

## A FAITHFUL BUDGET FOR JUST PEACE AND TRUE HUMAN SECURITY

### A. Introduction

A Faithful Budget is one that respects the rights of all persons and seeks a security built not on a culture of fear and violence but rather on relationship and community. The past decade has seen the United States spend vast resources on wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen. In the first six months of 2017, the present administration has expanded lethal counterterrorism operations across the globe. Much of this buildup over the last decade included massive off-budget spending directly for these wars and a doubling of the base military budget since 1998. Well over half the discretionary budget is now directed towards defense spending, with the new administration proposing additional increases of \$54 billion.<sup>i</sup>

The past decade has also seen increased funding for the prevention of violent conflict, peacebuilding, and increasing practices of active nonviolence. Such accounts include the Complex Crisis Fund, the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Our safety and well-being – and that of vulnerable peoples worldwide – depends on rethinking security. Overwhelming evidence shows that wars and a reliance on militarism have bought greater human insecurity. However, present budget proposals call for significant cuts to these programs.

A Faithful Budget seeks to build a Just Peace through deeper investment in long-term human security, both in our communities at home and in communities around the world.

### Reflecting the Need

- Since 2001, the United States has spent more than 1.3 trillion dollars in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq alone -- spending that has taken place off the budgetary books, contributing directly and significantly to the current federal debt.<sup>ii</sup>
- Pentagon spending has been at historically high levels for over a decade
- Research has indicated that investing in violence prevention is 60 times more cost effective than intervening after violence has begun. Yet the United States invests less than 2% of its income taxes on civilian intervention and 39% on the military.
- While the United States leads the world in military spending, we are at or below the median among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on reading, scientific, and math proficiency and near the bottom for infant mortality and child poverty.

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, ‘This way of settling differences is not just.’ [...] A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual

death [...] America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war.”<sup>iii</sup> We can, if we so choose, invest in a different way of relating and interacting with our brothers and sisters around the world.

Global threats to peace and security need not instill a national inclination to make increasing investments in new weapons systems, detention centers, and militarized border walls, leading to unjust spending on the mechanisms of war and enforcement, while we become less secure in so many other ways. We have the opportunity to invest in a different way of leading the world, seeking relationship and community rather than living out of fear and violence, by investing in infrastructure focused on preventing violence globally and meeting the challenges of a complex world with more sophisticated tools of influence and engagement.

## **B. Recognizing the Cost of War**

For many Americans, the cost of war over the last decade has not been recognized, but for others, the personal cost has been far too great. As a nation, we ignored the financial cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by putting into place an off-budget process of accounting. Our military and their families pay a tremendous cost and often endure physical and moral injury. The cost of war is also impacts our environment and is felt by people living in war zones and those in poverty living in the U.S. who have less resources because of enormous resources diverted to war.

The first and most immediate step that can be taken is putting military and defense spending under the same scrutiny as all other federal expenditures. Recently, a Washington Post article shed light on a report of \$125 billion in waste buried by the Pentagon.<sup>iv</sup> An estimated 31-60 billion dollars alone were lost to waste and fraud in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The exact figures are unknown because, under current guidelines, the Pentagon is the only federal agency which has failed to conform to a 1990s era law requiring auditable financial documents. Developing a mechanism to track defense spending would help find ways to reduce spending.

The United States should support and provide ways to heal the harm done to those in the military and their families upon their return home. The cost of war for veterans does not end just because they return from the battlefield. The suicide rate among veterans has risen by 35% since 2001, a recent study has shown.<sup>v</sup> In addition, persons in the military engage in higher rates of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, homelessness, and PTSD compared to the general population.<sup>vi</sup>

### **A Faithful Budget that recognizes the total cost of war will:**

- Call for a mechanism to track Pentagon spending, enabling effective, moral, and strategic efforts to reduce spending, eliminate waste, fraud and abuse.

- Work over the next decade to dramatically reduce Pentagon spending and adjust the U.S. foreign policy toolbox so that there are greater investments in diplomacy, peacebuilding, development and international cooperation.
- Invest in programs that support and heal our veterans as they make the transition home by supporting jobs initiatives, investing in veteran caregivers, and providing vital mental health and suicide prevention services.
- Be accountable to harm done to communities living in war zones by robustly investing in trauma-healing, peacebuilding, infrastructure, and environmental repair in those communities.

### **C. Investing in Human Security and a Just Peace**

The United States has the ability to invest in a different vision of security -- one built on the early prevention of violent conflict and on peaceful relationships with the global community. The cost of two drone strikes in Pakistan is equivalent to a two-year conflict management program in Iraq that trained more than 1,600 conflict mediators. For the cost of one \$75 million Super Hornet fighter jet, the U.S. could provide over two years of funding for the Complex Crisis Fund that has successfully supported prevention of violent conflict in Kenya, Central African Republic and other potential conflict zones.<sup>1</sup>

The Complex Crisis Fund is a crucial source of un-programmed, innovative, and flexible funding for civilian agencies without which the U.S. Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) would be less capable of acting quickly when conflicts escalate or undertaking rapid stabilization, prevention, and crisis response activities.<sup>2</sup> The Conflict Stabilization Operations account advances the Department of State's understanding of violent conflict through analysis and planning; monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and focused, in-country efforts that help the U.S. government anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict and promote long-term stability. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives supports programs that help fragile or conflict-prone countries transition to peace and stability. Additionally, professional, well-trained international unarmed peacekeeping and protection units can reduce the burden on the U.S. All of these programs are underfunded relative to their ability to impact human security and a just peace.

#### **A Faithful Budget seeking a vision of true human security and Just Peace will:**

- Robustly fund the Complex Crisis Fund, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, the Office of Transition Initiatives, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund
- Invest in people and organizations using peaceful means of relating to the world -- the diplomatic core, the United States Institute of Peace, the Nonviolent Peaceforce, and the United Nations.

### **D. Creating a World Free of Nuclear Weapons**

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<sup>1</sup> Presently, the CCF only has a budget of \$30 million.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fcni.org/documents/118>

Our faith traditions are clear in their condemnation of weapons of mass destruction that can indiscriminately destroy creation. Nuclear weapons, which have the ability to destroy entire cities, nations, and, indeed, all life on earth, exist in opposition to the care for life to which our faiths call us. We are troubled by the trend toward modernizing weapons systems that should be made obsolete.

People of faith have long spoken out against the development, production, possession, acquisition, deployment, use, and threat of the use of nuclear weapons as actions that are not consistent with what we know to be the will and desire of a God of life. The U.S. must take clear steps toward nuclear reductions if we are to be credible in calling other nations to reduce or decline to pursue a nuclear arsenal.

**In order to move toward a nuclear free world, a Faithful Budget will:**

- Make no new investments in nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction.
- Substantially reduce the number of nuclear armed submarines and aircraft.
- Substantially reduce the number of active warheads in the arsenal of the United States
- Support international treaties designed to protect global security such as the NPT, the INF treaty and the new START treaty. Urge the President and Congress to work for Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/27/us/politics/trump-budget-military.html?mcubz=0>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/cost-of/war/>

<sup>iii</sup> Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "A Time to Break Silence"

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/pentagon-buries-evidence-of-125-billion-in-bureaucratic-waste/2016/12/05/e0668c76-9af6-11e6-a0ed-ab0774c1eaa5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.faf6f9eb7af4](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/pentagon-buries-evidence-of-125-billion-in-bureaucratic-waste/2016/12/05/e0668c76-9af6-11e6-a0ed-ab0774c1eaa5_story.html?utm_term=.faf6f9eb7af4)

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/08/us/suicide-rate-among-veterans-has-risen-sharply-since-2001.html?mcubz=0>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.domesticshelters.org/domestic-violence-articles-information/the-facts-about-abuse-in-military-families#.WahcJbKGOpo> and <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-army-health-report-idUSTRE80J01C20120120>