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America is renowned for being an emblem of hope, prospects, and liberty. It is the nation that gave birth to a new frontier, infinite possibilities, and equal democracy for all. Those are the connotations that we, Americans, like to have about our magnificent country. We all enjoy bringing up the positive aspects of the United States, but what about the not so positive ones?

In a country filled with riches and opportunities, why do 43.6 million people live in poverty?

In a country that our forefathers built for the children of America, why do 21 percent of these children live in families with incomes far below the federal poverty level?

In a country that considers every single person to be as essential as the next, why does the top 1 percent of Americans control 43 percent of the nation's wealth?

Poverty in the United States has been increasing over the years, yet awareness of the issue seems to have diminished. As each day passes by, the poor become progressively invisible in our society.

For a country that has 14 percent of the population living in poverty, why does 19 percent of the United States' budget go towards national defense?

For a country with a GDP of 14.12 trillion dollars, why has 1.162 trillion dollars gone into the War on Terrorism but not even half of that amount has gone into the War on Poverty?

Playing superhero to the world may be a high and mighty task for the United States, but shouldn't helping those close to home come before fighting other countries' wars? We cannot impose ourselves onto other countries' difficulties without even resolving the foremost complications in our own nation.

Dwight Eisenhower once said "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed."

Although these words were said multiple decades ago, they hold true to this very day. A nation is only as strong as its weakest link, and the United States can hardly be considered robust and resilient when 15 million children live in poverty. Every dollar that is spent on violence and war is yet another dollar that the underprivileged will never receive. Every new war that the United States resolves to partake in leads to thousands of dollars that were indispensable to nourish a starving family or clothe a shivering child. When the wealthy decide to support yet another foreign confrontation, it is certainly the poor that are affected the greatest. How can a minority of prosperous individuals sacrifice what is not theirs to sacrifice in the first place?

As Jean-Paul Sartre once said, "When the rich make war, it's the poor that die." This problem has been continually happening, and we must terminate this recurrence today. The poor can no longer remain invisible, and awareness is the foremost step to cease this cycle.

## Works Cited

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