

# A SUSTAINABLE DEFENSE: More Security, Less Spending

Sustainable Defense Task Force | Center for International Policy

This fact sheet summarizes major findings of the report of the Sustainable Defense Task Force, a group of ex-military officers, former White House and Congressional budget experts, and non-governmental analysts convened by the Center for International Policy. View the full report and learn more about the task force at [internationalpolicy.org](http://internationalpolicy.org). The key takeaways from the report are as follows:

## **A SUSTAINABLE DEFENSE STRATEGY WOULD SAVE \$1.2 TRILLION OVER 10 YEARS:**

An alternative defense strategy that avoids unnecessary and counter-productive wars, reduces the U.S. global military footprint, takes a more realistic view of the major security challenges facing the United States, and reduces waste and inefficiency could save at least \$1.2 trillion in projected spending over the next decade while providing a greater measure of security.

## **A DETERRENCE-ONLY NUCLEAR STRATEGY WOULD MAKE AMERICA SAFER WHILE DRAMATICALLY SCALING BACK THE PENTAGON'S NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION PLANS:**

A deterrence-only nuclear strategy — like the one articulated by Global Zero — would have the sole purpose of dissuading any country from attacking the United States with nuclear weapons. This approach would enable a sharp reduction in the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, including an elimination of Intercontinental Ballistic-Missiles (ICBMs). Former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry sums up the case against ICBMs as follows: "These missiles are some of the most dangerous weapons in the world. They could even trigger an accidental nuclear war."

## **A DIPLOMACY-FIRST STRATEGY WOULD REDUCE THE PROSPECTS OF DEVASTATING, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST:**

Engaging in diplomacy to deal with challenges like Iran, rather than promoting the use of force or threat of force, would be a more effective way to limit nuclear proliferation and cool regional tensions. The next president should rejoin the Iran nuclear deal, which had effectively curbed nuclear weapons development by Tehran.

## **LIMIT THE WAR BUDGET (OCO) TO DIRECT WAR COSTS, AND ELIMINATE IT OVER TIME:**

The Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account, meant to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been used as a slush fund to evade the caps on Pentagon spending. Limiting the OCO account to direct war costs and ending America's endless wars would save \$320 billion over the next decade.

## **THERE IS NO READINESS CRISIS:**

Despite the budget caps imposed by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, the Pentagon is slated to receive \$5.8 billion in the BCA decade (2011-2021), \$1.1 trillion more than it received in the prior ten-year period, when hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan were at their peak levels. If there is a readiness issue it is not because the DOD hasn't been given ample taxpayer money — it's because the DOD has not been spending that money effectively.



The table below outlines the full list of savings proposed in the task force report:

## LIST OF OPTIONS FOR REDUCING SPENDING

### 10-Year Savings Estimate

#### Force Structure and Weapons Procurement Reductions\*

• Army Reductions and Restructuring	\$160 Billion
• Marine Corps Reductions and Restructuring	\$60 Billion
• Reduce U.S. Navy Personnel and Weapons Procurement	\$193 Billion
• Reduce U.S. Air Force Personnel and Aircraft Procurement	\$100.5 Billion
• Reduce Peacetime Troop Deployments Overseas	\$17 Billion
• End America's Endless Wars	\$320 Billion

#### Overhead and Efficiencies

• Reduce O&M Spending on Service Contracts	\$262.5 Billion
• Replace Some Military Personnel with Civilians	\$16.7 Billion
• Close Unnecessary Military Bases	\$20 Billion

#### Nuclear Weapons, Missile Defense, and Space

• Eliminate the New Nuclear Cruise Missile	\$13.3 Billion
• Cancel the New ICBM	\$30 Billion
• Cancel the Space Force	\$10 Billion
• Cancel R&D on Space-Based Weapons	\$3 Billion
• Cancel Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System	\$20 Billion
• Cancel New Nuclear Warheads and Rollback Modernization	\$15 Billion
• Include Nuclear Weapons Complex in a BRAC Round	\$10 Billion

\* Force structure cuts include reductions in equipment purchases such as downsizing the proposed F-35 fleet, reducing the Navy's aircraft carrier force from 11 to 9, and canceling the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS).

**Total Savings: \$1,251 Billion**