



Ron Paul decries U.S. 'adventurism,' calls Obama's defense cuts 'increases'

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In a video released Monday, Texas Congressman and GOP Presidential candidate Ron Paul decried what he called "overseas adventurism" and incorrectly asserts that Obama's 2013 budget proposal calls for increases in defense spending.

"The facts are that the President's budget calls for an 18 percent increase versus the previously planned 20 percent increase. This is not a cut," Paul said.

"Yet Pentagon hawks continue to issue dire warnings that this draconian decrease in proposed future spending will seriously threaten our national security," he added.

But [The Hill](#) reported on Feb 13 that the President's budget proposal "cuts America's military budget in absolute terms for the first time in more than a decade."

The Hill adds:

The cuts come from both war spending and the department's base budget and include a reduction in armed forces and the cancelation of several weapons programs.

The 2013 total defense budget is \$614 billion, which includes \$525 billion for the base budget and \$88 billion in overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding. Together, that's a reduction of \$32 billion from the 2012 budget: \$5 billion from the base and \$27 billion from war spending with the end of the Iraq war and drawdown in Afghanistan.

Rep. Buck McKeon(R-CA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called the cuts irresponsible.

"It irresponsibly ignores the looming threat of sequestration, while failing to adequately address threats posed by our adversaries around the world," he said.

"It asks the men and women in uniform who have given so much already to give that much more, so that the President might fund programs the American people don't want and can't afford," he added.

According to The Hill, the budget proposal would reduce America's fighting forces by 100,000 troops next year, saving an estimated \$50 billion. In addition, the proposal would cancel several weapons programs, "all part of the Pentagon's plan to cut \$259 billion over the next five years."

But Rep. Paul sees this as an increase.

Citing a Feb 7 article by [Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute](#), Paul says conservatives sound like liberals on defense spending. In that article, Bandow appears to forget what took place on Sept 11, 2001, and repeats Paul's debunked claims of [U.S. military presence overseas](#) when he asserts:

While the world is dangerous, it is not particularly dangerous to America. The U.S. is surrounded by oceans east and west and friendly neighbors north and south. America is allied with every major industrialized state save Russia and China. Washington already has a thousand military installations around the world. The American navy is equivalent to that of next 13 navies combined, 11 of which belong to U.S. allies.

Maybe Paul and Bandow can explain to the victims of 9/11 how it is that America is not in any danger.

An article at the [Center for American Progress](#) hails the defense cuts, noting:

The Obama administration's fiscal year 2013 defense budget halts the unrestrained growth in baseline military spending that has occurred over the last

decade, essentially holding the budget steady in inflation-adjusted terms through FY 2017. But it does little to bring the baseline budget back down from its current level, which remains near historic highs.

If passed by Congress, the proposal would authorize \$525.4 billion for the Pentagon's base budget for the fiscal year beginning in October, a \$5.2 billion or 1 percent reduction from this year's spending level. The proposed budget recognizes that we can no longer afford the runaway growth in defense spending that has occurred since 1998.

Paul, however, decried the spending, saying that much of what is allocated goes to help defend other countries, who he says should defend themselves.

"Is there any amount of money that would satisfy the hawks and neo-conservatives?" he asked.

"Even adjusted for inflation, military spending is 17 percent higher now than when Obama took office," he added.

But [ABC News](#) reported:

Defense officials have laid out plans to find about \$260 billion in savings over the next five years, including moves to slash the size of the Army and Marine Corps, cut back on shipbuilding, and delay the purchase of some fighter jets and other weapons systems.

The plan also slashes war spending. Money for Iraq and Afghanistan will drop from \$115 billion this year to \$88.5 billion, with less than \$3 billion spent for security in Iraq. It also cuts in half the amount spent on training and equipping Afghanistan's security forces — a key element to the U.S. effort to gradually withdraw forces and transfer security responsibility to the Afghans.

While military personnel still would get a 1.7 percent pay raise, retirees would get hit with a series of increases in health care fees, co-pays and deductibles. The impact would be greater on those who are under 65 and are likely to have another job, as well as on those who make more money.

Paul, however, views U.S. overseas operations against terrorism as "adventurism" and "nation building" and says those operations threaten national security.

While Paul is correct in being concerned about the \$1.3 trillion deficit in Obama's budget, he is incorrect in asserting that the proposal increases defense spending, when it clearly does not, nor is he correct when he calls fighting terrorism overseas "adventurism."

It's statements like this that got him [expelled from the Advisory Board](#) of the conservative Young Americans for Freedom.