
Defense Report

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The Army's Diminishing Budget — We Must Get out of The Rut

As world tensions increase, our national elected and appointed leaders face the formidable tasks not only of reaching a balance between domestic needs and a defense establishment capable of protecting our nation's interests on a global scale, but also of how to focus defense resources to counter the most probable threats. Those threats have grown dramatically and in the past generation have moved perilously closer to our doorstep. Yet the vital missions assigned to the Army have not been given adequate budgetary support in recent years. This neglect has manifested itself in a steadily declining share of the Defense budget allocated to our primary Landpower force — the Army — even as the Administration has called for strengthening our conventional forces and increasing total Defense budgets.

These budgetary constraints dangerously impair the Army's credible deterrence against conventional threats. What the Army requires is a greater share of the Defense Budget than it has received in recent years. The current force structure and manpower are inadequate to the assigned missions. Both active and reserve components must be strengthened and be carefully matched to mission requirements if deterrence is to be assured.

In the case of our Landpower forces, adequate funding means a steady state portion of the military budget equating to not less than 26 percent of the annual Defense appropriation. Also needed immediately is a special additional funding increment to complete Active, National Guard and Army Reserve modernization and equipment buildup and the facilities to store and maintain them. A reasonable level for this increment would be between one and three percent of the total Defense budget for the last four years of the 1985-1989 planning period.

As in the past, Landpower will continue to be the decisive element of our national defense. As the Nation's paramount Landpower force, the Army must be provided the wherewithal to meet squarely its steadily increasing commitments. To do less is foolhardy.

DR 84-23