

Defense base budget: \$515.4B in FY2009

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. President George Bush Monday allocated \$515.4 billion to the Defense Department, a \$35.9 billion -- 7.5 percent -- increase of its current budget. The budget request for fiscal year 2009 "provides the resources necessary to maintain an agile, highly trained, and lethal fighting force, increase Army and Marine Corps end strength, and sustain the United States' technological advantage over current and potential enemies," Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in a news release. The budget would:-- Allocate nearly \$50 billion for equipment such as unmanned aerial vehicles, armored ground vehicles and technology that supports U.S. troops.-- Designate \$70 billion as an emergency allowance to support activities related to the war on terror.-- Provide \$20.5 billion for efforts to increase the size of the U.S. Army to 547,400 and the U.S. Marine Corps to 202,000.-- Allocate \$49.1 billion for National Guard and Reserve units.-- Provide \$389 million to establish a new command to strengthen ties with African governments, institutions and organizations to foster security and peace.-- Designate \$750 million to support allies in their contributions to international military peacekeeping efforts.-- Earmark \$17.3 billion to modernize aircraft fleets.

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