

Defund Militarism:

How a Policy of Violence Has Bankrupted Our Communities in United States

Militarism and violence are the hallmarks of U.S. policy at home and abroad. From war to mass incarceration and beyond, these policies amplify poverty, racism and environmental degradation. They can and must change.

Violence as Policy in the United States

Investment in a culture of war vs. a culture of care

- Spending on detention, deportation and border patrol totaled \$21.6 billion in 2018, more than six times as much as for federal homeless assistance programs (\$3.5 billion).ⁱ
- The prison industry cost governments \$179 billion a year, including paying for prison operators, courts and policing. Only \$4.5 billion (2.5%) of that total is for indigent defense.ⁱⁱ
- United States law enforcement agencies received 452,335 items worth \$1 billion in surplus military equipment from the Department of Defense, such as rifles, armored vehicles, and military aircraft.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The U.S. ranks first in the world for military spending and has the fourth highest poverty rate.^{iv}
- The U.S. military budget, at \$716 billion in 2018, was 30 times larger than the federal public school budget (\$23.4 billion), 14 times larger than the federal housing budget (\$48.2 billion), and 81 times larger than the Environmental Protection Agency budget (\$8.8 billion).^v
- The U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost \$6.4 trillion.^{vi} It would take a full-time minimum wage worker more than 7 million lifetimes to earn that much.
- United States taxpayers will contribute \$738 billion to the Pentagon and military in 2020. That money could have created 12.8 million infrastructure jobs, health care for 201 million adults, or full scholarships for every public 4-year college student in the nation.^{vii} The United States awarded \$342 billion in Pentagon contracts, but only \$163 billion in education grants from the Department of Education.^{viii}
- We could save as much as \$350 billion per year and achieve true security by ending wars, reducing our aggressive posture overseas, and reining in military contracts that drain public coffers for private gain.^{ix}

Lives at stake

- One in four U.S. adults has had a sibling incarcerated, one in five adults has had a parent incarcerated, and one in seven has had a child incarcerated.^x
- In this country, guns kill 33,000 people and injure 80,000 more each year.^{xi}
- Annual deportations increased tenfold between 1976 and 2015.^{xii}
- The United States has more than 1,400 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities. From 2002 to 2018, ICE deported 4.6 million people.^{xiii,xiv}
- 7,010 American troops were killed in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with an average age of 26. An additional 53,000 troops were wounded.^{xv}
- The United States is home to 19 million veterans, making up 7.6% of the adult population. Of those, 5.4 million (18.4%) are on disability, and 37,800 were documented as homeless at a given time.^{xvi,xvii}
- The Iraq and Afghanistan (and beyond) wars of the last 18 years have resulted in 800,000 deaths and an estimated 21 million people displaced or forced to flee from their homes.^{xviii}
- There were 39,600 gun deaths in United States in 2017.^{xix}

Private profit

- The top five Pentagon contractors paid their CEOs a combined \$100 million. The average Pentagon contractor salary is close to \$200,000, and entry level pay for a soldier is \$20,172.^{xx,xxi}
- In a single year, the private prison industry drew \$14 billion in public funds. That would be more than enough to restore Temporary Assistance to Needy Families to its pre-1996 funding level.^{xxii}

- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) gave out \$1.9 billion in contracts in 2018, more than the entire budget of the Meals on Wheels program that provides meal delivery to seniors.^{xxiii,xxiv}

Poverty, racism, and environmental degradation

- Poor communities experience more wartime deaths compared to high-income communities.^{xxv}
- Native and Indigenous people serve in the military at higher rates than other ethnicities.^{xxvi}
- Black boys and men are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white boys or men, and are ten times more likely to be killed by gun violence than White men.^{xxvii,xxviii}
- There were 2.29 million people incarcerated in United States in 2018,^{xxix} where Black people are incarcerated at 5.4 times the rate of White people.^{xxx}
- Of 1,200 contaminated Superfund sites marked for environmental clean-up in the U.S., an estimated 900 were military facilities or military support sites.^{xxxi}
- The U.S. military spends an estimated \$81 billion a year to protect the world's oil supplies, more than twice what the U.S. has spent over the past 70 years on developing renewable energy technology.^{xxxii}

ⁱ Perl, Boyd, Duff, et. Al. "Homelessness: Targeted Federal Programs." October 18, 2018. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL30442.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Peter Wagner and Bernadette Rabuy. "Following the Money of Mass Incarceration." January 25, 2017. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/money.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Defense Logistics Agency. Accessed January 24, 2020. <https://www.dla.mil/DispositionServices/Offers/Reutilization/LawEnforcement/PublicInformation/>.

^{iv} OECD. <https://data.oecd.org>

^v FY 2020 President's budget analysis by National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies. <https://www.govinfo.gov/features/budget-fy2020>.

^{vi} Summary of Findings. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/summary>

^{vii} National Priorities Project. "Trade-Offs: Your Money, Your Choices." Updated April 2019. <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/trade-offs/>

^{viii} USA Spending. Accessed December 5, 2019. <https://www.usaspending.gov>

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<https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2019/poor-peoples-moral-budget/>

^x Brian Elderbroom, et al. Every Second: The Impact of the Incarceration Crisis on America's Families. December 2018,

<https://everysecond.fwd.us/downloads/EverySecond.fwd.us.pdf>.

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^{xv} Defense Casualty Analysis System. Accessed December 5, 2019. <https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties.xhtml>.

^{xvi} American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013-2017. <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

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^{xviii} Summary of Findings. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/summary>

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