



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 30, 2015

## Pentagon Loses \$500 Million in Yemen, Gets a \$96 Billion Budget Increase

For decades, conservative Republicans have been accusing their liberal counterparts of trying to cure social ills by “throwing money” at every problem. But Republicans have proven, time and again, that when it comes to throwing huge stacks of money, they hurl as recklessly as Democrats — especially when the problem they’re throwing money at is the Pentagon.

Barely a week after learning that the military brass can’t account for some \$500 million worth of weapons and equipment given to Yemen, Congress last week moved to compensate for the cuts in military spending required by the 2013 sequester law by approving a spending bill for \$5.5 trillion over the next decade, including \$96 billion in off-budget accounts for war-related funding.



“We cannot let fiscal sanity and national security be juxtaposed against one another, Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) told the *New York Times*. “It’s like trying to discern which wing on an airplane is more important. You can’t have one without the other.”

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The missing supplies, according to a *Washington Post* report, include hundreds of guns, more than a million rounds of ammunition, four hand-launched drones and body armor. Also among the missing and unaccounted for items are three airplanes, four helicopters, and 160 Humvees.

“How do you ‘lose’ 160 armored trucks?” [wrote](#) Eric Boehm at Watchdog.org. The *Post* noted that Yemen is “in turmoil” with its government splintering and the Defense Department has lost its ability to monitor the whereabouts of the arms and equipment “donated” to the country by the United States. While military authorities declined to comment for the record, an official speaking anonymously said there was no hard evidence that the equipment had been looted. “But the official acknowledged that the Pentagon had lost track of the items,” the *Post* said.

As usual, the officials are worried that the weapons might have fallen into “the wrong hands,” like those belonging to Iranian-backed rebels or al-Qaeda militants. All the talk about “wrong hands” implies that our State Department, Pentagon, and intelligence personnel know whose are the “right hands” for our weapons, despite a recent history of generously supplying “wrong hands” with high-powered weapons eventually turned against us, often sooner, rather than later. (Remember our “humanitarian assistance” to the rebels in Benghazi?) Perhaps the weapons are already in the “wrong hands” when the Pentagon is holding them just before “donating” them to people in far-off lands in an effort to turn the whole



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world into a weaponized welfare state. Perhaps all the money that entails is in the wrong hands when Congress appropriates it.

The world, to be sure, is a dangerous place and weapons are needed, up to a point, for defense. But the world might be a little less dangerous if members of Congress stopped treating “fiscal sanity” so lightly and defining “national security” so broadly as to turn the world into a global weapons bazaar.

“If employees of the federal government went to Las Vegas and managed to lose \$500 million in taxpayer dollars at the slot machines and roulette wheel, there would be expected and understandable outrage from Congress,” Boehm wrote. Perhaps. But losing all that money in Vegas would pose far less danger to our “national security” and world peace than losing half a billion dollars worth of weapons in a place like Yemen.



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