

The Executive Memorandum

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CLINTON DEFENSE INCREASES: GOOD START, BUT NOT ENOUGH

President Bill Clinton on December 1 recognized publicly what others have long known: America's armed forces are woefully underfunded to perform the missions that have been assigned to them. Clinton announced a plan to ask Congress for some \$2 billion in supplemental appropriations for defense in fiscal 1995 to pay for peacekeeping operations in Haiti and elsewhere. He also outlined an additional \$25 billion for the six years from 1996 through 2001.

Clinton's announcement is a good first step toward correcting the decline in military readiness that has occurred during his tenure, but it does not go far enough. Outside estimates of the shortfall in defense spending range from The Heritage Foundation's \$100 billion to the General Accounting Office's \$150 billion. Military pay has fallen behind comparable civilian pay by as much as 12 percent. Funds needed for day-to-day operations and maintenance are now being used to pay for unexpected and unfunded peacekeeping operations like the one in Haiti. Future force modernization is threatened both by a drastic decline in procurement spending and by a significant reduction in research and development spending. And the size and organization of the armed forces are inadequate to meet the Administration's official goal of being able to fight and win two major regional conflicts "nearly simultaneously."

Opening for Congress. Clinton's defense spending increases are not enough to correct all of these problems. Only declining military pay is addressed by the Administration's plan. More must be done. Congress must now step in and solve the many problems caused by Clinton's underfunding of America's armed forces.

Much of this will be done if Congress passes the "Contract With America," the GOP's campaign platform in the last election. One of the bills in the Contract is the National Security Restoration Act, which acknowledges the Clinton Administration's defense planning shortcomings, particularly the shortfalls in defense spending. The bill raises concerns about the impact of defense cuts on combat readiness, force structure, weapons modernization, and ballistic missile defense programs.

The supplemental appropriations bill Clinton intends to introduce will give Congress a chance to get an early start on addressing issues in the Contract. Thus, Congress should:

- ✓ **Add \$8 billion to \$10 billion to the \$2 billion requested by Clinton for fiscal 1995, most of which should go for modernization.** This additional funding should be used to replace aging weapons with modern ones and to develop new ones. Because of funding cuts, many weapons are being kept operational longer than they should be. For example, the average age of the Army's main battle tank will have more than doubled by the end of the decade. On top of that, defense cuts are inhibiting the Pentagon's ability to develop new generation weapons to replace old ones. Research and development funding has dropped by 10 percent in real terms since President Clinton took office. This reduction has had a severe impact on the program to develop anti-missile defenses. Unless something is done to reverse these trends, American soldiers will be relying on aging weapons that may be not only worn out, but also outdated. U.S. forces need modern weapons and equipment to prevail on the battlefield and to reduce casualties, as was demonstrated during the Persian Gulf War.

✓ **Place strict limits on U.S. participation in "operations other than war," including peacekeeping.** The National Security Restoration Act in the Contract With America ensures a great deal more congressional oversight of U.S. participation in U.N. peacekeeping than has been the case. This will include a requirement that the President specify "the source of funding for the [U.S.] share of the costs" prior to committing forces. This should stop what has become the common practice of diverting funds intended for fuel, training, and routine maintenance. But Congress should consider applying similar constraints to peacekeeping operations for the remainder of fiscal 1995. The options include asking the Pentagon in advance for a proposed budget for an operation, limiting the portion of the force that may be committed to such operations, and requiring that the Secretary of Defense certify that all military combat units are in the highest readiness status before new peacekeeping or humanitarian missions are undertaken.

As these measures are undertaken, Congress should specify that no action taken to constrain the participation of U.S. forces in United Nations operations should be construed as a restriction on the President's freedom to dispatch U.S. forces in defense of U.S. interests or in a national emergency. In doing so, Congress would be drawing a clear distinction between legitimate constraints on U.S. participation in U.N. operations and inadvisable restrictions on presidential prerogatives as imposed by the War Powers Resolution of 1973. This Resolution unwisely interferes with the President's authority as commander in chief to deploy forces in defense of American interests.

✓ **Remove non-defense spending from the Pentagon's budget.** The Congressional Research Service has identified \$5.8 billion in the 1995 defense authorization bill for "items that may not be directly related to traditional military capabilities." This includes \$10 million for "U.S.-Japan Management Training" and nearly \$300 million for AIDS, prostate, and breast cancer research. When environmental clean-up and research programs are included, this figure rises to more than \$11 billion. This list is a good starting point for obtaining funds within the defense budget to apply improving readiness.

✓ **Restore the ballistic missile defense program.** The Contract With America places a high priority on restoring America's missile defense program, which has been practically decimated by Clinton's cuts. A good first step would be to spend between \$1 billion and \$2 billion of the \$8 billion to \$10 billion in additional funding for ballistic missile defense in fiscal 1995. Programs targeted for increased spending should be 1) the space-based interceptor program, 2) the Lightweight Exo-Atmospheric Projectile (LEAP) interceptor program, 3) the "Brilliant Eyes" sensor satellite for detecting and tracking enemy missiles in flight, 4) the advanced light-weight satellite program, 5) the Navy's Upper-Tier Interceptor program, 6) the space-based laser program, and 7) the Boost-Phase Interceptor program.

Congress should also consider passing an amendment directing the Administration to observe a moratorium on negotiations with Russia or other countries regarding the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. This treaty, which bans the deployment of strategic defenses, is outdated and should be abandoned. An agreement with the Russians to change the agreement cosmetically would only perpetuate a treaty that does not serve American security interests.

CONCLUSION

President Clinton's decision to increase defense spending is an acknowledgment of what many have known for over a year: The Clinton Administration has been underfunding America's armed forces. It also is an acknowledgment of a central premise of the Contract With America: Sending U.S. forces on peacekeeping and other U.N. errands while drastically cutting the defense budget is a recipe for declining military readiness. The \$25 billion supplemental spending request for the Pentagon is a good start in correcting this problem. But the job of restoring America's military strength is not done. It is up to the 104th Congress to resolve a problem which the President allowed to get out of hand.

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