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A policy of military restraint makes good sense

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The Nov. 23 news article “Republicans unclear on how to pay for Trump’s agenda” rightly pointed out the contradiction between President-elect Donald Trump’s budget-busting tax and spending plans and the reluctance of many fiscal conservatives to raise questions about them.

In addition to trillions of dollars in tax cuts and a \$1 trillion infrastructure program, Mr. Trump has proposed a massive military spending binge while the Pentagon’s budget is already at historically high levels — higher than during the peak year of the Reagan administration’s buildup in the 1980s, after adjusting for inflation. Mr. Trump’s Pentagon spending proposals would add scores of combat ships and tens of thousands of troops, even as it doubles down on the Pentagon’s ill-advised plan to spend up to \$1 trillion on a new generation of nuclear-armed missiles, bombers and submarines over the next three decades.

Rather than cutting Medicare and Social Security, which Mr. Trump unequivocally promised not to do on the campaign trail, his administration should pursue a policy of military restraint that focuses on core security interests. According to a recent analysis by experts at the Cato Institute, doing so could save \$1 trillion in Pentagon outlays over the next decade, a figure that would take considerable pressure off the deficit while freeing up funds to pay for other urgent national needs.