

## PM: The Pentagon's Foreign Aid

By Polly Mann

While people are in need in the U.S., another weapons issue of vital concern is the nearly \$623 billion discretionary funds allocated for the Pentagon. (Figure from National Priorities Project). This includes foreign military aid programs. Known as Building Partners Capacity (BPC), these programs are designated for arming and training foreign partners. In addition to questions about fiscal responsibility, BPC programs appear to undermine U.S. national security. Counter-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen suggest that U.S. military assistance programs have created substantial blowback by exacerbating the central forces fueling insurgency and violence, thereby strengthening the enemies they are intended to combat. (Current, comprehensive and specific public information on the Pentagon's spending is available from the Security Assistance Monitor.)

According to policy analyst, Lora Lumpe of Saferworld, a London-based grant program that studies foreign aid, "the Pentagon's opaque foreign aid budget also undermines our partner governments' capacity to govern. In many fragile democracies, governments struggle to provide civilian oversight of their militaries. Congress only weakens its counterparts by supplying local forces with undisclosed amounts of money, weapons and training."

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# President's Proposed \$1.15 Trillion Discretionary Spending (FY 2017)

