

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

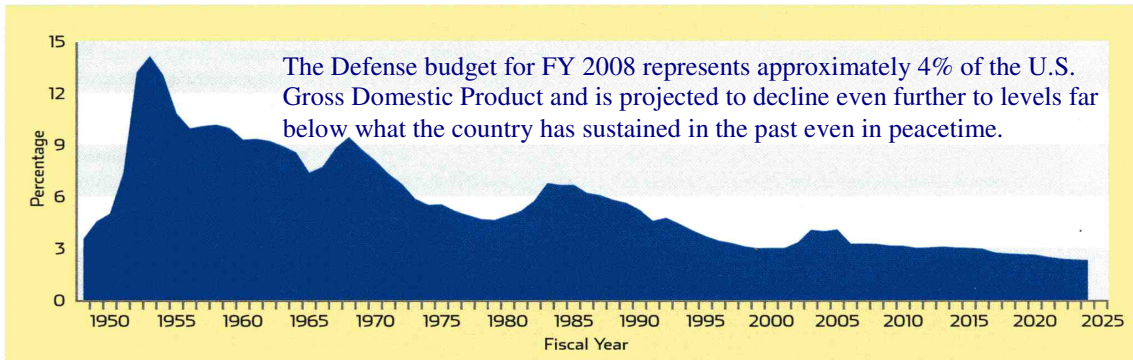
Here is the wording of the VCOC National Legislative Objective as approved on 9 Jan 2009. We will want to get these to our Congressional Delegation prior to the Virginia Congressional Luncheon on 28 April and then follow up with the Congressmen, Congresswomen and their aides at the luncheon. We will have to lobby hard to convince them **not to cut the defense budget**. Also, now is the time to start telling them to **not even think about increasing TRICARE costs for retirees**.

PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

Our nation is at war and defense is the first duty of national government. We are in an “era of persistent conflict”. We are fighting counter-insurgencies, but the threat of a conventional high intensity war is also a real possibility. We must re-balance our force to meet the full spectrum of potential conflict.

We need a wartime budget! Our country can afford, and must devote, a greater share of its resources to national defense. Past wars have required a larger sacrifice from our nation; this war is no less important. Our defense budget must be increased to at least 5% of our GDP! Only the military is bearing the brunt of war; we must not skimp in their support. Also, we need a national solution to our energy problem in order to maximize our available defense dollars.

**Defense Spending as a Percentage of GDP
(1948–2024)**



Of all the positions identified by MOAA, the VCOC has determined these are the top 3 objectives.

- 1. Increase the size of ground forces:** We are finally starting to increase the size of our land forces. But, we have dangerously stretched our Army and no longer have a viable strategic reserve. We must rebuild our readiness! We urge Congress to fully fund and increase the end strength of the active Army to at least 700,000; ARNG to 358,000, Army Reserve to 206,000 and Marines to 202,000. Do not reduce USAF/Navy strength to increase our land forces, nor resort to a draft.
- 2. Prevent the erosion of TRICARE benefits:** Cost saving in the Defense Budget must not be borne by the military community who have served an arduous 20- to 30-year career. Proposals that increase costs of retiree health care are unfair and send the wrong signal to those serving. *We need a permanent fix to the Medicare reimbursement rate problem!*
- 3. Fully Implement All Recommendations of Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC):** Only some of the Commission’s recommendations have been acted on by Congress. Specifically, Congress must eliminate the SBP-DIC off-set; approve full concurrent receipt for retiree disabilities; simplify and expedite the processing of disability claims and appeals. Our Wounded Warriors deserve the best care this country can provide. Enact legislation to implement the full range of the Commission’s recommendations.

/Sam Wilder, COL, USA, Ret, VCOC Vice President & Legislative Chair

National Legislative Section of VCOC website <http://www.VirginiaMOAA.com/> includes links to Congress