

**May 21, 2021**

Dear Chairwoman McCollum, Ranking Member Calvert, Chairman Tester, and Ranking Member Shelby,

The undersigned 40 organizations believe that the Biden administration's recently announced troop withdrawal from Afghanistan offers an opportunity to re-examine the nation's extremely large commitments to the Pentagon budget. We are dismayed that the administration's initial budget blueprint to Congress did not reflect a corresponding reduction in war funds, and instead included a gargantuan request of [\\$753 billion for the Pentagon and affiliated spending](#). We urge the congressional defense appropriations subcommittees to appropriate a lower topline than initially requested by the Biden administration to, at a minimum, reflect cost savings from withdrawing troops from Afghanistan.

Estimates indicate that [at least \\$20 billion](#) and perhaps as much as [\\$50 billion](#) will be freed up by withdrawing troops from Afghanistan. Yet the administration requested a [1.7 percent](#) increase from the previous fiscal year, adding [\\$13 billion](#) in discretionary spending to an already sky-high figure. If the costs of the troop withdrawal were not factored into this request, the budget increase will in reality be even greater, given troops are required to withdraw *prior* to the start of the next fiscal year.

Recently, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reported that the United States spent more on its military last year than the next [eleven](#) nations combined, a whopping [39 percent of global military spending](#) in 2020. If enacted, the administration's proposed budget would provide the Department of Defense with [more money](#) than the Departments of State, Justice, Education, Transportation, Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency combined. The increase alone in Pentagon spending is more than the entire budget for diplomatic programs at the State Department - despite the fact that robust diplomacy in Afghanistan will be needed both during and after the troop withdrawal.

As such, we urge you to appropriate a lower topline for the Pentagon and associated spending in the final FY22 budget than that requested by the Biden administration.

Sincerely,

American Friends Service Committee  
Center for International Policy  
Coalition on Human Needs  
CODEPINK  
Common Defense  
Concerned Veterans for America  
Daily Kos  
DC Peace Team

Demand Progress  
Detention Watch Network  
Foreign Policy for America  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends of the Earth  
Just Foreign Policy  
Greenpeace US  
Indivisible  
MADRE  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
MoveOn  
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies  
National Taxpayers Union  
Our Revolution  
Pax Christi USA  
Peace Action  
Peace Direct  
PlusPeace  
Progress America  
Project On Government Oversight  
Public Citizen  
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft  
RootsAction.org  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team  
Social Security Works  
Taxpayers for Common Sense  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Win Without War  
Women's Actions for New Directions  
World BEYOND War  
Veterans for Peace