

Resource 3 (1 of 4)**Commentary on National Security Spending**

Military Cutbacks Make Sense

New York Times Editorial Board, July 24, 2015

The Army's plan to cut 40,000 troops, as well as 17,000 civilian employees, over the next two years is unsettling many American communities. . . . But the cutbacks are a sensible and necessary move, and they should not come as a surprise since it was Congress that approved big cuts in federal defense spending.

. . . If the budget restrictions are not lifted, the Army will be reduced further to 420,000 troops by the end of the 2019 fiscal year, and Army officials say that further cuts would leave them unable to meet their obligations. But many experts believe the Army can do its job even if it declines to 420,000 troops, and Congress can save billions if it approves a new round of base closings for a military that maintains at least 20 percent more real estate than it needs.

Source: *New York Times* Editorial Board. (2015, July 24). Military cutbacks make sense. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/opinion/military-cutbacks-make-sense.html>

Bob Burnett: Why We Should Reduce the Defense Budget

Huffington Post, April 19, 2013

Another reason for the contentious nature of defense budget discussions is that 63 years of ever-increasing defense budgets has fomented a military-industrial complex that constantly lobbies for billion-dollar defense projects. This has led to a bloated budget and an overabundance of generals. When senior officers do retire, they quite often join the staff of a military contractor and become lobbyists. Meanwhile, senators and representatives fight for military projects for their constituents believing that it will help employment and increase their prospects for reelection.

Whenever defense budget reductions are proposed, generals and congressmen warn us, "The world continues to be a dangerous place." They point out threats such as Iran and North Korea to justify the proposed budget. But what's not discussed is why the United States has to continue to be the world's police force. The NIC report indicates that we're rapidly moving towards a quadripartite world governed by the U.S., China, India, and the European Community. In such a world, it makes no sense for America to shoulder most of the responsibility for policing the world and absorbing 42 percent of military spending.

Now is the time for Democrats to drastically reduce America's defense budget.

Source: Burnett, B. (2013). Why we should reduce the defense budget. Huffington Post. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-burnett/why-we-should-reduce-the-_b_3115515.html

Resource 3 (2 of 4)**Commentary on National Security Spending**

Public Uncertain, Divided Over America's Place in the World

Pew Research Center, May 5, 2016

Growing share says defense spending should increase

For the first time in more than a decade a greater share of Americans say spending on national defense should be increased (35%) than say it should be cut back (24%). A plurality (40%) say that spending should be kept roughly the same.

In November 2013, the last time this question was asked, more Americans said we should reduce our spending than increase it (28% cut back vs. 23% increase).

. . . There are wide partisan and ideological differences when it comes to national defense spending. Though most conservative Republicans (67%) think defense spending should be increased, moderate and liberal Republicans are more divided: 45% say the national defense budget should increase, 39% say it should stay the same, and 14% think it should be reduced.

Only 20% of Democrats say there should be more spending on defense; 30% say the defense budget should be cut back, while roughly half (49%) say it should remain near current levels.

Conservative and moderate Democrats are about equally likely to say defense spending should go up (26%) as to say it should be cut back (22%), though roughly half (51%) say it should remain about the same. Liberal Democrats, in contrast, are about three times as likely to say defense spending should be cut as to say it should be increased (39% vs. 12%); 48% say it should be kept the same.

Source: Pew Research Center. (2016, May 5). Public uncertain, divided over America's place in the world. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2016/05/05/3-international-threats-defense-spending/>

Analyst William Kristol: Don't Cut Military Spending

Response to an interview question, January 6, 2012

[Cuts proposed by the Obama administration to the defense budget] would decimate our military. It would weaken the United States of America. Let's not kid ourselves. There is no magic. You have don't cut the ground forces he [President Barack Obama] wants to cut, cut our capacities around the world . . .

It's unbelievably irresponsible. The savings are tiny when it comes to the actual budget deficit. The highest number is \$40 billion a year when he is running \$1.5 trillion deficit when he wasted \$800 billion on the stimulus, none of which went to the military. Doesn't that tell you everything.

Source: Armbruster, B. (2012). Kristol: Budget cuts 'would decimate our military,' but 'the savings are tiny.' Retrieved from <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/01/06/399207/kristol-military-cuts-decimate-savings-tiny>

Resource 3 (3 of 4)**Commentary on National Security Spending**

Senators Marco Rubio and Tom Cotton: Why the Defense Budget Must Grow

CNN, March 26, 2015

Regrettably, military strength is seen in many quarters as the cause of military adventurism. A strong, robust defense is seen not to deter aggression, but to provoke it. For years, we have systematically underfunded our military, marrying a philosophy of retreat with a misplaced understanding of our larger budgetary burdens and the real drivers of the debt: our entitlement programs.

. . . Political leaders in Washington need to be reminded that our defense is the single most important responsibility of the federal government. Instead of starting the process by setting arbitrary defense spending levels and then forcing our military to cut vital programs in order to meet these levels, the budgeting process should start by taking into account all the threats against us, listing the programs and capabilities we'll need to protect our people and interests around the world, and then funding those efforts.

. . . The results of these cuts have been disastrous for our military and for our ability to project power and deter our enemies. . . . At the end of this process, our military will be significantly smaller, dramatically less capable and dangerously unready to deploy if these budget cuts remain in place. The Army is on the path to be reduced to pre-World War II levels. The Navy is at pre-WWI levels. And our Air Force has the smallest and oldest combat force in its history.

Our force reductions have been felt throughout the world—by our friends and our enemies. They have presented not just a crisis of readiness for America, but also a perilous strategic weakness. Our adversaries have been emboldened by what they perceive as our diminished military presence.

History has shown that every time we have unreasonably cut resources from our military in anticipation of a peace dividend, it has only cost us more to make up for the deficit we create in military readiness and capability, and the expected era of perpetual peace fails to materialize.

We think we are saving money, but in the long run, we end up paying more and creating more risk and uncertainty.

Source: Rubio, M., & Cotton, T. (2015). Rubio, Cotton: Why defense budget must grow. CNN. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/26/opinions/rubio-cotton-defense-cuts/>

Resource 3 (4 of 4)**Commentary on National Security Spending**

Former President Dwight Eisenhower’s “Cross of Iron” Speech on the Real Cost of Military Spending

Excerpt from a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953

The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population.

It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals.

It is some 50 miles of concrete highway.

We pay for a single fighter with a half million bushels of wheat.

We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

This, I repeat, is the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking.

This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

Source: Information Clearing House. (n.d.). Cross of iron speech. Retrieved from <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article9743.htm>