

# TUA NEWS RELEASE

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205 W. Randolph Street • Suite 1305 • Chicago, IL 60606 • Fax: (312) 427-5139  
www.taxpayersunited.org • E-mail: tobin@taxpayersunited.org

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Contact: Jared Labell (773) 766-4947  
(312) 427-5128

## Bread and Circuses: The F-35 Buzzes Over Chicago

CHICAGO — If the city of Chicago were a house, the State would have condemned it as blighted property long ago, bulldozing its rotten wood and crumbling concrete structure into a pile fit for a funeral pyre. Chicago hasn't been condemned yet, despite the city's abundance of bureaucrats, infamous history of government corruption and violence wrought upon its residents, and its atrocious financial standing. Chicago remains a dilapidated house, but one that's on the verge of burning down in a [self-inflicted economic arson fire](#).

With that in mind, the city will begin to close out the summer this weekend with the [58<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Air and Water Show](#) on Saturday August 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday August 21<sup>st</sup> along North Avenue Beach. Similar to the bread and circuses of empires past, Chicago annually distracts taxpayers with big, shiny objects to take their minds off of the political and economic failures of their government. This year's event is no different, as festivities are draped in the flag and [promoted](#) heavily with food, drinks, and fun for the entire family. Among other participants and aircraft featured in the event, the centerpiece of the show this year is the rollout of the notorious F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.

Corporate sponsors [Shell and Boeing](#), as well as media outlets like WBBM Newsradio, ABC 7 television, and The Chicago Tribune, help underwrite the cost of the show, making it free for the public's enjoyment. But don't thank these sponsors for the free entertainment just yet, because nothing is free. When the F-35 is involved, rest assured that taxpayers are picking up the tab, one way or another.

Just a few weeks ago, Antiwar.com published my synopsis of the F-35 program – [I'm Paying Taxes, But What Am I Buying?](#) – which detailed the \$400 billion jet's beleaguered history of cost overruns, operational fiascoes, and the opportunity costs of maintaining a weapons system that's projected to incinerate trillions of dollars from US taxpayers throughout the estimated duration of its production and deployment lifecycle.

The Straus Military Reform Project, part of the Project on Government Oversight's Center for Defense Information, offers another [detailed rundown](#) of the most expensive weapons system in history. Readers are encouraged to become well-acquainted with the Department of Defense's worst boondoggle, as the F-35 is a prime example of how the government misspends tax dollars at an alarming rate and with little to no accountability.

Unless a coalition of activists, taxpayers, and average folks from across the political spectrum demand accountability for this detrimental misallocation of resources, we will be no better off than those poor souls in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. As Orwell wrote, "War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea..." resources that were

confiscated from taxpayers and funneled into lavish government programs, like those fabled Floating Fortresses in his seminal novel.

Chicago's Air and Water Show comes just a little more than a week after it was [announced](#) that the Pentagon granted Lockheed Martin, the F-35's manufacturer, an additional \$1 billion of our taxes to make up for expenses associated with low-rate initial production costs incurred by the company. The joint program office obligated the funding by way of a pre-existing undefinitized contract action (UCA), but that's not the end of the largesse. "The agreement has a not-to-exceed value of \$5.37 billion, meaning that the government could use it to inject even more cash at a later date," reported Defense News.

Previous to this newest round of corporate welfare handouts, Lockheed Martin CFO Bruce Tanner had [said](#) of the F-35's production issues and cost overruns, "We will not be able to continue and have that level of cash outflow as a corporation. We simply don't have that capacity. The Pentagon clearly knows that situation, and I'm optimistic that we are going to get cash soon." Tanner's optimism was logical. Of course the Pentagon would pay up.

Journalist John T. Flynn dispelled the myth of the supposedly positive aspects of military Keynesianism decades ago in his book, *As We Go Marching*, warning of "an economy supported by great streams of debt and an economy under complete control, with nearly all the planning agencies functioning with almost totalitarian power under a vast bureaucracy."

Flynn's thorough indictment of the New Deal-era warfare state and America's lunge toward economic collectivism is as relevant today as it was then. Flynn emphasized that politicians, laborers, and businesses would sadly embrace imperialism and eventual economic ruin because of the perverse incentives of the warfare economy.

"Thus militarism is the one great glamorous public-works project upon which a variety of elements in the community can be brought into agreement," Flynn wrote mournfully more than seventy years ago.

The 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Air and Water Show isn't actually free. And if unable to stop boondoggles like the F-35, then neither are we.