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No free pass for the Pentagon

Tea Party Republicans have a reputation as “anti-spending zealots,” said Benjamin H. Friedman in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, but they seem strangely indifferent to the billions squandered by the Pentagon.

POSTED ON JANUARY 27, 2011, AT 2:57 PM

Benjamin H. Friedman
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Tea Party Republicans have a reputation as “anti-spending zealots,” said Benjamin H. Friedman, but they seem strangely indifferent to the billions squandered by one government agency—the Pentagon. In a recent survey of Congress, only 5 percent of Republican senators and representatives support cutting defense spending, and only 4 percent oppose the U.S.’s endless war in Afghanistan, which is costing \$10 billion *per month*. Tea Party–inspired freshmen share this blind spot.

Some GOP leaders recently said the Pentagon couldn’t be excluded from future cuts in spending, but spoke only of eliminating “waste.” If they are “true fiscal conservatives,” the new Tea Party arrivals in Congress should push them to go much further than that. It makes no sense to argue that the federal government can’t “deliver mail in Pittsburgh,” if you swallow the preposterous notion that it can somehow “deliver democracy in Afghanistan.”

To be “ideologically coherent,” the Tea Party crowd should be just as angry about America’s “fiscally calamitous military adventures” as it is about Wall Street bailouts. Trying to run the world through wars and prolonged occupations is “neither conservative nor cheap.”

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