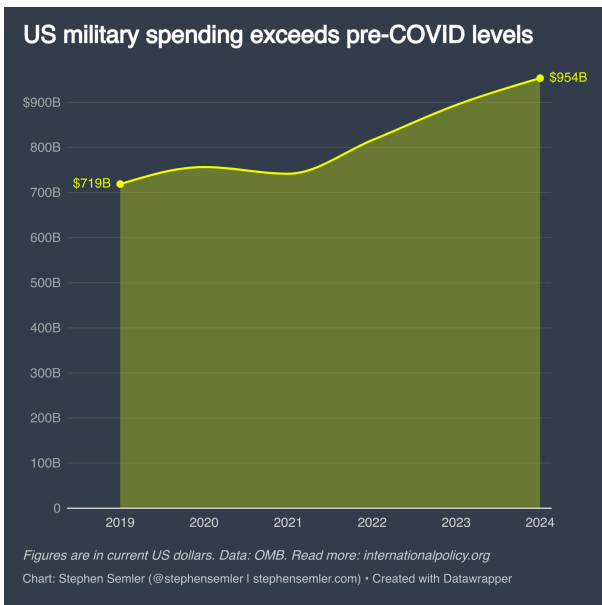
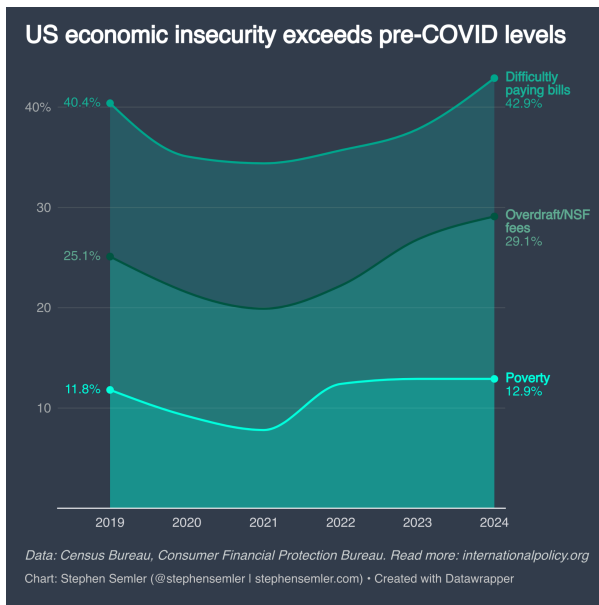


## Military Spending Monitor – October 3, 2025: Marching Together: Economic Insecurity and Military Spending

*The trade-off between spending tax dollars on an ever-expanding military budget versus urgent domestic priorities like health, infrastructure and education has long been understood, but has never been clearer. While economic insecurity and military spending dipped briefly during the Biden Administration, both are again on the upswing as Trump slashes social programs and redirects public funds to weapons and war.*

### Economic Insecurity and Military Spending March in Lock-Step

Recent surges in military spending have been accompanied by reductions in domestic programs that improve economic security. It is fitting, then, that the last time economic insecurity fell was the same year that military spending also saw a decrease. In 2021, the Biden Administration expanded the U.S. social safety net while reducing its military budget and extricating U.S. armed forces from the intractable conflict in Afghanistan. Since then, however, it has practically been the opposite: more funding for warmaking, less for Americans' well-being.



The Census Bureau's latest annual poverty [report](#) shows that poverty remains above pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, the poverty rate was 12.9% (44 million Americans), compared to 11.8% in 2019 (38 million).

It's not just poverty that has shot up: there has been an increase in economic hardship across-the-board. As far as personal finances go, only about a third of Americans live comfortably, according to the [Federal Reserve](#). The majority of Americans either experience or are at risk of experiencing economic insecurity, defined as the inability to reliably meet one's needs. There are two ways of measuring economic insecurity — the percentage of people having difficulty paying household bills, and the share who recently incurred overdraft or insufficient funds fees — both are visualized in the first graph above.

In turn, military spending now also exceeds pre-pandemic levels. Discretionary U.S. military spending in 2024 was \$235 billion higher in current dollars than it was in 2019 (\$93 billion higher in constant 2025 dollars), and represents a \$233 billion inflation-adjusted increase over the Cold War high in 1985.

### **Trump Set to Sink America Further into Quagmire of Economic Insecurity and War**

The policies enacted under Donald Trump will worsen economic insecurity while further bloating the Pentagon budget. Trump's [One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#) is almost twice the cost of the American Rescue Plan ([\\$3.4 trillion](#) vs. [\\$1.8 trillion](#)) despite the 2025 legislation drastically cutting the very types of social programs the 2021 bill expanded, which led to [record lows](#) in poverty and a historic reduction in economic insecurity. Trump's legislation further frays the social safety net and will leave most Americans [worse off](#) for that reason: workers will work more, earn less, and ultimately be unable to make up for the losses caused by atrophied social programs.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act also authorized \$156 billion in mandatory military funding that the administration [plans](#) to obligate beginning this fiscal year. Those funds will be on top of the [\\$926 billion](#) in discretionary military spending approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee's [NDAA](#). All told, nearly \$1.1 trillion in military spending is being considered for FY2026.

If enacted, this allocation would not only channel a record amount of public funds to [private contractors](#), but also help enable President Trump's unauthorized and unlawful war of choice against cartels and Venezuela, and an alleged "[war from within](#)" in the United States. Trump's leveraging of a bloated Pentagon budget to create crises abroad and enable repression at home advances his attempts to solidify autocratic power, and distracts the public from his administration's plummeting popularity and unprecedented corruption.