



Foreign Policy for the People

American foreign policy should serve the safety, prosperity, and everyday needs of the American people. But right now, we're trying to do too much with our military and we're allowing special interests too much influence. The result is a set of priorities that are out of balance, where we spend billions on unnecessary military programs and invest too little in American communities.

A more responsible and balanced foreign policy would focus on what actually keeps Americans safe. It would keep us out of unnecessary wars, prioritize diplomacy, and invest in strength at home. And all of these decisions would be made with the best interests of the American people in mind, rather than corporate profits or foreign interests.

What keeps Americans safe?

Security isn't just about military power. It's also about a strong economy, reliable infrastructure, public health, and staying out of unnecessary wars. When our priorities are out of balance, it can actually make us less safe. Spending too much on military programs, especially ones we don't need, means less investment in the things that Americans rely on every day. Over time, that weakens our economic strength, strains public services, and leaves us less prepared for vital threats like pandemics, natural disasters, and financial crises. This is what happens when we try to do too much abroad, and let spending decisions be shaped by politics and special interests instead of real priorities.



"Given today's threats, we need a larger defense budget."



"When defense spending grows without limits, we underinvest in other forms of safety."

Don't we need to increase Pentagon spending given today's threats?

One result of trying to do too much globally and letting special interests shape decisions is constantly rising Pentagon budgets. The US already spends more on its military than any other country by a wide margin. We shouldn't cut corners on defense. But we also shouldn't assume that more spending automatically means more security, especially when that spending is driven by politics or outdated strategies rather than real threats. Efforts to push defense spending even higher than they are now risk worsening our budget deficit, crowding out investments in infrastructure, health care, and education. A more restrained strategy could maintain US security while saving significant resources for national renewal at home.



"Given all the threats we face, we can't afford to cut defense spending."



"More Pentagon spending does not mean more security. It makes us more vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse."



"If we don't keep increasing the Pentagon budget, we'll fall behind."




"The US isn't at risk of falling behind in military spending. It is at risk of wasting resources on programs that don't actually make us safer."

Doesn't defense spending create good jobs?

Defense spending creates fewer jobs per dollar than investing in infrastructure, clean energy, health care, or education. So when we rely on Pentagon spending as a jobs program, we're overspending and also missing better opportunities to grow the economy. This is another example of how misaligned priorities weaken our economic strength.

 "We need to support this weapons program because it creates jobs in our district."

 "Defense spending and foreign policy decisions should be based on strategy, not whether a program benefits a particular district."

 "Cutting Pentagon spending would hurt American workers."

 "We can create more good jobs by investing in industries that directly benefit our communities."

What influence do corporations have on foreign policy?

The defense industry and related interests play a major role in shaping US foreign policy. Contractors deploy extensive lobbying networks, campaign contributions, and local economic pressure to sustain high levels of military spending. These dynamics can distort policy decisions, prioritizing weapons programs and military commitments that benefit contractors rather than serving the national interest. The arms industry spends tens of millions on campaign contributions and employs hundreds of lobbyists to influence defense policy and budgets. This reinforces high levels of military spending and encourages a foreign policy that tries to do too much.

 "Defense companies are just responding to national security needs."

 "Major contractors actively shape foreign policy through lobbying and political spending, distorting our national priorities."


What should we do about foreign influence?

Foreign governments and their agents actively lobby US officials to shape policy outcomes in their favor. In some cases, this can drag the US into unnecessary wars or towards commitments that don't serve the American public. Even our strongest allies have interests that diverge from ours, and it is essential that policymakers recognize this. To mitigate the negative impacts of foreign influence, it's important to prioritize transparency, to apply the rules consistently, and to ensure policymakers prioritize real US interests.

 "Our allies' priorities naturally align with ours."

 "Even close partners pursue their own interests. US policy should be guided by what benefits Americans."

 "Adversary countries should be subjected to more stringent transparency rules."

 "All foreign influence should be transparent, so that we have a clear view of the interests at play."