

Nuclear Fallback

Political turmoil in the Middle East, Iran's drive for nuclear weapons, and the buildup of China's military are only a few of the worrisome trends that point to a prolonged period of global instability. Against this backdrop, the U.S. defense budget and the military capabilities it buys are being dramatically reduced in ways that will hinder our ability to shape or respond to these developments.

Over the next decade, defense spending will drop by anywhere from \$450 billion to more than \$1 trillion. The full extent of the cuts, and the national-security implications they foreshadow, are now in the hands of a congressional "supercommittee" charged with slashing overall federal spending. But cuts of this magnitude will translate into less military capability, a likely "dumbing down" of U.S. military strategy, a more problematic margin of military advantage over potential adversaries, and greater strategic risk. They are also likely to diminish America's ability to advance U.S. policy objectives and secure a stable world order.

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