

"Reducing the Pentagon budget to reflect the savings from ending the Afghan war is just common sense. The Pentagon has no claim on the money that will no longer be spent on that failed war, the taxpayers do. Given the outrageous bloat, waste, mismanagement and misdirected resources in the Pentagon budget, as well as the long list of underfunded domestic and human needs, the savings from ending the Afghan war – variously estimated at \$20-50 billion a year – should be devoted to nonmilitary priorities to make our nation safer, more secure and more just."

Robert Weissman, President, Public Citizen

"The Biden administration's decision-making on Afghanistan presents policymakers with perhaps the clearest opportunity in years to reduce the defense budget without adversely impacting personnel, readiness, and modernization efforts elsewhere in the military. Unfortunately, rather than grasp at that opportunity President Biden has proposed a defense budget that's essentially flat compared to last year. This letter should make clear that an ideologically diverse coalition of groups would like policymakers to rethink that flat topline."

Andrew Lautz, Director of Federal Policy, National Taxpayers Union

"President Biden's decision to finally withdraw U.S. forces from Afghanistan after 20 long years of war is a major, welcome step in the right direction. But that alone is not enough. If we're serious about not just ending our current wars, but ending the endless war mentality that brought us there, we need our budget to reflect that. The real security challenges of today – from the climate crisis to global inequality – demand that we cut the Pentagon budget and invest instead in human needs."

Erica Fein, Advocacy Director, Win Without War

"As defense appropriators in both Chambers of Congress consider the Biden budget, they must also consider the impact of the Afghanistan withdrawal on our military spending. Estimates indicate that between \$20 and \$50 billion will be saved by withdrawing troops from the unwinnable war in Afghanistan. Given that this amount is higher than the combined budgets of the State Department and USAID, and yet robust diplomacy will be needed to ensure the fragile gains for Afghan women secured throughout the past 20 years, the answer is clear. Congress must reject the tactical fear-mongering of our generals and begin the process of trimming the defense budget in favor of diplomatic and human security needs."

Mac Hamilton, Advocacy Director, Women's Action for New Directions

"Endless wars mean endless Pentagon spending, and vice versa. Now that the U.S. war in Afghanistan is finally coming to a close, Americans deserve to have the savings spent on something that will actually make all of us more secure, such as bold measures to address global pandemics, climate change and racial injustice."

Diana Ohlbaum, Legislative Director for Foreign Policy, Friends Committee on National Legislation

"China spends 32% of what the U.S. does on its military, but that's 19% of NATO members/partners (not including Russia), and 14% of what the U.S. plus allies, weapons customers, and military "aid" recipients spend. In per capita terms, the U.S. spends 11 times what China does. In 2020, China reduced its military spending, as did Russia (8% of U.S. and falling) and many others. There is no enemy to justify U.S. military spending. There are only profiteers."

David Swanson, Executive Director, World BEYOND War

"While we applaud President Biden's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, we are painfully aware that 20 years of violent warfare have not made Afghanistan or the United States more secure. The

Taliban and other extremist groups continue to wield power and influence. Meanwhile, other threats to human security such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic demand vast resources. For over fifty years, Maryknoll missionaries have joined other Catholic leaders from Pope Paul VI to Pope Francis in calling for funds to be reallocated from military defense to development and aid as a more effective investment in peace and security. Today, we repeat that call, and urge Congress to reduce the defense budget, investing instead in more effective, nonviolent alternatives.”

Dan Moriarty, Sustainable Pathways to Peace Coordinator, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

"Withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan by September of 2021 is an important step toward fulfilling President Biden's campaign promise to 'end the forever wars'. The U.S. now has a special responsibility for peacebuilding, reconciliation, and reconstruction, given our near 20 year occupation of Afghanistan. To truly fulfill the promise to "end forever wars", the estimated savings freed up by troop withdrawal should be redirected from the Pentagon budget to create a dedicated fund for Afghanistan's reconstruction and social development."

Carley Towne, Co-Director CODEPINK

"Long calling for an end to the expensive Afghanistan War, Reps. Lee, Pocan and others wisely ask that taxpayers see savings or investments in other priorities such as solving the climate crisis and racial equity as the U.S. ends its longest war."

Paul Kawika Martin, Senior Director, Policy and Political Affairs, Peace Action

"Defense spending should be responsive and proportional to our national security needs. Just as our military entanglement in Afghanistan hasn't been connected to our national security objectives for some time, neither are the billions of tax dollars spent each year to support it. As our troops leave that country, spending must also decrease. Congress should take this opportunity to demonstrate they are responsible stewards of hard-earned taxpayer dollars and align spending with the conditions of our continued prosperity."

Nate Anderson, Executive Director, Concerned Veterans for America