Negative: Defense Budget Cut

By Vance Trefethen  
  
***Resolved: The United States federal government should considerably decrease its military commitments***

Affirmative cuts the budget of the US Dept. of Defense.

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The upcoming federal budget isn't a commitment because it doesn't exist yet. Biden hasn't announced anything, and even if he does, it could still be amended going forward 3

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Negative: Defense Budget Cuts

TOPICALITY

1. No "commitment"

The upcoming federal budget isn't a commitment because it doesn't exist yet. Biden hasn't announced anything, and even if he does, it could still be amended going forward

Deniece Peterson 2020. (MBA; Director of Federal Market Analysis for Deltek, a global business consulting firm) 21 Dec 2020 "Administration Transition and the FY 2022 Budget" https://iq.govwin.com/neo/marketAnalysis/view/Administration-Transition-and-the-FY-2022-Budget/4642?researchTypeId=1&researchMarket=

Typically, the outgoing administration leaves the budget submission responsibilities to the incoming administration. In both the outgoing Obama and Bush Administrations, for example, OMB directed agencies to prepare current services budgets, which provide estimates of the anticipated cost of continuing federal programs and activities at the current levels of service, without any policy changes. This leaves room for the incoming president to have some, though limited, influence on the budget request. For the current transition, the Trump Administration elected to proceed with the full, formal budget submission incorporating its own funding priorities. There are at least three approaches President-elect Biden can take with the FY 2022 budget: “Delay and Rebuild”, “Accept and Modify” or “Accept As-Is”.  
Delay and Rebuild  
In this scenario, President-elect Biden decides against submitting the budget left for him by the previous administration and pushes agencies to submit an entirely separate budget that represents his policy priorities.  [**END QUOTE**] The Trump Administration took this route for the FY 2018 budget (as did President Obama for the FY 2010); the President submitted first a “skinny” budget in March 2017 that provided a high-level blueprint of budget priorities, followed by a full budget request in May 2017. This provided the Trump Administration with the time to fully influence all components of its first budget request. One risk of this approach is that it requires decision-making during a time when incoming leadership is still learning about the organization. It also restricts the amount of time available to conduct research and risk analysis of any new initiatives.   
[**SHE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT, QUOTE:]** Accept and Modify   
Biden could also choose to accept and submit the budget it will inherit from the Trump Administration, and request targeted modifications in the form of budget amendments (which can be submitted at any time). This approach would allow him to forego the lengthy and complex budget formulation process do-over and instead focus on modifying specific elements of the budget that are misaligned with his policy agenda, such as funding supporting healthcare, immigration and the border wall, and climate change R&D.   
Accept As-Is   
President-elect Biden could — but is highly unlikely to — accept the FY 2022 budget request left by the Trump Administration in full and shift focus on the FY 2023 budget, which will begin under the new Biden Administration in the spring of 2021.   
A Look Ahead  
The track the Biden Administration will take is not yet clear.

Definition of "COMMITMENT"

Merriam Webster online Dictionary copyright 2021. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commitment

an agreement or pledge to do something in the future

Violation: Nothing agreed or pledged, so no commitment

Since Pres. Biden hasn't agreed nor pledged what the upcoming defense budget will be, nor has Congress voted on it … we can't reduce the commitment. You can't substantially reduce something that doesn't exist.

Impact: No Affirmative team means a Negative ballot

The Negative team advocates the Status Quo and the other team advocates modifying something that either doesn't exist or isn't a commitment. Nobody showed up in the debate round to actually affirm the resolution. Since there is no Affirmative team, no matter who wins, you should vote Negative.

2. Goes beyond "military"

Link: "Defense Budget" includes non-"Military" stuff. Example: Intelligence agencies

Michael E. DeVine 2019 (Analyst in Intelligence and National Security, Congressional Research Service) Updated November 6, 2019 https://fas.org/sgp/crs/intel/R44381.pdf

Most intelligence dollars are embedded in the defense budget. Historically this was for security purposes. All but the topline NIP [National Intelligence Program] and MIP [Military Intelligence Program] budget numbers are classified.

Consequences: Enough is enough.

Negative teams shouldn’t have to debate things outside the resolution. This topic is already more than broad enough. Letting Affirmatives extend it out to intelligence agencies and other civilian programs and employees of the Defense Department is going too far. Teach them not to do this with a Negative ballot in today's debate round.

INHERENCY

1. Defense burden on US economy already greatly decreased

Defense spending was 6.1% of GDP (the entire US economy) in 1988. Today it's only 3.4%

Thomas Spoehr 2021. (retired Lieutenant (3-star) General, US Army; Master of Arts in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College) 18 Jan 2021 " The Six Blind Men and the Elephant: Differing Views on the U.S. Defense Budget" https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-six-blind-men-and-the-elephant-differing-views-the-us-defense-budget

The next most commonly used metric for defense budget assessment is the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) spent on defense. For 2019, the United States devoted [3.4 percent of its GDP to the military](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Data%20for%20all%20countries%20from%201988%E2%80%932019%20as%20a%20share%20of%20GDP.pdf)—down from 6.1 percent as recently as 1988. Because this metric also helps portray the burden of defense on the U.S. economy, it is also mentioned in the next approach, affordability.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. Stories in the press don't prove anything

Can't use stories in the press to make serious national defense budgeting decisions

Thomas Spoehr 2021. (retired Lieutenant (3-star) General, US Army; Master of Arts in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College) 18 Jan 2021 " The Six Blind Men and the Elephant: Differing Views on the U.S. Defense Budget" https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-six-blind-men-and-the-elephant-differing-views-the-us-defense-budget

The mention of a [scandalously priced Air Force coffee cup](https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2018/10/23/air-force-puts-the-kibosh-on-the-1300-coffee-cup/), the news account of [marines scavenging for aircraft parts in museums](https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/a20134/marines-had-to-scrounge-for-f-a-18-parts-at-a-museum/), or the Pentagon’s [failure to pass a financial audit](https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2020/11/16/the-pentagon-failed-its-audit-again-but-sees-progress/) are too often treated as prima facie evidence of an either over- or under-resourced Pentagon. Despite the entertainment value, this is not a serious approach. Individuals seeking insights should be on guard against being swayed by these arguments.

2. Constitutional duty outweighs

Constitutional duty to "provide for the common defense" outweighs other priorities

James Di Pane and Janae Diaz 2020 (DiPane - Research Associate, Center for National Defense, Heritage Foundation. Diaz - Fall 2020 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/global-threats-are-high-now-not-the-time-shortchange-national-defense-budget

As the leadership of our nation weighs the balance between domestic spending priorities and the fate of future defense budgets, they should not lose sight of the federal government’s solemn constitutional duty: to provide for the common defense.

3. Lack of Affirmative threat analysis

Affirmative advocacy for defense cuts fails because they don’t provide the analysis showing why the threats have reduced to the point that would justify it

Frederico Bartels 2020. (Senior Policy Analyst for Defense Budgeting at Heritage Foundation) The Defense Budget’s Brewing Storm 30 Oct 2020 https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-defense-budgets-brewing-storm

Instead of discussing how to reduce the defense budget simply because the number looks big—or because some have designs to divert the funding to their pet causes—the nation should focus on understanding the threats posed by Russia and China around the globe, both today and in the future, and ensure that our military is on the right path to counter those threats.

SOLVENCY

1. Won't put a dent into the federal deficit.

Link: The Defense Department budget was $738 billion in 2020

Lawrence J. Korb 2020 (*senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. Former assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration; served four years on active duty as a naval flight officer; and retired from the U.S. Navy Reserve with the rank of captain* ) 6 May 2020 " The Pentagon’s Fiscal Year 2021 Budget More Than Meets U.S. National Security Needs" https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2020/05/06/484620/pentagons-fiscal-year-2021-budget-meets-u-s-national-security-needs/#:~:text=The%20FY%202021%20defense%20budget%20is%20composed%20of%20two%20parts,%2473%20billion%20in%20FY%202020.

When the Trump administration unveiled its FY 2021 federal budget, many defense hawks in and out of government expressed concerns that the increase in the size of the proposed $740 billion defense budget was too modest, particularly when compared with the $738 billion that the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) received for FY 2020.

Link: The federal deficit is $966 billion

Kimberly Amadeo 2020 (over 20 years of senior-level corporate experience in economic analysis and business strategy; master's in management from the Sloan School of Business at MIT) 29 Oct 2020 U.S. Federal Budget Breakdown https://www.thebalance.com/u-s-federal-budget-breakdown-3305789

The [budget deficit](https://www.thebalance.com/current-u-s-federal-budget-deficit-3305783) is estimated at $966 billion. That's the difference between $3.863 trillion in revenue and $4.829 trillion in spending. This shortfall is added to the existing national debt.

Failure: Do the math.

The deficit wouldn't go away if you SHUT DOWN THE ENTIRE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT. A 10% cut in the Dept. of Defense (= $73.8 billion) would reduce the federal deficit by only 7.6%

2. More study needed

Defense Dept. doesn't have the analytical tools to conduct an accurate assessment. We need to rebuild those and do the assessment first

Thomas Spoehr 2021. (retired Lieutenant (3-star) General, US Army; Master of Arts in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College) 18 Jan 2021 " The Six Blind Men and the Elephant: Differing Views on the U.S. Defense Budget" https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-six-blind-men-and-the-elephant-differing-views-the-us-defense-budget

The final, and most important, improvement the administration can make is to rebuild the Department of Defense’s analytic capability, which has been cut or atrophied. Last year, the Government Accountability Office [found](https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/697533.pdf) that the Department of Defense has not kept relevant analysis products, such as concepts of operation, up to date, and thus, relevant assessments have suffered. The Government Accountability Office suggested that a telltale sign of this inadequacy is that Department of Defense analysis rarely deviates from those conducted by the services, suggesting that the Office of the Secretary of Defense has been co-opted. Perhaps because of these deficiencies, outside think tanks, rather than the Department of Defense, have performed many strategic assessments of late. The Department of Defense should take the opportunity to deliberately reconstitute a world-class analytic capability run by qualified analysts and leaders. The starting point for deciding how much money the nation should spend on defense is to first form an informed opinion on what is necessary.

DISADVANTAGES

BIG HEGEMONY DA LINKS

Big Link: Russia & China are the main threats to international stability

Frederico Bartels 2020 (Senior Policy Analyst for Defense Budgeting at Heritage Foundation) 2 Nov 2020 Defense Budget Debates Should Start With Strategy, Not Dollars https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/defense-budget-debates-should-start-strategy-not-dollars

The current strategy was released in early 2018 and states that we are currently in “an increasingly complex global security environment, characterized by overt challenges to the free and open international order and the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition between nations.” The strategy states that Russia and China are the two main challenges to the free and open international order. The strategy has received praise from both sides of the aisle, and both parties seem to understand the challenges that Russia and China present to U.S. interests at home and abroad.

Big Link: High US military spending is what stops them from disrupting global stability, and we need to raise it even more

Frederico Bartels 2020 (Senior Policy Analyst for Defense Budgeting at Heritage Foundation) 2 Nov 2020 Defense Budget Debates Should Start With Strategy, Not Dollars https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/defense-budget-debates-should-start-strategy-not-dollars

Right now, this competition is mainly nonmilitary precisely because our military is currently unmatched in most areas and capable of deterring direct military action by imposing high enough costs on any adversary. America’s conventional and strategic deterrence has served to create and sustain an unprecedented period of global stability. In an era of great power competition, maintaining this equation requires that we build and maintain our military strength.   
**[END QUOTE. HE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT, QUOTE:]**  
The enormousness of these tasks is why the Congressional Bipartisan Commission that evaluated the defense strategy, as well as successive defense secretaries, have called for increases in the defense budget of 3-5% above inflation through 2023.

1. Loss of US hegemony #1 - Russia

Link: Military spending is key to protecting US interests. Brink: Resources are reducing and many threats emerging now

James Di Pane and Janae Diaz 2020 (DiPane - Research Associate, Center for National Defense, Heritage Foundation. Diaz - Fall 2020 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/global-threats-are-high-now-not-the-time-shortchange-national-defense-budget

The American people trust their armed forces to protect U.S. interests at home and abroad from foreign adversaries. While the U.S. spends a great deal on its military, it also asks much of it—often expecting it to do more with less resources. Today, our military faces intense challenges from many global threats.

Link: Russia is a big threat and could lead to major conflict with USA

James Di Pane and Janae Diaz 2020 (DiPane - Research Associate, Center for National Defense, Heritage Foundation. Diaz - Fall 2020 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/global-threats-are-high-now-not-the-time-shortchange-national-defense-budget

Russia stands as a significant possible opponent in the near future. With its advanced [conventional and nuclear capabilities](https://www.heritage.org/military-strength), Russia is the principal threat to American and allied priorities in Europe. There is good reason to suspect that, if the United States engages in a major conflict any time soon, Russia may be the reason we do so.

Link: Blocking Russia in the Middle East is key to maintaining US leadership as a great power

Steven A. Cook 2018 (senior fellow for Middle East and Africa studies at the Council on Foreign Relations ) 16 March 2018 FOREIGN POLICY “Russia Is in the Middle East to Stay” https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/16/the-middle-east-needs-a-steady-boyfriend/

If the United States is, as Secretary of Defense James Mattis averred in January, in a new era of great power competition, it is time the United States treated the situation as seriously as it is. Putin must be disabused of the notion that the Middle East is the most propitious place to begin weakening the West and the United States. Americans once before contained and rolled back Moscow’s influence in the region; there is no reason to believe that they cannot do it again — but only if they have the wisdom to recognize what is important in the world right now and the collective stomach to meet the challenge.

Impact: Apocalyptic consequences without US hegemony. Loss of peace, prosperity, democracy, world order

Brook Manville 2018 (principal of Brook Manville LLC, consulting on strategy and organization) 14 Oct 2018 “Why A Crumbling World Order Urgently Needs U.S. Leadership” FORBES <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brookmanville/2018/10/14/why-a-crumbling-world-order-urgently-needs-u-s-leadership/#2bb8912f2e61> (brackets added)

The botanical metaphor in [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan’s book title began our recent conversation. “We’ve been living in a tranquil garden of largely peaceful practices and liberal expectations across much of the world, ignoring the dark forces of jungle multiplying under the rocks. If we don’t defend civilization’s cultivation—especially American’s guarantee of peace and economic integration across the world—the toxic creatures and weeds will roar back.” Thus China’s determined military rise, Russia’s continuing aggressions, fiery authoritarians on the march in so many once democratic countries. [**END QUOTE**] As [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan continued, “Trump has been damaging the system—he too seems to have forgotten what good it has delivered—but actually America’s desire for maintaining the global order has been diminishing for years. After the dissolution of the Soviet empire in the 1990s, people talked about [‘the end of history”](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_End_of_History_and_the_Last_Man)—that America didn’t have to worry anymore about war or aggression. History doesn’t end, it simply paused. **[HE GOES ON TO SAY QUOTE:]** The ugliest aspects of human nature are surging again.”  
**Vanishing Leadership, Vanishing Peace**  
Kagan’s apocalyptic message, repeated in other recent writings, is lucid and terrifying, all the more devastating for its relentless use of history. It’s a footnoted plea that “we’ve seen this movie before.” He reminds us that Americans have frequently turned away from defending world order, with regrettably familiar outcomes: to be dragged in later at greater cost (e.g. helping to stop Hitler earlier might have prevented World War II); or, simply hoping that “the problem would go away,” to watch it get ten times worse (e.g. Obama’s policy in Syria). Kagan acknowledges that America has sometimes misstepped (e.g. Viet Nam, Iraq), but he still argues that overall our foreign engagement has produced more peace and prosperity than not. “History shows,” he summarized, “that world order has never been achieved without some constructive force to keep the peace. The relative harmony and fair play we’ve created in the modern world will vanish if the U.S. forsakes international leadership.”

2. Loss of US hegemony #2 - China

Link: China is growing its military, intends to become a challenger to American power, and not just in East Asia

Dr. Kim R. Holmes 2015 (PhD in history from Georgetown Univ.; formerly worked for the Defense Policy Board, the U.S. defense secretary’s primary resource for expert outside advice; and public member of the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) 3 June 2015 China prepping for regional hegemonyhttps://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/china-prepping-regional-hegemony

Increases in defense spending have been outpacing GDP growth rates for years, and although China’s defense spending is still far below America’s, it is growing while the U.S. is cutting its defense expenditures. All of this adds up to a bold new role for China’s armed forces. Long thought to be content with the mere defense of its mainland territory, China is clearly staking a larger claim for itself. It is striving to become the dominant military power in East Asia for sure, but also, in the long run, a rival challenger to American military power.

Link: Military spending essential to block threat from China over next 20-30 years

James Di Pane and Janae Diaz 2020 (DiPane - Research Associate, Center for National Defense, Heritage Foundation. Diaz - Fall 2020 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/global-threats-are-high-now-not-the-time-shortchange-national-defense-budget

Though already a formidable rival, the China of 20-30 years from now could present an even bigger problem. At our current rate of military investment, we may not be adequately to prepared to meet such a threat.

Link: China gaining Asian regional hegemony leads to gaining global hegemony, replacing USA

Min-Hyung Kim 2019 (Department of Political Science and International Relations, Kyung Hee University, South Korea) 4 Feb 2019 “A real driver of US–China trade conflict: The Sino–US competition for global hegemony and its implications for the future” [https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ITPD-02-2019-003/full/html](about:blank)

Although China repeatedly claims that it does not seek to replace US hegemony in the world, its behavior revealed by the initiatives of the BRI, the AIIB and Made in China 2015 illustrates that its ultimate goal is to be a global hegemon. This is not surprising because all the rising powers in history invariably sought to first dominate the region they are situated ([Mearsheimer, 2011, 2014](about:blank#ref031%20ref032)) and expand their power globally ([Gilpin, 1981](about:blank#ref012)).

Impact: World peace & prosperity at risk. US hegemony is key to global peace & prosperity

Capt. M. V. Prato 2009 (United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University) “The Need for American Hegemony” http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a508040.pdf

The world witnessed a vast shift in the polarity of geopolitics after the Cold War. The United States became the world’s greatest hegemon with an unequalled ability to globally project cultural, political, economic, and military power in a manner not seen since the days of the Roman Empire. **[END QUOTE]** Coined the “unipolar moment” by syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, the disparity of power between the U.S. and all other nations allows the U.S. to influence the world for the mutual benefit of all responsible states. Unfortunately, the United States is increasingly forced to act unilaterally as a result of both foreign and domestic resentment to U.S. dominance and the rise of liberal internationalism. [**HE GOES ON TO CONCLUDE QUOTE:]** The United States must exercise benevolent global hegemony, unilaterally if necessary, to ensure its security and maintain global peace and prosperity.