

Military spending in america

[People](#), [Barack Obama](#)



The majority of college students in the US today, do not know what it is like to live in a nation that is not at war, and this is no different for myself. One of my own memories in elementary school was the attack on the world trade center on 9/11. I am sure that I share that memory with many others. Throughout our lives, we have known our country to be one that is constantly fighting with another. As I grow older, I realize how surrounded we are by issues concerning our military presence in other countries.

I also begin to feel the consequences of our actions as a country.

Much of our politicians' time and effort is put into figuring out how to "bring our troops home" or how to "support our troops" while still keeping taxes down. In the end it is the American public who are funding our war with our taxes as well as paying the consequences with things such as raised oil prices.

For my research paper I am going to discuss American military economics; it's effects on the American public, and our current presidential candidates' stances on military spending. The military budget is a portion of the United States' federal budget.

It is used to pay the salaries, training, and health care of military personnel. It is also used to maintain arms, equipment, facilities, funds operations, and develops and buys new weapons. According to the Department of Defense Budget for the 2010 fiscal year, the president's base budget for spending on overseas operations was \$663. 4 billion. The 2009 U. S. military budget accounts for approximately 40% of the total global arms spending. The US's

2012 budget is 6 to 7 times larger than the \$106 billion of the military budget of China.

It is greater than the next twenty largest military spenders combined. Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts claims “ if we do not make reductions approximating 25 percent of the military budget starting fairly soon, it will be impossible to continue to fund an adequate level of domestic activity”. Some argue that now is not the time to cut military spending. Republican historian Robert Kagan argues, “ A reduction in defense spending this year would unnerve American allies and would be taken by the world as evidence that an American retreat has begun. The increased military spending since 9/11 has stimulated the US economy to a degree. However the jobs and income that it has created is offset by the massive increase in debt created. According to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, the defense budget has increased from \$432 billion in 2001 to \$720 billion in 2011, an increase of around 67 percent. Increased military spending has been funded almost entirely by borrowing. There are many reasons why the debt has grown so much since 2001.

These reasons include tax cuts, increases in other government spending, and the largest postwar recession the US has experienced. However, military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have raised annual deficits by about 1 percent of GDP, a trend that is expected to continue through 2020. Since we decided to borrow money instead of increasing taxes or cutting other spending, if war spending continues as forecasted, the country can expect to have paid about \$1 trillion in interest by 2020.

If the investments in the military over the last decade had been made in U. S. education, it would represent an 18. 5 percent boost in terms of capital improvements nationwide. This would finance the investments in public school facilities required to return the country's schools to good condition. Traditionally the Republican Party has been the more inclined towards increased national security and previous presidential candidate Mitt Romney described Obama's plan as a " hollowing out" of the military. 2012 running mates Ryan and Romney make the point that it is Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security that are the majority of the deficit.

Though they are right, the American public still wants to cut spending even more than the \$487 billion already cut by the Obama administration. Romney and Ryan had a plan to go in the exact opposite direction if they had won the election. They planned to boost defense spending by \$100 billion, or nearly 20% in 2013. The Republican Party, otherwise known as the grand old party or GOP, traditionally follows Ronald Reagan's stance on national defense. That stance is represented by the motto of peace through strength.

Today, that means protecting America's homeland by confronting terrorism and maintaining a defense against arising threats of nuclear power. The Republican Party is fully committed to America's Armed Forces to make sure that they are prepared for any challenges they may need to face. While the United States is involved in various international organizations, which serve the cause of peace and posterity, the Republican Party argues that these organizations must never substitute for principled American leadership to protect our vital national interests.

All of the information I gathered about the GOP's stance on national defense was pulled directly from their official website, [www. GOP. com](http://www.GOP.com). Current president Barack Obama has sought to end the war in Iraq and accelerate the transition in Afghanistan in part to lower defense costs. He has proposed a number of defense cuts over the next decade. Rather than following the words of a president who was in office over 20 years ago and during the cold war, the Democratic Party feels that as our threats have evolved over the years, so too should our ability to respond to them.

President Obama has made significant steps to restore America's image around the world by rebuilding strategic alliances with countries that share our values and face common threats. As far as the situation overseas, the President plans to bring home 10, 000 troops by the end of this year, 33, 000 by next summer, and complete the transition by 2014. Just as I did for the Republican Party, I got all of this information directly from the official website, [www. democrats. org](http://www.democrats.org).

What originally inspired my interest in this subject is when I began to notice issues such as how much our educational system is suffering across the nation. Also, with a little bit of research, I learned that the NASA budget has been cut about a billion dollars in the last three years. Yet, at the same time, the military budget is increase by about the same amount as the entire NASA budget. Maybe it's just my nature, but I feel that it is a huge waste of time and assets to be spending most of our money fighting other countries, when we could be exploring and making discoveries for the betterment of mankind.

As I mentioned earlier, the US has funded all of our wars solely on borrowing, and we have racked up quite a large amount of interest in doing so. On the other hand, a paper written by Douglas A. Camstock, Director of Innovative Partnerships Office, NASA Headquarters, and Daniel P. Lockney of Innovative Partnerships Office, NASA Headquarters, the return rate for NASA research can be as high as 32 times the initial investment. At the very lowest, they estimate that for every dollar invested in NASA, there is a return of at least seven dollars as a result of technological advances.

Not only is the lack of support for research a shame for the curious minded, but it is bad fiscal planning as well. Single bombs can cost the military about one million dollars each. Here in the state of California, an average teacher's salary is about \$40, 000 a year; this is one of the states with the highest averages. For the price of one bomb or missile, twenty-five teachers can be paid to work for a full year. It doesn't take a professional economist to tell you that investing in education is well worth it.

Educated adults grow up to become working, contributing members of society. Politicians seem to always be looking for ways to create jobs. What better way than for an educated individual to go out and become an entrepreneur, start a business, and hire people to work for them? A study from the University of Massachusetts in 2011 says that for every billion spent in education, about 26, 700 jobs are created. Among the different departments that were researched were health care, clean energy, tax cuts, and of course education and defense.

Of those five, the military had the least amount of jobs created per billion spent at 11, 200 jobs. Once again, it doesn't take an economist to recognize

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a poor investment. Over the course of my research paper, I learned about the details of our defense budget and military spending trends in the US as well as our overall deficit. I also found the effects that war has had on the American Public as well as on our economy. During the election I paid close attention to our current presidential candidates and their plans for our defense budget.

Only the future will tell if these trends continue or whether our president will take action against our deficit and the fate of national security. I was also able to look into what sparked my interest on the topic in the first place. I got to compare our spending on the military with other departments like education and NASA research. With the President's plan to begin our transition out of the Middle East in these upcoming years, we will see if we begin a shift to a more progressive, intellectually motivated America. As a member of our educational system as well as a proud American, I sure hope we do.