

# FACT SHEET

## WE NEED \$2 TRILLION/YEAR FOR OTHER THINGS

---

Global military spending on war & preparations for war is \$2 trillion a year, half of which is spent by the U.S. government alone. When making the case for the abolition of war, it is crucial that we draw attention to the economic trade-offs that are a result of the bloated military budget. Let's examine the potential social and environmental benefits of diverting \$2 trillion/year away from war.

### FAST FACTS

- According to the 2018 Global Peace Index, produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), the global economic impact of violence is \$14.76 trillion, 12% of global GDP.<sup>1</sup>
- Based on estimates from the United Nations, just \$30 billion a year - 1.5% of global military spending - could end hunger on earth.<sup>2</sup>



- \$11 billion a year could provide clean drinking water for all.<sup>3</sup>
- Currently, the U.S. is seen as the greatest threat to peace in the world, according to a 2013 Gallup poll that surveyed people in 65 nations.<sup>4</sup> By diverting only 4% of its military spending to provide food & clean water for all, the U.S. could become the greatest cause for peace on earth, drastically repairing its reputation and reducing the current rise of anti-American terrorist groups.
- Lester R. Brown, founder of TheWorld watch Institute, has proposed spending \$187 billion annually - just 9% of global military spending - for 10 years on a "Plan B budget" to meet social goals and earth restoration initiatives. This includes preserving topsoil (\$24 billion per year), protecting biodiversity (\$31 billion per year), restoring fisheries (\$13 billion

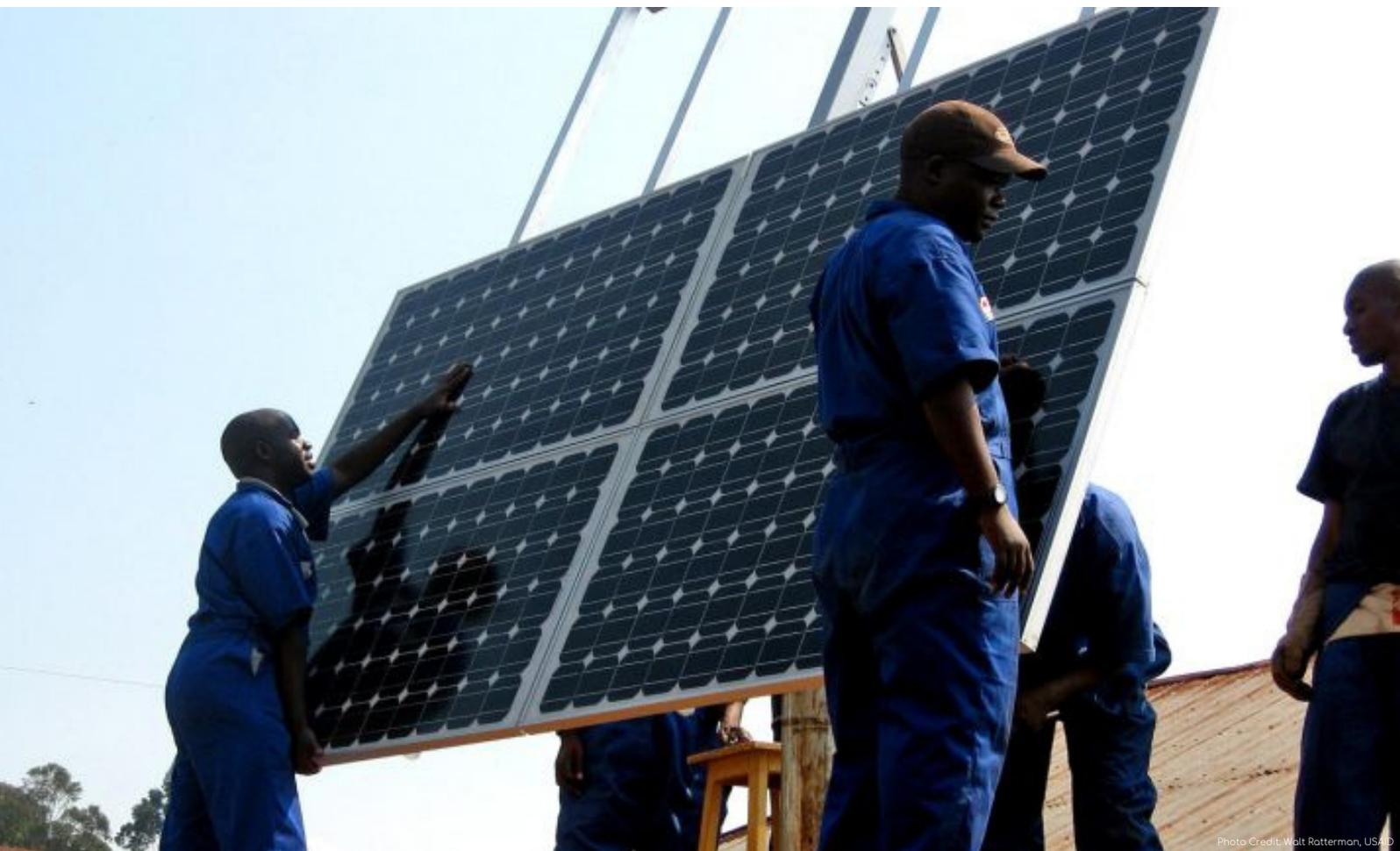


Photo Credit: Walt Rotterman, USAID

per year), stabilizing water tables (\$10 billion per year), eradicating adult illiteracy (\$4 billion a year), and providing basic health care (\$33 billion per year) and universal primary education (\$10 billion per year) in developing countries.<sup>5</sup>

- Just 1 year of U.S. military spending could pay for more than 9 million clean energy jobs, or 8 million elementary school teachers, or 68 million military veterans receiving VA medical care for a year.<sup>6</sup>
- Dollar for dollar, a University of Massachusetts study shows that investing in peacetime industries like health care, education, mass transit, and construction would produce more jobs and, in many cases, better-paying jobs than would spending that money on the military.<sup>7</sup>

---

In short, the \$2 trillion business of war is a corporate boondoggle, lining the pockets of the elite, while draining our economies of vital funding for social and environmental needs.

---

**LEARN MORE AT:**  
[worldbeyondwar.org/2trillion](http://worldbeyondwar.org/2trillion)

World BEYOND War is a global grassroots network of volunteers, activists, and allied organizations advocating for the abolition of war and its replacement with an alternative global security system based on peace and demilitarization. Visit WorldBEYONDWar.org to join the global movement to end all wars.

#### REFERENCES

1. "Global Peace Index 2018 Snapshot." *Institute for Economics & Peace*, 2018, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Global-Peace-Index-2018-Snapshot.pdf>
2. "The world only needs 30 billion dollars a year to eradicate the scourge of hunger." *FAO Newsroom*, 3 June 2008, <http://www.fao.org/Newsroom/en/news/2008/1000853/index.html>
3. "Improving Water & Sanitation Access Would Cost \$11.3 Billion More a Year." *UN News*, 27 April 2004, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2004/04/101652-improving-water-and-sanitation-access-would-cost-113-billion-more-year-un>
4. Brown, Eric. "In Gallup Poll, the Biggest Threat to World Peace Is...America?" *International Business Times*, 2 January 2014, <https://www.ibtimes.com/gallup-poll-biggest-threat-world-peace-america-1525008>
5. Brown, Lester R. *Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2009
6. "Trade-Offs: Your Money, Your Choices." *National Priorities Project*, 2018, <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/trade-offs/>
7. Pollin, Robert, and Heidi Garrett-Peltier. "The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities." *Department of Economics and Political Economy Research Institute (PERI)*. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, October 2007, [https://peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other\\_publication\\_types/PERI\\_IPS\\_WAND\\_study.pdf](https://peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/PERI_IPS_WAND_study.pdf)