

Historic Increase of US Military Budget: Trump Boosts Most Wasteful Department, Reduces All Others

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On February 27th, Reuters headlined [“Trump seeks ‘historic’ increase of 9 percent in U.S. military’s budget”](#) and reported that “Trump will ask Congress to boost Pentagon spending in the next fiscal year by \$54 billion in his first budget proposal and slash the same amount from non-defense spending.”

The U.S. Department of Defense is one of the [15 U.S. Cabinet departments](#), the others being: State, Treasury, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, Education, Veterans Affairs (which is entirely ‘Defense’-related and so their budget is actually an essential part of America’s military expenditures), and Homeland Security (which is another essential military expenditure).

In addition, there are **16 intelligence agencies within a federal “black budget,”** whose combined expenditure, when that was reported by the BBC headlining on 30 August 2013 [“US intelligence agencies’ ‘black budget’ detailed”](#), was “\$52.6bn in total for 16 intelligence agencies, according to the files” that had been “disclosed by leaker Edward Snowden.” As the *Washington Post* had first [reported it the prior day](#):

“The \$52.6 billion ‘black budget’ for fiscal 2013, obtained by The Washington Post from former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, maps a bureaucratic and operational landscape that has never been subject to public scrutiny. Although the government has annually released its overall level of intelligence spending since 2007, it has not divulged how it uses the money or how it performs against the goals set by the president and Congress.” In addition, there was reported “a separate \$23 billion devoted to intelligence programs that more directly support the U.S. military.” So, a grand total spent on ‘intelligence’ in that year was \$75.6 billion. And, actually, none of it has “been subject to public scrutiny.” ‘Defense’ and ‘intelligence’ are the only portions of the U.S. federal budget that have never “been subject to public scrutiny,” as will here be explained.

On Tuesday, 13 May 2014, *Stars and Stripes* bannered [“Decades later, military still unable to account for its spending”](#) and reported:

The military is still running behind in its decades-long quest to audit its spending and rein in waste, Department of Defense comptrollers testified Tuesday to the Senate.

Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps financial managers will be unable to fully meet a midpoint deadline set by the secretary of defense this year for mandated accounting benchmarks. Meanwhile, “serious continuing deficiencies” remain in the accounting efforts, according to a Government Accountability Office report issued Tuesday.

Nearly three decades after U.S. taxpayers gasped over \$640 toilet seats and other Cold War military waste, the Department of Defense remains the last federal department still unable to conduct a financial audit despite laws passed in the 1990s that require the accounting.

Trillions of dollars are being poured down, into ‘Defense’ (including aggressions such as the invasions of Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc.) and into ‘intelligence’ (including the false ‘intelligence’ that was used to ‘justify’ those invasions), and yet none of it is at all accountable to the public; it’s merely being paid to U.S. corporations by the ‘representatives of the public’, and will now soar even more, while everything else (supposedly except Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid) will get slashed, as being what supporters of the military-industrial complex call “waste, fraud, and abuse” in all Departments but their own. (They never call ‘defense’ and ‘intelligence’ expenditures that.)

On 26 July 2016, the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Defense issued its study, [“Army General Fund Adjustments Not Adequately Documented or Supported”](#), and reported:

We determined whether adjustments made to Army General Fund (AGF) data during the FY 2015 financial statement compilation process were adequately documented and supported. ... The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management & Comptroller) (OASA[FM&C]) and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Indianapolis (DFAS Indianapolis) **did not adequately support \$2.8 trillion in third quarter journal voucher (JV) adjustments and \$6.5 trillion in yearend JV adjustments¹ made to AGF data during FY 2015 financial statement compilation.** ... In addition, DFAS Indianapolis did not document or support why the Defense Departmental Reporting System-Budgetary (DDRS-B), a budgetary reporting system, removed at least 16,513 of 1.3 million records during third quarter FY 2015. ... As a result, the data used to prepare the FY 2015 AGF third quarter and yearend financial statements were unreliable and **lacked an adequate audit trail.** Furthermore, DoD and Army managers could not rely on the data in their accounting systems when making management and resource decisions.

The present reporter had headlined little more than a month ago on January 15th, [“The Thorniest Policy-Question That President Trump Will Face”](#), and I opened:

A decision must be made at the start of Donald Trump’s Presidency on one issue, which will shape both his foreign and domestic policies, and so his entire Presidency.

Mark Strauss, [the Editor of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists](#), headlined on 8 September 2014, [“Nukes Are Cannibalizing The U.S. Defense Budget”](#), and he raised the question of why nuclear forces are “cannibalizing the U.S. defense budget” now decades after the end of the Soviet Union and of its Warsaw Pact military alliance and its communist dictatorial ideology.

No American President will be able significantly to improve the U.S. economy who fails

to reverse this cannibalization by U.S. nuclear-forces advocates and contractors (who get trillions of dollars from this nuclear-weapons business).

President Trump has made his decision on this. He will be spending vastly more on America's nuclear bombs and bombers, in his promised 'war against radical Islamic terrorism'; and yet, supposedly, he's on the *anti*-terrorist side of that war, the same side of it as is Russia, who is obviously his real target (where else are our nuclear forces targeted?), now that he has actually won the White House. Some people call him 'Putin's puppet', but is Trump actually the military-industrial complex's puppet? Was he fooling us, all along, to trust his saying that he wanted to cooperate with Russia instead of to target Russia? Are we already not wasting too much on 'Defense'?

Osama bin Laden's former bag-man who personally collected every one of the million-dollar-plus cash donations that funded Al Qaeda, said ["without the money of the — of the Saudi — you will have nothing"](#) of Al Qaeda. He named among those donors from whom he had picked up such a cash donation, Prince Bandar bin Sultan al-Saud, the Saud family's Ambassador to the U.S. on 9/11, whom the 'missing 28 pages' in the official 9/11 report documented had been [regularly paying tens of thousands of dollars personally to at least two of the 15 Saudis who were among the nineteen 9/11 terrorists](#), and yet President Trump is targeting Russia's ally Iran — the Sauds' foe — as being the source of that problem — Trump agrees with Obama on that, which also isn't what seemed to have been Trump's views prior to the November 8th election.

So, this is why the *non*-'defense' half of the U.S. government will need to be cut by around 9% — it's where the 'waste, fraud, and abuse' is in the federal budget, even though the 'Defense' Department is the only one of the 15 federal Departments that cannot even be audited.

Donald Trump's Presidency is now set clearly onto its path. Whatever else happens now cannot change the course of his Presidency. Finally, the answer is clear as to whether he will be a great President, a mediocre President, or an atrocious President. He is finally [committed, publicly, to his path](#).

And, on February 25th, [the Democratic Party also committed itself finally](#), to whether it is on the path that Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama had established, or instead on the path that Bernie Sanders had been trying to establish.

Finally, things are clear, about the path that America is on. It's on the Sauds' path.

*Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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