

How much is too much?

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Even though the federal government's fiscal year (FY) 2027 began earlier this month, budget negotiations are still underway. However, the administration's request for \$1.5 trillion (1,500 billion) to fund the Pentagon is unprecedented. This sum represents an increase of almost 50% over the FY26 military budget.

Two recent articles shed light on the military budget and raise serious questions about the nation's priorities. [In a series of three charts](#), the National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies shows how the military budget accounts for almost 70% of the federal discretionary budget (funding directly under congressional control). By comparison, only 3.6% goes to education and 5.2% to housing and community development.

Looking at the military budget itself, more than half (52.2%) is allocated for development and purchase of weapons. Only 14% is spent on the troops in the form of pay, benefits and military family housing. The third chart examines where these additional funds (\$441 billion) will be appropriated. More than \$300 billion will be spent on weapons development and procurement.

A second article posted on the TomDispatch website, [looks at the Pentagon's shadow budget](#). These are military expenditures buried in the budgets of other government departments and agencies. For example, funding for nuclear weapons is included in the budget for the Department of Energy even though the Department of Defense controls and deploys these weapons.

In this article, political anthropologist, author and retired American University professor David Vine observes that including these military expenditures now outside the formal Department of Defense budget would bring total military spending in FY27 to well over \$2 trillion. While these numbers boggle the mind, Vine reminds us that "every single dollar spent on the Pentagon is a dollar not spent on our children, on healthcare, on affordable housing, on efforts to slow catastrophic climate change, and much more."

He reminds us that "the public needs a full, accurate accounting of the military. Congress could provide an annual True Total Military Budget that tallies all of the Pentagon's spending in one place and stop hiding funding in other agencies' budgets. Until this happens, journalists and analysts can help by explaining the full scale of spending and no longer repeating incomplete totals."