National Security Division Report
Week ending June 4, 2021

U.S. Army's $5.5B wish list seeks to restore cuts made to protect force modernization

The U.S. Army's fiscal 2022 wish list, known as an unfunded requirements list, asks for $5.5 billion in additional money that would help reduce risk to operational readiness.

The Army needs additional funding beyond its $173 billion budget request in FY22 in order to hold on to momentum gained in recent years, McConville noted. The FY22 budget is a $3.6 billion reduction from what was approved by Congress in FY21. The FY22 president's budget request was released on May 28.

"While we have managed to flat line end strength, sustain the readiness gains the Army has achieved in FY18-21, and further invest in our six modernization priorities, our progress is at risk if we don't have real growth of 3-5% above inflation as we advance," McConville said in the letter sent to the congressional defense committee.

The unfunded requirements list is a document the military services send to Congress each year following the release of the defense budget request to tell lawmakers about where they could use more funding in a perfect world. The lists are usually provided at the request of congressional defense committees.

The budget reduction in FY22, McConville wrote, "come as the Army pivots from incrementally improving 1980s weapons systems to resourcing an aggressive 21st century Army Modernization Strategy."

The American Legion agrees that the momentum of Army transformation and modernization must be maintained to deal with irregular, catastrophic, and traditional challenges to combat today's 21st-century adversaries.

Resolution No. 219: Support Full Funding for the Department of the Army Budget

RESOLVED, That Congress enables the Army to maintain the momentum of key programs while accelerating transformation.

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Some Afghans Dread The Departure Of Foreign Forces. Others See It As Liberation

Black Hawk Helicopter flies over Kabul, May 2021

Nayebi recently divorced her husband, signed up for dental college, and began working in a hair salon doing eyelash extensions to pay for her studies.

"I'm independent now," Nayebi, 32, says over the din of hairdryers and music in the Shabnam Salon in an upscale Kabul neighborhood.

But she's counting down the days until — she fears — her freedom will be lost. On May 1, American and foreign forces began scaling back troops and dismantling bases across Afghanistan, ahead of a planned complete withdrawal on September 11. The date is symbolic because the 2001 al-Qaida attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. were the reason why the U.S. invaded Afghanistan two decades ago to topple the Taliban, who'd given refuge to al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

Now, September 11 may take on new symbolism for Afghans.

For others, particularly urban women like Nayebi, it will mark the beginning of more difficult times.

"I worry that the Taliban will seize power when the Americans leave," she says. "The dark times we lived through before will return."

The American Legion supports the end of America's longest war; even a growing number of foreign policy officials have begun to advocate a drawdown in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Resolution No. 22: Addressing the 'Forever War'

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled virtually on October 14-15, 2020, That The American Legion urges a renewal of a proper constitutional balance to American foreign policy decision-making by encouraging Congress to repeal and replace outdated Authorizations for the Use of Military Force; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That The American Legion advocate for the importance of a civilian-led approach of elevating development and diplomacy alongside a strong defense in order to build a better, safer world.

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Navy Not Ready to Repair Battle Damaged Ships

The Navy is poorly positioned to fully repair its fighting fleet of warships damaged in future high-end battles. The Government Accountability Office found in a report released this week.

USS Fitzgerald sustained damage during a deadly Collison

The G.A.O. found that the Navy would struggle if conflict erupted, and several ships sustained sufficient battle damage that ships' crews couldn't repair. "

Navy officials we interviewed generally agreed that the Navy could handle a single battle damage event but were uncertain how the Navy might handle multiple simultaneous or near-simultaneous events," the report stated.

"The Navy has identified several challenges with using its regular maintenance capability (which restores ships to fully operational status) to provide battle damage repairs during a great power conflict. Challenges include the lack of established doctrine for battle damage repair, unclear command and control roles, and a shortage of repair capacity," according to a G.A.O. assessment released Wednesday in a study mandated as part of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

Moreover, while the issues raised aren't new, the G.A.O. determined the service hasn't fully addressed those concerns, in part because no single person or entity has been put in charge of doing so.

Suppose we recall the burning of the U.S.S. Bonhomme, while dry-docked, was amid $250 million repairs/upgrades. The fire burned for four days forcing the Navy to decommission the ship, thus reducing the Navy's warship inventory. The ability to project a show of force is vital to our National Defense; therefore, The American Legion supports any legislative or administrative actions that take the necessary step ensuring our Navy's inventory of ships is ready to defend this great nation.

Resolution No. 96: Support Full Funding and Resourcing for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion urges the Administration and the Congress to fully resource and fund the United States Navy and Marine Corps to provide credible combat power from the sea.

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The vision of the Air Force and Space Force

Frank Kendall told the Senate Armed Services Committee May 25 that if he is confirmed as the 26th Secretary of the Air Force, he will continue reshaping the Air and Space forces to confront near-peer adversaries such as China, nurture the Space Force's successful evolution and ensure that Airmen, Guardians, and their families are well served.

"If confirmed, my priorities would be straightforward and mirror precisely those articulated by Secretary of Defense (Lloyd) Austin as they apply to the Department of the Air Force – taking care of our people, mission performance, and building teams. Our military is people first and foremost," he told the committee.

"With regard to mission performance, I believe the range and severity of the threats that we face and will face, the rapid pace of technological innovation, and the need to harness that technology in new operational concepts rapidly demand a sense of urgency and alike focus on getting our choices right," he said.

An essential part of that effort, Kendall said, is ensuring that the United States can operate in and defend space, calling the still-nascent U.S. Space Force "a critical contributor to our national security. If confirmed, I'll be honored to have a role in making it a success."

Also important, he said, is fully understanding and recognizing China's rapid advances and ensuring that the Air and Space Forces succeed in meeting them.

"There is a consensus that China is the pacing threat," said Kendall, using the term for defining a leading challenger to U.S. security.

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Resolution No. 26: Support For The United States Space Force

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled virtually on October 14-15, 2020, That The American Legion urges Congress to appropriately support the United States Space Force's commitment to attract, retain, and train quality people who will be molded into a force capable of flexibly responding to threats to America's national and economic security that will enhance readiness through its continued focus on total force integration and modernization programs that will maintain America's dominance in space well into the 21st century.

May 27, 2021: Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Hobbs, B.)
June 1, 2021: U.S.S. Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Delles, L.)
June 1, 2021: U.S.S. Oklahoma Remains Honorable Carry **UPDATED**
June 2, 2021: U.S.S. Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Ballance, W.)
June 3, 2021: U.S.S. Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Ellis, E.)
June 3, 2021: Solider Accounted For From World War II (Esmay, M.)
June 3, 2021: U.S.S. Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Todd, N.)

Legislative Issues

- Support for Afghan Interpreters through the Special Immigrant Visa Program – The American Legion advocate for Afghan Interpreters who stood shoulder to shoulder with U.S. Forces and Diplomats contributing to saving countless American lives. The American Legion urges the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to recognize the contributions of Afghan SIV recipients. (Resolution No. 16, 2018) Recognition for Afghan and Iraq Combat Translators.
- Availability of Healthcare benefits for residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in proposed language of the FY22NDAA – The American Legions support funding that provides long-term solvency and viability of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (Resolution No. 107, 2016)

- Quality of Life for Service members and their Families – We owe our military men and women a debt of gratitude we can never repay for all that they — and their families — sacrifice to serve our country. Ensure the Coast Guard is paid – The American Legion supports a fully funded United States Coast Guard (Resolution No. 23, 2016)
- Expedited Citizenship through Honorable Military Service – The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed before discharge (Resolution No. 15, 2018)
- Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure – The American Legion supports refined processes and policies that will enhance interagency cybersecurity, promulgate best practices and standards, and protect critical infrastructure from cyber and other electronic attacks. (Resolution No. 20, 2017)
- Addressing the Forever Wars – The American Legion advocate for elevating diplomacy to build a better, safer world (Resolution No. 22, 2020)

Staff Activity:

- Staff Processed through the Military Equipment and Ammo & Rifle Program 58,280 rounds of ammunition, 100 ceremonial rifles, 164 clips, and two static displays to 21 American Legion Departments.
- Staff spoke with the Government Accountability Office concerning their recent G.A.O. report on repairing battle-worn ships. Diane Maurer, Director of the Defense Capabilities and Management Team, stated that "the Navy had implemented a plan on repairing these vital warships."
- Staff attended the hearing on *Space Force, military space operations, policy, and programs.* General David D. Thompson, Vice Chief of Space Operations U.S. Space Force, stated, "The DoD is taking a proactive approach to acquisition to reduce bureaucracy to more quickly deliver technologies and systems to the warfighter and has made many important changes to improve space acquisition, including fully embracing the authorities Congress has provided."
- Staff hosted an M.S. Teams meeting to discuss The AFGHAN INTERPRETERS PRESS CONFERENCE: "RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS" to be held June 16, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. EDT at the Capitol Hill Triangle.
- The National Security Division opened the meeting by discussing the following actioned items taken by The American Legion: Letter to the President, Letter to the Secretary of State, meeting with the National Security Council, visit the U.S. Embassy of Afghanistan; and an Afghan Translator featured article to be published in the July edition of The American Legion Magazine.
- The Legislative Division provided details for proposed legislation advocating for an amendment to the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 sponsored by Rep. Crow to waive the requirements to undergo a medical exam for aliens who are otherwise eligible for special immigrant status.

- The Media Division recommended a valuable press conference speaker and co-founder of the non-profit No One Left Behind, who assists interpreters and their immediate family members in obtaining Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs).
- 1st Degree Marketing and Public Relations is currently obtaining approval on the conference message map and a press release that will include distribution paths to civilian and defense media outlets.

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Week ending 06/4/2021