



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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Trump's Irrational Budget Undercuts Our National Security

Once again, the President's budget ignores national security experts' calls for a comprehensive national security approach and instead primarily looks to our military to advance the country's security objectives. The budget funds defense at the level set by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 (BBA19) but drastically cuts the nondefense budget, which funds important elements of our national security, including diplomacy and foreign aid. Many retired military leaders, those who have direct experience in military conflict, have expressed their dismay at this Administration's pursuit of a strategy that clearly puts the country's security at risk and on a path to more frequent and dangerous military operations.

National Defense

We all agree we should have a military that is second to none and that our service men and women deserve our full support. To meet these goals, not only do we have to provide the resources necessary to train and equip our military to perform the missions the country asks of it, but also follow a defense strategy that is realistic and financially supportable. Over the 10 years covered by the President's budget, there is a discrepancy between funding and plans that shows a lack of strategy and will result in inefficient military spending and a less effective military.

Matches budget deal for defense — For 2021, the President's budget provides \$741 billion for Function 050 (National Defense). This includes the Pentagon, but also the nuclear weapons activities of the Department of Energy and several other smaller activities, such as those performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security. Of that amount, the budget designates \$69 billion as Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding, which is consistent with the BBA19. In total, the President's defense funding for 2021 is \$2.5 billion, or 0.3 percent, above the 2020 enacted level, excluding emergencies.

Function 050 (National Defense)					
<i>Budget authority in billions of dollars</i>					
	Enacted 2020	President's 2021 Budget	Increase/Decrease	% Change	
Base Budget	666.5	671.5	5.0	0.8%	
OCO	71.5	69.0	-2.5	-3.5%	
Total	738.0	740.5	2.5	0.3%	

Note: Excludes \$8 billion of 2020 emergency funding

This document has not been reviewed and approved by the Democratic Caucus of the Budget Committee and may not necessarily reflect the views of all members.

A dangerous discrepancy between funding and plans — If the President wants to implement his Administration’s National Defense Strategy (NDS), his budget does not show it. The Pentagon has stated in recent years that it needs 3 to 5 percent real growth to implement the NDS. However, the President’s defense budget remains relatively flat in inflation-adjusted dollars from 2021 to 2025, and in the second half of the ten-year window, the defense budget is frozen in nominal dollars. It is not clear how the Administration will adhere to the NDS and reach its goal of a 355-ship Navy, increase space capabilities, and make advancements in hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence. Whether or not you support all of the provisions of the NDS, setting our military up to fail is not only wasteful, it is potentially dangerous. In short, this irrational defense budget is unrealistic, and if this discrepancy between the President’s aspirations and his budget persists, then the Administration runs the risk of mismanaging important defense programs and starting programs and activities it can’t complete or sustain.

Assumes lower costs for overseas operations — The President’s budget assumes a larger share of OCO funds can be used to supplement base budget activities. Of the \$72 billion OCO enacted for 2020, DoD plans to spend \$6 billion for base budget activities. For 2021, the budget assumes \$16 billion of OCO funds will be used for base budget activities, leaving \$10 billion less for overseas operations – a dangerous gamble.

Overseas Contingency Operations		
<i>Budget authority in billions of dollars</i>		
	Enacted 2020	President's 2021 Budget
Costs in Support of Overseas Operations	66	53
OCO for Base Budget Requirements	6	16
Total	72	69

Diplomacy and Foreign Aid

President Trump’s former Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, famously said, “If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.” The President continues to ignore this warning by again targeting one of our first lines of defense for destructive budget cuts: diplomacy and foreign aid.

Reneges on budget deal and cuts foreign aid by 21 percent — The President’s budget cuts funding for Function 150 (International Affairs) by \$12 billion, or 21 percent, below the 2020 enacted level of \$56 billion. It eliminates all \$8 billion of the non-defense OCO funding, intended for Function 150, that Congress and the President agreed to under the bipartisan budget agreement already in place. The cuts affect nearly all programs within the international affairs portfolio, including cuts to international security assistance, peacekeeping, international

narcotics control, development and economic assistance, humanitarian assistance, democracy programs, and global health.

Cuts Global Health Programs — While the coronavirus rages on around the world, we are reminded of how human health is interconnected and a global concern. Despite this reality, the President’s budget cuts funding for Global Health Programs by \$3 billion, or 34 percent below the 2020 enacted level. This is in addition to his budget’s 19 percent cut to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s discretionary budget authority. The Global Health Programs include the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). If the President was truly committed to addressing the worldwide AIDS epidemic, he would not have attacked the very programs that would help him do it.

Other Notable Cuts:

2021 Cuts as Compared to the 2020 Enacted Level		
	(Billions of \$)	%
Humanitarian Assistance	-3.285	-34%
Economic Support and Development	-1.563	-21%
Embassy Security	-0.692	-11%
Peacekeeping	-0.614	-31%
Foreign Military Financing	-0.586	-10%
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	-0.381	-27%
Millennium Challenge Corporation	-0.105	-12%

Conclusion

Strong national security depends on much more than having a strong military. It takes strong diplomacy and foreign aid operations to prevent wars and broker the peace when war breaks out. It takes decisive action on climate change, which not only threatens our citizens but also will create crises around the world to which our military will have to respond. It takes a healthy economy to provide for a strong security apparatus, which depends upon investments in education and infrastructure. Unfortunately, the President’s budget takes a dangerously myopic view of national security by ignoring these and other important security-related nondefense programs. Moreover, the budget makes unrealistic assumptions about its defense plans that if left unchanged would have adverse consequences for building and maintaining an effective military. On all fronts, this budget fails to provide for the comprehensive national security strategy the country needs.