

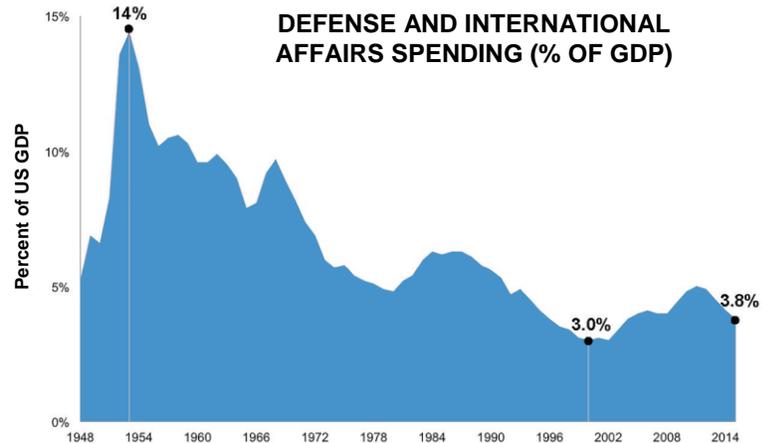


The security of the United States and its people is an enduring objective and serves as an imperative for active US engagement abroad. In the security realm, not only does US global engagement — including the forward deployment of US troops — deter aggression, but in the event of conflict, it also enables the US to address threats far from its shores.

### US SECURITY GOALS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT ACROSS ADMINISTRATIONS:

**Early, active engagement to prevent crises from becoming conflicts and to address threats has been an enduring US foreign policy goal. US involvement is based on maintaining highly capable armed forces and using diplomatic initiatives geared toward reducing, managing, and countering threats.**

- Defense spending and the foreign affairs budget combined stand at 3.8 percent of GDP, a historically low rate that is inarguably affordable. Yet the military increasingly must contend with aging systems and an unpredictable budget environment to address threats that are more varied and global than at any time during the Cold War.
- The US foreign affairs budget, which includes diplomacy and aid, is a fraction of 1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). **Although it is not possible to calculate the savings from wars that were avoided through diplomacy and the goodwill produced by aid, the impacts of these first-resort tools of American power far surpass their costs.**



Source: Total government expenditures by major category of expenditure as percentage of GDP: 1948–2014, [WhiteHouse.gov](http://WhiteHouse.gov)

### THE BENEFITS OF US MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

#### ENSURE ACCESS TO THE AIR AND SEA LANES THROUGH WHICH TRADE FLOWS IN PEACETIME, AND PROTECT THEM IN WARTIME.

- International trade accounts for the equivalent of \$10,000 of each American household's income.
- International trade supports 40 million American jobs.

#### SUPPORT A NETWORK OF ALLIANCES THAT MULTIPLIES AMERICAN STRENGTH AND HELPS MAINTAIN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SECURITY.

Examples:

- France took the lead in launching military operations against al Qaeda in Mali, but the success of these operations would not have been possible without support from US communications systems.
- Training counterterrorism task forces in allied countries allows the latter to provide security on their own territory while minimizing the locations where international terrorists might take refuge.
- Positioning troops and equipment in Japan and South Korea not only bolsters their security; it also supports stability in a region with deep economic linkages to the US.

#### PRESERVE A STABLE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT ACROSS THE EURASIAN LAND MASS.

- Maintaining stability across Eurasia is one of the most tested and enduring American national security objectives, as it helps prevent localized conflicts from requiring an American response
- Of the 54 countries with which the US has a collective defense agreement, 33 are in Eurasia — proof of how vital this area remains to US national security

#### PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF.

- The US is the world's largest government provider of humanitarian assistance, yet for 2013 the total amount of assistance given was only 0.5 percent of government revenues.
- Yet when disaster strikes, the United States is frequently relied upon as a first responder.
- Disaster relief enjoys broad, bipartisan support not only because it's the right thing to do, but because it also builds goodwill for America.

The American Internationalism Project is a bipartisan effort that seeks to build a new consensus for American leadership in international affairs. Read more about the project in the [report](#), *Why American Leadership Still Matters*.

