



## **WILPF CALL FOR PEACE**

### **RESOURCE GUIDE # 9**

#### **Moving Money out of the Military**

#### **Budget into Programs to Help the Poor as suggested by the Poor People's Campaign**

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**The Poor People's Campaign's Moral Budget describes how to transform our national defense from domination to true defense.**

Here are some necessary steps:

- Close unnecessary overseas bases and discharge troops permanently stationed there over time, through a combination of attrition and retirement;
- End all current U.S. wars;
- Close unnecessary bases on U.S. territory;
- Reduce or cancel weapons systems, including ships and planes, tied to the outdated mandate of running multiple major wars at once;
- Work toward total nuclear disarmament, as required by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, with a \$4 billion reserve of nuclear weapons funds for implementation. While disarmament would require new international treaties that would take years of effort, this should be the long-term goal for the U.S.;
- Transfer spending on military medical care and military primary and secondary schools within U.S. borders to expanded public health care programs and public-school systems;
- End financial aid to foreign militaries (as well as foreign military equipment sales);
- Implement cost-saving efficiency measures like replacing troops with federal civilian employees in administrative positions, reducing the use of contractors, reducing spending for research and development on weapons systems, and reducing funds for military construction, among others.

List of how much money (quoted in billions) would be saved by certain actions,

Aiming to reduce a Pentagon annual budget of \$700B by \$350Billion

Close 60% of foreign bases - The U.S. operates 800 bases in 90 countries, ten times more than the rest of the world combined. Close 60% of those (roughly 480 bases) and allow corresponding troop reductions primarily through attrition and retirement. (This excludes combat troops).	<b>\$90.0</b>
End wars and war funding - End wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere, and bring our troops home.	<b>\$66.0</b>
Cut unnecessary weapons - Cancel new procurement and reduce use of weapons systems that are obsolete, ineffective, or in excess of reasonable security needs.	<b>\$57.9</b>
Dismantle nuclear weapons - Seventy countries have signed on to a U.N. ban on nuclear weapons to eliminate the threat of nuclear war. Develop new treaties for complete nuclear disarmament, destroy U.S. nuclear stockpiles (includes a \$4 billion annual budget for implementation), cancel nuclear delivery systems (bombers, submarines), and cancel planned nuclear upgrades.	<b>\$42.8</b>

Continuing list of how much money would be saved by certain actions, money quoted in billions.

Convert Military Health System into a universal health system - A system of universal health care in the United States would provide medical care to troops and their families and allow separate funding for military health care to be funneled into that system.	<b>\$33.3</b>
Cut overhead by 10% - Military overhead increased from \$57,400 per active duty service member in 1980 to \$152,300 in 2015 (in 2015 dollars). A 10% reduction could be achieved primarily through a reduced reliance on for-profit contractors and reduced use of fossil fuels.	<b>\$27.0</b>
End Foreign Military Financing Program - End military foreign aid that enables authoritarian governments and human rights abuses, and increases killing and violence, and instead invest in diplomacy and economic and humanitarian aid.	<b>\$14.0</b>
Reduce research and development (R&D) by 10% - The 2018 military research and development budget increased by 11% since 2015 (adjusting for inflation). This reduction brings R&D back to roughly the 2015 level and reflects the fact that a smaller military would also need less R&D.	<b>\$10.4</b>
Replace military personnel in support positions with civilians - Transition up to 80,000 military positions providing support and administrative functions to civilian employment.	<b>\$3.0</b>
Close unneeded domestic bases: The Pentagon has requested a process to close domestic bases it says it doesn't need. Closing unneeded domestic bases could save \$2 billion per year.	<b>\$2.0</b>
Other: Cancel the Space Force; cut military construction by 10% to meet needs of smaller military; convert U.S.-based military elementary and secondary schools to public schools	<b>\$3.1</b>

See Lindsay Koshgarian, "Guide to 350 Billion in Pentagon Cuts," June 2019, <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2019/cutting-350-billion-from-military-budget/>

TOTAL SAVINGS IN A YEAR FROM ABOVE LIST OF ACTIONS = \$349.6 Billion

Source: Poor People's Moral Budget, pp.103-104, <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PPC-Moral-Budget-2019-report-FULL-FINAL-July.pdf>

What programs that benefit the 140 million Americans living in poverty or struggling against economic injustice could be funded by these billions of dollars? Some examples:

- Investing \$52 billion per year could reduce child poverty by 57%, Black child poverty by 65%, and improve economic conditions for 95% of all poor children.
- Universal early learning and childcare support would require \$100 billion per year.
- Repeal the inefficient Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Replace it with a new cash assistance program at \$66B per year.
- Under the so-called Baby Bonds program, the federal government would open a \$1,000 savings account for every American child at birth, with additional deposits of up to \$2,000/yr based on household income. \$80B/yr would fund this racial wealth gap reducing program.
- Give \$25B over 10 years to a Capital Magnet Fund to finance affordable housing; plus day care centers, a workforce development center and health clinics in low-income neighborhoods.

Many more ideas for helping the poor are in the "Moral Policy Agenda to Heal and Transform America: The Poor People's Jubilee Platform": <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/jubilee-platform/>

**WILPFers: YOUR ACTION** is to write to your Congressperson to highlight how billions of dollars not spent on the military could be spent on new programs to help our poor in ways that ultimately benefit the country. Look in Call for Peace Resource Guide #12 for a sample letter on this Move the Money to the poor topic.