Letter: Correct funding agenda is key to America’s success

By Staff | Published May 31, 2019

What is on your wish list for the next president? Making college debt free? Medicare for All? Rebuilding our infrastructure? Transitioning to a green energy economy?

Whatever your number one issue is in the next election cycle, odds are good that it will take a lot of money when your issue becomes federal policy.

If you’re thinking big and bold (as the above wish list is), the answer for funding can be equally big and bold – and in my mind, long overdue.

The first source is the military budget.

The United States spends several billion dollars on the military, roughly half of all discretionary spending in the federal budget.

Add in a Cold War mentality that still lingers and you can see that the military budget is bloated to defend against yesterday’s world. Today, the first world economies are expanding due to a “peacetime dividend,” using only 1 to 2% of their national budget to fund their defense, while the United States economy is sustained by foreign investment.

The second source are the subsidies given to the fossil fuel industry. Not including the costs borne by taxpayers related to the climate, local environmental, and health effects of their products, Oil Change International estimated that the U.S. handed the extremely profitable industry $20.5 billion in 2017. This is still being done, even with the scientific consensus that we need to eliminate the use of CO2 emitting fuels as soon as possible.

Think tanks have plans for new taxes and fees to pay for their big plans. I say it is time to start looking at the funding already on the table and reassigning it to the needs of the 2020s and beyond.

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