

US must acknowledge harm caused by a flawed military



Your Turn

Alan Dailey and Richard Myers
Guest columnists

A recent Democrat & Chronicle front page announced food insecurity for many veterans as we move into the winter. Some 160,000 veterans are food insecure, a euphemism for hungry.

Some 50,000 veterans are homeless. Depression, PTSD and other mental illnesses and suicide plague those who have served.

Twenty years of war in Afghanistan failed to meet our objectives. In 2019, a trove of secret documents showed us that we had been lied to about so-called progress in Afghanistan. The Washington Post reported, "U.S. officials constantly said they were making progress. They were not, and they knew it." Gen. Douglas Lute was quoted as saying, "We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan. We didn't know what we were doing."

People of deep compassion around the country are doing their best to support the veterans, the homeless, the Afghan refugees who risked their lives to help us. The system relies on people like these to pick up the pieces.

Yet in September, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the National Defense Authorization blueprint for 2022. It totaled \$767.6 billion. Even after the failed war, President Biden pro-

posed an increase for the Pentagon. To his increased budget, the House added another \$25 billion.

A motion to reduce the whole budget by 10% failed. Rep. Barbara Lee and others offered an amendment to remove the extra \$25 billion. This also failed.

No, it is the war economy that has failed. It is the system that funnels taxpayers' dollars to military contractors that has failed. Congress has not investigated the failure. Our veterans are bearing the failure. The whole nation is suffering.

All of our faith traditions tell us that redemption starts when we admit our failures, confess our sins, change our minds. There is forgiveness and a new path. You in Congress can do this. Our beloved veterans and follow citizens deserve it.

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Military personnel lift a child Aug. 20 during an evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. PHOTO PROVIDED