



Pentagon Blue Print Would Cut Army Size As Military Adjusts To Leaner Budget

Monday, March 3, 2014 | Ernesto Londono, The Washington Post



The Defense Department on Monday proposed cutting the Army to its smallest size in 74 years, slashing a class of attack jets and rolling back personnel costs in an effort to adjust a department buoyed by a decade of war to an era of leaner budgets. The five-year budget blueprint outlined by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel reflects a willingness by the Pentagon to make deep cuts to personnel strength to invest in technology and equipment as it eases off a war footing. "The development and proliferation of more advanced military technologies by other nations mean that we are entering an era where American dominance on the seas, in the skies and in space can no longer be taken for granted," Hagel told reporters at an afternoon news conference. Congress recently passed a bill that authorized the Defense Department to spend nearly \$1 trillion over the next two years — \$75 billion less than the Obama administration requested but a reprieve from the spending cuts that would have been forced under the deficit-reduction mechanism known as sequestration.

The Pentagon's budget-trimming plan represents the department's opening bid in what is widely expected to be a politically fraught process that lawmakers and influential constituencies will seek to shape. The formal budget will be presented Tuesday. Under the proposal, during the next five years the Pentagon would get \$115 billion above the savings it would have had to find under sequestration but \$113 billion less than the spending levels contemplated in last year's budget proposal.

Gordon Adams, a defense budget expert at American University who served in the Clinton administration, said the new proposal was more realistic than the one the department articulated a year ago. But he warned that Pentagon officials would be wise to plan for sequestration-level budgets for some time to come. "The international threat environment doesn't drive you to higher levels, and the Republican Party is split on the issue and disinclined to go higher," he said.

The most startling part of the plan is the proposal to cut the active-duty Army to between 440,000 and 450,000 soldiers, from a wartime peak of 570,000 — which would reduce the force to its smallest size since before World War II. Officials warned that if sequestration-level cuts remain in place as of 2016, the Army would be forced to trim down to 420,000 — a level they called unacceptable. Army Secretary John M. McHugh said in a statement that the proposed cuts "provided equal doses of reality and opportunity," but he acknowledged that the downsizing would "be a difficult road." The most contentious part of the plan is likely to be proposed cuts to pay and benefits, including rolling back tax-free housing allowances and the level of subsidies offered by stores in military bases. "No realistic effort to find further significant savings can avoid dealing with military compensation," Hagel said.

Veterans groups and lawmakers pushed back on some of those proposals Monday, calling them particularly unfair after a decade of intense combat deployments. "Washington is trying to balance the budget on the backs of those who have sacrificed the most," said Paul Rieckhoff, the founder of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "We know the Defense Department must make difficult budget decisions, but these cuts would hit service members, making it harder for them and their families to make ends meet."

The Pentagon proposed eliminating its fleet of A-10 Thunderbolt II attack planes, which it said would save \$3.5 billion over the next five years. It also plans to retire the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft and use Global Hawk drones instead. Hagel said, however, that the department would slow the growth of its drone fleet. He said the drones have been effective against terrorist targets but "cannot operate in the face of enemy aircraft and modern air defenses." Hagel warned Monday that the Pentagon would work more assertively to shut down bases it views as obsolete — an effort that has long been stymied by members of Congress who have protected facilities and jobs in their jurisdictions. "If Congress continues to block these requests even as they slash the overall budget, we will have to consider every tool at our disposal to reduce infrastructure," Hagel said.

For fiscal 2015, the Pentagon will be requesting \$26 billion over the amount appropriated in the recent spending bill, as part of a broader security initiative the Obama administration will announce next week in greater detail. A key omission in Hagel's speech Monday was the future of the overseas contingency operations fund, which in recent years has served as the base budget for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. A Defense Department official said the department's budget request next week will include a "placeholder" request for roughly \$80 billion, the same level of funding the war budget got in fiscal 2014. The official said a revised figure would be submitted when the administration has clarity on whether it will keep a troop contingent in Afghanistan past 2014.

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1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons synonymous with the proposed monumental cutbacks to the United States Armed Forces annual budget. Paul Rieckhoff, the founder of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America passionately articulated, "*Washington is trying to balance the budget on the backs of those who have sacrificed the most. We know the Defense Department must make difficult budget decisions, but these cuts would hit service members, making it harder for them and their families to make ends meet.*" In exceedingly stark opposition, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel stated, "*The development and proliferation of more advanced military technologies by other nations mean that we are entering an era where American dominance on the seas, in the skies and in space can no longer be taken for granted.*" Assemble a valid defense in support of either Rieckhoff or Hagel acceptable before an audience of soldiers and their dependents upon returning from an intense one-year combat deployment in Afghanistan. Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence *not* limited solely to article above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
2. According to National Public Radio (NPR), all the tanks, planes and ships of the U.S. military burn about 340,000 barrels of oil per day, making it the "single-largest purchaser and consumer of oil in the world." The High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) consumption of diesel fuel varies, but generally less than 12 miles per gallon. On average eight on the highway and four in the city. The number of gallons g of gas used varies directly with the number of m miles traveled. According to Independent Statistics and Analysis United States Energy Information Administration, the average cost for a gallon of diesel nationwide is \$4.017. Write a function rule relating the cost c for g gallons of gas. Is this a direct variation? Write and solve a direct variation relating the cost of gas to the miles traveled. Employ the same inquiries upon the Buffalo Mine Protected Vehicle, which generally acquires 3.5 miles per gallon and maintains an 85-gallon tank. **(MA.912.A.1.4; MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.2.2; MA.912.A.2.3; MA.912.A.2.4)**
3. A HMMWV and a Buffalo Mine Protected Vehicle discreetly depart the Forward Operating Base simultaneously in opposing directions of travel infiltrating deep behind enemy lines. Each vehicle travels two miles, then changes directions and proceeds an additional 2.4 miles. The HMMWV starts due east and suddenly turns 50 degrees north. The BMPV initiates travel due west and turns 45 degrees south. Construct a diagram illustrating these results, identify which vehicle has progressed farthest from camp, and explain specifically what one can derive via applying the Hinge Theorem to this scenario. **(MA.912.G.4.7; MA.912.G.8.2; MA.912.G.8.1; MA.912.G.8.6)**
4. Thus far, in Geometry we have reasoned directly from given information to prove desired conclusions. In an indirect proof, you start by making the temporary assumption that the desired conclusion is false. By then showing that this assumption leads to a logical impossibility, you prove the original statement true by contradiction. Write an indirect proof regarding the infamous aforementioned sequestration. **(MA.912.G.8.2; MA.912.G.8.4; MA.912.G.8.4)**
5. Using contextual clues only, determine the most complete and accurate definitions of following italicized terms: *appropriated, initiative, contingency, omission, drone, assertively, obsolete, stymied, infrastructure, sequestration, continuous, subsidies, articulated, disinclined, fraught, constituencies, proliferation, and buoyed* as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**
6. Identify and thoroughly support your reasoning regarding which of the following that best describes the author's attitude toward the proposed military cutbacks: flippant disregard, mild frustration, passive resignation or an informed citizen. Explain the intended purpose of this article and identify any indicators or supporting evidence, which suggest the author may possess a bias for or against military personnel immersed in excess of a decade in combat. Provide an inference service members returning from combat theaters may derive from this material. The point of view employed throughout the passage is best described as first person, second person, third person, or a combination of first and third person. Identify ways in which this article be referenced for an independent student research project regarding monetary cutbacks specifically as it pertains to United States Armed Forces. Explain specifically how the image above contributes to the validity of the aforementioned passage. **(RI.9-10.1 – 10.6)**
7. **SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Provided the fact that this story is incomplete, create an updated concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above incorporating the italicized term: *Fraught* adj. Teeming with; laden; full. **(LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**

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