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Providing for the common defense is one of the Congress's most central duties, and today this is more important than ever. Congressman Blumenauer has worked to ensure that the government takes a comprehensive and long-term approach to Defense and Homeland Security. It is not enough to ensure that America's military and security personnel remain the best in the world: Congressman Blumenauer believes the government must effectively partner with those who serve, states and neighborhoods, and the global community.



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Homeland Security

Since his election to Congress, Representative Blumenauer has worked to make sure that a safe, secure and resilient homeland means more than just preventing the next terrorist attack. It also means ensuring that the liberties and privacy of all Americans are respected, that we are prepared for natural disasters, pandemics, cyber attacks, and the ever-changing nature of international threats.

After the tragedy of September 11th, Congressman Blumenauer supported both the creation of an independent commission to study the events surrounding the terrorist attacks and subsequent recommendations to improve prevention of and response to future attacks.

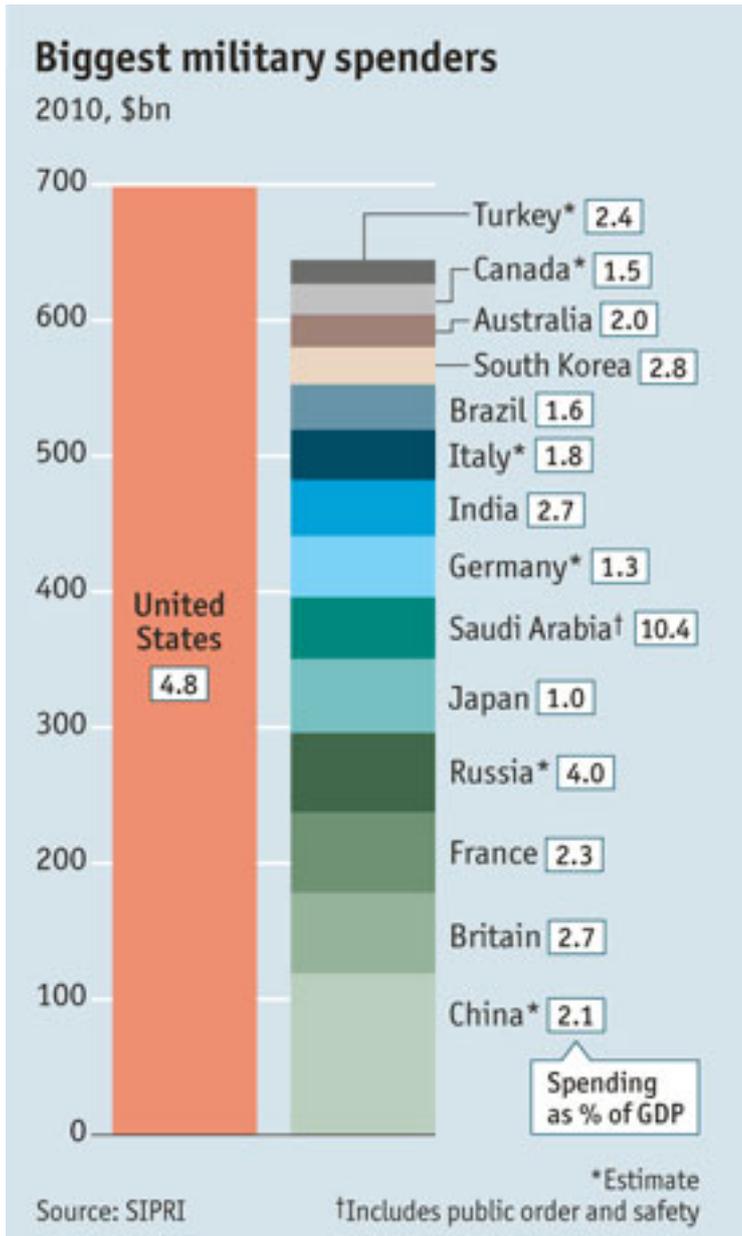
One of the most critical pieces of national security is the preparedness of local communities, ensuring that the federal government partners effectively with states and local responders like police and local fire departments. Blumenauer has worked to ensure that the first responders in the Portland metropolitan area have access to the training and the equipment they need and has consistently fought to secure funding for the Fire Grant Program, Urban Area Security Grants, and the SAFER program. These competitive federal programs enable local jurisdictions to adequately staff, train, equip, and respond more effectively to threats to community safety.

Defense

Congressman Blumenauer has fought to ensure that our government takes a comprehensive, realistic, and long-term approach to national defense – including guaranteeing support for America's Reserve and National Guard forces to help them meet the challenges that have come with their expanded role during this time of war.

Blumenauer is particularly proud to support the 142nd Fighter Wing and 125th Special Tactics Squadron of the Oregon Air National Guard, both of whom call Portland home. He was instrumental in the successful community effort to preserve the strategic Portland location of the 142nd.

A Fiscally Responsible Defense Department



Congressman Blumenauer supports the efforts by the Department of Defense to decrease overall military spending, while at the same time investing in defense for the 21st century in areas such as special operations and cyber security. The Congressman also supports meeting the the budget reductions required by the Budget Control Act of 2011, but believes that greater flexibility is needed to implement reforms in a way that does not harm our men and women in uniform.

It's helpful to look at our defense spending compared to other countries. The U.S. accounts for 43 percent of all defense spending worldwide. We spend six times more than China, twelve times that of Russia, and our Navy is larger than the next thirteen navies combined.

Now more than ever, it's clear that we can no longer separate national security from fiscal responsibility. Even without including the costs for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. defense spending, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is the highest it has been at any time since the end of World War II – even greater than at the peak of the Cold War.

In addition, a recent [study](#) of federal spending since World War II found that the economic benefits from nonmilitary spending – such as education, infrastructure, or health – were at least 50 percent greater than federal dollars spent on defense.

Congressman Blumenauer believes that by shifting defense strategy and investments to more accurately reflect our 21st century needs, we can make our country safer, while at the same time saving tax dollars.

There are many straight-forward, non-controversial ways that we can decrease defense spending, while still keeping America safe and our troops secure. Increasing efficiency in naval deployment, can reduce the need for more warships. The United States eleven aircraft carriers add up to more than the rest of the world's fleet combined, and many of the other countries that have aircraft carriers are U.S. allies. China – a potential adversary – *only has one carrier* that was just put to sea for the first time in Fall 2011. Former Secretary of Defense Gates has said, “in terms of size and striking power, no other country has even one comparable ship.”

Given improved capabilities for long-range strikes, rapid troop transport and the geopolitical landscape, the United States no longer needs all of the 150,000 U.S. troops permanently based in Europe and Asia. It's time to bring the majority of these men and women home, and close some of our bases there.

Blumenauer believes that the Department of Defense, the largest manager of infrastructure in the U.S., and the largest consumer of energy in the world, has a responsibility to not only clean up after itself when it closes a military base or plant, but to lead by example, becoming a better partner for local communities. As founder and co-chair of the [Unexploded Ordinance Caucus \(UXO Caucus\)](#), Congressman Blumenauer has led the fight to ensure that DoD the Department of Defense has the resources they need to remove unexploded bombs and munitions from local communities.



There are many ways that the Department of Defense can reduce its environmental footprint. Moving towards energy independence could save taxpayers a large portion of the \$17 billion that is currently spent each year on gasoline and diesel fuel while at the same time providing greater security for our troops. Blumenauer applauded the arrival of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy Plans & Programs in 2011, the first ever Assistant Secretary-level position to oversee and implement a comprehensive DoD energy plan.

Congressman Blumenauer has fought to ensure that we take a comprehensive, realistic, and long-term approach to national defense – including guaranteeing support for America’s Reserve and National Guard forces to help them meet the challenges that have come with their expanded role during this time of war, and the strategic role they will play in the future, providing the highest level of security and professionalism at a fraction of the cost compared to a full-time force.