

What Would Afghan Spending Buy at Home?

By [Russ Baker](#)

Global Research, June 06, 2014

[WhoWhatWhy](#) 3 June 2014

Region: [Asia](#)

In-depth Report: [AFGHANISTAN](#)

This article was first published by Who What Why.

Link to original article:
<http://whowhatwhy.com/2014/06/03/what-would-afghan-spending-buy-at-home/>

Most of the stories headlining how President Obama plans to cut troops in Afghanistan as part of his planned exit from that country have not bothered to provide numbers on U.S. military spending there.

A few have, but almost in passing. For example, CNN doesn't indicate the current levels of spending, but [notes that](#)

Tony Blinken, Obama's deputy national security adviser, told CNN that the United States will spend about \$20 billion on the continued military presence in Afghanistan after 2014.

In other words, \$20 billion is what the U.S. will spend *after* it has effectively "withdrawn."

Too bad news organizations don't routinely give us a sense of what we are spending, or what else we might get for the same monies directed toward other purposes.

But here's one thing to consider: \$20 billion is about one-third to one-half of what the United States Department of Education spends on elementary, secondary and vocational education, and comparable to what it spends on higher education.

When President Obama released his Fiscal Year 2013 budget, Education Secretary Arne Duncan "announced [that high-quality education is absolutely critical to rebuilding our economy.](#)" Maybe so, but domestic spending is constantly under assault—and the lawmakers who reflexively support any and all military allocations are often the same ones complaining about "big government" and "wasteful" spending.

Here are a few other comparative statistics: (numbers vary, of course, from year to year)

- \$20 billion is what the U.S. government budgeted for 2013 to subsidize often-struggling farmers

- It's four-fifths of what we spend for science, space and technology

- It's more than twice the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency

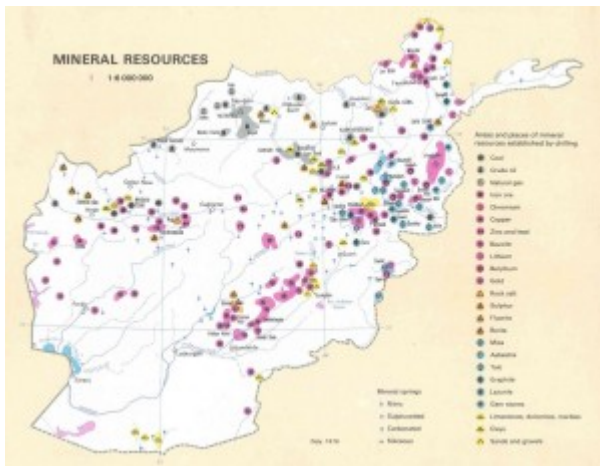
- It's a third of what we spend on veterans' hospital and medical care—on the people who fight in all wars combined

-It's about a third of what we spend on administration of justice

-It's five times what's budgeted for energy conservation in 2014 and 2015

-It's about 8 times what we spend on national parks—which have suffered continued cuts in recent years, resulting in reduced services and closures

If it's not achieving something of clear benefit to Americans, why does the spending continue at such levels? Here's [another thing to consider](#), a graphic on Afghanistan we've run in the past to [considerable interest](#):



Sources for Budget Data:

[OMB Historical Budget Tables](#)

[Department of Interior 2014 Budget Highlights](#)

The original source of this article is [WhoWhatWhy](#)
Copyright © [Russ Baker](#), [WhoWhatWhy](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Russ Baker](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those

who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca