

2018 U.S. Defense Budget

Overview of the FY 2018 Defense Budget Request

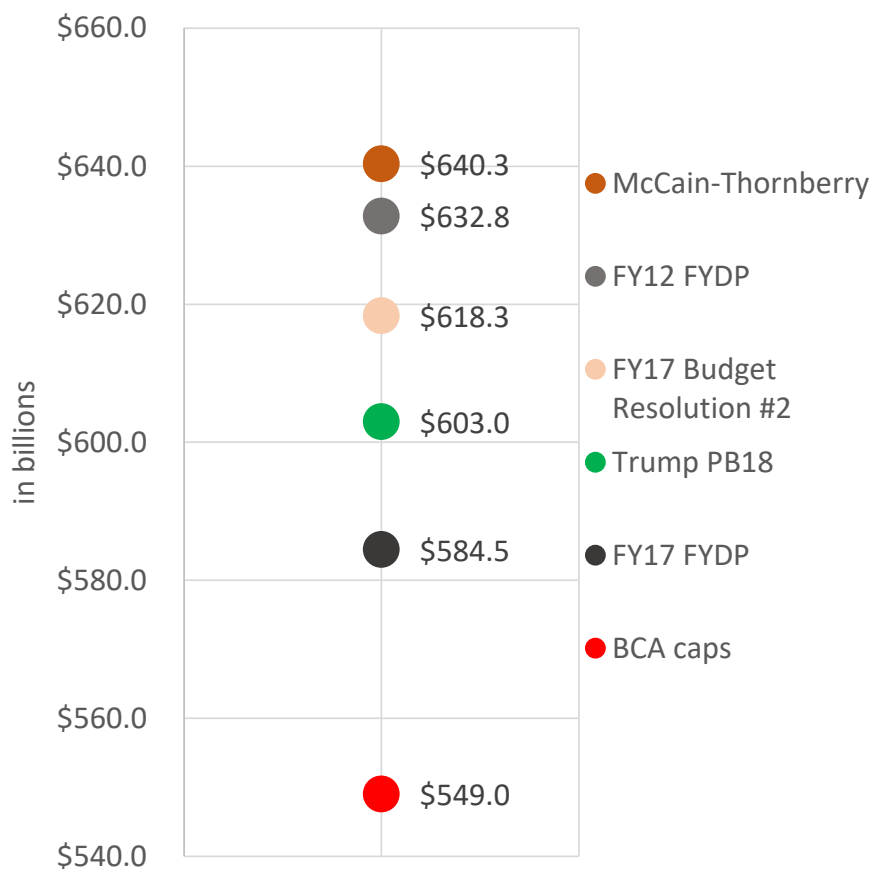
July 2017 | Katherine Blakeley

The Trump administration's first President's Budget (PB) requests a total of \$667.6 billion in discretionary national defense funding for FY 2018, including \$639.1 billion for the Department of Defense (DoD). The administration requested \$603 billion in base discretionary funding for national defense, an additional \$64.6 billion for overseas contingency operations, and \$9.7 billion in mandatory spending for a total of \$677.1 billion in funding for national defense, known as budget function 050.

According to Secretary of Defense James Mattis, the FY 2018 defense budget is intended to "achieve program balance."¹ The administration sought to "restore readiness" with a requested \$30 billion of additional funding in FY 2017, predominantly in operation and maintenance (O&M) accounts.² Congress provided half of this requested funding, or \$15 billion, as Overseas Contingency Operations funding in the FY 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Act. The FY 2019 defense budget, spanning the FY 2019–FY 2023 FYDP, will be informed by the 2018 National Defense Strategy, now underway, and the accompanying Nuclear Posture Review. Underpinned by a new defense strategy and force sizing construct, the FY 2019 defense budget is expected to both "build capacity" and "improve lethality." In other words, the administration's position is that a buildup will begin in FY 2019. However, forgoing a request for additional defense spending in its first budget, when a new administration has the greatest chance of making big course corrections, was a strategic mistake. By delaying the ask for a substantive defense buildup until FY 2019, the administration has squandered any honeymoon and allowed Congress to set the terms of the budget debate.

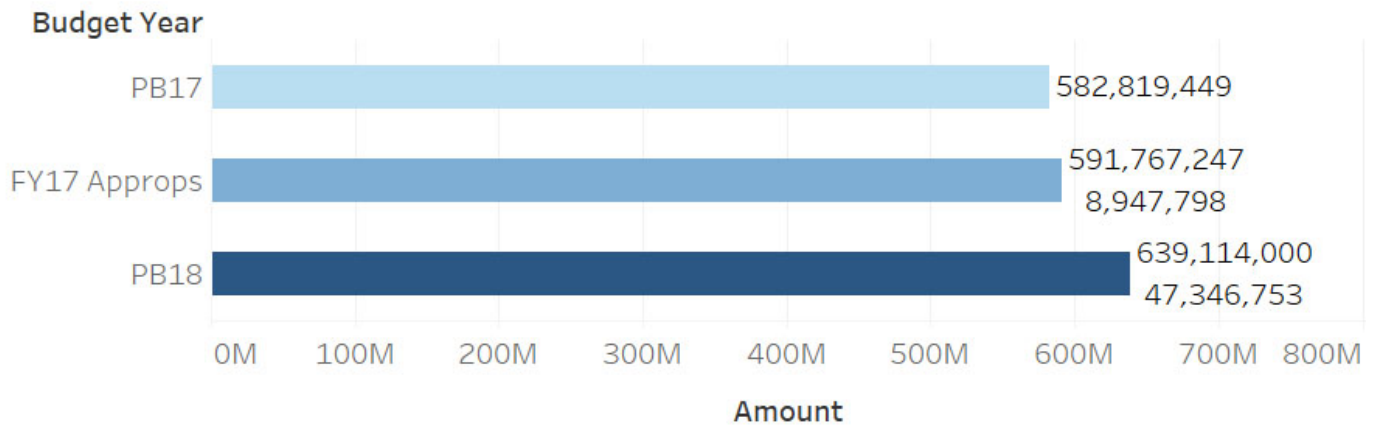
This proposed \$603 billion in discretionary base national defense spending would be \$51.8 billion dollars more than the \$551 billion the Obama administration requested in FY 2017, an increase of 9.4 percent. The requested \$603 billion is also \$54 billion, or 10 percent, over the caps on national defense spending for FY 2018 established by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), as amended. However, the requested \$603 billion represents a much more modest \$18.5 billion, or 3 percent, over the \$584.5 billion in the Obama administration's PB 2017 projection for the national defense base budget in FY 2018. It is also some \$37 billion, or 5.7 percent, below the \$640 billion in funding for national defense called for by Sen. McCain and Rep. Thornberry, the Chairmen of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, respectively. The Trump administration's request for \$603 billion is below the projected defense spending levels of the FY 2012 Gates budget—the last budget formulated before the BCA caps, widely considered to be the last budget driven by strategy rather than resources—and the level of national defense spending agreed to in the FY 2017 budget resolution adopted by the Congress in January 2017 (see Figure 1-1). National defense funding comprises funding for the Department of Defense (DoD) (about 95.5 percent of all national defense funding), funding for the nuclear weapons work of the Department of Energy (DOE), and a small amount of funding for other defense-related activities. One major question as the beginning of the 2018 fiscal year approaches is whether the Congress, deeply divided between the Republican defense hawks, the conservative Freedom Caucus, and the Democrats, will be able to come up with a deal to increase or amend the BCA caps, as they have done in each of the past five years that caps were in force.

FIGURE 1-1: PB18 NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET REQUEST



At \$639 billion for DoD, the Trump administration's FY 2018 request is about \$56.3 billion more than the Obama administration's PB 2017 request and \$47.3 billion more than the total of \$591.8 billion appropriated for DoD in FY 2017 (see Figure 1-2).³ Of this total DoD request, \$574.5 billion is for the base defense budget, while \$64.6 billion is for OCO funds.

FIGURE 1-2 TOPLINE DOD FUNDING



Source: OMB, Budget Analysis Branch, *Public Budget Database: Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2018, Budget Authority* (Washington, DC: OMB, May 2017), available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2017-DB/xls/BUDGET-2017-DB-1.xls>; CSBA tabulation of FY 2017 appropriations (P.L. 114-223, P.L. 114-254, and P.L. 115-31); OMB, Budget Analysis Branch, *Public Budget Database: Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2017, Budget Authority* (Washington, DC: OMB, February 2016), available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2017-DB/xls/BUDGET-2017-DB-1.xls>. Analysis in Tableau.

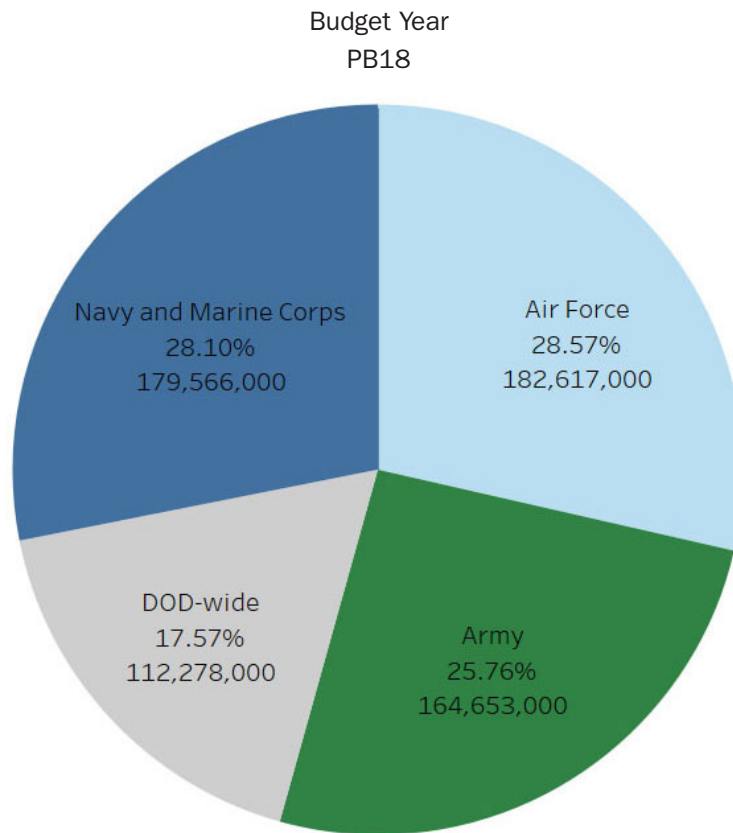
Note: Dollars in thousands.

Service Funding

Per OMB, of the \$639.1 billion in discretionary funding requested for DoD in the FY 2018 budget request, \$182.6 billion, or 28.6 percent, would go to the Air Force; \$179.6 billion, or 28.1 percent, would go to the Navy and Marine Corps; 164.7 billion, or 25.8 percent, would go to the Army; and \$112.3 billion, or 17.4 percent, would go to DoD-wide activities (see Figure 1-3). However, the OMB and DoD budget request information is not mutually consistent. Per the DoD budget overview, the Air Force's request is \$183 billion, \$415 million more than the OMB figures; the Navy's is \$180 billion, for a delta of \$426 million more; the Army's is \$166 billion, for a delta of \$1.4 billion more; and the DoD-wide request is \$110.1 billion, or \$2.2 billion less.⁴

Compared to the FY 2017 budget request, each of the Services would receive 8–12 percent more funding. The greatest increase would go to for the Army, which would receive between \$16.6 billion and \$18 billion (some 10–12 percent) more in the FY 2018 request. The smallest increase would be for DoD-wide spending, which would still see requested funding go up by \$7.1–\$7.4 billion (7–8 percent) more than the FY 2017 request. However, Congress appropriated \$9.1 billion more for DoD in FY 2017 than the original FY 2017 President's Budget requested. For FY 2017, Congressional appropriations for discretionary spending for DoD totaled \$591.8 billion, \$9 billion more than originally requested in the FY 2017 budget request. Accordingly, the amounts requested in the FY 2018 President's budget are smaller increases from the amounts actually appropriated as compared to the original FY 2017 budget. Overall, the \$639.1 billion requested in FY 2018 is \$47.3 billion more than appropriated in FY 2017, or an 8 percent increase. From the FY 2017 appropriated amounts, the Army would see a 7–8 percent increase, the Navy a 5–6 percent increase, the Air Force a 9 percent increase, and defense-wide spending an 11–13 percent increase (see Table 1-1 and Figure 1-4).

FIGURE 1-3: FY18 DOD REQUEST BY DEPARTMENT



Source: OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2018. Analysis in Tableau.

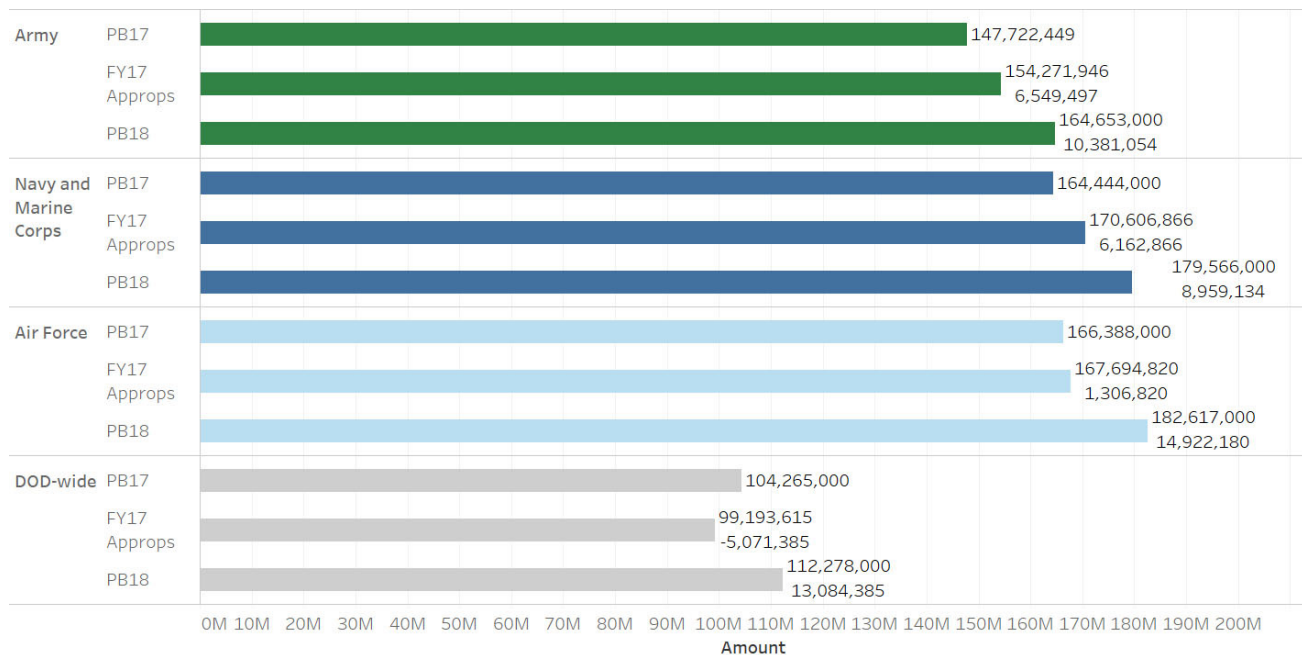
Note: Dollars in thousands.

TABLE 1-1: FY 2018 DOD REQUEST BY DEPARTMENT, AS COMPARED TO PB17 AND FY17 APPROPRIATIONS

Current-year dollars in millions	PB17 request	FY17 appropriations	PB18 request DoD	PB18 request OMB	Delta from PB17	Delta from FY17 appropriations
Army	\$148,034	\$154,272	\$166,022	\$164,653	10-12%	7-8%
Navy	\$164,861	\$170,607	\$179,993	\$179,566	8-9%	5-6%
Air Force	\$166,879	\$167,695	\$183,032	\$182,617	9-10%	9%
DoD-wide	\$102,927	\$99,194	\$110,068	\$112,278	9-10%	11-13%
DoD Total	\$582,701	\$591,768	\$639,115	\$639,114	10%	8%

Source: OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2018; CSBA tabulation of FY 2017 appropriations (P.L. 114-223, P.L. 114-254, and P.L. 115-31); OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2017; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD)(Comptroller), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request: Defense Budget Overview* (Washington, DC: DoD, May 2017), available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2018/fy2018_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf.

FIGURE 1-4: FY18 DOD REQUEST BY DEPARTMENT, AS COMPARED TO PB17 AND FY17 APPROPRIATIONS



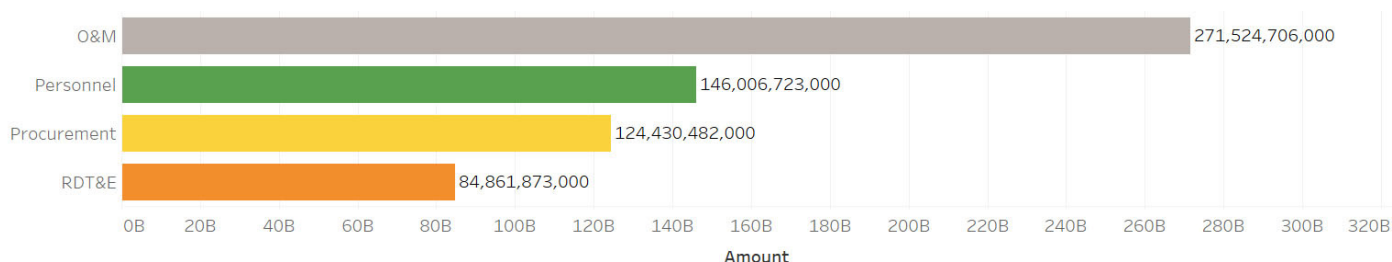
Source: OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2018; CSBA tabulation of FY 2017 appropriations (P.L. 114-223, P.L. 114-254, and P.L. 115-31); OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2017. Analysis in Tableau.

Note: Dollars in thousands.

Appropriation Categories

The differences between the Trump administration’s PB 2018 plan and the FY 2017 request and appropriations are starker when examining the appropriations categories of defense funding. The PB 2018 request asks for a total of \$271 billion in O&M funding, \$146 billion for military personnel (MILPERS), \$124 billion for procurement, and \$83 billion for research, development, test & engineering (RDT&E) (see Figure 1-5).

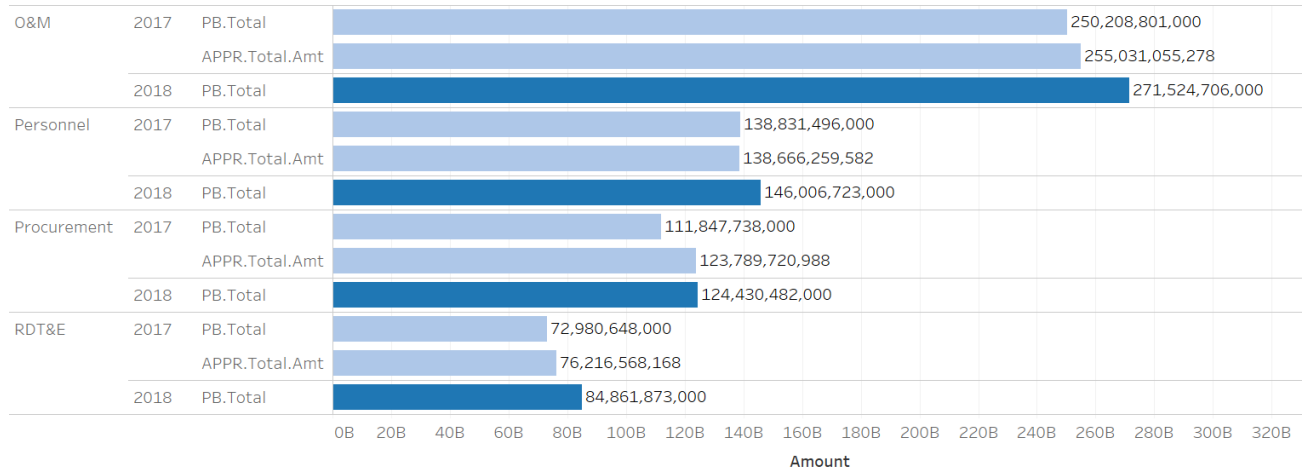
FIGURE 1-5: FY18 REQUEST BY APPROPRIATIONS TITLE



Source: Data from VisualDOD. Analysis in Tableau.

Compared to the Obama FY 2017 request, the Trump FY 2018 request envisions modest growth in MILPERS and O&M of 5 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively. The major increases are in RDT&E and procurement at 16.3 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively. However, Congress appropriated funding for DoD at a higher level than the Obama administration’s FY 2017 request, most notably in an additional \$12 billion for procurement, an approximately 10 percent increase. Compared to Congressional appropriations for FY 2017, the Trump administration’s budget for FY 2018 requests an additional \$7.3 billion, or 5.3 percent, for MILPERS to fund additional end strength; an additional \$16.5 billion, or 6.5 percent, for O&M; and an additional \$8.6 billion, or 11.3 percent, for RDT&E. Due to Congress’ higher procurement appropriations than requested in FY 2017, following the March 2017 request for additional appropriations, the PB 2018 procurement request increases by just \$641 million, or 0.5 percent (see Figure 1-6, Table 1-2, and Table 1-3).

FIGURE 1-6: PB18 DOD REQUEST BY APPROPRIATIONS TITLE, AS COMPARED TO THE PB17 REQUEST AND FY17 APPROPRIATIONS



Source: Data from VisualDOD. Analysis in Tableau.

TABLE 1-2: FY17 APPROPRIATIONS AND PB18 REQUEST BY APPROPRIATIONS TITLE, AS COMPARED TO THE PB17 REQUEST

				Amount	Delta from PB17	% Delta from PB17
O&M	2017	PB. Total	2017	250,208,801,000	0	0.00%
		APPR. Total. Amt	2017	255,031,055,278	4,822,254,278	1.93%
	2018	PB. Total	2018	271,524,706,000	21,315,905,000	8.52%
Personnel	2017	PB. Total	2017	138,831,496,000	0	0.00%
		APPR. Total. Amt	2017	138,666,259,582	-165,236,418	-0.12%
	2018	PB. Total	2018	146,006,723,000	7,175,227,000	5.17%
Procurement	2017	PB. Total	2017	111,847,738,000	0	0.00%
		APPR. Total. Amt	2017	123,789,720,988	11,941,982,988	10.68%
	2018	PB. Total	2018	124,430,482,000	12,582,744,000	11.25%
RDT&E	2017	PB. Total	2017	72,980,648,000	0	0.00%
		APPR. Total. Amt	2017	76,216,568,168	3,235,920,168	4.43%
	2018	PB. Total	2018	84,861,873,000	11,881,225,000	16.28%

Source: Data from VisualDOD. Analysis in Tableau.

TABLE 1-3: PB18 DOD REQUEST BY APPROPRIATIONS TITLE, AS COMPARED TO FY17 APPROPRIATIONS

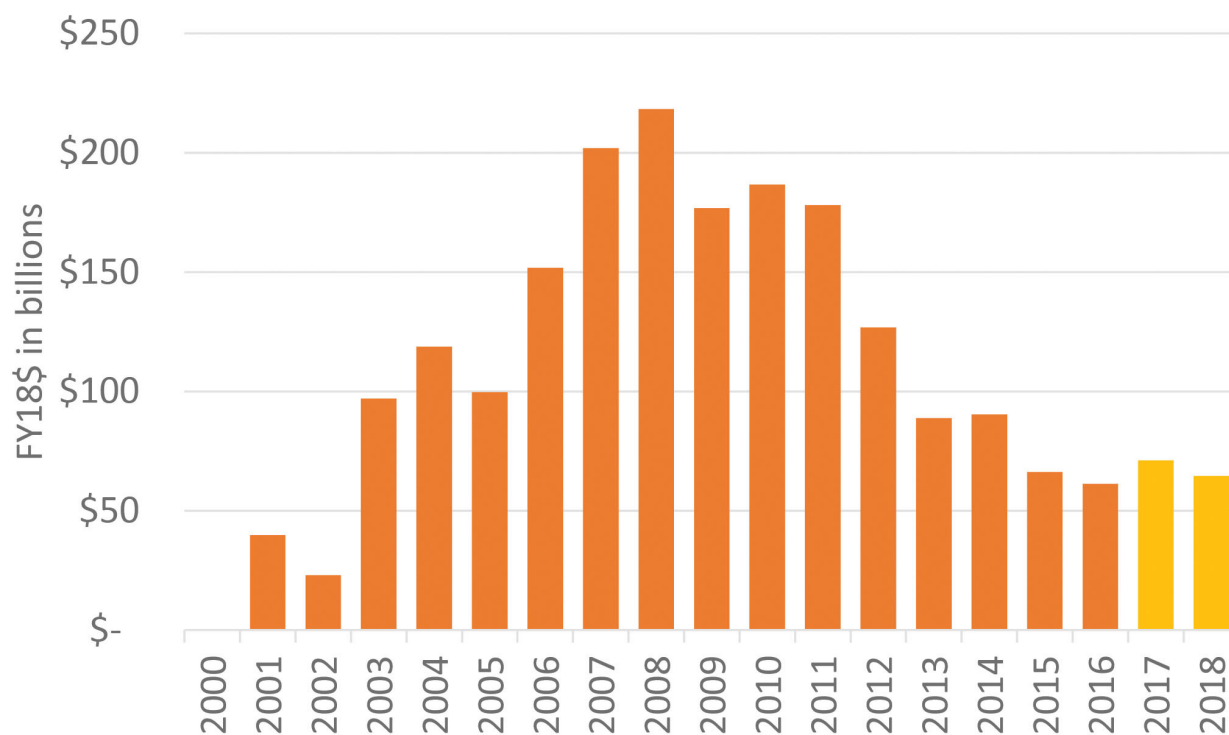
			Amount	Delta from FY17 Approps	% Delta from FY17 Approps
O&M	APPR. Total. Amt	2017	255,031,055,278	0	
	PB. Total	2018	271,524,706,000	16,493,650,722	6.47%
Personnel	APPR. Total. Amt	2017	138,666,259,582	0	
	PB. Total	2018	146,006,723,000	7,340,463,418	5.29%
Procurement	APPR. Total. Amt	2017	123,789,720,988	0	
	PB. Total	2018	124,430,482,000	640,761,012	0.52%
RDT&E	APPR. Total. Amt	2017	76,216,568,168	0	
	PB. Total	2018	84,861,873,000	8,645,304,832	11.34%

Source: Data from VisualDOD. Analysis in Tableau.

Overseas Contingency Operations

The PB 2018 request includes \$64.6 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funds, which is \$5.8 billion more than the \$58.8 billion requested in the Obama administration's PB 2017 request but \$4.7 billion less than the total of \$69.7 billion requested for FY 2017 (including the November request for an additional \$5.8 billion to support operations in Afghanistan and the March 2017 request for an additional \$5.1 billion to support the campaign against ISIS). However, the FY 2017 request included \$5.2 billion in explicit OCO-to-base funds, as required by the Balanced Budget Act of 2015 that amended the BCA caps for FY 2016 and FY 2017. Without this \$5.2 billion, the balance of the FY 2017 OCO request, \$64.5 billion, closely matches the FY 2018 request for \$64.6 billion.

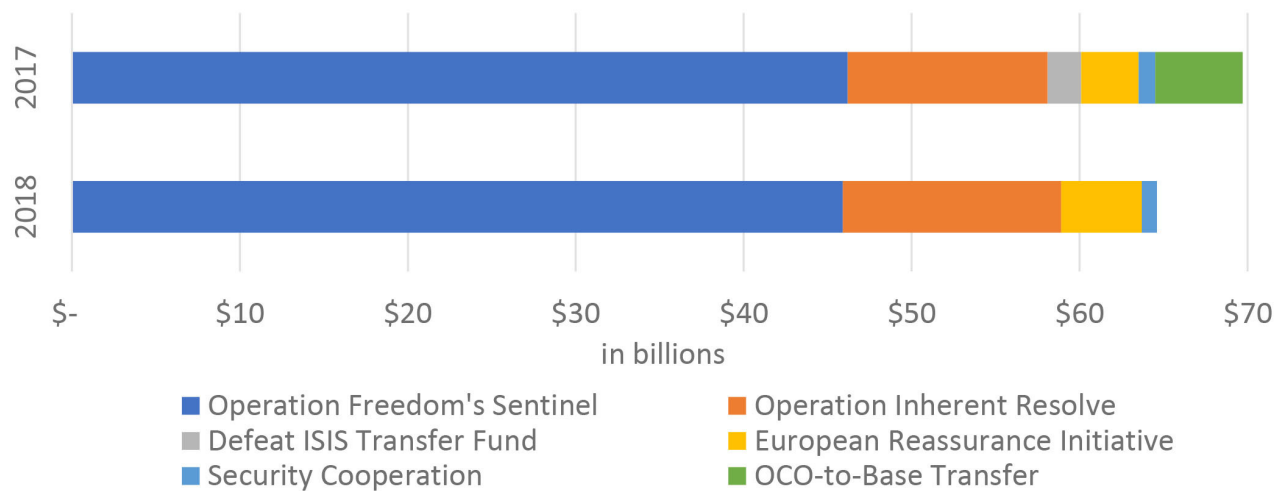
FIGURE 1-7: OCO FUNDING ENACTED FY01–FY16 AND REQUESTED FOR FY17 AND FY18



Source: OUSD (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2018*, FY 2018 Greenbook (Washington, DC: DoD, June 2017), Table 2-1, “Base Budget, War Funding, and Supplementals by Military Department, by P.L. Title (FY 2001 to FY 2018)””; OUSD (Comptroller), CFO, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request: Defense Budget Overview: Overseas Contingency Operations Budget Amendment* (Washington, DC: DoD, November 2016); OUSD (Comptroller), CFO, *Request for Additional Fiscal Year 2017 Appropriations* (Washington, DC: DoD, March 16, 2017).

The FY 2018 request includes \$45.9 billion in OCO funds for the support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel in Afghanistan and related missions, \$13 billion for Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria and related missions, \$4.8 billion for the European Reassurance Initiative, and \$900 million for security cooperation funds. In a point of continuity with the Obama administration, the funding requested for each mission area aligns very closely with the amounts requested in FY 2017.

FIGURE 1-8: TOTAL FY17 AND FY18 OCO FUNDING REQUESTED



Source: OUSD(Comptroller), CFO, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request: Defense Budget Overview*, Figure 6.1, “Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Funding by Activity,” p. 6-1.

DoD and National Defense Funding in Context

Of the \$603 billion requested for base national defense discretionary funding, \$574.5 billion, or 95.2 percent, is for DoD. Of the remainder, \$20.6 billion is for the nuclear weapons activities of the DOE, and \$7.8 billion is for other defense-related activities, predominantly in the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security. The total request of \$667.1 billion includes \$9.6 billion in mandatory spending, which does not need to be specifically appropriated by Congress. \$7.9 billion of this mandatory spending is for DoD pension accrual obligations, and the bulk of the remainder is for occupational health payments to those harmed by nuclear weapons activities and CIA pension accrual payments (see Table 1-4).

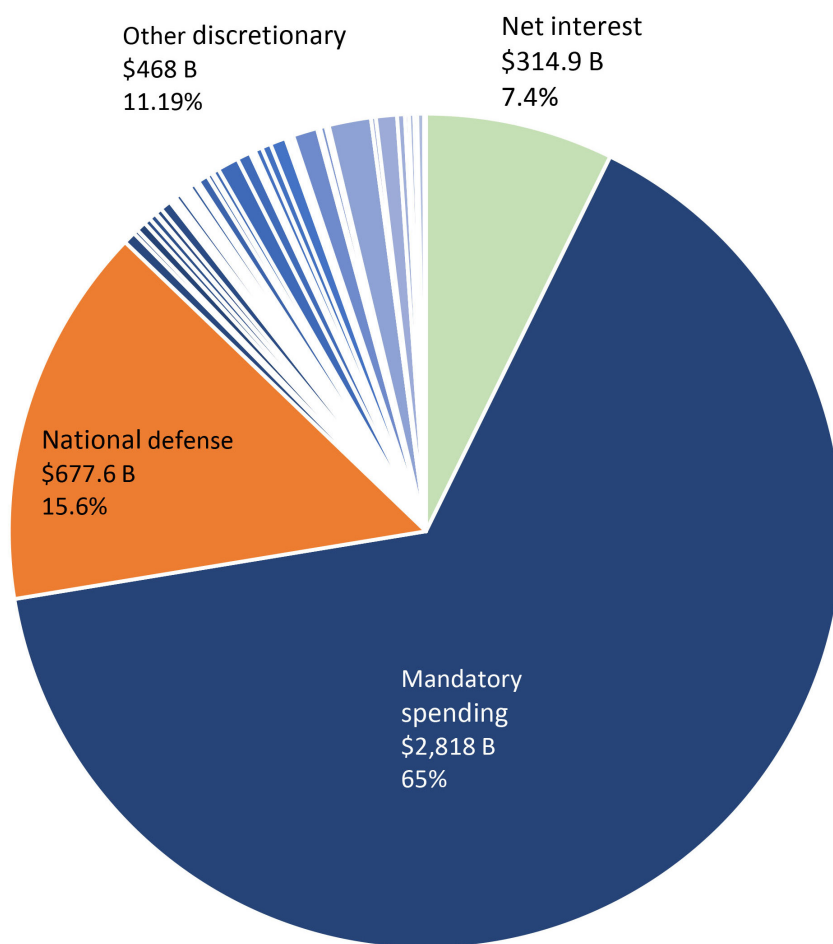
TABLE 1-4: TOTAL NATIONAL DEFENSE SPENDING REQUESTED, PB17 AND PB18

Current-year dollars in billions	PB17 request for FY17	PB18 request FY18	Delta	Percent delta
DoD base	\$523.9	\$574.5	\$50.6	9.7%
DOE	\$18.9	\$20.6	\$1.7	9.0%
Other defense-related	\$8.2	\$7.9	-\$0.3	-4.2%
Base discretionary total	\$551.0	\$603.0	\$52.0	9.4%
DoD OCO	\$58.8	\$64.6	\$5.8	9.9%
DoD discretionary Total	\$582.7	\$639.1	\$56.4	9.7%
Discretionary total	\$609.8	\$667.6	\$57.8	9.5%
DoD	\$7.4	\$7.8	\$0.4	5.6%
DOE	\$1.2	\$1.2	\$0.0	0.3%
Other defense-related	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.0	-6.0%
Mandatory total	\$9.2	\$9.6	\$0.4	4.3%
DoD Total	\$590.1	\$646.9	\$56.8	9.6%
Overall Total	\$655.1	\$677.1	\$22.0	3.4%

Source: OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2018, Table 25-1, “Budget Authority and Outlays by Function, Category and Program,” available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/25_1.xls; OMB, Public Budget Database, FY 2017, Table 28-1, “Budget Authority and Outlays by Function, Category and Program,” available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2017-PER/xls/BUDGET-2017-PER-8-6-1.xls>.

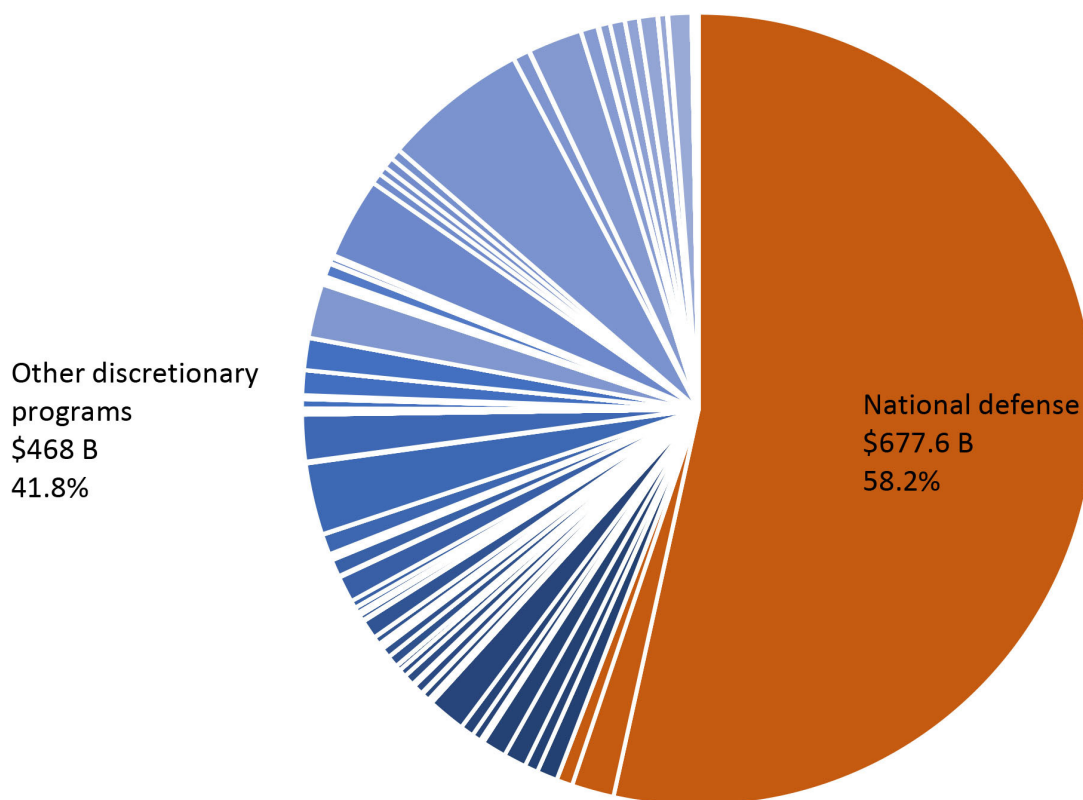
Mandatory spending, predominantly Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, accounts for 65.9 percent of federal spending in the FY 2018 budget, while net interest accounts for 7.5 percent. Discretionary spending accounts for 26.8 percent of all federal spending requested. Overall, the \$677.1 billion proposed for national defense spending would account for 15.8 percent of the \$4,279.5 billion federal budget (see Figure 1-9). In the FY 2018 budget request, national defense spending would make up 58.23 percent of all federal discretionary spending, a departure from the more even split between national defense and non-defense elements of federal spending under the separate caps created by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (see Figure 1-10).

FIGURE 1-9: NATIONAL DEFENSE SPENDING AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL FY18 BUDGET REQUEST



Source: OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2018.

FIGURE 1-10: NATIONAL DEFENSE SPENDING AS A PROPORTION OF DISCRETIONARY SPENDING IN THE FY18 REQUEST



Source: Public Budget Database FY 2018.

Areas of Focus

Although President Trump touted a defense buildup during the campaign, the PB 2018 defense budget postpones any major increases in defense spending over the amounts planned for FY 2018 by the outgoing Obama administration in the PB 2017 request. Much of the additional \$18.5 billion requested in base national defense spending over the planned FY 2018 defense budget is allocated to increases in O&M and RDT&E funding, including a relatively large increase in funding of \$2.3 billion for classified RDT&E programs. The FY 2018 request includes a small boost to procurement spending compared to the PB 2017 projection, but because Congress appropriated additional funds for procurement in FY 2017, it will not represent any growth over actual FY 2017 spending level.

The PB 2018 budget funds a modest increase in end strength in FY 2018 over the current force as funded by Congress for FY 2017. Maintaining the active-duty Army at 476,000 and the Marine Corps at 185,000, it would fund an additional 4,000 sailors and an additional 4,100 airmen, for a total of 8,100 additional active duty servicemembers. It would also increase the reserve components by 2,700 servicemembers, for a total end-strength growth of 10,800. This modest growth is largely a continuation of the efforts by Congress to halt the drawdown of military personnel above the levels forecast for FY 2017. However, it does result in real end-strength growth of 12,700 in the active component and 4,900 in the reserves compared to the FY 2016 end strength. Each appropriations title will be discussed in depth in forthcoming sections of the FY 2018 defense budget request.

Budget Discrepancies

The OMB budget database, the DoD overall budget documents, and the Service budget documents present different dollar figures. For example, the OMB budget database for FY 2018 states that the Navy's total O&M funding request is \$60.76 billion. The DoD budget overview states that the Navy's total O&M request for FY 2018 is \$61.04 billion, while the Navy's budget overview document states that the O&M request totals \$59.64 billion. Part of this discrepancy is due to different figures presented for the FY 2018 budget request for the Marine Corp's O&M account. The DoD-wide O&M justification book and the FY 2018 OMB FYDP budget database present this request as \$8.05 billion, while the Navy's own O&M justification book has a figure of \$6.93 billion, a difference of some \$1.12 billion.

Although the OMB and the DoD overview figures sum to nearly the same levels within each appropriation type, the amounts allocated to each Service diverge substantially. In the procurement accounts, DoD overview figures show the Army with \$962 million more than the OMB budget data does. The OMB budget data allocates this \$962 million to DoD-wide procurement instead. Similar divergences appear in the O&M, MILCON, and revolving funds appropriation types. Across the Services, the DoD PB18 budget overview documents allocate \$2.2 billion to the Services that the OMB budget data allocates to the DoD-wide accounts. Specifically, the DoD overview documents allocate \$1.4 billion to the Army, \$426 million to the Navy, and \$415 million to the Air Force that the OMB database allocates to DoD-wide (see Table 1-5). This report will note the source of the budget figures used for each reference, but will not attempt to reconcile divergences between the budget numbers presented by OMB, DoD, and the Services.

TABLE 1-5: COMPARISON OF THE FY18 BUDGET DATA PRESENTED BY OMB AND DOD, BY SERVICE AND APPROPRIATION TYPE

		MILPERS	O&M	Procurement	RDT&E	MILCON	Family Housing	Revolving Funds	Total
Army	DoD	\$60,894	\$72,341	\$21,177	\$9,545	\$1,402	\$529	\$134	\$166,022
	OMB	\$60,894	\$72,125	\$20,215	\$9,544	\$1,345	\$530	\$0	\$164,653
	Delta	\$0	\$216	\$962	\$1	\$57	-\$1	\$134	\$1,369
Navy	DoD	\$48,050	\$61,035	\$50,336	\$17,805	\$1,844	\$412	\$509	\$179,991
	OMB	\$48,050	\$60,754	\$50,335	\$17,805	\$1,701	\$412	\$509	\$179,566
	Delta	\$0	\$282	\$1	\$0	\$143	\$0	\$0	\$426
Air Force	DoD	\$37,019	\$60,271	\$47,727	\$35,050	\$2,496	\$403	\$66	\$183,032
	OMB	\$37,019	\$59,977	\$47,727	\$35,049	\$2,442	\$403	\$0	\$182,617
	Delta	\$0	\$294	\$0	\$1	\$54	\$0	\$66	\$415
DoD-wide	DoD	-	\$78,283	\$5,988	\$20,928	\$3,271	\$63	\$1,535	\$110,068
	OMB	-	\$79,076	\$6,949	\$20,928	\$3,527	\$63	\$1,735	\$112,278
	Delta	-	-\$793	-\$961	\$0	-\$256	\$0	-\$200	-\$2,210
Total	DoD	\$145,963	\$271,930	\$125,228	\$83,328	\$9,013	\$1,407	\$2,244	\$639,113
	OMB	\$145,963	\$271,932	\$125,226	\$83,326	\$9,015	\$1,408	\$2,244	\$639,114
	Delta	\$0	-\$1	\$2	\$2	-\$2	-\$1	\$0	\$0

Source: OMB, Public Budget Database FY 2018; OUSD(Comptroller), CFO, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request: Defense Budget Overview*.

Note: Dollars in millions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katherine Blakeley is a Research Fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. Prior to joining CSBA, Ms. Blakeley worked as a defense policy analyst at the Congressional Research Service and the Center for American Progress. She is completing her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she received her M.A. Her academic research examines Congressional defense policymaking.

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NOTES

- 1 Secretary of Defense James Mattis, "Implementation Guidance for Budget Directives in the National Security Presidential memorandum on Rebuilding the U.S. Armed Forces," memorandum to DoD leadership, January 31, 2017, available at <https://media.defense.gov/2017/Feb/01/2001693094/-1/-1/0/DDD-170201-373-002>.
- 2 Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, "Request for Additional Appropriations," letter to the White House, March 14, 2017, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/amendment_03_16_18.pdf.
- 3 This \$591.8 billion appropriated for DoD in FY 2017 includes funds appropriated in the initial continuing resolution (P.L. 114-223), the December extension of the continuing resolution (P.L. 114-254), the short April extension of the continuing resolution (P.L. 115-30), and the FY 2017 omnibus funding bill (P.L. 115-31).
- 4 The OMB budget database, the DoD overall budget documents, and the Service budget documents present divergent dollar figures. For example, the FY 2018 budget request for the Marine Corp's O&M account is inconsistent across these sources. The DoD-wide O&M justification book and the FY 2018 OMB FYDP budget database present this request as \$8.05 billion, while the Navy's own O&M justification book has a figure of \$6.93 billion, a difference of some \$1.12 billion. This report will note the source of the budget figures used for each reference, but will not attempt to reconcile divergences between the budget numbers presented by OMB, DoD, and the Services. For a fuller discussion, see the section "Budget Discrepancies."