



People > Pentagon

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Throughout my 15+ years with the National Ministries, I've written repeatedly on the US government's unrestrained military spending, every time ramping up the rhetoric to call attention to "unprecedented" levels of Pentagon spending. Each time, the words "unprecedented" and "historic" lose a bit of their meaning. In spite of the many pressing topics deserving of our attention (attacks on voting rights, women's rights, climate, and immigration), I again feel called to offer another reflection, and rebuke, on our nation's spending habits. Why? Because I fundamentally believe our federal budget is a moral document and must reflect our nation's values.

We need better healthcare, nutritious food, stronger infrastructure—not ever more exotic and expensive weapons of mass destruction. We must [demand from our policymakers that they prioritize people over Pentagon](#) to bring an end to endless wars and the war economy.

As Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6:21, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What we value most is where we invest our time and resources. So where is our national treasure invested today? Looking at our federal budget, we see [nearly half](#) of our discretionary spending goes to defense. In 2025 alone, the [average taxpayer paid over \\$4,000 for weapons and war](#).

What else could you have used that money for? Rent? Gas? Healthcare? Infuriatingly, that amount is expected to grow even higher given unbridled spending and



the current war in Iran. As of May 5, 2026, the United States has already spent [\\$25 billion](#) on the war on Iran, and reports suggest the real number is [likely double that](#). But the true cost of war is much more when you consider the human, environmental, socio-political, economic, and moral toll war takes.

Rather than changing course, however, the United States continues to pump obscene amounts of money into the Pentagon despite it [never passing an audit](#) or held accountable for waste and fraud allegations. In fact, just weeks ago, President Trump released a budget request adding a whopping [\\$445 billion more](#) to the Pentagon budget in 2027. This increase, which does not even include the cost of war in Iran, will bring the base military budget to an [astronomical \\$1.5 TRILLION](#). The immorality of this budget request is even starker when we consider the cuts needed to pay for it which will impact nutrition programs, low-income heating assistance, funds for housing, and other programs all on the chopping block for next year.

In his *Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence* speech, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminds us, “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” King’s warning is never more stark today. When we eclipsed the one trillion dollar threshold last year, I hoped public outrage might grow. Sadly, as a nation we have become numb to these spending levels and priorities. When will we heed King’s warning of “spiritual death”? When will our outrage turn into action?

As Christians called to love our neighbor and put our treasure where our heart is, we must [call on policymakers](#) to reverse course. We need investment in the many needs in our communities—education, healthcare, infrastructure, etc.—all of which Congress defunded last year through H.R. 1 (OBBA). Finally, we must invest again in the “things that make for peace” (Luke 19:42), such as diplomacy, development, and peacebuilding rather than failed Cold War ideologies. “Peace through strength” may achieve

a ceasefire, but it can never bring about a true, lasting, and just peace. May our nation one day put its treasure where its heart is! May we prioritize people over Pentagon. May it be so!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Michael Neuroth serves as the Director of the Office of Public Policy & Advocacy in the national setting of the United Church of Christ.

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