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Letters to the Editor

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Candidates don't make sense on Pentagon funding

Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney have been talking a lot lately about cutting taxes and increasing spending on the military. They hark back to the Reagan administration, hailing him as a true fiscal conservative.

These proposed policies would be a whole new disaster for our country at a point where we desperately need a new direction. Here are a few points we should keep in mind when considering their recommendations:

The size of the federal workforce is at an all-time low, but the number of contract workers is at an all-time high, so the amount of money being spent has not decreased under a Republican administration.

Real spending, adjusted for inflation, on one significant area of the federal budget – training, employment, and social services – has decreased by 6.5 percent over the past six years. Meanwhile, spending on the military has increased by a staggering 115 percent. Much of that money is going for wasteful, Cold War-era weapons systems, including the maintenance of enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over. Military experts say we could cut the Pentagon budget by \$60 billion a year and not harm our national security.

The federal debt tripled during Ronald Reagan's eight years in office because of tax cuts for the wealthy combined with increased spending for the military. Reagan submitted a balanced budget only once during his eight years in office. That doesn't sound like a fiscal conservative to me nor a legacy we should be repeating.

It is ironic that so-called fiscal conservative candidates for president are running on cutting the size of the federal government

while giving a pass to the largest, most inefficient, and bloated part of the government – the Pentagon. I hope the candidates will take a serious look at trying to make the Pentagon the lean, mean fighting machine it should be.

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