

REDIRECT SAVINGS FROM NONESSENTIAL MILITARY SPENDING TO ALTERNATIVE JOB CREATION

March 8, 2010

Dear Senator/Representative:

As you consider the FY11 budget resolution and appropriations subcommittee allocations, we urge you to include savings in nonessential Pentagon spending. The Administration's FY11 baseline Pentagon budget request increases spending by 3.4% over FY10. In the request, the \$447 billion in discretionary spending that is not security-related is proposed to be frozen at current levels for three years. By exempting security accounts from the proposed spending freeze, the Administration is ensuring that the freeze will have only a marginal effect. The \$733 billion military budget request dwarfs the \$447 billion the Administration proposes to freeze. A serious initiative to rein in the discretionary budget cannot leave out more than half of that budget.

According to a 2009 report from the Government Accountability Office, the Department of Defense has amassed cost overruns of \$295 billion on weapons programs currently in the pipeline. That's more than the proposed freeze in domestic spending is projected to save over the next ten years.

At a time of soaring budget deficits and a struggling economy, we can no longer afford to underwrite weapons programs that are outdated, unworkable, overbudget or all three. While the Administration has tried to find some efficiencies in Pentagon spending, it has backed away from its initiative last year to cut major weapons systems. We urge you to scour the procurement budget and the research and development budget for reasonable reductions that can be made without sacrificing national security or undermining our troops.

Savings from these reductions should be redirected to alternative job creation. While strategically dubious weapons procurement is often sold as a jobs program, the evidence points in another direction. While military spending of course does create jobs, a study by University of Massachusetts economists* found that *public dollars invested in clean energy, health care, and education, will all create significantly **more** jobs within the U.S. economy than investing an equivalent amount in the military.* Moreover, these alternative investments all increase the productivity of the economy as a whole. We urge you to take the findings of this study into account as you consider job creation legislation this year.

Our national security depends on our economic health as well as on the strength of our military.

Sincerely,

National groups

Regional/state/community groups

At end of final page:

**The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities: An Updated Analysis*, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of Economics (October 2009) -- wand.org/jobs2010.pdf

Letter organized by the Budget Priorities Working Group--Co-chairs: Miriam Pemberton/Institute for Policy Studies & Marie Rietmann/Women's Action for New Directions