

The Pentagon is Even More Bloated than You Thought

[An internal study](#) at the Department of Defense identified \$125 billion in wasteful spending, the *Washington Post* reports. But government officials buried the report out of fear lawmakers would make defense cuts in the ensuing budget.

[Via Bob Woodward and Craig Whitlock at the Post:](#)

Pentagon leaders had requested the study to help make their enormous back-office bureaucracy more efficient and reinvest any savings in combat power. But after the project documented far more wasteful spending than expected, senior defense officials moved swiftly to kill it by discrediting and suppressing the results.

The [report](#), issued in January 2015, identified “a clear path” for the Defense Department to save \$125 billion over five years. The plan would not have required layoffs of civil servants or reductions in military personnel. Instead, it would have streamlined the bureaucracy through attrition and early retirements, curtailed high-priced contractors and made better use of information technology.

Titled “[Transforming DoD’s Core Business Processes for Revolutionary Change](#),” the report found that the Pentagon employed roughly the same number of back-office bureaucrats at desk jobs (1.01 million) as active duty troops (1.3 million).

Anthony Fisher at Reason offers [additional report highlights](#):

- The average administrative position received over \$200,000 in compensation, including benefits.
- Over 192,000 positions in “real property management” cost taxpayers a total of \$22.6 billion.

- Approximately 84,000 people worked in “human resources” positions.
- Over half a million military contractors were earning compensation averaging between \$170,000 and \$189,000.

The fact that the Pentagon buried its own report is perhaps not surprising—it discovered that about one-fourth of its budget is overhead expenses. What’s troubling is that we’ve grown accustomed to this sort of thing coming out of the nation’s capital.

Defense outlays [more than doubled](#) between 2001 and 2013, and there has been little appetite in Washington, D.C., to do the dirty work of trimming the fat from the Pentagon’s bloated budget.

Donald Trump [has hinted](#) that big cuts could be in store for defense spending. He couldn’t find a better excuse to take a broadsword to the Pentagon’s budget.

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