

Appendix 2. Recommended Policy Statement from Peoples Budget Campaign guiding Pentagon portion of Peoples Budget

It has been said by the president and widely understood by both military and scholarly observers that there is no military solution to the challenge of terrorism. Nowhere is that better demonstrated than in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. You cannot destroy an ideology, or movements that promote one, by bombing its adherents. If that were effective, the challenge of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria would have already been overcome. Military escalation has proven to be counter-productive.

But the primary stumbling block to changing strategy is the fact that ending massive political violence against populations is not the fundamental goal of U.S. war policies. Rather, that goal in the Middle East and elsewhere remains to achieve what the Pentagon calls “Full Spectrum Dominance” over the entire planet. To accomplish this de-facto goal our leaders sometimes go to war against extremist groups and governments and sometimes work in collaboration with them (e.g. our support for the Khmer Rouge army in Cambodia, genocidal militias in Central America, and the global jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980’s, and Saudi Arabia – the leading propagator of sectarian jihadist ideology – today, which has also been massacring and starving the civilian population of Yemen).

Based on that understanding, the People’s Budget should:

1. Recommend budgets that help:

- move us away from a foreign policy based on full spectrum domination in service of a global economy based on the needs of global corporations, fossil fuel conglomerates and dominant political interests that undermine the welfare of the U.S. itself, and
- move us toward a foreign policy based on defending the United States and supporting international law, self determination and fundamental human rights, and which
- reallocate resources away from military to non-military ways to deal with terrorism and terrorist organizations like al Qaeda, ISIS and al Nusra Front, understanding that strengthening human security strengthens national security.

Rather than in continuing to prosecute, escalate and expand the use of military force, significant resources should be allocated to the following alternatives¹ to the use of military force:

- The way to fight a wild fire is to deprive it of fuel and oxygen. Seek agreement with US allies, the Russians and Iranians to cut off the flow of arms to all parties in the region – both allies and adversaries alike. Move toward a comprehensive arms embargo.
- Stop the campaign of airstrikes and drone assassinations and stop sending more ‘boots on the ground’ in Iraq and Syria and end our involvement in the war against Yemen’s population
- Enforce the Leahy Law (that prohibits assistance to foreign military units known to violate human rights).

¹ Links to a variety of sources of alternatives is available at <http://uslaboragainstar.org/Article/74701/dealing-with-terrorism-without-going-to-war>. These proposals draw heavily from those advocated by Phyllis Bennis: <http://uslaboragainstar.org/Article/74094/six-steps-short-of-war-to-beat-isis>

- Invest seriously and heavily in diplomatic initiatives that involve all state and non-state parties directly and indirectly involved in or affected by the conflicts. Initiate a new search for broader diplomatic solutions in the United Nations that draw all parties into a negotiating process and work to build a real international coalition to use diplomatic and financial pressures, not military strikes, in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.
- Cut off the flow of oil, antiquities, wheat and other resources that are stolen to finance terrorist operations, and seriously increase sanctions to restrict their access to the global financial system.
- Pressure Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and other gulf governments to stop arming and financing Sunni extremists, and to keep their citizens from doing so; pressure U.S. ally Turkey to seal its border with Syria to stop ISIS and other jihadist fighters from crossing into Syria and stop ISIS from using Turkey as a haven and avenue for moving oil and other stolen resources to international markets.
- Pressure U.S. allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and others to stop financing and arming everyone and anyone in Syria who says they're against Assad.
- Massively increase US humanitarian contributions to U.N. agencies for the now millions of refugees and IDPs in and from Syria, Iraq and Yemen; greatly increase the number of refugees accepted in the US. Remove impediments to civil society organizations so they can play a larger role in civic life, promoting peace and reconciliation.
- Significantly increase non-military economic development assistance to enable reconstruction, provide jobs, reduce poverty, open access to healthcare and education, and enable refugees and displaced people to return to their homes. Strengthen adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law by international and state actors.
- Cut the flow of foreign fighters and address the conditions that lead them to join violent jihadi movements – western military intervention, poverty, alienation, social isolation and exclusion, discrimination and other social conditions in the countries from which they are recruited.
- Treat terrorist acts as the criminal actions they are and pursue and prosecute them vigorously through national and international legal forums and judicial institutions.
- Promote conflict resolution and peace-building measures rather than retaliatory punitive military actions that deepen divisions, instill hatred and fuel a thirst for revenge.