

# OPINION

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## We Need More Jobs, Less War

### Use the money for economic transition

BY JOHN FEFFER  
AND MIRIAM PEMBERTON

The Great Recession may be officially over but the United States is stuck in a prolonged economic crisis, with joblessness hovering around 10 percent. Millions of unemployed and underemployed Americans are fed up. They want jobs. But many lawmakers are reluctant to invest more revenue in job creation because of concerns over the national debt.

Our country also faces an immense energy and environmental challenge. We need to retool our economy so that we consume less energy, produce less carbon emissions, and can compete in new global green manufacturing. All of this also requires a lot of money.

Fortunately, the government is sitting on a pile of money that could be used to create jobs and retool our economy without adding to the debt. We continue to spend more than \$700 billion a year on building weapons we don't need, fighting wars that aren't necessary, and maintaining a bloated Pentagon bureaucracy. Pentagon chief Robert Gates wants to reduce military spending--but only to shift those savings toward yet more weapons and war-making.

It seems obvious. We should cut the military budget and use that money to fund our economic transition, creating millions of new jobs. Studies show that investing a billion dollars in the green economy generates far more jobs than investing the same amount in the military economy.

Obvious ideas are not, however, always politically feasible.

After the end of the Cold War, we could have redirected Pentagon funds for research in and the development of new energy sources, and building an environmentally sustainable manufacturing base. But we failed to capitalize on this "peace dividend." Instead, from the mid-1990s to today, we doubled

feature of its original stimulus package and also created a "green jobs czar." But so far the United States has only pursued half-measures. That's why we continue to face both a jobs crisis and a climate crisis.

The "obvious solution" is not so obvious to defense contrac-

reluctant to be seen as anti-job. The promise of green jobs has a hard time competing with the reality of existing military jobs.

The only way to cash in on our green dividend is to focus on jobs. It's the only way to convince workers, manufacturers, and politicians to back reduc-

transition now, those workers will be Americans. If we lose this chance to reap a green dividend, the United States won't be a productive part of the new global green economy. We will only be consumers. Our unemployment rate will remain unacceptably high.



military spending.

Now we face a second opportunity. This time a "green dividend" is within reach. Both China and South Korea, two countries with very different political and economic systems, have backed green growth. The Obama administration made such funds a

tors worried about losing Pentagon contracts--and unions and workers worried about losing the nation's remaining manufacturing, mining, and oil industry jobs--all in exchange for the promise of a different kind of industry. Politicians who might ordinarily back the "obvious solution" are

tions in Pentagon spending and a green stimulus package. In our Green Dividend report, we illustrate how the United States can, community by community, shift from military jobs to green jobs. Workers now producing military engines will one day produce windmill turbines. If we plan this

We struck out with the peace dividend. We are on the verge of striking out on the green dividend. We probably won't get a third chance.

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