

Pentagon set to submit \$515.4B budget

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon reportedly will submit a \$515.4 billion 2009 budget, the highest level of U.S. defense spending since World War II adjusting for inflation. The budget to be unveiled Monday would pay for regular defense operations, but does not include funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, The New York Times reported Sunday. Congress has already approved more than \$600 billion in supplemental spending for the wars and for counterterrorism operations. The new level of Pentagon spending represents an increase in real terms of about 5 percent over last year's spending, the Times said. However, growth in defense spending has not kept pace with overall U.S. economic growth, the newspaper said -- and spending for regular Pentagon operations and the for the wars account for a smaller percentage of the gross domestic product than in previous wars, the report said. The United States spent about 14 percent of the national economy during the Korean War and about 9 percent during the Vietnam War. Spending on normal Pentagon operations, nuclear weapons and supplemental war costs combined account for just over 4 percent of the current economy, budget experts told the Times.

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