

March 26, 2009

Congressman Barney Frank  
29 Crafts St.  
Newton, Ma. 02458

Dear Congressman Frank:

I understand that you are preparing to mount an effort to reduce the military budget by 25%. I want you to know that you have my full support, as Mayor of Newton, for this or an even larger reduction.

The size of the US military budget is untenable by any rational analysis:

- It constitutes half of the discretionary budget of the United States – not counting the expenditures for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars!
- It is approximately equal to the total of military budgets for all the other countries in the world.
- It has grown by 50% during the Bush administration as a percent of GDP.
- It is fed by a huge assembly of lobbyists from both the business and civic world that are pushing for jobs and profits.

Surely, we can adequately defend the United States with much smaller military expenditures. It is time to stop unnecessary programs, close some of our nearly 100 foreign bases, and eliminate waste.

The huge military expenditure robs other very deserving programs, which are under funded – both domestic and international. A UMass study shows that diverting money from the military budget to civilian programs will create more new civil-sector jobs than would be lost in the military-industrial complex.

Here are some of the needs in the City of Newton, which could be funded by some of the excess military expenses:

- Important capital projects to renovate or replace our aging elementary schools and fire stations.
- perform deferred maintenance of thoroughfares throughout the City.
- Offset rising Special Education costs in the Newton Public Schools.
- Restore cuts we've made in recent years to senior citizens' transportation services.

- Replace personnel losses to our open space maintenance crews, which, among other things, have led to our current inability to remove leaves from sidewalks and parks.
- Commence with the 60 shovel ready projects put forward by the City for federal stimulus funds that range from replacing leaking roofs to reconstructing the Needham Street economic development corridor.
- Restore teacher positions and educational programs that have been cut because of shortage of funds.

I and my administration stand ready to support your effort to reduce the military budget and spend the dollars wisely on civilian programs. I will be pleased to promote this campaign to the Massachusetts Municipal Association, so that we can get state-wide support from many other communities. Please let me know how else I can help.

Sincerely,

David B. Cohen  
Mayor