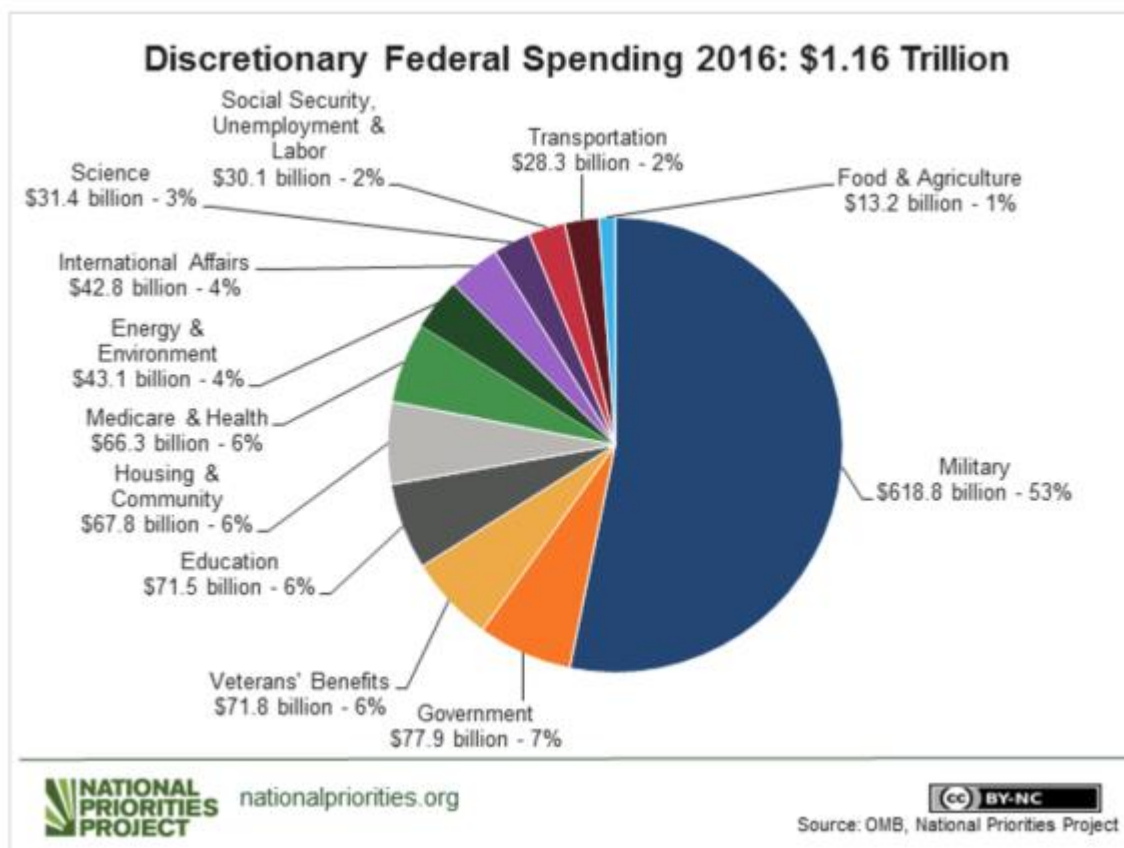


## Taxes: Is This Where You Want Them to Go?

*“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” —Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



At this time of year, when we Americans are trying to do our part to contribute to the cost of our governance, we might want to step back for a minute and think about what our tax money is being used for and what it is not being used for.

Have you ever wondered why other developed countries have the money to pay for services like health care and college education for everyone, but we Americans, citizens of the richest country on Earth, are told that the U.S. can't afford such things? What we are often *not* told, however, is that we spend more on our military forces than the next seven countries combined, (China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the United Kingdom, India, France, and Japan <sup>1</sup>).

The total military spending by our government is over \$700 billion per year<sup>2</sup>. That's well over \$2,000 for every child, woman and man in the U.S. It is also more than half of the federal discretionary budget. The U.S. military maintains over 800 bases around the world, at an annual cost of at least \$156 billion.<sup>3</sup> Are these bases needed to defend our country? That doesn't seem plausible.

In his proposed budget for 2018, President Trump plans to increase military spending \$54 billion by cutting nonmilitary programs by the same amount. His budget slashes spending on many of the federal programs intended to promote the common good, such as those relating to education, science, the environment, and reducing poverty<sup>4</sup>. In the United States, where 21% of our children are being raised in poverty<sup>5</sup>, and tens of millions of our citizens are barely earning enough to cover basic expenses, we need to rethink our tax-spending priorities. We need to shrink our bloated military budget so that we can

address the needs of our people for health care, education, a healthy environment, affordable housing, and good jobs rebuilding our decaying infrastructure.

*“Economics is an external moral system; a budget is morality and priorities made visible.”* —Rev. Jesse Jackson

### Next Steps

If you think our country’s budget priorities are out of line with your values, then join *PeaceSeekers*, a wing of Pacem in Terris concerned with world peace. It is having its next meeting Thursday, April 27 at 7:00 pm at the Pacem in Terris office, 401 N. West St. Wilmington, DE 19801. *You are invited*. Find out more about [PeaceSeekers](http://depaceminterris.org/project/peaceseekers/) (<http://depaceminterris.org/project/peaceseekers/>).



<sup>1</sup> “U.S. Military Spending vs. the World”, National Priorities Project, <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/campaigns/us-military-spending-vs-world/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Congress passes \$618.7 billion annual defense bill,” Patricia Zengerle, Reuters, Dec. 6, 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defense-congress-idUSKBN13X26G>

<sup>3</sup> “The United States Probably Has More Foreign Military Bases Than Any Other People, Nation, or Empire in History” David Vine, The Nation, <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-united-states-probably-has-more-foreign-military-bases-than-any-other-people-nation-or-empire-in-history/>

<sup>4</sup> “Trump to Seek \$54 Billion Increase in Military Spending,” Michael D. Shear and Jennifer, The New York Times, Feb. 27, 2017: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/27/us/politics/trump-budget-military.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/27/us/politics/trump-budget-military.html?_r=0)

<sup>5</sup> “Child Poverty” National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, 2015. <http://www.nccp.org/topics/childpoverty.html>