



## An Open Letter to President Obama and the Congress: Spend Less, and Spend Smarter at the Pentagon

February 27, 2013

We, the leaders of the undersigned organizations, may not agree on many things, but we all agree on this: The time has come to reduce wasteful and ineffective Pentagon spending to make us safer. There has been a great deal of doomsday rhetoric about the effects of sequestration. Our organizations believe that sequester might not be the best way to reshape Pentagon spending, but that should not serve as an excuse to avoid fundamental reforms.

We aren't alone. There is a growing consensus—among members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, policy wonks of various stripes, and even defense industry CEOs—that lawmakers can, and should, find areas for substantial savings in the Pentagon's bloated budget. We and other military experts believe we can realize savings of at least \$50 billion to \$100 billion per year over

10 years in the Pentagon budget—without compromising national security. In fact, such savings will make us safer since our security depends on a sound strategy and a strong economy.

The Pentagon must confront the threat to our economy with the same vigor, determination, and skill it has shown toward other urgent tasks. Our military might is not measured by how many dollars we spend but how we spend our dollars.

There is no dearth of ideas for responsible Pentagon spending reductions. Below is a sampling of such recommendations made by our organizations and others with diverse interests and ideologies. To be clear, we do not agree among ourselves on every recommendation listed here. However, we are united in the belief that there are plenty of ways to strategically target pork-barrel projects and programs designed to fight the Cold War instead of 21<sup>st</sup> century threats. What seems lacking is the political will to have a meaningful discussion over the structure of our armed forces—a structure that is sensible as well as sustainable.

Mr. President and Members of Congress, the American people are counting on your courage to stand up to the big-spending status quo that has squandered all too many taxpayer dollars in the name of national security. This means proposing a comprehensive framework to realign and reform the Pentagon budget. When you do, we will stand by you as you make our country stronger and our future more secure.

Below are just some of the recommendations that have been put forward. Please note the savings listed here are 10 year estimates, except for the Cato Institute and Project on Defense Alternatives and one of the Citizens Against Government Waste recommendations, which are for FY 2013 only.

The signatories to this letter are:

Americans for Tax Reform, Campaign for America's Future, Center for Freedom and Prosperity, Council for Citizens Against Government Waste, Cost of Government Center, CREDO, Freedom Action, Friends Committee on National Legislation, National Priorities Project, National Taxpayers Union, Peace Action, Progressive Democrats of America, Project On Government Oversight, Republican Liberty Caucus, R Street, Take Back Washington, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Taxpayers Protection Alliance, USAction, U.S. PIRG, Women's Action for New Direction, and Win Without War.

**[Cato Institute and the Project on Defense Alternatives  
Defense Sense, Options for National Defense Savings in FY 2013, May 2012](#)**

End Littoral Combat Ship Procurement at 10	\$2 billion
Slow procurement of Virginia class submarines	\$2 billion
Missile Defense Reforms	\$2.5 billion

**[The Center for a New American Security  
Sustaining Pre-eminence, May 2012](#)**

Downsize military headquarters	\$40 billion
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Trim the civilian workforce by 100,000 \$50 billion

**[The Center for American Progress](#)**  
**[\\$100 billion in Politically Feasible Defense Cuts, December 2012](#)**

Replace the over-budget F-35C with the effective and affordable F/A-18E/F \$17 billion

Reduce the number of deployed nuclear weapons \$28 billion

Reform the Pentagon's outdated health care programs \$40 billion

**[Citizens Against Government Waste](#)**  
**[Defense Cuts, December 2012](#)** and **[MisguidedMissile.org](#)**

Delay rebuilding Abrams tanks the Army doesn't want \$3 billion

Cancel the Medium Extended Air Defense System \$195 million (one year)

**[National Taxpayers Union & U.S. Public Interest Research Group](#)**  
**[Toward Common Ground, September, 2011](#)**

Cancel C-27J Cargo Aircraft \$1.46 billion

Change depots pricing structure \$2.47 billion

Pause development of the Ground Combat Vehicle \$14.0 billion

**[Rand](#)**  
**[A Strategy Based Framework for Accommodating Reductions in the Defense Budget, Focus on Western Pacific Scenario October 2012](#)**

Cut two Marine regiments and two tactical fighter squadrons \$23-27 billion

Reducing the size of the Navy fleet by 5% \$35-41 billion

Remove six Army brigades from the force \$84-99 billion

**[The Project On Government Oversight and Taxpayers for Common Sense](#)**  
**[Spending Even Less, Spending Even Smarter, May 2012](#)**

Replace the V-22 Osprey with MH-60 and CH-53 helicopters \$17.1 billion

Withdraw 40,000 troops from Europe \$32 billion

Replace the B and C models of F-35 with F/A-18E/F Super Hornet \$62 billion

**[The Stimson Center](#)**  
**[A New U.S. Defense Strategy for a New Era, November 2012](#)**

Reducing infrastructure billets	\$100 billion
Relying less on contractor support	\$110 billion
Increase health care fees and cost-sharing	\$40-110 billion

**Congressional Progressive Caucus Co-Chairs Reps. Keith Ellison and Raul Grijalva  
The Balancing Act: Cut Handouts Not Jobs, February 2012**

Reduce General and Flag Officers to a Cold War standard	\$1 billion
Limit military bands	\$2 billion
Limit the purchase of Virginia-class subs to one per year	\$22 billion

**Senator Tom Coburn  
Back in Black, July 2011**

Cut non-defense defense spending at “The Department of Everything”	\$68 billion
Reduce nuclear weapons force structure	\$79 billion
Reform TRICARE Standard and Prime for military retirees	\$115 billion

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