

Trump budget emphasizes wrong threats

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In the daily barrage of absurdities emanating from the Trump administration, the larger ones easily get lost among the smaller ones. Two examples of the former are proposed cuts to programs that track and address climate change, paired with proposed increases in military spending.

If Trump has his way, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will see its fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget cut by 17 percent. The NOAA operates many of the satellites and conducts much of the research that document and analyze the impacts of climate change. Additionally, Trump is proposing cuts of 24 percent to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which would include elimination of the Clean Power Plan and other programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Evidently, Trump and his subordinates want to render the U.S. government blind and impotent in the area of addressing climate change.

Cuts in the NOAA and EPA budgets — along with cuts in other civilian government agencies — are intended to help pay for a \$54 billion increase in military spending. Trump alleges that this increase is needed to prevent wars from starting and, if necessary, to win them. In fact, the U.S. spends more on its military than the countries with the next seven highest military budgets combined — five of which are our allies.

Sea level rise, severe weather events, diminished agricultural productivity and water shortages — all of which are driven by climate change — pose an enormous threat to global peace and stability. This fact is recognized clearly by the Department of Defense, which released a study on the security implications of climate change in July 2015. If only the Trump administration would pay attention to the government agency it most wants to help!

If the president is going to act irrationally, it's especially important that the rest of us act rationally. The Fort Collins Sustainability Group urges your readers to contact Sens. Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner and Rep. Jared Polis to tell them that the final FY 2018 budget needs to place far more emphasis on the threat posed by climate change to our nation and world than Trump's current budget proposal.

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