

Group Activity:

What might happen to **military spending** 10 years down the line?

Time Needed: 30 minutes to 75 minutes

Space Needed: A room and chairs

Materials Needed: Blank sheets of paper, pens/pencils, War Resisters Tax Day Flyer

Introduction

Before going into this activity, participants should read the War Resisters League Tax Day Flyer, focusing particularly on the pie chart section. You might have people read it independently before they get together, in small groups, or as a large group. You might also want to lead a short 5 - 10 minute conversation on the flyer and hear people's reactions to it.

Then, lead the below activity.

Small Group Scenarios and Report-backs (20 - 30 Minutes)

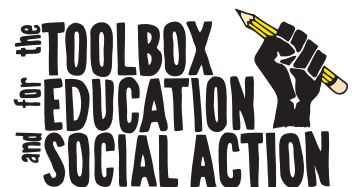
Break into a number of smaller groups, one for each scenario you choose to take on. Give each group one of the below scenarios. (Feel free to use your own scenarios as well!) Each group should imagine and create their own pie chart that reflects their given scenario. Groups should take about 5 - 15 minutes to create their pie chart, and they should use the categories already on the Tax Day Flyer (General Government, Past Military, etc.). The participants should also create their funding pie chart based on a conversation of their scenario's impact on the US. Each group should prepare a brief, 2 minute report-back for the rest of the group. The small groups should report-back on the following:

What was your group's scenario?

Why does your pie chart look like it does? What happened to the military spending?

What factors most influenced the way your group thought federal spending and military spending would change?

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Scenarios

1. It looks like austerity (continued budget cuts to social services that help working class people, women, and historically oppressed groups) will be arriving to the US in full force soon, and not going anywhere quickly. With that said, how do you think this pie chart will look in 10 years?
2. If the US's continued aggression towards North Korea and Iran turns into a full scale war, what do you think this pie chart will look like in 10 years?
3. If America's current financial crisis resulted in a reduction of military spending and an increase in spending on social services and job creation, what do you think this pie chart will look like in 10 years?

As a facilitator, you can also come up with your own scenarios for this activity.

Creating Your Own Scenarios (Optional Follow Up) (10 - 20 Minutes)

Now, ask each group to think of their own scenarios that could dramatically change the military budget. These ideas can be fantastical or incredibly realistic, depending on what the group thinks up. (I.e. A new left-wing party emerges and wins the white house in 10 years). Their scenarios could be good or bad.

Tell the participants to take 2 minutes to come up with their scenario. (They shouldn't get bogged down in figuring it out.) Then, the groups should reimagine their pie chart one last time, as they see it changing with their scenario. This should take 5 minutes.

Ask every group to give a quick summary of what their unique scenario was, and what happened as a result to the military spending.

Final Full Group Conversation (5 - 25 minutes)

Even if you don't have much time, it is always important to come together as a group and process all of the information that has been discussed. Depending on the time available, this can take as little as a couple of minutes, and as much as a half an hour. Below are a couple of sample questions you can base your conversation on:

What do people think is the most realistic federal spending breakdown for the US in the next 5 years? What about 10 years? Why?

These pie charts visualize the state of the US's federal spending, but how do you think they shape state and city economies?

If the pie charts were to reflect a decline in military spending, how would you want that money to be spent in your community? What about at the national level?

What were your three most important takeaways from this exercise? Why?