

Military Escalation: Obama okays \$130 b for Afghanistan, Iraq wars

By [Global Research](#)

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WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama Wednesday signed the fiscal 2010 National Defence Authorization Act during a ceremony at the White House.

Obama hailed the act, which contains \$680.2 billion in military budget authority, as transformational legislation that targets wasteful defence spending.

The authorization act contains \$130 billion to fund overseas contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and it also provides \$6.7 billion for thousands of all-terrain, mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles now arriving in Afghanistan.

The president was accompanied by Vice President Joe Biden, congressional leaders and other senior officials, including Defence Secretary Robert M. Gates and Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“There’s still more waste we need to cut; there’s still more fights that we need to win,” Obama said, noting he and Gates will continue to seek out unnecessary defence spending.

Obama said he has ended unnecessary no-bid defence contracts and signed bipartisan legislation to reform defence procurement practices so weapons systems’ costs do not spin out of control. “Even as we have made critical investments in equipment and weapons our troops do need, we’re eliminating tens of billions of dollars in waste we don’t need,” Obama said.

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“As commander in chief, I will always do whatever it takes to keep the American people safe to defend this nation,” Obama said. “That’s why this bill provides for the best military in the history of the world.”

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Money also is budgeted to fund programs that address “real and growing threats,” Obama said. Such systems, he said, include the F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter, the littoral combat ship, and more helicopters and reconnaissance support for deployed U.S. forces.

Obama praised Gates and Mullen for their hard work in developing the 2010 defence budget. “I want to thank, publicly, Bob Gates for his service to our nation,” he said, and he added that Mullen has “provided wise counsel and stood with us in our efforts to initiate reform.”

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