

Pentagon Wants \$450 Billion Increase Over Next Five Years

By [Global Research](#)

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“We cannot do everything, or function equally well across the spectrum of conflict. Ultimately we must make choices,” Gates wrote.

The new estimate, which has not been publicly released, would raise the fiscal 2010 budget number announced by the administration this year from \$527 billion to \$584 billion, not counting operations costs for the ongoing wars.

Money to prosecute the ongoing wars is not included in the new estimate, meaning the military would still need significant supplemental appropriations in addition to the increased budget request.

Supplemental appropriations have been used to fund procurement and personnel costs that are predictable and therefore should be placed into the regular budget, said Admiral Michael Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“We’re going to have to figure out how to get off supplementals,” Mullen told a group of Washington reporters Thursday. “My strategic approach is to start to implant those things that are in supplementals that we think we’ve got to have into the baseline budget. We need to start doing that. We’re working our way through the next budget now.”

While reset and modernization funds in the new estimate are relatively non-controversial, the \$30 billion contingency fund could face stiff opposition on Capitol Hill. That money, if approved, would be available to rapidly deploy active duty forces overseas in the event of an unexpected crisis.

In 2001 and 2002, lawmakers rejected attempts by Pentagon leaders to secure a contingency fund, from which they could draw money without requesting additional permission from Congress.

“The Congress always saw this from their perspective as a slush fund,” said Zakheim, “Whereas the defense department has said it needed this kind of money because it could never project what exactly would be needed in the event of an emergency.”

Presidential Candidates Differ

The candidates differ on whether or not large increases in overall defense budgets are wise or even doable.

McCain has promised to freeze all discretionary spending except for national security, and is

pushing for an additional 150,000 troops above current plans, to be paid for within the base budget.

Obama only supports the current planned increase of 92,000 Army and Marine Corps personnel.

Both candidates have called for a wholesale reform of the Pentagon's acquisitions system in an effort to control procurement costs, which have ballooned in recent years due to mismanagement.

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