

The Billionaire-Military Complex

written by Gary Wilson

April 30, 2025

Military spending surges while domestic programs face the DOGE axe



The Pentagon, the world's largest low-rise office building.

In case you didn't notice, the only thing on Trump's budget so far is military expansion.

On April 7, Trump announced plans for a \$1 trillion defense budget next year, a massive increase.

"We're going to be approving a budget, and I'm proud to say, actually, the biggest one we've ever done for the military," he said. "\$1 trillion. Nobody has seen anything like it."

At the same time, severe cuts (DOGE) ravage domestic government programs.

The timing of this announcement speaks volumes. As working people grapple with reduced public services and slashed social programs, with tens of thousands of civil service jobs cut and other job losses, as well as cuts in health care and education, the Pentagon secures yet another windfall. This is not just a budget reallocation but a declaration of who truly holds the reins of power — the billionaires like Elon Musk and the military-industrial complex. Maybe we should call it the billionaire-military complex.

And Trump thinks that his tariff war on the world will pay for the military expansion. Trump's top economic adviser, Stephen Miran, said that the administration is using tariffs to pressure foreign nations to finance U.S. military and financial dominance.



Miran laid out the Trump administration's strategy in a

speech on April 7 at the Hudson Institute. The White House later published an [official transcript](#) of his remarks.

Miran said that the Trump administration seeks to strengthen U.S. global power, demanding that allies and rivals alike pay for the “benefit” of global U.S. military and financial dominance.

He suggested several ways other countries could pay, including:

- Accepting U.S. tariffs on their exports without retaliating, allowing tariff revenue to help finance the U.S. military.
- Buying more U.S.-made goods, specifically including military equipment (while cutting back on trade with China).
- Investing in and building factories in the U.S.
- Making direct financial contributions (“simply write checks”) to the U.S. Treasury (bonds).

Miran said: “Our military and financial dominance cannot be taken for granted; and the Trump Administration is determined to preserve them.” He also affirmed the goal of ensuring “dollar dominance can continue for decades, in perpetuity.”

Military-industrial complex in Silicon Valley

The U.S. military-industrial complex is centered in Silicon Valley.

A report by Roberto González published in April 2024 by the [Costs of War Project](#), has the details:

“Although much of the Pentagon’s \$886 billion budget is spent on conventional weapon systems and goes to well-established defense giants such as Lockheed

Martin, RTX, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, Boeing, and BAE Systems, a new political economy is emerging, driven by the imperatives of big tech companies, venture capital, and private equity firms. As Defense Department officials have sought to adopt AI-enabled systems and secure cloud computing services, they have awarded large, multi-billion-dollar contracts to Microsoft, Amazon, Google, and Oracle. ...

“Booming demand for AI-enabled military technologies and cloud computing services is being driven by several developments. Perhaps most importantly, the easy availability of massive amounts of digital data collected from satellites, drones, surveillance cameras, smartphones, social media posts, email messages, and other sources has motivated Pentagon planners to find new ways of analyzing the information.”

The United States military has shifted toward AI and “data-driven” warfare. A new revolving door is placing senior Pentagon officials in executive positions or as advisers to big tech companies.

González of the Costs of War Project says:

“Over the past two years, global events have further fueled the Pentagon’s demand for Silicon Valley technologies, including the deployment of drones and AI-enabled weapon systems in Ukraine and Gaza, and fears of a global AI arms race against China.”

The Costs of War Project report “refutes the popular misperception that China is poised to surpass the U.S. in a global ‘AI arms race’ that will determine the future of geopolitics and global economic dominance. It does this by showing how the arms race narrative has been propagated by Pentagon officials and tech leaders who stand to benefit from increased sales of high-tech weapons, surveillance, and logistics systems enabled by AI. These myths and misperceptions risk diverting

taxpayer funds towards research and development (R&D) projects that meet military needs, rather than civilian needs.”

