



Insight

Both Party Platforms Oppose Defense Cuts

RACHEL HOFF | AUGUST 24, 2016

Amidst the hype of both the Republican and Democratic national conventions, each party took time to write a platform—a statement of policies, principles, and priorities the party would hope to implement if its candidates are elected. Despite broad disagreement across the spectrum of issues, there emerged at least one source of general agreement: opposition to recent U.S. defense budget cuts.

The [Republican platform](#) reads: “Successive years of cuts to our defense budget have put an undue strain on our men and women in uniform. ... The U.S. defense budget has suffered a 25 percent cut in real dollars in the five years since sequestration.” The [Democratic platform](#) shared that sentiment: “We support a smart, predictable defense budget that meets the strategic challenges we face, not the arbitrary cuts that the Republican Congress enacted as part of sequestration.” In an election year, when partisanship dominates, it is encouraging that both parties agree on the harm of defense spending cuts and the value of a robust, stable defense budget.

For its part, the GOP went even further, specifying, “We support lifting the budget cap for defense and reject the efforts of Democrats to hold the military’s budget hostage for their domestic agenda. Congress and the Administration should work together to approve military spending at the level necessary to defend our country.” The Obama administration and congressional Democrats have consistently refused to increase the defense budget without a dollar-for-dollar increase to domestic spending as well.

Without real leadership, this problem will not go away. There are some indications, however, that either party nominee may have the political will to exercise the necessary leadership. Hillary Clinton has long been a vocal opponent of defense budget cuts, [calling](#) for a permanent end to the sequester (for both defense and non-defense spending). And Donald Trump has [said](#) that a strong military is the single cheapest investment America could make.

Whichever party wins in November, the platforms and candidates offer reasons to hope that the next president may bring an end to the senseless defense budget cuts that have weakened U.S. military readiness and jeopardized American national security.