

BRING OUR BILLION\$ HOME:

CUT THE MILITARY BUDGET. FUND HUMAN NEEDS.

Here is the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's update on our "Bring Our Billion\$ Home" campaign for early February 2013. See more information on the BOBH page of our website, www.olympiafor.org



OUR CAMPAIGN CONTINUES: For a few years the Olympia FOR has been participating actively in the Western Washington FOR's campaign to cut the military budget and use the savings to fund human and environmental needs. The "Bring Our Billion\$ Home" campaign has been "connecting the dots" between issues that are interrelated and reflect the FOR's values related to peace and social justice. While Congress and President Obama have fretted about the federal budget they have ignored a major reason for the recurring deficits and the continuing decline in the American standards of living and quality of life.

BUDGET RHETORIC CONTRADICTS REALITY: THE U.S. SEVERELY UNDERFUNDS HUMAN NEEDS BUT WASTES BILLIONS ON THE MILITARY BUDGET: Within the industrialized world, the U.S. budget for housing, health care, education, care for retirees, public transit, student aid, helping the poor, etc., is just about the smallest relative to the size of our economy, but the U.S. spends about as much on the military budget as all other nations combined. (Furthermore, most of the world's other biggest military spenders are our allies!) Why don't the "deficit hawks" and "fiscal cliff" panickers talk about this?

IT'S A MATTER OF VALUES AND PRIORITIES: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., stated clearly: **“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.”** That hard reality still confronts us. We must act now before Congress sets priorities in late February 2013.

REJECT “AUSTERITY” CUTS TO HUMAN NEEDS: When the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have gotten poor nations into debt, the WB and IMF have forced the indebted nations to make “austerity” cuts that hurt funding for food, housing, education, and health care. These “austerity cuts” have hurt ordinary people and poor people in order to make loan payments to the banking elites. This has happened in economically strapped European nations too (*e.g.*, Greece and Spain), resulting in horrible suffering there. The 1% that runs the U.S. economy is doing that here too, but under different rhetoric (*e.g.*, persistent mania about federal deficits, weakening Social Security, and the contrived “fiscal cliff”). The results of other countries’ “austerity” policies and mainstream U.S. policies are the same: Forcing cuts that hurt the 99% while continuing to enrich the 1% and the military-industrial complex.

Act boldly now by mid-FEBRUARY: In late February 2013 congressional leaders will decide whether to cut wasteful Pentagon spending or make deeper cuts in critical social programs. Senator Patty Murray chairs the Senate budget committee, so she will be one of five crucial participants in the biggest decisions. Peace organizations are urging people to contact her (as well as Senator Maria Cantwell and your U.S. House member) in early-to-mid-February to **insist that Congress maintain the plan for a total \$1 trillion cut in Pentagon spending over the next several years** in order to protect investments in caring for our elderly and for poor communities. Information and letter-writing help are available from several organizations, including the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL, www.fcnl.org) and Peace Action (www.peace-action.org). Postcards and phone calls are quick and effective too.