
Defense Report

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The Defense Budget—The Army's (Landpower's) Share Must Be Increased

If possible, the recently reconvened Congress faces even more difficult problems than those which normally confront legislators in an election year. Not the least of these is to provide adequately for the nation's security, which is being increasingly threatened, in the face of constantly growing demands of nondefense programs.

This is, of course, not a new problem. In recent years the competition for funds has resulted annually in a steadily declining share of the defense budget allocated to the Army—our primary land force—even as the Administration has called for strengthening our conventional forces from increased total defense budgets. Alarmingly, this reduction in landpower funding has occurred during a period when land-force commitments in support of national objectives have steadily expanded; when the Army needs desperately to modernize and to fully equip and train both its active and reserve forces; and when force modernization requires greater numbers of active-duty forces and increased full-time manning for its reserve components.

If the Army is denied the resources needed to match its assigned missions, the momentum which has led to recent improvements in both active and reserve components will be slowed or lost, and the Total Army will be unable to meet its still-growing commitments. To meet these, the Army requires an adequate "steady state" share of the defense budget of at least 25 percent (as compared to about 23 percent in fiscal 1984). If initial reports are correct, it appears that the President has recognized this need in the fiscal 1985 budget he is sending Congress. Not recognized, however, is an equally compelling need for a special additional funding increment to complete active, National Guard and Army Reserve modernization.

As the 98th Congress addresses its awesome responsibility of providing for the nation's defenses, we urge it to recognize that the country's defense resources must be focused on our most likely needs and to assure that the Army's needs are assigned that priority required so that it can successfully perform its central role as the decisive element in national security.