-125-billion-in-bureaucratic-waste/2016/12/05/e0668c76-9af6-11e6-a0ed-ab0774c1eaa5_story.html?utm_term=.b4f9548f160e) (or hired contractors to employ) nearly as many deskbound, back-office people as it had active-duty troops. The report found that it **could save $125 billion** a year by, among other measures, **reducing overstaffing** through retirements and attrition. The Pentagon buried that report, [according to The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/pentagon-buries-evidence-of-125-billion-in-bureaucratic-waste/2016/12/05/e0668c76-9af6-11e6-a0ed-ab0774c1eaa5_story.html?utm_term=.b4f9548f160e).

Not only do lawmakers give the Pentagon a free pass on its budget; sometimes they even force the agency to keep the little fat it’s trying to trim. The Air Force says that it’s ready to retire its fleet of A-10 Warthogs, fighter airplanes that date back to the 1970s. Congress [forbade](https://www.defensenews.com/congress/budget/2021/07/23/senate-policy-bill-rejects-air-force-request-to-send-some-a-10s-in-the-boneyard/) [any such reduction](https://breakingdefense.com/2021/12/congress-approves-retirement-of-160-air-force-planes-with-one-notable-exception/) in 2022.

Starting in 2017, Congress even required each military service to submit [an annual wish list of “unfunded priorities”](https://www.ntu.org/publications/detail/congress-should-do-away-with-dod-unfunded-priorities-lists-a-multibillion-dollar-wish-list-boondoggle) — that is, goodies that the services might want but that the White House had not requested in its budget. It has since become routine for Congress to not only give the Pentagon [much of what it asks for](https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/07/29/lawmakers-cave-to-wish-lists-and-give-the-pentagon-money-it-doesnt-need/) but also ladle on [extras](https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-05-07/congress-should-end-the-military-s-wish-lists?sref=B3uFyqJT).

The reasons such spending persists aren’t a big mystery. [The military-industrial complex is every bit as politically powerful as Dwight Eisenhower warned](https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2021/11/afghanistan-proved-eisenhower-correct/) it would be. (A recent Wall Street Journal headline [captured the situation well](https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-won-in-afghanistan-private-contractors-troops-withdrawal-war-pentagon-11640988154): “Who Won in Afghanistan? Private Contractors.”) In another trick, the military spreads its contracts to a [large number of congressional districts](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-tragedy-of-the-american-military/383516/), giving every lawmaker a reason to celebrate excessive military spending. ([Manchin put out a statement](https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-applauds-senate-passage-of-national-defense-authorization-act-secures-west-virginia-priorities) taking credit for all the benefits the new defense appropriation will bring to West Virginia.)

And finally, there is plain patriotic posturing: Because every dollar to the Pentagon can be defended as protecting the troops and the nation’s security, no politician will ever get in trouble for giving too much money to the military.

Mandy Smithberger, who studies Pentagon excess at the Project on Government Oversight, a nonpartisan independent group, told me that while she has hopes that younger generations will begin to question the military’s excessive spending, the situation is unlikely to change anytime soon.

“It’s going to take members of Congress to really step up,” she said. That seems about as likely as pigs flying — or, more aptly, F-35s.

#### More spending fails---the military sucks

De Rugy 3/10 (Veronique de Rugy, senior research fellow at George Mason University, 3-10-2022, “More Defense Spending Does Not Equal More Safety”, Reason, accessed 6-28-2022, <https://reason.com/2022/03/10/more-defense-spending-does-not-equal-more-safety/> )//kp

The brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia has renewed conservatives' calls for large increases of our defense budget. The extra money, we are told, would fund more weapons to better prepare us to respond to aggression in a world that looks increasingly dangerous. As compelling as these arguments can be in a stressful time, it's not quite so simple.

Providing military defense is a valid function of the federal government. However, that doesn't give license to Congress to simply pile on more spending, even when there are dangers out there. Nor does it mean that more spending will result in a completely safe world for us Americans. That's in part because that world doesn't exist. There's only so much safety money can buy.

While I certainly don't pretend to know what the optimal budget for our military is, we are already spending a large amount on national security and on the Pentagon. In fiscal year 2023, the United States is expected to spend more than $770 billion on national defense, with $729 billion of this amount being for the Department of Defense's military operations. This enormous sum is **more than the next 10 countries spend combined**. Russia, for instance, spends close to $62 billion. France and Germany spend almost $53 billion each. Assuming China's numbers are accurate, it spends $252 billion.

When considering how much more money we think is worth spending, we must keep in mind that not **every additional dollar** of military spending will result in enhanced national security. That's because government intentions **do not equal results**. Elected officials and **bureaucrats** **have weak incentives to** sensibly **manage** tax **dollars**. They are not rewarded for maximizing taxpayer value, nor are they usually punished for unnecessary risks. In addition, interest groups often drive political decisions that run counter to the best interest of the public.

Military spending is not immune from these forces any more than the entitlement and welfare parts of the budget. Just look at the **arms-industry lobbying** machine, which in 2021 alone spent $117 million in lobbying expenditures and used 763 lobbyists, likely **pushing** **for** as much **Pentagon spending** as they can get. This explains why Congress continues to allocate funds to produce weapons that the Pentagon itself says it doesn't need. It also explains the **endless** saga of its **cost overruns**, as well as **delays and malfunctions** such as those of the F-35. The Defense Department has been allowed to fail its audits repeatedly, meaning **no one really knows where** some of that **money** **goes**. The result is a less-than-optimal allocation of our large defense budget.

These facts alone don't mean there are no grounds for the argument that the military is underfunded to do everything Congress demands of it. In 2017, the American Enterprise Institute's Mackenzie Eaglen argued for more military spending because "the United States now fields a military that could not meet even the requirements of a benign Clinton-era world," and that "while the United States continues to field the best military personnel in the world, policy makers have asked them to do too much with too little for too long."

I have no reason to doubt Eaglen's claim. However, unless the political system that produced these poor outcomes is reformed, one should remain skeptical about the effectiveness of even more spending.

What about the idea that we should annually spend four percent of our GDP on defense, as opposed to the three percent we are now spending? I find this argument lacking. As a measure of economic activity, GDP has very little to do with our ability to defend ourselves. There's no reason for three percent, four percent, or any other portion of GDP to be considered the right number.

If the defense-spending-to-GDP measurement reflects anything, it's affordability. That brings us to our enormous budget deficits and resulting growing debt. Unless Congress cuts non-defense spending significantly, growing the military budget would grow the deficit. However, if additional defense spending is deficit-financed, then we can expect slower growth, as Harvard economist Robert Barro and I demonstrated in a study back in 2013. That reduces, not increases, the affordability of our defense budget.

In other words, let's make sure we're asking the right questions before rushing to jack up the defense budget.