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# Defense Report

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## The Army's Budget—A Rut That Is Getting Deeper and Deeper

The best thing that can be said of the Army's share of the budget for national defense is that it is consistent. The budgets for the Navy and Air Force have shown major increases when very expensive shipbuilding and aircraft procurement programs have been approved, then declines when those programs tapered off. The Army's share, always the smallest, has hovered at or near the 24 percent level with no adjustment made for the very apparent need to modernize its equipment and to expand its forces.

In the 1983 fiscal year the Navy's share of the budget jumped upward to fund two new nuclear carriers. In the budget proposed for fiscal year 1984 the Navy budget falls while the Air Force budget swells to pay for B1-B bombers and the Peacekeeper (formerly M-X) missile system. The Army's share increases by just one-tenth of one percent.

To continue its modernization program within the limits of this inflexible funding the Army decided to forego needed increases in its force structure—which would have added units to cope with expanding worldwide commitments—and to concentrate the available funds on procuring improved weapons and equipment. Much to the consternation of the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, which has become very supportive of the new M1 tank since it has had a chance to prove itself, the Army chose to slow its production in order to generate funds for use elsewhere.

The Army's inability to gain adequate funding for equipment modernization may be attributable to the fact that it is a "manpower-intensive" service rather than one in which hardware gets the job done. When the budgeteers in the Defense Department and the White House Office of Management and Budget see an Army plan to keep its personnel strength at a steady level they apparently assume its budget can stay the same.

What the budgeteers must realize is that no war is won until a victorious soldier stands on the territory in dispute. In order to assure that victory the nation's prime landpower element, the Army, needs a steady-state increase in its share of the defense budget.