

OMNI COSTS OF WARS NEWSLETTER #1, FINANCIAL COSTS, JANUARY 14, 2011, Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace. (Editor for #2 on Human Costs--the killed, wounded, displaced--invited.)

Contents Part One: BOOK AND ARTICLES ON AFGHAN, IRAQ, PAKISTAN, YEMAN, WORLD \$

Code Pink: End the Wars \$

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Barney Frank and Ron Paul, Reducing Military \$

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Contents Part Two: LOCAL LETTERS ON COST OF WARS (from present to summer of 2010) \$

BOOK

--Stiglitz, Joseph and Linda Bilmes. *The Three Trillion Dollar War.*

January 5, 2011

Dear Dick,

As Congress reconvenes today, **CODEPINK** is not wasting any time. We will be in the office of Speaker John Boehner with a simple message: The best way to cut the deficit is to end the wars and bring our war dollars home. Please call 202-224-3121 and email your rep with the same message NOW!

The number one issue on the minds of the American people and this new Congress is our ailing economy. Everywhere one hears calls-particularly from the Tea Party-for slashing government spending.

But where should that money come? Not from social security, Medicare and programs shielding people from the ravages of the economic crisis. The only logical sector to cut is the military budget.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan-and the expanding attacks in Pakistan -- helped plunge us into this financial crisis and have not made us any safer at home. The U.S. will spend more on the war in Afghanistan this year, adjusting for inflation, than we spent on the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War COMBINED. The United States also spends nearly as much on military power as every other country in the world combined, plus we maintain troops at more than 800 bases around the world-often antagonizing the local people and making us targets for terrorist attacks.

We can't afford these wars. We can't afford the bases sprawled all over the world. We can't afford the bloated military budget. It's critical for you to send a message to your congressperson-ASAP. Call 202-224-3121 or email. Tell your rep that it's time to bring our war dollars home.

Thank you for helping bring peace, justice and sanity to 2011!

Janet, Jean, Joan, Jodie, Kristen, Lisa, Farida, Medea, Nancy, Rae, and Tighe

P.S. The U.S. prison facility at Guantanamo Bay enters its 10th year of operation on Tuesday, January 11, 2011. President Obama signed an executive order to close the camp, but his priority to shutter the camp has since faded. Join us on January 11 to protest the President's refusal to close the prison! Find our full January action calendar here.

Tell Congress that if it is going to slash government spending, there is only one logical place to cut --

the Defense budget.

Call 202-224-3121

or email your rep today!

Tweet this message:

Tell Congress to Cut the Defense Budget!

Serve our letter to your Congressperson for lunch!

Reminder: add [codepink@mail.democracyinaction.org](mailto:codepink@mail.democracyinaction.org) to your Known Senders/Contact list.

Source: [www.independent.org](http://www.independent.org)

When President Obama presented his budget recently for fiscal year 2011, he proposed that the Pentagon's outlays be increased by about 4.5 percent beyond its

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12d677348e5dfc5f>

<strong>Defense Spending Is Much Greater than You Think

By Robert Higgs </strong>Saturday April 17, 2010 at 2:50:18 PM PDT

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When President Obama presented his budget recently for fiscal year 2011, he proposed that the Pentagon's outlays be increased by about 4.5 percent beyond its estimated outlays in fiscal 2010, to a total of almost \$719 billion. Although many Americans regard this enormous sum as excessive, few appreciate that the total amount of all defense-related spending greatly exceeds the amount budgeted for the Department of Defense.

In fiscal year 2009, which ended last September, the Pentagon spent \$636.5 billion. Lodged elsewhere in the budget, however, other lines identify funding that serves defense purposes just as surely as—sometimes even more surely than—the money allocated to the Department of Defense. On occasion, commentators take note of some of these additional defense-related budget items, such as the Department of Energy's nuclear-weapons program, but many such items, including some extremely large ones, remain generally unrecognized.

Since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, many observers probably would agree that its budget ought to be included in any complete accounting of defense costs. After all, the homeland is what most of us want the government to defend in the first place.

Other agencies also spend money in pursuit of homeland security. The Justice Department, for example, includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which devotes substantial resources to an anti-terrorist program. The Department of the Treasury claims to have “worked closely with the Departments of State and Justice and the intelligence community to disrupt targets related to al Qaeda, Hizballah, Jemaah Islamiyah, as well as to disrupt state sponsorship of terror.”

Much, if not all, of the budget for the Department of State and for international assistance programs ought to be classified as defense-related, too. In this case, the money serves to buy off potential enemies and to reward friendly governments who assist U.S. efforts to abate perceived threats. About \$5 billion of annual U.S. foreign aid currently takes the form of “foreign military financing,” and even funds placed under the rubric of economic development may serve defense-related purposes indirectly. Money is fungible, and the receipt of foreign assistance for economic-development projects allows allied governments to divert other funds to police, intelligence, and military purposes.

Two big budget items represent the current cost of defense goods and services obtained in the past. The Department of Veterans Affairs, which is authorized to spend about \$124 billion in the current fiscal year, falls in this category. Likewise, a great deal of the government's interest expense on publicly held debt represents the current cost of defense outlays financed in the past by borrowing from the public.

To estimate the size of the entire de facto defense budget, I gathered data for fiscal 2009, the most recently completed fiscal year, for which data on actual outlays are now available. In that year, the Department of Defense itself spent \$636.5 billion. Defense-related parts of the Department of Energy

budget added \$16.7 billion. The Department of Homeland Security spent \$51.7 billion. The Department of State and international assistance programs laid out \$36.3 billion for activities arguably related to defense purposes either directly or indirectly. The Department of Veterans Affairs had outlays of \$95.5 billion. The Department of the Treasury, which funds the lion's share of military retirement costs through its support of the little-known Military Retirement Fund, added \$54.9 billion. A large part of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's outlays ought to be regarded as defense-related, if only indirectly so. When all of these other parts of the budget are added to the budget for the Pentagon itself, they increase the fiscal 2009 total by nearly half again, to \$901.5 billion.

Finding out how much of the government's net interest payments on the publicly held national debt ought to be attributed to past debt-funded defense spending requires a considerable amount of calculation. I added up all past deficits (minus surpluses) since 1916 (when the debt was nearly zero), prorated according to each year's ratio of narrowly defined national security spending—military, veterans, and international affairs—to total federal spending, expressing everything in dollars of constant purchasing power. This sum is equal to 67.6 percent of the value of the national debt held by the public at the end of 2009. Therefore, I attribute that same percentage of the government's net interest outlays in that year to past debt-financed defense spending. The total amount so attributed comes to \$126.3 billion.

Adding this interest component to the previous all-agency total, the grand total comes to \$1,027.8 billion, which is 61.5 percent greater than the Pentagon's outlays alone.

In similar analyses I conducted previously for fiscal 2002 and for fiscal 2006, total defense-related spending was even greater relative to Pentagon spending alone – it was 73 percent greater in fiscal 2002 and 87 percent greater in fiscal 2006. In fiscal 2009, the ratio was held down in large part by the reduced cost of servicing the government's debt, owing to the extremely low interest rates that prevailed on government securities. This situation cannot last much longer. As interest rates on the Treasury's securities rise, so will the government's cost of servicing the debt attributable to past debt-financed defense outlays.

For fiscal 2010, which is still in progress, the president's budget estimates that the Pentagon's spending will run more than \$50 billion above the previous year's total. Any supplemental appropriations made before September 30 will push the total for fiscal 2010 even farther above the trillion-dollar mark.

Although I have arrived at my conclusions honestly and carefully, I may have left out items that should have been included—the federal budget is a gargantuan, complex, and confusing collection of documents. If I have done so, however, the left-out items are not likely to be relatively large ones. (I have deliberately ignored some minor items, such as outlays for the Selective Service System, the National Defense Stockpile, and the anti-terrorist activities conducted by the FBI and the Treasury. For now, however, the conclusion seems inescapable: the government is currently spending at a rate well in excess of \$1 trillion per year for all defense-related purposes. Owing to the financial debacle and the ongoing recession, millions are out of work, millions are losing their homes, and private earnings remain well below their previous peak, but in the military-industrial complex, the gravy train speeds along the track faster and faster.

National Security Outlays in Fiscal Year 2009

(billions of dollars)

Department of Defense 636.5

Department of Energy (nuclear weapons & environ. cleanup) 16.7

Department of State (plus intern. assistance) 36.3

Department of Veterans Affairs 95.5

Department of Homeland Security 51.7

Department of the Treasury (for Military Retirement Fund) 54.9

National Aeronautics & Space Administration (1/2 of total) 9.6

Net interest attributable to past debt-financed defense outlays 126.3

Total 1,027.5

Source: Author's classifications and calculations; basic data from U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2011 and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970.

Categories: Budget and Tax Policy, Economics, Military, The State, War, Weapons

**“Telling the Truth about the True Costs of Wars” by Daniel Ellsberg** December 23, 2010

Most people became aware of me because of the Pentagon Papers. Since then, I have become known as “The Most Dangerous Man In America”. And why? Because I spoke the truth. I was convinced that the American public should know the truth about the Vietnam War.

I continue to work to bring the truth to light. On December 16th, in a Veterans For Peace sponsored action, along 131 other people, I was arrested for attempting to chain myself to the White House gate. This was done in protest of American involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am a proud member of Veterans For Peace. I challenge you to join me and VFP and speak the truth to your family, friends, neighbors, and anyone that will listen. They need to know the truth about how our military is devastating the very countries that we have self-righteously proclaimed to save.

We are destroying Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the same way that we devastated Vietnam. Agent Orange dispersed in Vietnam still lingers in the ground contaminating soil and food. Live bombs and mines continue to harm innocent men, women and children. Today we are leaving depleted uranium weapons scattered throughout Iraq and Afghanistan that will have devastating ecological consequences for both people and ecosystems for years to come.

The True Cost of War is not measured in dollars spent on guns, nor on enemy combatants killed. The True Cost of War is visible in the catatonic face of a PTSD sufferer, in the lifeless body of a veteran who has committed suicide. The cost can be heard in the cries for help of the tortured, the stomach growls of hungry abandoned children on the streets of Iraq and Afghan villages. It can be felt at home in smaller budgets for schools and in homes that seem emptier because a father or mother has been deployed and is away from home during the holidays. The True Cost of War is that it strips us of our humanity, spoils nature's splendor, and ruins people's lives.

I challenge you to join the local VFP Chapters across the country. Become informed and participate in their projects. It is important that we support Bradley Manning and Julian Assange who are being persecuted for telling the truth about the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. When we work together we can make a difference.

I believe that VFP is one of the most credible organizations you can support. We have no alternative but to work for peace.

Daniel Ellsberg

**WHY WE MUST REDUCE MILITARY SPENDING** by Barney Frank and Ron Paul

Read More: Afghanistan , Afghanistan War , Barney Frank , Beyond Left And Right , Defense Spending , Deficit , Department Of Defense , Military , Military Spending , Obama Defense Spending , Pentagon , Ron Paul , Politics News

As members of opposing political parties, we disagree on a number of important issues. But we must not allow honest disagreement over some issues to interfere with our ability to work together when we do agree.

By far the single most important of these is our current initiative to include substantial reductions in the projected level of American military spending as part of future deficit reduction efforts. For decades, the subject of military expenditures has been glaringly absent from public debate. Yet the Pentagon budget for 2010 is \$693 billion -- more than all other discretionary spending programs combined. Even subtracting the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, military spending still amounts to over 42% of total spending.

It is irrefutably clear to us that if we do not make substantial cuts in the projected levels of Pentagon spending, we will do substantial damage to our economy and dramatically reduce our quality of life. We are not talking about cutting the money needed to supply American troops in the field. Once we send our men and women into battle, even in cases where we may have opposed going to war, we have an obligation to make sure that our service members have everything they need. And we are not talking about cutting essential funds for combating terrorism; we must do everything possible to prevent any recurrence of the mass murder of Americans that took place on September 11, 2001.

Immediately after World War II, with much of the world devastated and the Soviet Union becoming increasingly aggressive, America took on the responsibility of protecting virtually every country that asked for it. Sixty-five years later, we continue to play that role long after there is any justification for it, and currently American military spending makes up approximately 44% of all such expenditures worldwide. The nations of Western Europe now collectively have greater resources at their command than we do, yet they continue to depend overwhelmingly on American taxpayers to provide for their defense. According to a recent article in the New York Times, "Europeans have boasted about their social model, with its generous vacations and early retirements, its national health care systems and extensive welfare benefits, contrasting it with the comparative harshness of American capitalism. Europeans have benefited from low military spending, protected by NATO and the American nuclear umbrella."

When our democratic allies are menaced by larger, hostile powers, there is a strong argument to be made for supporting them. But the notion that American taxpayers get some benefit from extending our military might worldwide is deeply flawed. And the idea that as a superpower it is our duty to maintain stability by intervening in civil disorders virtually anywhere in the world often generates anger directed at us and may in the end do more harm than good.

We believe that the time has come for a much quicker withdrawal from Iraq than the President has proposed. We both voted against that war, but even for those who voted for it, there can be no justification for spending over \$700 billion dollars of American taxpayers' money on direct military spending in Iraq since the war began, not including the massive, estimated long-term costs of the war. We have essentially taken on a referee role in a civil war, even mediating electoral disputes.

In order to create a systematic approach to reducing military spending, we have convened a Sustainable Defense Task Force consisting of experts on military expenditures that span the ideological spectrum. The task force has produced a detailed report with specific recommendations for cutting Pentagon spending by approximately \$1 trillion over a ten year period. It calls for eliminating certain Cold War weapons and scaling back our commitments overseas. Even with these changes, the United States would still be immeasurably stronger than any nation with which we might be engaged, and the plan will in fact enhance our security rather than diminish it.

We are currently working to enlist the support of other members of Congress for our initiative. Along with our colleagues Senator Ron Wyden and Congressman Walter Jones, we have addressed a letter to the President's National Committee on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, which he has convened to develop concrete recommendations for reducing the budget deficit. We will make it clear to leaders of both parties that substantial reductions in military spending must be included in any future deficit

reduction package. We pledge to oppose any proposal that fails to do so.

In the short term, rebuilding our economy and creating jobs will remain our nation's top priority. But it is essential that we begin to address the issue of excessive military spending in order to ensure prosperity in the future. We may not agree on what to do with the estimated \$1 trillion in savings, but we do agree that nothing either of us cares deeply about will be possible if we do not begin to face this issue now.

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**Andrew Bacevith, "Unequal Sacrifice,"** *The Nation* (9-20-10), in rev. of Kriner and Shen, *The Casualty Gap*, writes: "Since 9-11, the **Pentagon budget** has more than doubled to approximately \$700 billion per year," and "current war costs [are] \$400 billion annually" Thus "the per capita cost of ongoing US wars comes to more than \$3,300 per annum. Add that as a surcharge to every American's tax bill (or subtract that amount from the annual payout to Social Security recipients)." This taxation for wars will not change in the foreseeable future, argue Kriner and Shen, because officials of the US Security State will continue to successfully cover up the casualties and the fact that the majority of them are poor.

**"The United States of War Criminals \*By Mickey Z.\*"**

"People from poorer places and poorer countries have to call upon their compassion not to be angry with ordinary people in America."

– \*Arundhati Roy\*

\*December 16, 2010\*\* \*\*\*Information Clearing

House\*<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/>>

\*" \*-- -- More than half (53.3%) of US tax dollars go to a criminal enterprise known as the US Department of Defense (sic), a.k.a. the worst polluter on the

planet<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/tech-transport/identify-worst-polluter-planet.html>>.

We hear about tax cuts this and budget that and all kinds of other bullshit from the US government and the corporations that own it...but the reality remains: Roughly one million tax dollars per minute are spent to fund the largest military machine (read: global terrorist operation) the world has ever known.

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article27084.htm>

## PART II LOCAL LETTERS ON COST OF WARS (from present to summer of 2010)

**PUBLIC VIEWPOINT,** *NWA TIMES* America Needs New Vision</strong>Friday, January 14, 2011

The year 2010 was a disappointment for many people who'd like to see the world become a more peaceful and humanfriendly place. We're pretty far from that idea and getting farther all the time. I'm thinking about wars, collapsing economies and global warming, but also impacts on our local school systems, hospitals, businesses and governments.

Do you know that 59 percent of our discretionary spending goes to pay for something for the military? The systems every one of us depends on to keep our communities prosperous and fair are being systematically stripped, and every available resource pumped into the militarycorporate complex to keep our wars going profitably. Then it's left to the politicians to tell us that we have to give up critical services to keep the system going.

It's hogwash of the nonsporting variety.

What do us regular folks get from this scenario? Are we really so thrilled to see our country create the richest billionaires on the planet? They're the only ones who are benefiting from the current situation. Legitimized greed is still greed, and it causes suffering.

Ask people who've lost homes and jobs where THEY think resources should be allocated. It'll be a different response than is heard in Washington.

America needs a new vision for how society works, since this one only works for the top 50 people. The rest of us need to see something different, because it's time. A new framework for 2011 would be a great new year's resolution for America.

GLADYS TIFFANY

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2011/jan/14/public-viewpoint-america-needs-new-vision-20110114/?nwa-opinion>

Cut it out!

[codepink@mail.democracyinaction.org](mailto:codepink@mail.democracyinaction.org)

<strong>LETTERS TO FAYETTEVILLE MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS FALL 2010</strong>

During the summer and fall of 2010 three members of OMNI (Dick, John Rule, Julie Thacker) <strong>contacted the Mayor and members of the Council </strong>in an informal ANTI-WAR / PUBLIC FUNDS NEEDS/PUBLIC OFFICIALS CAMPAIGN. Our reasoning was that since the public remains silent, we would ask our officials to lead the way to end the wars in order to fund Fayetteville public needs. We urged our local officials to be informed and connect the dots between the war spending, the federal budget, the national financial crisis, and the finances of towns and cities. We urged them to bring our war dollars home! And to support the troops by bringing them home. Below are their letters.

DICK'S 4TH LETTER TO TWO MORE COUNCIL MEMBERS (Council Members Rhonda Adams and Mark Kinnion 12-29-10)

BREAK THE SILENCE

On February 15, 2003, occurred the largest global protest against war the world has ever seen. Over 12 million people came out in the streets in over 60 countries and on five continents. So impressive was this outpouring of anti-war feeling that the New York Times claimed there were now two superpowers: the US National Security State and global public opinion. But that day of worldwide action did not stop Bush and Cheney from illegally attacking Iraq, did not stop them from replacing diplomacy with aggressive war. And now we see the consequences, and the importance for all people and especially people in official positions of influence to choose publicly not to be complicit in silence but to speak up with the truth.

Consider the financial consequences alone. In 2008, the military spent \$976, 121,986,000; that's \$1.9 million spent every single minute for wars falsely labeled "defense." In July 2009 the \$636 billion Pentagon spending bill passed 400-30. But that didn't include money for the Afghan and Iraq wars, or in the Energy Dept. for nuclear weapons, or for "Homeland Security." A special aspect of the appropriation is the unneeded pork money—for a new presidential helicopter fleet, new cargo jets, an alternative engine for the next-generation F-35 Fighter, and more. But this is peanuts compared to the \$128 billion for the Iraq and Afghan wars, which brings the total appropriated by Congress just for these wars to above \$1 trillion. (As stated in ADG 7-31-09, but Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes in The Three Trillion Dollars War estimated \$3 to 5 trillion, and recently Stiglitz raised the estimate to \$4 to 6 trillion because of the unexpectedly large number of wounded vets.)

These costs play out in our individual taxes. Andrew Bacevitch ( “Unequal Sacrifice,” The Nation, 9-20-10, in a review of Kriner and Shen, The Casualty Gap), writes: “Since 9-11, the Pentagon budget has more than doubled to approximately \$700 billion per year,” and “current war costs [are] \$400 billion annually.” Thus “the per capita cost of ongoing US wars comes to more than \$3,300 per annum. Add that as a surcharge to every American’s tax bill (or subtract that amount from the annual payout to Social Security recipients).” This taxation for wars will not change in the foreseeable future, argue Kriner and Shen, because officials of the US Security State will continue to successfully cover up US soldier casualties and the fact that the majority of them are poor.

And now, by extending the Bush tax cuts to the wealthy, shrinking the estate tax, and freezing discretionary spending on everything except war, Pres. Obama is leaving less for education and infrastructure.

Yet these wars, these sacrifices, have not shielded the US, nor defended liberty. We hear from all who choose armed-force over negotiation and diplomacy that once in a war we must “support the troops” for their sacrifice in our defense. But name one US war after WWII in Europe that comes close to being a war of defense. What does it tell us that the VA provides health care for more than 23 million US veterans; as many as a quarter of the nation’s population qualifies for VA coverage; and federal cemeteries are running out of space? Have that many citizens defended the country from attack? Name the wars caused by another country attacking the US.

So let us remember Martin Luther King, Jr.’s great sermon, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence” (April 4, 1967): “A time comes when silence is betrayal.” Silence about the wars—US permanent war-- must end. The myth of US defensive wars is not sacrosanct; casualty facts must no longer be kept secret; the enormous financial and human costs, the true costs of US wars, must be disclosed. We must “break the silence of the night” of these wars, just as King urged light for the Vietnam War.

**<strong>DICK’S LETTER TO WARD 3 COUNCILMEN JUSTIN TENNANT  
([Justin@tenantforcouncil.com](mailto:Justin@tenantforcouncil.com)) and BOBBY FERRELL ([ward3\\_pos2@ci.fayetteville.ar.us](mailto:ward3_pos2@ci.fayetteville.ar.us)) and  
copy to Mayor Jordan 12-2010</strong>**

Dear Bobby Ferrell and Justin Tennant:

I write to you as a resident of Ward 3 to express my curiosity regarding the way our mayor and other city managers handled their recent ward meetings. Their presentations were excellent, clear and factual—very professional. Importantly, they confronted the shortage of funds to carry out all of the needs of our community.

But they did not explain it, and that made me curious. Why were they silent about the major cause of our budget shortfalls—the cost of the two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq of \$4 to 6 trillion (est. by Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes in their The Three Trillion Dollar War). We borrow \$2 billion a day from China to pay for these wars.

Here’s a small example of these costs: one type of drone aircraft, the Global Hawk unmanned reconnaissance plane, costs the taxpayers \$11.1 billion for 77 planes, the per-aircraft procurement cost having increased 11 percent to \$100.8 million since the project began in 2000. (ADG 9-16-10).

A democracy depends upon informed citizens. How can we make budgetary decisions, when our own officials withhold causes of financial shortages? (Or is there some other explanation?)

Please ask our mayor and his assistants why they are silent about these immense expenditures for wars, wars that are illegal, based upon lies, and have killed so many innocent women and children and our own soldiers, when that money could do so much good for Arkansas and for Fayetteville. Think of it:

Since 2001 Fayetteville taxpayers have so far paid more than \$221,860,000 million for the wars: for the war in Iraq more than \$147,760,000, and for the war in Afghanistan more than \$74,100,000.

How can our officials remain silent? And you our Council members?

Thank you,  
Dick Bennett  
2582 Jimmie Ave.  
Fayetteville, AR 72703

References:

These three websites provide information on the costs of these wars and the breakdown of the Federal Budget by category.

1. <http://www.mibazaar.com/costofiraqwar> Interactive map - click on Arkansas balloon (25).
2. <http://www.costofwar.com> Shows costs of wars for United States (by entire USA, household, person, and taxpayer), by State (entire state, city & state)
3. <http://nationalpriorities.org> mibazaar in (1) above claims National Priorities as its source.

<strong>REPLY FROM COUNCILMAN FERRELL</strong>> -

> From: bobby ferrell <[rlsferrell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rlsferrell@sbcglobal.net)>

> Date: Sun, Dec 12, 2010 at 5:44 PM

> Subject: Re: FAYETTEVILLE BUDGET

> To: Dick Bennett <[jbennet@uark.edu](mailto:jbennet@uark.edu)>

>

>> Dick- in my opinion our shortage of funds is fairly simple to explain. For  
> several years we had very good positive revenue growth. During that time a  
> lot of money spent around Fayetteville. In the last few years the revenue  
> has declined. Although some cuts have been made, not enough in my opinion  
> to balance the budget. Incidentally I'm all for cuts to balance the budget.

<strong>TENNANT's Reply</strong>Mr. Bennett,

Thank you for your email. I too am very concerned about the cost of our wars. I have been troubled by it since shortly after they began all those years ago. It is my hope that the major engagements will end soon and curb the astronomical costs associated with them. In all cases, I want to protect our troops and provide them a steady, safe and fast return home.

I assure you I will have this in mind when I take my spot on the council in January.

On another note, this email address will soon be disabled. Please look at the [www.accessfayetteville.org](http://www.accessfayetteville.org) website soon after the 1st of the new year to see my new address for council correspondence.

Thank you.  
Justin Tennant

<strong>DICK'S LETTER TO DOUG THOMPSON/NAT: COST OF MILITARISM, SILENCE OF PUBLIC AND OFFICIALS 11-28-10 (pub. 12-16-10)</strong>

To the Editor  
Doug Thompson

The inability of Fayetteville and Washington County to afford a broad range of needs and desires can be traced directly to the wars our leaders have led us into. These wars are an enormous drain on our finances. Of President Obama's 2011 Recommended Discretionary Spending, over 50% goes to the military (the wars, the Pentagon, Veterans Affairs, Nuclear Weapons). But for the urgent needs of Fayetteville and Washington County? For Federal Health and Human Services, the 2011 budget provides only 6%; for Transportation, 6%; for Education, 4%; for Housing and Urban Development, 3%; for Justice, 2%; for Agriculture, 2%; for Environmental Protection Agency, 1%. Everything is shorted for the military.

Yet We, the people are largely silent. Why is that? We are not entirely to blame. Particularly, we are deceived about the real financial costs of the wars. We are not paying as we go the present costs of the wars directly by taxes, because payment has been delayed through loans from Japan and China, for our children and grandchildren to pay.

Also, the true costs are hidden from us through Pentagon secrecy, government subsidies to corporations, corporate public relations, media complicity, and sheer complexity. The cost of gasoline for the tanks and planes, for example, is substantially higher than the price the Pentagon pays, because much of this cost is hidden from the public. Especially uncounted and unmeasured is the destruction to the environment by U.S. wars.

Even our local officials are complicit in the cover-up. When lamenting the shrunken budget, our public officials do not confront the major cause in the four to six trillion dollars the Iraq and Afghan wars are to cost (not including the expansion of the wars into Pakistan and Yemen, and throughout the world via our network of some 900 military bases). Not until the people are told the real costs of the wars and the true causes of municipal and county shortfalls will the public ever know enough to be motivated to change the war economy of the U.S. National Security State.

I turn to our officials then: the next time you speak to the public about your struggle to find money for the services We, the people need, don't omit the facts of the wars.

Dick Bennett  
2582 Jimmie Ave.  
Fayetteville, AR 72703  
442-4600

comments on your letter are growing in online version.

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2010/dec/16/public-viewpoint-wake-wars-costs-20101216/?nwa-opinion-northwest>

<strong>JULIE'S LETTER TO LIONELD AND HER 2 WARD COUNCILLORS</strong>Dear Mayor Jordan,

I am learning that a forum to discuss the City of Fayetteville budget is coming up. I have also learned that according to some websites, we are spending outrageous amounts of our hard-earned tax money on the wars.

Since 2001 Fayetteville taxpayers have so far paid a total of more than \$221,860,000 for the wars. More than \$147,760,000 has gone to the war in Iraq, and more than \$74,100,000 has gone to the war in Afghanistan.

When discussing the city budget next time, I want to request that you discuss the costs of war on the City of Fayetteville. How much money is being wasted on these wars? There is no reason to be silent about this. Please speak up about this, when considering the City's budget.

Taxpayers in Arkansas have so far paid nearly 7 billion for the illegal war in Iraq. Do you realize

what 7 billion could have provided? I am listing just a few examples:

That money billion could have provided:

2,713,079+ children with health care, or  
4,089,204+ homes with renewable electricity, or  
140,174+ public safety officers, or  
95,840+ music and arts teachers, or  
842,601+ scholarships for university students, or  
445+ new elementary schools, or  
72,734+ affordable housing units, or  
826,380+ Head Start places for children, or  
102,408+ elementary school teachers, or

When you and others are working on the budget for the City of Fayetteville, please consider the costs of war, and recognize that we can use our money way more wisely than on these destructive wars.

Sources of my statistics (the numbers grow daily):

<http://www.mibazaar.com/costofiraqwar>

<http://costofwar.com>

<http://nationalpriorities.org>

Sincerely yours,

Julie S. Thacker

30 year citizen of the City of Fayetteville

**JOHN RULE'S LETTER TO Mayor Lioneld Jordan NOVEMBER 27, 2010**

Dear Mayor Lioneld Jordan, </strong>

I'm writing to you about two subjects which concern me deeply and have for some time, both for their relation to each other and for side effects.

Although technically we are already acquainted, I'd like to clarify where I come from.

I turn eighty this year, am a retired college teacher (B.A., M.A., U. of A.), taught in colleges from here to Germany, served two years during the Korean War (Police Action, Truman's War), achieving grade E5. My father did defense work at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, and Brookley Field in Alabama, and brought us to Harrison in 1942 after WWII was declared. I'm quite loyal to my nation's basic documents and ideals.

But my loyalty is not an unthinking loyalty. I feel we need to use our personal experiences and values, our critical mental powers and our sense of compassion and social justice to plot the nation's path ahead and vote and speak out accordingly. I call this the higher patriotism. It is not a flag-waving, my country right or wrong, combative attitude.

It calls for us each to operate on long-term self-interest for ourselves, for our communities, for our nation, and for our share of the planetary ecology.

Now I'll discuss warfare, economy, and ecology. I do believe in absolute self-defense; even Eleanor Roosevelt believed in that. But a large standing army (fifty-nine per cent of the national budget) is waste and expense personified. Combat training uses large land areas, logistics of movement and supply for personnel and large machines {a battle tank moves on five gallons of gas per mile}, accidents and loss of equipment. We civilians likely never know the full cost. Even actual crime adds to it; In my Headquarters Detachment unit we had collusion between supply personnel and civilians

to steal significant amounts of materiel . The trial was aborted because of loss of stored evidence. Even as a child of ten I saw deliberate burning of piles of new plywood at Brookley Field and heard my dad cussing deliberate waste and cost-plus. It did not matter to contractors , whose profit percentage was guaranteed beyond all production expense. And resale was perhaps forbidden in the contract. In my army service I witnessed destruction of terrain through bombing practice by weekend warrior reservists and finding of a long-lost ruined weapon on the training range. Our efficiency in my permanent unit was often hampered by drunken personnel fighting off-duty.

Besides the drain on the nation's commerce and wealth—except for the defense-military complex, which profits to excess—costing something like three billion per month for the Iraq-Afghanistan wars, warfare around the planet increases terrible damage to flora, fauna, and humanity. Chemical pollution from spills and explosions is vast. Even here at home, shells commonly stray beyond impact areas. All this hastens global warming and the extinction rate of species exponentially.

Why am I writing to you? Because you are one of our many chosen guides to the future, the bearer of a public trust. And because I feel it is past time to push, in a sane and rational manner, for a movement toward a peaceful and prosperous existence on the local level, and to signal such a wish to the national administration. I feel that this society is in flux, on the cusp of change, and public administrators should move us toward diplomac , away from secrecy and global warfare toward openness and the democratic republic the nation's framers envisioned.

And of course I want you to push so judiciously and sanely, in the manner of Lincoln and Eisenhower, that you will not only stay in office but grow in stature with us all.

Most sincerely yours

<strong>10-31-10 DICK ON CLOSING SCHOOL IN SPAVINAW placed in blog.

"Reba Where Are You?"</strong>A crisis in education because \$4 to 6 trillion will be spent on the Iraq and Afghan wars? No worry, so long as Reba McEntire's on the case. The Spavinaw, OK school district was on the verge of closing pre-K through 8th grade, being \$60,000 in the hole. But in flew fairy godmother Reba, and all was well.

What? Other schools are also war-shortaged? Not to worry.

Reba. Reba! Reeceebaaaaa!

Well, we can turn to athletics for the money for education. In Arkansas 4 of the 10 public universities funded more than 20% of their athletic programs with state revenue and student tuition, 2009-10. And athletic spending at Arkansas' 2-year colleges and 4-year universities grew 11% from the previous year to over \$116 million. What? They won't give up their money for other schools warred out?

What shall we do?

The Pentagon? What? Its \$600 billion 2009-10 budget was not enough for a year of the Afghan-Iraq wars? They needed more? They cannot share? And there's the invasion of Pakistan to consider. And the 900 military bases around the world. We have to find our own money for education?

Reeeeeeeeeebaaaaaiaaaaaaaaaaaaa.

(ADG 10-25-10)

<strong>DICK'S LETTER WRITTEN AUGUST 17, 2010 SENT to Mayor Jordan, Alderwoman Adella Gray, and Don Marr.</strong>

"Born and Raised Inside the Pentagon" by Dick Bennett, August 17, 2010.

Mayor Jordan remarked at a Ward meeting, "We have to be frugal with our money." On almost the same day, the public schools were also saving pennies, and Governor Beebe ordered all state agencies to find "ways to save money" with the state's vehicles. I'm sure we're all for frugality in municipal and

state affairs. And we are well served by our competent officials who operate with auditable, accountable discipline. They can tell citizens what a project will cost, what it will actually do, and when it truly might arrive.

Yet they seem blind or subservient in pinching pennies at home without making a single complaint about our government spending trillions of dollars in foreign wars without the fiscal discipline demanded at home.

Here's why we must pinch pennies at home: The Pentagon budget in 2001 when George W. Bush became president amounted to \$305 billion (not including nuclear weapons or interest on the debt and many other billions in related costs). By the time he left office it was \$600 billion and the national debt \$10.6 trillion. Under President Obama Pentagon budget, deficit, and debt continue to rise. Why is this?

Example one:

You have a part of the F-35 in your backyard. The Pentagon plans to buy 43 F-35 fighter aircraft under the 2011 budget at a cost of \$201 million per F-35. The Pentagon intends to procure 2,443 of these fighters. Besides the question of the need for so many, or even the need for the fighter at all, other problems include its share of Pentagon administrative overhead, estimated to be 40%.

Example two: You have a part of the super-secret militarization of the heavens outside of international agreements and boundaries in your garage.

The Pentagon's \$26 billion per year space program, which exceeds NASA's budget of \$18 billion, is increasing. It includes the multi-billion-dollar National Reconnaissance Office with its spy satellites and the rockets that lift them into space.

Example three: Pentagon chaos pervades your yard, garage, and entire house. The Pentagon cannot pass an audit. As the Director of the Straus Military Reform Project of the Center for Defense Information writes: "the Pentagon's comprehension of its own material resources is a deep, dark void. It can't track its own money; it cooks its own books to make them appear in balance, and then it makes new spending decisions based on the phony data. Nor can it accurately track its own property, even supplies to the troops fighting in Afghanistan."

Pentagon, wars, deficit, and debt. This bloated war machine produces enormous deficit. The federal budget deficit is the difference between what the government takes in from taxes and other sources and what it spends annually. Imagine you made \$60,000 in a year but had \$70,000 in expenses. You would have a \$10,000 deficit. You would need to borrow \$10,000 to make up the difference. The national debt can be thought of as the accumulated amount the government owes from years of borrowing money to pay off the annual deficits. Pinch all the pennies you can locally, the U.S. budget deficit has grown to \$1.17 trillion in the first ten months of 2010. The national debt in 2010 is \$13 trillion. Of that, some \$350 billion goes to pay the interest on the debt held by banks in China, Japan, and individuals. Thanks to the F-35 and the spy satellite you have welcomed to your bank account, and the books cooking in your kitchen.

The question then is: Why are our government officials, who are so sincerely trying to find money for the services we desire, utterly zipped about why the money is so short? You would think Lionel, Connie, and our other officials who struggle so valiantly with too little money would be, if not furious, at least willing to explain why they cannot do what we wish. But they are silent.

A few years ago I asked the members of OMNI to suggest why the public is silent about the invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, and US permanent war. In response I received over 30 different explanations. All together (busy, fear for job, conformity) they composed a comprehensive explanation. Yet one explanation, and I think the best, was barely mentioned. I have been describing it. Our officials also

have a war machine occupying their property, and a book cooker now watching TV in their living room, and they have been there so long nobody notices them, even when paying for their exorbitant upkeep!

How that ruinous situation occurred for the people of the US is a complicated story, of course, but fortunately many books explain it (Carroll's *House of War* one of the best), and a major explanation is summarized in a book published just this August 2010: *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* by Andrew Bacevich. Here is my summary of this thesis.

The basic creed and myth of the US was expressed as early as 1941, by Henry R. Luce in his essay, "The American Century." The purpose of the US was to liberate and transform the world. Read this carefully: "The people of the United States should 'accept wholeheartedly our duty to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit.'" Within a decade after Luce's pronouncement, the Pentagon was a Leviathan and the US was the most powerful National Security State in world history.

You know the official story; through repetition it has become almost organic to the US brain. The US was compelled by enemies—Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, Hirohito—to become a global power. From WWII to the invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, and now Pakistan, no choice ever existed for us. Overwhelming US power was necessary to guarantee not only our safety, prosperity, and freedom, but also that of our allies. The view was so fundamental to our educational conditioning system, so taken for granted, that it became invisible.

The Cold War sustained that black and white, Manichean worldview so thoroughly that it became the national orthodoxy with its dogmas to which every president since Roosevelt adhered and continues today with President Obama. The Vietnam War forced some of the population to question the dogmas—for example, that US power was essentially benign--, but the orthodoxy successfully led the majority through some 40 to 50 illegal invasions and interventions following WWII. The next great shock to the web of national security assumptions and myths embraced by US Christian, Jew, and Muslim was Bush II's invasion of Iraq and radical extension of the security orthodoxy to a "global war on terror" via preventive war. Yet the orthodoxy held and still holds, as the Obama/Pentagon apparatus repeats the same slogans of the Bush II/Pentagon, the same as with Panama, Grenada, Nicaragua, as we remember backwards the orthodoxy in action through Bush I, Reagan, Carter, Nixon, Johnson, Kennedy, Eisenhower, and Truman, where the US National Security State began in 1947. That so many generations were successfully indoctrinated to accept these beliefs as unimpeachable is as truly astonishing as the almost complete collapse of independent, critical thinking during those years.

Is it any wonder, then, that US military spending dwarfs that of Russia, China and in fact equals the combined military budgets of the next 15 countries behind us? We have been thinking inside the Pentagon for seventy years, so long we don't see it. The assault on universal Medicare as ruinously expensive, for example, was out of self-interest on the part of some, but compassionate medical care for all was also attacked by intellectuals like George Will and by members of the general public for whom the service was intended. Seventy years of national security public relations, of fear and secrecy, had convinced them that the Pentagon, a standing army, and global armed coercion, never mind the truly ruinous expense and the waste, were necessary.

We have slept long enough. Let "we, the people" and especially our elected officials tell the truth about the shortfalls in public services they so earnestly and sincerely decry. It's the wars.

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**CONDENSED VERSION (TO 350 WORDS) OF DICK'S LETTER WRITTEN AUGUST 17, 2010, accepted for pub. Richard Davis, TFW, 8-31, 10** "Living with the Eagle" by Dick Bennett, August 31, 2010.

"The 2010 Kids Count rankings...based on 10 equally weighted criteria covering education, health, and the economy" revealed that "overall, Arkansas came out No. 48 in the country—one place lower than last year."

What? Do you smell something? Oh oh. I breathed through my nose, and now I suspect there's an eagle in my living room. Only one a costly eagle. But if in all homes, together needing to be fed trillions of dollars for wasteful, illegal foreign wars.

Consider: Early this month \$1.9 million worth of computers purchased by the U.S. taxpayers and intended for Iraqi school children were auctioned off by Iraqi officials for less than \$50,000. By the time President Bush left office the Pentagon budget was \$600 billion (not including nuclear weapons or interest on the debt and many other billions in war costs) and the national debt \$10.6 trillion. The national debt in 2010 is \$13 trillion.

The Pentagon Mother of all Eagles is mighty prolific—and expensive.

The question then is: Why are our government officials, and more astonishingly the public, all of whom are sincerely trying to find money for kids, zipped about those flesh-eating predators in their homes?

Henry R. Luce explained in his 1941 essay, "The American Century." The purpose of the US was to transform the world "as we see fit and by such means as we see fit." Within a decade after Luce's pronouncement, the US was the most powerful and expensive National Security Empire in world history.

Now US military spending dwarfs that of Russia, China, and in fact equals the combined military budgets of the next 15 countries behind us. We have been living with the Pentagon so long it has become part of the furniture. Seventy years of rising Pentagon budgets, the growing military-industrial complex, the Pentagon Propaganda Machine, Pentagon fear-mongering, and Pentagon

secrecy, have convinced us that a standing army and permanent war, never mind the world-ruinous expense, waste, and conflagration, are necessary.

But we can at least smell something is wrong.

CONDENSED VERSION (TO 470 WORDS) OF DICK'S LETTER WRITTEN AUGUST 17, 2010  
<strong>Living with the Elephant</strong>by Dick Bennett, August 31, 2010.

On July 29, 2010 the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (ADG) reported in an editorial: "The 2010 Kids Count rankings...based on 10 equally weighted criteria covering education, health, and the economy" revealed that "Overall, Arkansas came out No. 48 in the country—one place lower than last year." On August 1, the newspaper reported: "When funds from the 2009 economic stimulus program ran out in June, 5000 Arkansas children lost access to subsidized child care."

Our money ran out? We must pinch pennies?

Do you feel uneasy? Something has been left out? Oh oh. I just opened my nose, and there IS a Pentagon elephant in my living room, and in my neighbors', and at City Hall. Our government IS spending—the public is spending (borrowing)--trillions of dollars for illegal foreign wars without even the fiscal discipline demanded at home. Just a few days ago, for example, the ADG reported that \$1.9 million worth of computers purchased by the U.S. taxpayers and intended for Iraqi school children had been auctioned off by officials for less than \$50,000.

So the wars make us pinch pennies and drag our Kids Count rankings down? Consider: By the time President Bush left office the Pentagon budget was \$600 billion (not including nuclear weapons or interest on the debt and many other billions in war costs) and the national debt \$10.6 trillion. Under President Obama Pentagon budget, deficit, and debt continue to rise. . Despite our pinching pennies locally, the U.S. budget deficit has grown to \$1.17 trillion in the first ten months of 2010. The national debt in 2010 is \$13 trillion. Why is this? The Pentagon Mother of all Elephants is prolific.

The question then is: Why are our government officials, and more astonishingly the public, all of whom are sincerely trying to find money for our kids, zipped about those big-nosed, messy babies in their homes?

Henry R. Luce explained it in his 1941 essay, "The American Century." The purpose of the US was to liberate and transform the world "as we see fit and by such means as we see fit." Within a decade after Luce's pronouncement, the US was the most powerful and expensive National Security State in world history.

Now US military spending dwarfs that of Russia, China and in fact equals the combined military budgets of the next 15 countries behind us. We have been feeding the Pentagon for seventy years, so long we don't see it. Seventy years of rising Pentagon budgets, the growing military-industrial complex, the Pentagon Propaganda Machine, fear and secrecy, have convinced us that the Pentagon, a standing army, and global armed coercion, never mind the truly ruinous expense and the waste, are necessary.

But we can at least smell something is wrong. It's the wars.

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DICK’S <strong>LTE ON COSTS OF US WARS JULY 2010</strong>

From <em>The Am Way of War</em>, 200-, and Stiglitz and Bilmes

437 words

Sent to <em>NAT</em>, Doug Thompson, published as “The Real Cost of War” (7-30-10).

This year Congress passed a record Pentagon budget of \$626 billion. The bill passed without much debate or even public notice. Perhaps our representatives and the public did not know that the Pentagon’s real budget each year is a trillion dollars, which does not include all of the expenditures for our “national security state.”

For example, Congress recently added \$33 billion “supplemental” funds for the Afghan surge for one year, and that does not include all of the expenditures for that year.

Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and his co-author Linda Bilmes report in The Three Trillion-Dollar War that if all costs of the Iraq War were to be counted, the Iraq War will cost “more than \$3 trillion” (p. 24) and likely \$5 trillion (p. 31). And this number omits the costs to the rest of the world, and to Iraq.

What are these total expenditures?

Higher oil prices and therefore larger deficits.

Interest payments on the national debt. The US has borrowed most of the funds used to wage the war, and we will have to repay this debt with interest.

Social and economic costs beyond budgetary costs—for example, the lost economic contribution of family members who must leave the workforce to care for disabled veterans.

Lost opportunity costs: how our country would have benefited had we spent the money in another way.

Costs across the government, including soaring energy costs, lower tax revenues, benefits to veterans, especially to severely wounded veterans.

Future costs of restoring all military forces (including the National Guard) to their prewar strength (replenishing, repairing): ammunition, vehicles and their parts, soldier equipment. And the Army intends to increase its size to respond to additional crises.

Current and future costs of disability and health care for returning veterans, one of our largest long-term financial obligations. By 2008, more than 1.6 million U.S. troops had been deployed, all of

whom were eligible for VA medical care.

Future operational expenditures. President Obama talks about withdrawal, but thousands of long-term plans and contracts have been made, permanent bases have been and are being built in Iraq and Afghanistan, and our new Embassy in Pakistan will rival the one in Baghdad. Whatever drawdown is ordered likely will be small and slow.

All of these costs diminish domestic investments and divert expenditures from roads, schools, research and other areas that would have stimulated the economy and benefited future generations of our youth. .

Compared to European industrialized countries, the people of the US attend church/temple/mosque well. But if willingness to spend on wars reveals the public's true religion, the military and "national security" are their real place of worship.

Dick Bennett  
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