

The Largest Military Budget in World History

By [David Swanson](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Up Is Down: The Military Budget

The largest military budget in the history of the world is being increased. Certain weapons are being cut back, others expanded. But the overall budget is going UP. However, you don't need me to tell you that. You've learned it from these fine news sources:

FoxNews.com:

"With Defense Secretary Robert Gates proposing broad cuts in Pentagon spending, a new war over the president's budget has begun. While critics already are warning that the plan could compromise U.S. security, the greater resistance appears to be coming from lawmakers worried that the cuts threaten thousands of jobs in their states."

There really are cuts and critics and chicken littles, but nowhere does Fox tell you that the overall budget is INCREASING. Then again, if Fox didn't lie, how would we know what was true?

[Rachel Maddow](#):

"Defense Secretary Robert Gates today proposed a massive overhaul of Pentagon spending. Since the year 2000 the already huge defense budget has risen 72 percent. Gates' new budget would pry the Pentagon away from its preparations for big conventional you-line-up-here we'll-line-up-here wars ... Anticipating criticism that he is making too big a change away from things that the Pentagon has traditionally LOVED spending money on, Mr. Gates said this: 'Every defense dollar spent to to overinsure against a remote or diminishing risk ... is a dollar not available to take care of our people.' ... And that was the head of the Pentagon acknowledging that there isn't infinite money available for his department, that there have to be tradeoffs. And that thump-thump-thump sound that you heard in the distance as he was talking was the sound of executives at all the big defense contractors passing out."

Love ya three-quarters of the time, Rachel, but you really should have waved blue pom-poms for this one. As noted below, many "defense" contractors are cheering for Gates' budget.

[The New York Times](#):

"WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates announced a major reshaping of the Pentagon budget on Monday, with deep cuts in many traditional weapons systems but new

billions of dollars for others, along with more troops and new technology to fight the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. ... Representative Tom Price, a Georgia Republican, reacted strongly against Mr. Gates's proposal to end spending for the F-22, which employs 25,000 workers in Georgia and across the country. 'It's outrageous that President Obama is willing to bury the country under a mountain of debt with his reckless domestic agenda but refuses to fund programs critical to our national defense,' Mr. Price said in a statement. In addition, a bipartisan group of six senators urged Mr. Gates not to make large cuts in missile defense programs. In a letter to Mr. Obama, they said the reductions 'could undermine our emerging missile defense capabilities to protect the United States against a growing threat.'"

If the New York Times didn't use "objective" (quote one war monger and a second war monger) reporting to back militarism, how would we know we weren't dreaming?

Air America:

"Regular Army No More? (Audio)
"By Ana Marie Cox

"Defense Secretary Robert Gates builds in unprecedented cuts to defense spending, especially on experimental and "next generation" weapons like the F-22 and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. What's next? Lower-tech, proven options such as intelligence and counter insurgency. What it has in common with the rest of the Obama program may surprise you."

I love Air America and was on it yesterday, but fluff is fluff and some of it I'm allergic to.

Center for American Progress:

"Gates Reins In Bloated Defense Budget

"Yesterday, Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced his recommendations for the department's 2010 budget, offering 'deep cuts in many traditional weapons systems but new billions of dollars for others, along with more troops and new technology to fight the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.' The Los Angeles Times described his proposal offering 'the most sweeping changes in military spending priorities in decades.' The Wonk Room's Matt Duss wrote yesterday that Gates's recommendations represent 'an appreciable shift in the way that the United States approaches the issue of military acquisitions.'"

This went on at length without ever mentioning that the budget was going UP not DOWN.

[True Majority:](#)

"Tell Congress to support the Gates/Obama defense budget.

"Dear David,

"At last!

"Some of us wondered if this day would ever come. Today the Secretary of Defense explained to Congress exactly the points TrueMajority members have been making for years: wasting taxes on weapons which don't work and have no conceivable use against real-world enemies makes us LESS strong as a

nation1.

Show Congress we're ready to invest in True Security — sign the petition."

OK, I know this isn't a news source. But this is an activist group that drives giant displays of Oreo cookies around the country to illustrate the relative sizes of the military budget and budgets for schools and healthcare. An Oreo got added to the military stack, and "True" Majority wants us to cheer instead of vomiting.

You could find the news if you searched, of course. [CNN](#) included the news in its 39th paragraph. [AP](#) included the total cost in its second paragraph but not whether it was an increase or decrease. A [New York Times editorial](#) in favor of more cuts included the total cost in its ninth paragraph. A [USA Today editorial](#) admirably noted and lamented the huge size of the budget but praised the supposed cutting of it and did not note that the overall budget was increasing. The [Washington Post's editorial](#) claimed to approve the cuts but deemed them politically impossible, never noting the INCREASING military budget. And, of course, columnists in the [Wall Street Journal](#) screamed "Obama and Gates Gut the Military".

But business sources told a very different story. Here's [Market Watch](#):

"Pentagon still a cash cow despite budget cuts

"Analysts weigh in on the winners and losers from Gates' spending proposal

"By Christopher Hinton, MarketWatch

"NEW YORK (MarketWatch) — The proposed 2010 defense budget from the Pentagon had a lot of changes, but Wall Street analysts said Tuesday there's still plenty of funding for the country's top military contractors. 'Lockheed Martin had the best outcome from [Defense Secretary Robert] Gates' budget decisions, there was also strong support for Northrop Grumman's and General Dynamics' shipbuilding businesses,' said Douglas Harned, an analyst with Bernstein Research. 'Notably, there were no indications of plans to bring budgets down significantly in 2011.'"

Here's [Jane's](#):

"US defence stocks surged on Gates' budget proposal

"Major US defence stocks were raised out of the doldrums by Defense Secretary Robert Gates' budget proposals thanks to the lifting of a degree of uncertainty and proposals that were not as dramatic as the markets expected. Fitch Ratings was among those who noted that although four of the top 10 US programmes face reductions or delays, several of the leading projects – including the F-35 and F/A-18 aircraft programmes – were to be increased. The proposal to increase intelligence and reconnaissance support by USD2 billion highlighted the new priorities of the Pentagon and threw up clear winners ranging from sensor and systems providers such as Raytheon (which closed 8.2 per cent up). Textron – which successfully divested its HR Textron unit the day before and increased its exposure to unmanned air systems through the buy of AAI Corporation – was the leader of the day, with a double-digit jump of 11.3 per cent."

The second round articles tended to be worse than the first:

[ABC News:](#)

"Will New Military Budget Prolong Recession?
"Many Cities and Towns Rely on Government Spending to Keep Their Economies Strong

"By SCOTT MAYEROWITZ, ABC NEWS Business Unit

"April 8, 2009—Many cities and towns across this country rise and fall with military spending. And with Defense Secretary Robert Gates' announcement earlier this week of new defense spending priorities, many communities are bracing for drastic cuts or a windfall."

This article mentioned that the budget was actually increasing in its 35th paragraph.

My point is not that the reported cuts aren't real, that jobs won't be lost, or that congress members aren't bought-and-paid-for schmucks. And my point is not just that the military should be cut and that non-military investment produces more and better paying jobs. My immediate point is that we are not getting the news, even from sources that would be screaming it from the rooftops if Obama had an "R" after his name.

Now, the last time I claimed that everybody had something wrong, Hullabaloo complained that they had got it right, so I checked and sure enough [Hullabaloo got this right](#) by quoting [TPM](#) which got this right. My advice is to follow such sources closely if you want to know you can believe what you're reading.

As you may have figured out, Republicorporate news sources will disguise and promote military spending even if done by a Democratic president, and Democratic news sources will do so only if done by a Democratic president. Democrats in Congress will play along whoever is in the White House, but at least when it's a Republican, SOME news sources will fill us in on what's happening. Practice eternal vigilance.

David Swanson is the author of the upcoming book "Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union" by Seven Stories Press and of the introduction to "The 35 Articles of Impeachment and the Case for Prosecuting George W. Bush" published by Feral House and available at Amazon.com. Swanson holds a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Virginia. He has worked as a newspaper reporter and as a communications director, with jobs including press secretary for Dennis Kucinich's 2004 presidential campaign, media coordinator for the International Labor Communications Association, and three years as communications coordinator for ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. Swanson is Co-Founder of AfterDowningStreet.org, creator of ProsecuteBushCheney.org and Washington Director of Democrats.com, a board member of Progressive Democrats of America, the Backbone Campaign, and Voters for Peace, a convenor of the legislative working group of United for Peace and Justice, and chair of the accountability and prosecution working group of United for Peace and Justice.

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