

Mounting U.S. Debt: A Looming Threat to National Security

In a climate of escalating global tensions, the United States faces a formidable adversary from within: its burgeoning national debt. As of January 2025, the national debt has surpassed \$36 trillion, eclipsing the nation's annual economic output. This fiscal path threatens national security. It may hurt the country's ability to respond to global crises.

The federal government's spending has consistently outpaced its revenue, leading to a deficit of \$1.83 trillion in the fiscal year 2024. This marks an increase of \$138 billion from the previous year, according to the U.S. Treasury's fiscal data.

The CBO projects that, without major policy changes, federal deficits will total \$20 trillion from 2025 to 2034. Public debt will reach 116% of GDP.

A significant portion of federal spending is now allocated to servicing this debt. In FY 2024, the U.S. spent \$882 billion on interest. This was more than the \$874 billion spent on national defense. This shift means that debts are crowding out vital security investments.

Experts warn that this fiscal imbalance could erode the United States' strategic capabilities. Retired Admiral Mike Mullen, ex-chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said, "The national debt threatens the U.S.'s ability to defend itself."

The implications of budgetary profligacy extend beyond immediate defense spending. Entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid have grown. They now consume a larger share of the federal budget. This expansion has crowded out discretionary spending, including defense and foreign affairs.

The international community is acutely aware of America's fiscal challenges. Adversarial nations may see the U.S.'s financial limits as an opportunity.

They might be emboldened to challenge U.S. influence and security. A report from the Brookings Institution says that publicly held debt now equals 70% of GDP. Many economists find this significant and worrisome.

Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach. The Penn Wharton Budget Model (PWBM) proposed 13 tax and spending reforms.

They aim to cut the deficit by \$10 trillion over ten years and generate \$59 trillion in net revenue by 2054. Their plan is to simplify the tax code. It will raise the ages for Social Security and Medicare.

It will also reform healthcare and immigration. However, implementation remains uncertain,

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given potential political resistance.

The need for fiscal reform is urgent. Interest payments on the debt are projected to reach \$892 billion this year and \$13 trillion in the next decade. Without intervention, these obligations will continue to divert resources away from critical national security needs.

In conclusion, the United States' fiscal trajectory poses a substantial threat to its national security. High deficits and entitlement spending are raising the national debt.

This threatens our defense and global standing. We must take decisive policy actions to restore fiscal discipline. We must ensure that national security is not compromised by budget cuts.