

Rep. Frank, NYT Take Aim at Bloated Pentagon

Written by Robert Dreyfuss | The Nation
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Representative Barney Frank (D.-Mass.) et al. have renewed a proposal to double President Obama's projected cuts in military spending. Hardly a radical idea, given the bloated size of the Pentagon, Frank, Representative Lynn Woolsey and others wrote to Obama this week suggesting cutting the Defense Department's wallet by nearly a trillion dollars over the next decade. As reported in The Hill, they [wrote](#) :

The Cold War is long over, and no remotely comparable adversary has emerged or is likely to emerge. We believe that savings of around \$900 billion over the next 10 years can be realized ... We ask you to take even bolder leadership on this issue as you finalize your budget.

In fact, the Pentagon could be reduced far more than that, but it's a start.

Obama and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta proposed modest cuts of \$487 billion over a decade, which merely reduces the growth in military outlays over that period.

Frank and his allies propose drawing down U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2012, not 2014, sharply reducing the U.S. deployment of forces overseas, and shrinking the U.S. nuclear force, including missiles, bombers and submarines.

[In an editorial today](#), the New York Times weighs in, too, suggesting that Obama's cuts don't go nearly far enough:

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The \$259 billion in budget cuts over the next five years announced by the Pentagon may sound like a lot. But they are mainly a scaling back of previously projected spending — the delights of the Washington budget games. This year, Pentagon spending will total \$531 billion. In 2017, it will rise to \$567 billion. Factoring in inflation, that amounts to only a minuscule 1.6 percent real cut. (Both numbers exclude war spending — \$115 billion this year.)

The Times [suggests](#) reducing the size of the super-expensive F-35 program, cutting the nuclear force, and eliminating one of eleven American aircraft carrier task forces. (Why they don't propose canceling the F-35 altogether and at least halving the number of aircraft carriers is beyond me.) But again, it's a start, and it opens the debate, especially against the hawks who are frothing at the mouth over Obama's moderate plan to slow military spending. To wit, [see the latest from Defending Defense](#)

, a hawk
[coalition](#)

that includes AEI, Heritage, and the Foreign Policy Initiative, all neoconservative groups:

The President's budget request will slash \$487 billion from the military over the next ten years, delaying vital next-generation systems and giving the pink slip to 100,000 active duty men and women in uniform. Unfortunately, this is a budget-driven strategy that kills jobs and puts our military at risk while it is still in harm's way.

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