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Time to clean out the Pentagon's closets

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There's a new call for military spending cuts of 25 percent to 50 percent.

The sign-on letter will be delivered to Congress on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day. The money saved would be spent addressing hunger, public education, jobs and climate remediation; creating jobs in the public sector; and rebuilding vital infrastructure.

In May 2010, the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation published a fact sheet detailing how much we spend, and then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates joined in, pointing out some of our disproportionate spending.

Here are some of the fact sheet points:

- The U.S. operates 11 large carriers, all nuclear powered. In terms of size and striking power, no other country has even one comparable ship.
- The U.S. Navy has 10 large-deck amphibious ships that can operate as sea bases for helicopters and vertical-takeoff jets. No other navy has more than three, and all of those navies belong to pure allies or friends. Our Navy can carry twice as many aircraft at sea as all the rest of the world combined.
- The U.S. has 57 nuclear-powered attack and cruise missile submarines -- again, more than the rest of the world combined.
- Seventy-nine Aegis-equipped combatants carry roughly 8,000 vertical-launch missile cells. In terms of total missile firepower, the U.S. arguably outmatches the next 20 largest navies.
- All told, the displacement of the U.S. battle fleet -- a proxy for overall fleet capabilities -- exceeds, by one recent estimate, at least the next 13 navies combined, of which 11 are our allies or partners.

In short, we have more than we need. It's time to clean out the Pentagon closets.

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