



Insight

President's Defense Budget Not Keeping Up with Global Threats

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The president's [budget](#) released yesterday makes it clear that the Department of Defense (DOD) will continue to suffer from the lasting effects of sequestration and multiple years of spending cuts.

The administration's budget requests \$583 billion for [DOD spending](#) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. This number is in accordance with the [Bipartisan Budget Act](#), a deal that Congress and the White House reached last fall, which revised the spending caps imposed by the 2011 [Budget Control Act](#) (BCA) for FY 2016 and 2017.

Many defense experts have been quick to point out that this request is already \$15 billion below the [projected](#) defense spending numbers from last year. It is important to remember, however, that there is an even bigger shortfall between the administration's latest request and the last strategic defense budget proposal.

In 2012, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates presented a [budget](#) that recommended increases in defense spending over a ten-year period in response to rising national security threats. These defense spending levels were never realized, as the BCA required \$1 trillion in cuts to the defense budget over ten years. In 2014, the bipartisan [National Defense Panel](#) endorsed Gates' projected budget baseline, calling it "the minimum required to reverse course and set the military on a more stable footing." The [projection](#) for FY 2017 called for \$672 billion in DOD spending—putting President Obama's request at a shortfall of \$89 billion.

It is also important to remember that the national security situation has gotten significantly worse even in the three months since Congress and the White House agreed to the budget deal last fall. Here are a few things that have happened since then:

- ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino
- U.S. intelligence reports that ISIS will likely attempt direct attacks on America and will only spread if not defeated in Iraq and Syria
- Iran's test of a medium-range ballistic missile
- North Korea's nuclear test and successful launch of a long-range rocket

U.S. defense spending should be determined based on an assessment of global threats and the strategy and capabilities needed in response. For too long, how much America spends defending the country has been based on the numbers made up in one budget deal or another. As a result, the U.S. defense budget is not keeping up with national security crises, and the American military is on the verge of a crisis.