

Defense Spending

| Year | Pres. | House | Senate | Democrats | Republicans | |
|------|-------|-------|--------|---|---|---|
| 1900 | R | R | R | We oppose militarism. It means conquest abroad and intimidation and oppression at home. It means the strong arm which has ever been fatal to free institutions. It is what millions of our citizens have fled from in Europe. It will impose upon our peace loving people a large standing army and unnecessary burden of taxation, and will be a constant menace to their liberties. A small standing army and a well-disciplined state militia are amply sufficient in time of peace. | | |
| 1904 | R | R | R | | Whenever crimes against humanity have been perpetrated which have shocked our people, his protest has been made, and our good offices have been tendered, but always with due regard to international obligations. . . Under his guidance we find ourselves at peace with all the world, and never were we more respected or our wishes more regarded by foreign nations. | |
| 1908 | R | R | R | | | |
| 1909 | R | R | R | | | US purchases first warplanes |
| 1912 | R | D | R | | | |
| 1914 | D | D | D | | | World War I breaks out (US declares neutrality) |
| 1916 | D | D | D | We therefore favor the maintenance of an army fully adequate to the requirements of order, of safety, and of the protection of the nation's rights, the fullest development of modern methods of seacoast defence and the maintenance of an adequate reserve of citizens trained to arms and prepared to safeguard the people and territory of the United States against any danger of hostile action which may unexpectedly arise; and a fixed policy for the continuous development of a navy, worthy to support the great naval traditions of the United States and fully equal to the international tasks which this Nation hopes and expects to take a part in performing. | In order to maintain our peace and make certain the security of our people within our own borders the country must have not only adequate but thorough and complete national defence ready for any emergency. | |
| 1920 | D | R | R | | we pledge ourselves to proper maintenance of the military and naval establishments upon which our national security and dignity depend. | |
| 1924 | R | R | R | We demand a strict and sweeping reduction of armaments by land and sea, so that there shall be no competitive military program or naval building. Until international agreements to this end have been made we advocate an army and navy adequate for our national safety. | There must be no further weakening of our regular army and we advocate appropriations sufficient to provide for the training of all members of the national guard, the citizens' military training camps, the reserve officers' training camps and the reserves who may offer themselves for service. | |
| 1928 | R | R | R | | We believe that in time of war the nation should draft for its defense not only its citizens but also every resource which may contribute to success. | |

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| 1932 | R | R | R | We advocate a Navy and an Army adequate for national defense, based on a survey of all facts affecting the existing establishments, that the people in time of peace may not be burdened by an expenditure fast approaching a billion dollars annually. | We support the essential principles of the National Defense Act as amended in 1920 and by the Air Corps Act of 1926, and believe that the army of the United States has, through successive reductions accomplished in the last twelve years, reached an irreducible minimum consistent with the self-reliance, self-respect and security of this country. | |
| 1936 | D | D | D | | | |
| 1940 | D | D | D | We propose to provide America with an invincible air force, a navy strong enough to protect all our seacoasts and our national interests, and a fully-equipped and mechanized army. We shall continue to coordinate these implements of defense with the necessary expansion of industrial productive capacity and with the training of appropriate personnel. Outstanding leaders of industry and labor have already been enlisted by the Government to harness our mighty economic forces for national defense. | We declare for the prompt, orderly and realistic building of our national defense to the point at which we shall be able not only to defend the United States, its possessions, and essential outposts from foreign attack, but also efficiently to uphold in war the Monroe Doctrine. | Lend Lease Agreement between US and Britain/US holds first peacetime draft |
| 1943 | D | D | D | | | The Pentagon is opened |
| 1944 | D | D | D | | We favor the maintenance of postwar military forces and establishments of ample strength for the successful defense and the safety of the United States, its possessions and outposts, for the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine, and for meeting any military commitments determined by Congress. | GI Bill signed into law |
| 1947 | D | R | R | | | National Security Act. Reorganization of US Military |
| 1948 | D | R | R | For these reasons it is imperative that we maintain our military strength until world peace with justice is secure. | The maintenance of armed services for air, land and sea, to a degree which will insure our national security | Truman ends segregation in military |
| 1949 | D | D | D | | | Dept. of Defense formed |
| 1950 | D | D | D | | | Defense Production Act signed into law |
| 1952 | D | D | D | The Democratic Party will continue to stand unequivocally for the strong, balanced defense forces for this country—land, sea and air. We will continue to support the expansion and maintenance of the military and civil defense forces required for our national security. We reject the defeatist view of those who say we cannot afford the expense and effort necessary to defend ourselves. | Generally, we shall see to it that our military services are adequately supported in all ways required, including manpower, to perform their appropriate tasks in relation to the defense of this country and to meet our treaty obligations. | |
| 1954 | R | R | R | | | Eisenhower gives Domino theory speech |
| 1956 | R | D | D | We reject the false Republican notion that this country can afford only a second-best defense. We stand for strong defense forces so clearly superior in modern weapons to those of any possible enemy that our armed strength will make an attack upon the free world unthinkable, and thus be a major force for world peace. | We shall maintain our powerful military strength as a deterrent to aggression and as a guardian of the peace. We shall maintain it ready, balanced and technologically advanced for these objectives only. | |
| 1960 | R | D | D | The Republican Administration has lost that position of pre-eminence. Over the past 7 1/2 years, our military power has steadily declined relative to that of the Russians and the Chinese and their satellites. | The firm diplomacy of the Eisenhower-Nixon Administration has been supported by a military power superior to any in the history of our nation or in the world. As long as world tensions menace us with war, we are resolved to maintain an armed power exceeded by no other. | |

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| 1961 | D | D | | | IKE gives Military Industrial Complex speech | |
| 1964 | D | D | Since then, and at the lowest possible cost, we have created a balanced, versatile, powerful defense establishment, capable of countering aggression across the entire spectrum of conflict, from nuclear confrontation to guerrilla subversion. | We will maintain a superior, not merely equal, military capability as long as the Communist drive for world domination continues. It will be a capability of balanced force, superior in all its arms, maintaining flexibility for effective performance in the rapidly changing science of war. | | |
| 1968 | D | D | We must and will maintain a strong and balanced defense establishment adequate to the task of security and peace. There must be no doubt about our strategic nuclear capability, our capacity to meet limited challenges, and our willingness to act when our vital interests are threatened. | We have frittered away superior military capabilities, enabling the Soviets to narrow their defense gap, in some areas to outstrip us, and to move to cancel our lead entirely by the early Seventies. | | |
| 1972 | R | D | Military strength remains an essential element of a responsible international policy. America must have the strength required for effective deterrence. . . But military defense cannot be treated in isolation from other vital national concerns. Spending for military purposes is greater by far than federal spending for education, housing, environmental protection, unemployment insurance or welfare. Unneeded dollars for the military at once add to the tax burden and pre-empt funds from programs of direct and immediate benefit to our people. Moreover, too much that is now spent on defense not only adds nothing to our strength but makes us less secure by stimulating other countries to respond | Only a strong America can safely negotiate with adversaries. Only a strong America can fashion partnerships for peace. . . From 1965 to 1969 the Vietnam war so absorbed the resources of the Defense Department that maintenance, modernization, and research and development fell into neglect. In the late 1960's the Soviet Union outspent the United States by billions of dollars for force modernization, facing the United States with the dangerous prospect that its forces would soon be qualitatively inferior. | | |
| 1976 | R | D | We must also seek areas of cooperation with our traditional adversaries. There is no other option, for human survival itself is at stake. But pursuit of detente will require maintenance of a strong American military deterrent, hard bargaining for our own interest, recognition of continuing competition, and a refusal to oversell the immediate benefits of such a policy to the American public. | A superior national defense is the fundamental condition for a secure America and for peace and freedom for the world. Military strength is the path to peace. A sound foreign policy must be rooted in a superior defense capability, and both must be perceived as a deterrent to aggression and supportive of our national interests. | | |
| 1980 | D | D | This increase is necessary in order to compensate for the decline in U.S. military strength over the previous eight years and to assure a high quality of military personnel, an effective nuclear deterrent capability, a capable conventional fighting force and an improved intelligence capability. We will act to further improve intelligence gathering and analysis. | Despite the growing sentiment for a stronger defense, candidate Carter ran on a promise of massive cuts in U.S. defense spending, one promise he has kept. . . Republicans commit themselves to an immediate increase in defense spending to be applied judiciously to critically needed programs. We will build toward a sustained defense expenditure sufficient to close the gap with the Soviets, and ultimately reach the position of military superiority that the American people demand. | | |
| 1984 | R | D | R | Maintaining strong and effective military forces is essential to keeping the peace and safeguarding freedom. Our allies and adversaries must never doubt our military power or our will to defend our vital interests. To that end, we pledge a strong defense built in concert with our allies, based on a coherent strategy, and supported by a sound economy. | We are proud of a strong America. Our military strength exists for the high moral purpose of deterring conflict, not initiating war. The deterrence of aggression is ethically imperative. That is why we have restored America's defense capability and renewed our country's will. Americans are again proud to serve in the Armed Forces and proud of those who serve. | |

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| 1988 R | D | D | our national strength will be enhanced by more stable defense budgets and by a commitment from our allies to assume a greater share of the costs and responsibilities required to maintain peace and liberty; and that as military spending and priorities change, government should encourage the conversion of affected military facilities and the retraining of workers to facilitate the creation of new forms of communication, space development and new peacetime growth and productivity. | Republicans will implement a strategic modernization program, emphasizing offensive and defensive strategic forces that are affordable and credible and that provide for a more stable balance. In contrast with the Democrat nominee and his party, we will not jeopardize America's security and undermine the advances we have made for peace and freedom by permitting erosion of our nuclear deterrent. | |
| 1992 R | D | D | Our economy needs both the people and the funds released from defense at the Cold War's end. We will help the stalwarts of that struggle—the men and women who served in our armed forces and who work in our defense industries—make the most of a new era. We will provide early notice of program changes to give communities, businesses and workers enough time to plan. . . America is the world's strongest military power and we must remain so. A post-Cold War restructuring of American forces will produce substantial savings beyond those promised by the Bush Administration, but that restructuring must be achieved without undermining our ability to meet future threats to our security. | Republicans call for a controlled defense drawdown, not a freefall. That is why President Bush proposes to carefully reduce defense spending over the next four years by an additional \$34 billion, including \$18 billion in outlays, with a 25 percent reduction in personnel. He has already eliminated over 100 weapon systems. Around the world, American forces are coming home from the frontiers of the Cold War. More than 550 overseas bases are being closed or realigned. Yet U.S. forces retain the ability to meet the challenge of another Desert Storm with equal success. | |
| 1996 D | R | R | Over the past four years, the Administration has undertaken the most successful restructuring of our military forces in history. Even as the size of our forces has decreased, their capabilities, readiness and qualitative edge have increased. The Administration has ensured that America is prepared to fight alongside others when we can, and alone when we must. We have defeated attempts to cut our defense budget irresponsibly. | Republicans are committed to ensuring the status of the United States as the world's preeminent military power. We must reverse the decline in what our nation spends for defense. In just three and a half years, an amateur approach to military matters and dramatic reductions in defense spending under the Clinton Administration have had a serious negative impact on the readiness and capabilities of our armed forces. | |
| 2000 R | R | R | A strong, flexible, and modern military force is the ultimate guarantor of our physical survival and the protection of our interests and values. Today, America's military is the best-trained, best-equipped, most capable, and most ready fighting force in the world. With Bill Clinton and Al Gore in the White House, Democrats reversed a decline in defense spending that began under President Bush, boosted pay and allowances, and provided the funding for a new generation of weapons. | A Republican president and a Republican Congress will transform America's defense capabilities for the information age, ensuring that U.S. armed forces remain paramount against emerging dangers. . . A Republican president, working in partnership with a Republican Congress, will push beyond marginal improvements and incorporate new technologies and new strategies — spending more and investing wisely to transform our military into a true twenty-first century force. | |
| 2002 R | R | D | | | George Bush signs Homeland Security Act establishing Homeland Security Department |
| 2004 R | R | R | John Kerry, John Edwards and the Democratic Party will send a clear message to every man and woman in our armed forces: We guarantee that you will always be the best-led, best-equipped and most respected fighting force in the world. You will be armed with the right weapons, schooled in the right skills, and fully prepared to win on the battlefield. You will never be sent into harm's way without enough troops for the task, and never asked to fight a war without a plan to win the peace. | President Bush also fulfilled his promise to begin transforming how our nation organizes and equips itself to fight 21st Century adversaries. Leveraging rapidly changing technology with flexible organizations and adaptable doctrine, the President and the Republican Congress have led the transformation of the U.S. military to become lighter, faster, and more lethal. | |

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| 2008 R | D | D | <p>We will rebuild our armed forces to meet the full spectrum needs of the new century. We will strongly support efforts to: build up our special operations forces, civil affairs, information operations, engineers, foreign area officers, and other units and capabilities that remain in chronic short supply; invest in foreign language training, cultural awareness, human intelligence, and other needed counter-insurgency and stabilization skill sets; and create a specialized military advisor corps, which will enable us to better build up local allies' capacities to take on mutual threats. We also will ensure that military personnel have sufficient training time before they are sent into battle.</p> | <p>Republican leadership, from the presidency to the Congress, has given America the best-manned, best-trained, best-equipped, and best-led military in the world. That is a radical change from the late 1990's, when national defense was neglected and under-funded by the Clinton Administration. Our Armed Forces today are modern, agile, and adaptable to the unpredictable range of challenges in the years ahead. We pledge to keep them that way.</p> | |
| 2012 D | R | D | <p>America's unrivaled military capabilities represent a second core pillar of our global leadership. After more than a decade of war, we have an opportunity to retool our armed forces and our defense strategy to ensure we both maintain the world's most capable military and adapt to the challenges of the 21st century. . . In our current fiscal environment, we must also make tough budgetary decisions across the board - and that includes within the defense budget. The Budget Control Act enacted by Congress last year, with the support of Republicans and Democrats alike, mandates reductions in federal spending, including defense spending.</p> | <p>Sequestration—which is severe, automatic, across-the-board cuts in defense spending over the next decade—of the nation's military budget would be a disaster for national security, imperiling the safety of our servicemen and women, accelerating the decline of our nation's defense industrial base, and resulting in the layoff of more than 1 million skilled workers. . . The strategy significantly increases the risk of future conflict by declaring to our adversaries that we will no longer maintain the forces necessary to fight and win more than one conflict at a time. It relies on the good intentions and capabilities of international organizations to justify constraining American military readiness. . . In order to deter aggression from nation-states, we must maintain military and technical superiority through innovation while upgrading legacy systems including aircraft and armored vehicles. We must deter the threat posed by rogue aggressors with the assurance that justice will be served through state-of-the-art surveillance, enhanced special operations capabilities, and unmanned aerial systems.</p> | |
| 2014 D | R | D | | | Obama proposes deep cuts to military |
| 2016 D | R | R | <p>We support a smart, predictable defense budget that meets the strategic challenges we face, not the arbitrary cuts that the Republican Congress enacted as part of sequestration. We must prioritize military readiness by making sure our Active, Reserve, and National Guard components remain the best trained and equipped in the world. We will seek a more agile and flexible force and rid the military of outdated Cold War-era systems.</p> | <p>Quite simply, the Republican Party is committed to rebuilding the U.S. military into the strongest on earth, with vast superiority over any other nation or group of nations in the world. We face a dangerous world, and we believe in a resurgent America. . . In all of our country's history, there is no parallel to what President Obama and his former Secretary of State have done to weaken our nation.</p> | |
| 2019 R | D | R | | | US Space Force founded |

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| 2020 R | D | R | <p>Democrats believe the measure of our security is not how much we spend on defense, but how we spend our defense dollars and in what proportion to other tools in our foreign policy toolbox and other urgent domestic investments. We believe we can and must ensure our security while restoring stability, predictability, and fiscal discipline in defense spending. We spend 13 times more on the military than we do on diplomacy. We spend five times more in Afghanistan each year than we do on global public health and preventing the next pandemic. We can maintain a strong defense and protect our safety and security for less. It's past time to rebalance our investments, improve the efficiency and competitiveness of our defense industrial base, conduct rigorous annual audits of the Pentagon, and end waste and fraud.</p> | | |
| 2024 D | R | D | <p>The United States has the finest fighting force in the history of the world. And while our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and guardians remain the envy of the globe, President Biden understands that maintaining our military advantages in the future means making strategic investments now. That is why the Administration has invested in cutting-edge capabilities across all services and domains and maintained a commitment to modernize and recapitalize the nuclear triad as the bedrock of deterrence.</p> | <p>The Policy of the Republican Party must be to ensure that America's Military is the strongest and best-equipped in the World—and that our Government uses that great strength sparingly, and only in clear instances where our National Interests are threatened. . . Republicans will ensure our Military is the most modern, lethal and powerful Force in the World. We will invest in cutting-edge research and advanced technologies, including an Iron Dome Missile Defense Shield, support our Troops with higher pay, and get woke Leftwing Democrats fired as soon as possible.</p> | |