



PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

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THE PRESIDENT'S DEFENSE BUDGET: SHORT OF THE REQUIREMENT AND HIGH ON RISK

Based on initial review of the President's fiscal year 2000 defense budget request, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Floyd Spence (R-SC) had the following comments:

“After weeks of presidential promises to fix the significant funding shortfall facing the nation's military, we finally get to see if the rhetoric corresponds with reality. Based on my read of the budget information provided, the answer is, no.

“The President has taken a small step in the right direction by proposing increased funding for defense. However, the proposed increase falls significantly short of the funding levels identified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as necessary to address critical unfunded quality of life, readiness and modernization requirements. The President's defense budget proposal claims to increase defense spending over the next six years by \$112 billion, when in reality it only provides \$84 billion in increases. Compared to the over \$150 billion worth of unfunded requirements identified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President's proposal falls short of the mark by as much as \$70 billion. Compounding the shortfall problem is the President's decision to resort to a ‘grab-bag’ of questionable assumptions and gimmicks in order to make the budget appear to fit within the spending caps.

“The services' unfunded requirements are real, while savings associated with optimistic economic assumptions and gimmicks may never be. The President continues to play high stakes poker with our military's future and with the nation's ability to protect and promote its interests around the world. We can and must do better.”

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