

A Unified Security Budget for the United States

Executive Summary

Since September 11, 2001, the question of how to provide for our security has loomed large over our national life. Many of the Bush administration's answers to this question have come under intense challenge—from the doctrine of preventive war to the development of new designs for “usable” nuclear weapons to the choice of war with Iraq as the centerpiece of its war on terrorism. But until recently one aspect of the administration's strategy has gone virtually unchallenged, namely its military budgets and the spending priorities contained within them. From 2000 to 2004, these budgets have increased by more than 50%. Congress has approved each of these budgets, and virtually the entire menu of programs specified in them, with hardly a whisper of debate.

Ever-increasing budget deficit projections have finally begun to make security budget priorities a permissible topic of conversation among lawmakers. In mid-February the House Speaker declared all parts of the budget “on the table” for cuts, including the military, and soon thereafter the administration abruptly canceled the Army's long-running *Comanche* helicopter program.

The Task Force on *A Unified Security Budget for the United States*, drawing on the knowledge of analysts with expertise in different dimensions of the security challenge, welcomes the opening of this overdue debate, and offers this contribution to help point it in the right direction. Among its findings:

Key finding: Despite promises of a comprehensive approach to fighting terrorism, the Bush administration has concentrated its resources overwhelmingly on its military forces, at the expense of other security tools. **Bush's 2005 budget would spend seven times as much on the military as on homeland security and all other forms of non-military security programs combined.**

Key finding: The Bush military budget is being spent on a force structure that does not match today's security challenges, because it is designed for a cold-war-style large-scale conventional challenge that we no longer face.

Key finding: Fixing the problem will require a unified approach to security that integrates nonmilitary tools into our security strategy and rebalances military forces for today's security challenges.

This document provides a working model for how this could be done, without reducing overall spending levels on security, and without increasing the deficit. It shows how funding can be shifted within military accounts for an overall saving of \$51 billion. And it outlines \$52 billion in spending on non-military measures. **This shift would change**

the current 7 to 1 ratio of military to non-military security tools to 3 to 1—a better balance for the U.S.’ long-term security needs.

Key finding: The administration’s decision to cut the Comanche program was a good start. The report identifies ten other programs, including the F-22 fighter and DDX destroyer, which could be safely cut or reconfigured to free up \$56 billion in resources for other neglected security priorities.

Key finding: \$5 billion should be added to military accounts to rectify military equipment shortfalls identified in Iraq, such as improved flak jackets, truck armor reinforcements and helicopter protection systems, and to restructure and retrain forces for small- and medium-scale peace and stability operations and counterterrorist missions.

Key finding: The report recommends reallocating \$6 billion to strengthen crucial nonmilitary dimensions of our security including diplomacy, nonproliferation programs, and support for international peace and stability operations.

Key finding: In a 2002 speech President Bush identified development assistance as a security tool, linking the desperate resort to terrorism with the hopelessness of persistent poverty. This unified security budget recommends a \$10 billion increase in US development assistance, and outlines key reforms in development policy.

Key finding: The remainder of the report’s recommended savings are allocated to addressing key deficits in homeland security, including increased funding for “first responders” to a terrorist attack.

It’s possible to rebalance our national security budget, filling in its missing military and nonmilitary pieces, without increasing its overall bottom line. The result would be military forces better prepared for actual deployments, nonmilitary tools better deployed to address the sources of threat, and a net gain in security for our nation.