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Cutting military spending for Lent

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NCR Today

For Lent I created a petition to cut the military budget by cutting the F-35 joint strike fighter, dismantling most of our nuclear weapons and closing a lot of military bases.

My purpose was inclusion of the petition in a Lenten calendar our Loretto Peace Committee has created for the community and friends.

The petition was circulated, and one recipient was a retired Air Force officer. He didn't like it, and we exchanged lengthy emails. I had made simple, arbitrary and large choices, I said, just to make the point that there is plenty to cut, but my correspondent wanted sources.

The first source I offered, which he didn't like either, is the War Resisters League pie chart. It shows congressional discretionary spending, not the Social Security, Medicare and highway trust funds. And it counts not just the Department of Defense but nuclear weapons in the Energy and Veterans Affairs departments, and the portion of the national debt incurred to pay for wars.

Second, regarding the military bases, it turns out there's a "Military Golf Course Guide" for civilians. Imagine! And as best I can find, nobody knows for sure exactly how many bases we operate, but it's more than 1,700.

Third, I pointed toward my own past writing on the F-35, citing a list of boondoggles identified by a professor of defense analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, Calif.

Finally, one source for the nuclear cuts is the *New York Times* story, "Obama to Renew Drive for Cuts in Nuclear Arms." It's a lengthy essay on a complex issue.

Consider signing the petition. We're not to our goal of 300 signatures yet, but SignOn.org sends every signature to Congress and the president.

The petition won't shake the universe, but it reminds our elected leaders of another perspective.

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