



September 10, 2012

Voter Guide 2012 Fact Sheet: Military Spending

Key Facts

- **Current Funding:** President Obama's fiscal 2013 budget proposal includes \$525 billion for the Department of Defense base budget. Adjusted for inflation, that's a **2.5 percent cut** relative to fiscal 2012 levels – and that will be the first cut to the Pentagon's base budget in over a decade.ⁱ Additional cuts (known as “sequestration”) are scheduled to affect military funding in January 2013, though many lawmakers have proposed cancelling them.
- **Military Funding in Context:** Military spending, which includes nuclear weapons and war costs, will account for 18 percent of the total federal budget in fiscal 2013, and 57 percent of the discretionary budget. (The discretionary budget is spending that lawmakers directly determine in the annual appropriations process.)
- **War Costs:** President Obama proposes spending \$88.5 billion in fiscal 2013 to fund operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Through fiscal 2012, **\$1.38 trillion** has been allocated to fund these two wars.ⁱⁱ
- **U.S. and the World:** In 2011, the United States accounted for 43 percent of global military spending. Combined with NATO allies, we account for roughly two-thirds of global military spending (and that doesn't include other allies, such as Japan and South Korea).ⁱⁱⁱ

What Americans Say:

“We're spending 27 cents out of each income tax dollar on the military.... I love this country and the folks that serve in our armed forces ... [but] we need to find ways to reduce this burden.”

- William (Denver, Colorado)

What the Presidential Candidates Say:

“America remains the one indispensable nation in world affairs – and as long as I'm president, I intend to keep it that way. That's why, working with our military leaders, I've proposed a new defense strategy that ensures we maintain the finest military in the world, while saving nearly half a trillion dollars in our budget.”

– Barack Obama, June 2012^{iv}

“As President, on Day One, I will focus on rebuilding America's economy. I will reverse President Obama's massive defense cuts. Time and again, we have seen that attempts to balance the budget by weakening our military only lead to a far higher price, not only in treasure, but in blood.”

– Mitt Romney, October 2011^v

What to Ask Your Congressional Candidates:

On average the American public wants to reduce military spending by around 18 percent, according to the Washington Post and the Center for Public Integrity.^{vi} Few lawmakers agree. Where do you come down on this issue?

ⁱ White House Office of Management and Budget, The President's Budget, Public Budget Database

ⁱⁱ [Cost of War](#), National Priorities Project.

ⁱⁱⁱ [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) data and in-house calculations.

^{iv} The President's State of the Union [address](#), 24 Jan. 2012.

^v Mitt Romney [remarks](#) on U.S. foreign policy, The Citadel, October 7, 2011.

^{vi} [Americans Want to Slash Defense Spending, But Washington Isn't Listening](#), Washington Post, 11 May 2012.