

Insight



President's FY16 Budget Funds Defense Needs—But the Military Needs Rebuilding

RACHEL HOFF | FEBRUARY 2, 2015

The President's 2016 budget request released today includes \$534 billion in base funding for the Department of Defense. This number represents a much-needed increase in Pentagon funding above the sequester-mandated budget caps. Unless Congress acts to lift the caps, sequestration will return in FY16, capping the Pentagon's budget at around \$498 billion. [Military leaders have made clear](#) that the sequestration spending limits represent a threat to national security and put American lives at risk.

The President's budget offers a necessary first step to reverse the devastating effects of recent defense spending cuts, but it is not sufficient to rebuild the military and keep the country safe. After six consecutive years of cuts to the Pentagon budget, the military lacks vital capabilities. According to senior defense officials, readiness and modernization have taken the biggest hits—but the impact on morale has also been significant.

[A new report out last week](#) from the Heritage Foundation determines that Congress should increase base defense spending to \$584 billion in FY16. Experts say that this would provide the resources necessary to begin restoring the military capabilities lost during recent years. This funding would allow the military to address global security challenges in multiple different regions of the world and also prepare for the future.

The defense budget should be determined by the national security strategy necessary to meet the threats the country faces. The administration's FY16 budget request gives Congress the Pentagon's assessment of the funding level needed to meet core national security requirements. Rebuilding weakened military capacity and capabilities, however, will require more investment. [Lifting the defense sequestration caps](#) and funding the President's budget would be a good first step.