

# U. S. Military Spending And the Cost of Invading Iraq

The Bush administration's defense spending next year is projected to be \$394 billion--\$100 billion more than in the final year of the Clinton administration. The United States already has the most powerful military on earth and now spends as much on defense as the next 15 big defense-spending nations combined. Russia, China and "rogue" states spend \$60, \$42, and \$15 billion respectively for military expenditures. The U.S. spends eight times more on defense than on education or health care, and twenty times more than on training, employment and social services.

In the same budget, one can note the following cuts relating to poverty and hunger in America:

- 36,000 seniors will be cut off from meal programs
- 532,000 families will be cut off from heating assistance
- 8,000 homeless children will be cut off from education programs
- 50,000 children will be cut off from after-school programs
- 33,000 children will be cut off from child care

The most important sections of the mainstream media in the USA continue to carry out psychological warfare against the citizens of the USA in order to mobilize them to support the military invasion of Iraq at a time when millions are in need of jobs, heat, affordable housing and medicine, healthcare, and decent education. According to military and economic experts, the invasion of Iraq will likely cost as much as \$200 billion, which has to be paid for by the American people. \$200 billion is:

- Six times what the federal government spends on K-12 education
- Enough to provide health care to all uninsured children in the U.S. for ten years
- More than eight times the total international affairs budget

Perhaps the greatest cost of invading Iraq will be the tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians who will lose their lives to massive bombardments, military invasion and occupation of their cities and homes. In addition, rebuilding Iraq is likely to cost another \$50 billion and would require significant material and personnel resources. Just the security forces alone would entail 75,000 personnel in the first year amounting to about \$16.5 billion. At least 5,000-10,000 troops would have to remain in place for five-ten years, costing \$1- \$2 billion a year. Beyond security, the U.S. would be expected to make a significant contribution for humanitarian and emergency aid, a transitional administration, civil service and other components of reconstruction. These non-security costs would amount to \$15 - \$25 billion over the next decade.

At a time of economic recession and when 35 states face severe economic difficulties and budget shortfalls, the \$200 billion cost of invading Iraq must be borne by all of the states of the union. Indiana's cost, based on its portion of individual income taxes, will run to about \$3 billion. In addition, the administration's new tax plan will cost states, on average, another \$4.5 billion in revenues. These will push the states further into recession, resulting in loss of jobs, and deeper cuts in social, health and educational programs, since states are now mandated by the federal law to balance their budget.