



Let's Not Talk About the Federal Budget

Budgets are about restrictions, about how to live within spending limits, and about defining essential or unavoidable expenses. You can't make these types of decisions without first defining a vision for yourself and for the country. Let's not talk about the federal budget.

Let's start with our vision for this country instead and then talk about how to divide up the \$3 trillion budget proposed by President Bush for the upcoming fiscal year.

What Vision?

For the past 55 years, the federal budget has supported just one primary vision – a vision of the United States as the world's dominant, or even sole, military power. As this newsletter explains, President Bush's budget continues that trend.

But a majority of people in the United States has a different vision of the country. When polled about federal spending in 2005, mid-way through this administration's term, and again in a Gallup poll in 2007, clear majorities of representative national samples favored increased funding for non-military priorities. In the 2005 poll, respondents specifically preferred to support veterans, education, job training, and medical research. The largest group, 70%, would have increased spending for conservation and renewable energy development by more than a thousand percent.

Majority Wants to Spend Less on Military

In contrast, nearly two-thirds said they would prefer to cut military spending by almost a third. Only 11% agreed with the vision of the United States as the dominant world military power.

The people of the United States have a vision for the future that is not being translated into federal policy. Part of the problem is the myth that the majority of people always support more military spending. "The member of Congress agrees with you, but we are not in the majority," say congressional staff who support cutting military spending. But in the United States, people who want to stop increasing military spending or want to cut military spending *are* the majority. Congress needs to hear that majority's voice.

Changing the vision reflected in the federal budget will not be easy and will not happen quickly. But it can happen. One first step is helping people to understand that the budget does reflect a vision, one that affects them and their community. Inside, you'll find suggestions on how to have that conversation in your area.

Start by talking to your neighbors. Then get a group together to talk with your members of Congress. Begin with your vision for the world. Imagine this country in a different way. This nation could join with other nations to respond to global problems, such as climate change, disease, and terrorism, and Congress and the president can use the budget to advance those priorities concretely.

Make your vision real by naming the things that the U.S. government could accomplish with our common dollars. Don't talk about the federal budget. Talk about the federal government's vision. ■

43% In 2007, 43% of your tax dollars were used to pay the costs of current and past wars. See FCNL's flyer, *Where Do Our 2007 Income Tax Dollars Go*, at www.fcnl.org/wartaxes.

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**U.S. Government Shopping List
 What Should the U.S. Buy?**

	Part of FCNL's vision	Not part of FCNL's vision
\$4 billion	Providing additional support for diplomatic programs, a "diplomatic surge" in Iraq, and Civilian Response Corps	Building more F-22 fighter jets
\$629 million	Providing home heating for the one million low-income households which would be cut off the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program in the president's budget	Starting production of another new "armed reconnaissance helicopter"
\$7 billion	Extending the State Children's Health Insurance Program to the remaining four million eligible uninsured children for one year.	Funding the "space arms race," the ballistic missile "defense" agency
\$1.8 billion	Increasing funding for food stamps to help more families have enough food to make it through the whole month	Funding the Space Based Infra-Red System-High, the next generation of missile warning systems
\$771 million	Providing enough housing vouchers so that all the families who now receive rental assistance can continue in the program, AND	Building the "Virginia" class attack submarine – a Cold War era weapon.
\$100 million	Increasing funding for the Cooperative Threat Reduction program to secure loose nuclear fuel around the world, AND	
\$1 billion	Restoring and increasing funds for Department of Energy's energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, AND	
\$1 billion	Restoring funding for Head Start	
\$6 billion	Fully funding the Indian Health Program	Ordering a new aircraft carrier (a floating military base)

President's Budget Pie Feeds Military

A Cherokee grandfather spoke of two wolves engaged in a terrible fight inside of him. One wolf represented fear, arrogance, lies. The other represented joy, faith, and generosity. "Which wolf will win?" a grandchild asked. "Why, the one I feed," the elder answered.

Changes Needed for True Security

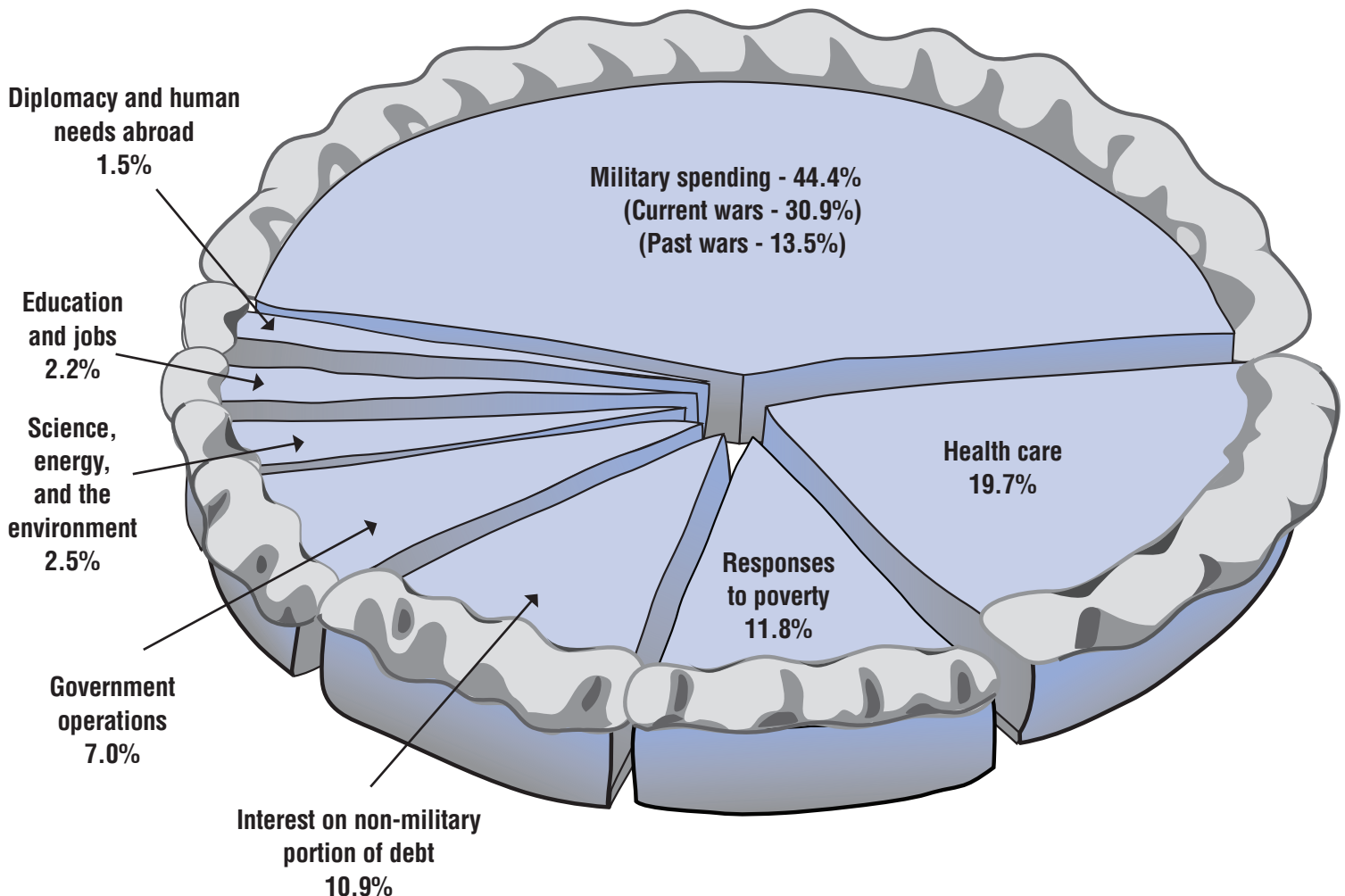
As Congress prepares its version of the budget, it will use the president's proposal as a guide. What does the president's Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget say about what's needed for security, and how do we at FCNL think that Congress should alter this proposed budget?

Climate security. The biggest threat to U.S. and global security is the unrelenting march of global warming. This threat has been identified and located, and its consequences are known. Climate change is endangering water supplies and agricultural production around the world.

Tens of millions of people living near sea level in the United States may be forced from their homes by rising seas and increasingly intense storms. People living in hotter areas, such as the U.S. southwest, may find those regions uninhabitable within this century.

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The president's proposed budget, which Congress will use as a starting place for its budget proposal, promotes a vision of the U.S. as the military dominator of the world.



Notes to Pie Chart:

- (1) This pie shows the “federal funds budget,” the part of the U.S. treasury supported by your income tax dollars. It does not include programs supported by payroll taxes, such as Social Security and parts of Medicare.
- (2) While FCNL strongly supports adequate funding for the care of returning veterans, we recognize the cost of their care and support as a cost of war.
- (3) For a detailed table of the programs included in each slice, see www.fcnl.org/budget.

Key:

- A. Military spending (44.4%):** Includes the cost of war and preparing for war (30.9% of the budget) and obligations from past wars (13.5% of the budget) such as veterans programs and interest on the military portion of the national debt
- B. Health care (19.7%):** Includes Medicaid, parts of Medicare, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, along with health research and public health programs
- C. Responses to poverty (11.8%):** Includes food programs, housing assistance, income supports, and energy assistance
- D. Interest (10.9%)** on the non-military portion of the national debt
- E. Government operations (7.0%):** Includes law enforcement, courts, transportation, economic supports, agriculture and federal employee benefit programs
- F. Science, energy and the environment (2.5%)**
- G. Education and jobs (2.2%):** Includes employment, social services, and community services
- H. Diplomacy and human needs abroad (1.5%):** Includes humanitarian aid, diplomatic missions, and international cooperation

Budget (continued from page 3)

How does the president’s budget respond to this known threat? The president proposes to cut 27%, or \$467 million, from the Energy Department’s energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. As part of that cut, he proposes to zero out funding for the low-income weatherization program, which provides both jobs and more energy efficient homes for low-income families.

The president’s budget could cut one million people off of the low-income energy assistance program at a time when energy prices are soaring. It would reduce the subsidy for Amtrak by 40% and the Environmental Protection Agency’s climate science and technology programs by 38%. The amount of the budget devoted to addressing climate change is already tiny; the president proposes to shrink it further.

International security. The president wants to use 44.4% of the federal budget to support a vision of U.S. military dominance in the world. A more direct and much less expensive way to improve security in the world would be to invest in preventing wars before they break out. The U.S. State Department currently lacks the tools it needs to prevent war in the 21st century.

The budget does contain some positive initiatives, but the money allocated to them isn’t enough. FCNL supports the president’s request for 1,100 additional personnel to assist with diplomatic programs; 300 additional people for development programs; and \$248 million to support the office that coordinates civilian, rather than military, responses to crises. Yet the entire budget for the State Department, U.S. dues to international organizations, and non-military aid to meet human needs overseas amounts to just 1.5% of the president’s proposed budget, even with some proposed increases.

No more nuclear weapons. Rather than working to end the threat of nuclear war, the president’s budget proposes a 5.1% increase in the Department of Energy’s budget for nuclear weapons systems.

The money proposed for new nuclear weapons and projects is relatively small (compared to the military budget as a whole.) But if this spending is approved,

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Budget (continued from page 4)

future Congresses would have a difficult time ending funding for the programs. The president's budget requests about \$30 million to begin the development of the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) and \$100 million to begin construction on a new facility to produce the triggers used in nuclear weapons, called plutonium pits.

Last year, as a result of your lobbying and the lobbying of tens of thousands of others around the country, Congress refused to fund either the RRW program or a new nuclear bomb plant. This year's proposed new bomb plant proposal is a scaled-down version of last year's request.

The arms control community, now joined by such leaders as former Senator Sam Nunn, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, and former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Schultz, is calling on the U.S. government to work toward universal nuclear disarmament. The president hasn't gotten that message.

Military spending. Military spending has risen every year for the past 11 years. The president now proposes the highest level of military spending since World War II, an increase of 7.5%. Under the president's proposed FY 2009 budget, the United States would spend about 20 times as much on military responses to the world's problems as on non-military responses.

What would these dollars buy? The president's proposal heavily emphasizes military construction and procurement of weapons systems, transports, and materiel. Outlays for military construction would rise by 48%, or about \$5 billion. Outlays for procurement will rise by 9%, or about \$12 billion.

The president proposes to spend \$104 billion to buy equipment and \$80 billion to develop new weapons. Much of the money would continue to fund conventional weapons systems, such as the F-22 Raptor, the SSN-774 Virginia-class submarine and the DDG-1000 Zumwalt class destroyer, all Cold War-era relics designed to fight the Soviet Union. According to some military experts, some of the money will support equipment that has

never met contract specifications and, in some cases, just doesn't work, such as the V-22 Osprey and the C130J cargo aircraft. More than \$21 billion would go to unworkable space and missile defense systems.

The proposed increase in military spending would buy lucrative contracts for major weapons builders. But, wait! There's more. The trillion dollar total does not yet include the anticipated \$120 - \$125 billion supplemental request that the president will likely submit to Congress this spring for the con-

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Poverty – A Growing Problem in 2008

According to the Census Bureau, 35.6 million people in the United States were "poor" in 2006. (The 2007 count has not been tallied yet.) A similar number of people weren't sure whether all of the members of their household would have enough to eat, according to the Department of Agriculture. Those numbers are pretty big for a wealthy nation such as the United States.

The statistics are even more disturbing when the government pulls out data on how children are affected by poverty. According to U.S. government data, one-third of the children living in Detroit, Atlanta, and Milwaukee were living in poverty in 2006.

In 2008, these problems are likely to get worse with the combination of the housing mortgage crisis and the anticipated recession. Rising energy and food prices could force many more families to choose among necessities: home heating, prescription drugs, or food.

This nation can do better than to force these choices by re-knitting the safety net that is supposed to catch us all before we fall into poverty and by taking steps to end poverty, or at least reduce it by half, in the next 10 years. For more information, see the article "12 Steps to Reducing Poverty" in the July / August 2007 *Washington Newsletter*.

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tinuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For more on the cost of these wars, see the February *Washington Newsletter*.

The only parts of the Pentagon budget that the president proposes to cut are spending on military personnel and family housing. How is this proposal taking care of the men and women and their families who serve in the armed forces?

Congress can accept the administration's vision, or it can offer an alternative one.

Human security. To feel safe, people need to know that they'll have somewhere to live, enough food to feed their families, health care when they're sick or injured, education and job training for themselves and their children, and access to transportation and employment. It takes work, planning, and investments for a government to maintain the structures for human security.

In February 2008, the House of Representatives adopted a goal of cutting U.S. poverty in half over the next ten years. The president's proposed budget, however, sets no such goal and leaves little room for Congress to take steps to reduce poverty. What's needed? (See "12 Steps Out of Poverty" in the July / August 2007 *Washington Newsletter*).

The president's budget continues the downward slope of funding. Only a small handful of programs would keep the same level of funding they currently have, with adjustment for inflation. Virtually every program would have to cope with cuts, ranging from 1 to 100%. Funding for small and effective programs such as the Weatherization Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Foods, assistance for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, and Emergency Medical Services for Children would be zeroed out. The Community Services block grant, which helps states with a variety of social and economic development programs, would be cut from \$669 million to \$0.

If the president's budget were to be adopted, states would be hard-hit by the combination of cuts in services and supports, especially in health care. But if Congress were to add back about \$10 billion, shifting money from military spending into this category, Congress could reverse the cuts in human needs programs proposed by the president for FY2009 and restore some of the cuts that have been made in the past three years.

The president's budget lays out the administration's vision of how the U.S. should invest its resources. Congress can accept this vision, or it can offer an alternative one, shifting resources from the military to addressing other forms of security and bringing the vision more in line with the majority opinion in the United States. This change is unlikely to happen in one leap, but members can be encouraged to take steps that will lead towards the world we seek. ■

Tax Rebates for Peace

While 43% of your federal tax dollar goes for war, 100% of your "economic stimulus package" check or tax refund can go for peace! Donate the amount to the Friends Committee on National Legislation to lobby Congress for peaceful prevention of deadly conflict. Or make the contribution to the FCNL Education Fund to educate about alternatives to war and be eligible for a charitable tax deduction for the amount of the gift!

Mail your check to FCNL, 245 Second Street, NE, Washington, DC, 20002.

Charge your donation to your credit card by calling 800-630-1330, ext. 2538.

Donate online securely by going to FCNL's web site, www.fcnl.org and click on "Donate Now."

Thank you!

Choices - and Pie (continued from page 8)

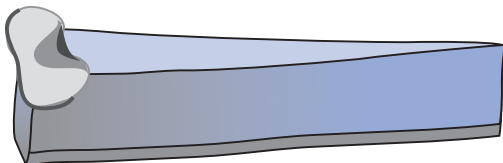
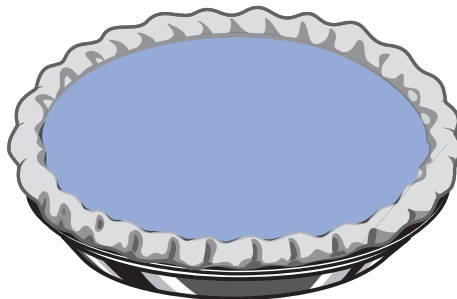
that money could be invested in your community. Health care, decent homes, college scholarships, renewable energy, public safety, and many more practical needs become possibilities by re-orienting federal spending.

How to Serve a Budget Pie (or Cookies!)

Visual aids are helpful to show the extreme imbalance in the federal budget between military spending and support for human needs and environmental protection. They can get the message across when numbers and percentages makes your audience's eyes glaze over. Here are two suggestions for edible visual aids, courtesy of our colleagues at Women's Action for New Direction and True Majority.

The pie:

1. Bake or purchase a pie. A solid pie, such as pumpkin or meringue, works best.
2. Download a pie template from the FCNL web site, www.fcnl.org/budgetpie. Cut out the template and use it to show you where to mark on your pie where your slices will be.
3. At your discussion of the budget, cut all of the non-military slices and slivers (health care, responses to poverty, etc.) and offer them to



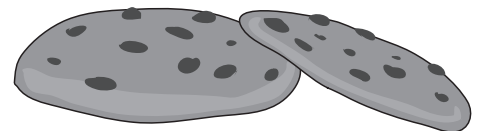
people who have a particular interest in those areas. Almost half

the pie will remain. Point out that a small part of the remaining piece is proposed for veteran's care but that other large chunks go to obsolete weapons, support for Cold War strategies, and just plain excess. (See the article on page 2 for some of the tradeoffs.)

4. Ask who wants more for their priorities and how they could get more in real life by lobbying their members of Congress to shift money from the military to other priorities.
5. Send a report of your pie-cutting session to the local paper and to your congressional delegation. Send the report, along with a picture of the group and your pie, to FCNL at the address on page 2.

Cookies:

1. Bake or purchase 100 cookies. A smooth-topped cookie will work better than a lumpy cookie.
2. Using the summary table that accompanies the pie in this newsletter on page 4, make stacks or piles of cookies representing the percent of the budget proposed for each category. Break cookies in half to represent partial percents.
3. Encourage your group to rearrange the cookies to match their priorities (before eating them!) Talk about how they could rearrange the cookies in real life by lobbying their members of Congress to shift money from the military to other priorities.
4. Send a report of your cookie-stacking to the local paper and to your congressional delegation. Send the report, along with a picture of the group and your cookies, to FCNL at the address on page 2.



Whether you talk about games or choices, pies or cookies, you can help people in your community find out about how the U.S. government currently spends our tax dollars and how they can influence that spending in the next year. ■



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INSIDE: BUDGET: WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR THE COUNTRY?

No. 725, March 2008

Let's Talk About Choices—And Pie

Imagine a game in which you are in charge of a nation of 300 million people. Your country has rich, arable lands and a mild climate. It has successful agriculture, manufacturing, science, and information industries and maintains an active global trade. The country has a relatively progressive (though complicated) tax system through which citizens pool about \$3 trillion dollars each year for common goals.

You have to decide how to use this \$3 trillion. Here are some of the things you will have to consider:

- How will you **foster good relations** with other countries so that your nation is not likely to be attacked?
- What will you do to **help people in poorer countries**, both because you are concerned about fellow human beings and because you don't want poorer countries to erupt into violence?
- How will you **maintain a sound infrastructure** and make sure that bridges, roads, dams, levees, public transportation, energy systems, and other utilities are adequate and well-maintained?
- What will you do to **address climate change** and to put your nation on a path to reduce its dependence on oil and other carbon-emitting energy sources?
- How will you **make sure that the people in your country are educated** to continue the success of the nation's industries and to contribute to global knowledge and understanding?
- What will you do to **maintain the health** of the people in your country?

- Will you pay **special attention to the children in your country**, as the rising generation of leaders, so that they have what they need to grow up strong and wise?
- What kind of **military force** will you maintain?
- Will you **return some of the \$3 trillion** to your wealthiest taxpayers?

Even with \$3 trillion, you have to make choices.

Outside of a game, most of us don't have the ability to decide how a country spends \$3 trillion. But we can influence how Congress spends this money in our behalf.

Read this newsletter to find out about the spending choices being proposed in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. If those choices seem out of balance to you, as they do to us at FCNL, help spread the word in your meeting, church, or community group about why the budget matters and what we all can do to change it. Here are some suggestions.

How to Make the Budget Choices Real

You can bring home to your community the local effects of the choices Congress makes on your behalf. Using information from the National Priorities Project (www.nationalpriorities.org/tradeoffs), you can find out how much of your community's resources go to pay for war in Iraq and how else

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