

The Chart Page

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Aspin's Challenge

Composition of the Base Force

	The Force in FY 1991	Base Force 1990
Strategic		
Bombers	B-52, B-1	B-52H, B-1, B-2
ICBMs	1,000	550
SSBNs	34	18
Air Force		
Active FWEs	22	15
Reserve FWEs	12	11
Army		
Active Divisions	16	12
Reserve Divisions	10	6
Cadre Divisions	-	2
Navy		
Total Ships	530	450
Aircraft carriers	15	12
Active air wings	13	11
Reserve air wings	2	2
Marine Corps		
Active MEFs	3	3
Reserve MEFs	1	1

FWE	Fighter wing equivalent
MEF	Marine expeditionary force

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin (D-Wis.) has produced a competing plan, which he calls "Option C." It calls for deeper cuts, producing a US military smaller than the base force, and would rely much more on reserves and naval power projections.

The Base Force is what the Pentagon considers the minimum force required to ensure US defense in the post-cold war world. The Base Force elements in this table were sized in 1990 to be able to respond to regional threats rather than to a global challenge from Soviet forces. Such regional threats are deemed to require fewer wings, and warships.

The Option C Difference

	The Force End FY 1991	Base Force 1997	Option C 1997
Air Force			
Active FWEs	22	15	10
Reserve FWEs	12	11	8
Active personnel	511,000	430,000	364,000
Reserve personnel	202,000	200,000	193,000
Army			
Active divisions	16	12	9
Reserve divisions	10	6	6
Cadre divisions	--	2	--
Active personnel	725,000	536,000	476,000
Reserve personnel	741,000	567,000	550,000
Navy			
Total ships	528	450	340
Carriers	15	13	12
Attack submarines	87	80	40
Assault ships	65	50	50
Active personnel	571,000	501,000	432,000
Reserve personnel	150,000	118,000	112,000
Marine Corps			
Active divisions	3	2.3	2
Reserve divisions	1	1	1
Active personnel	195,000	159,000	112,000
Reserve personnel	44,000	35,000	49,000
Sealift			
Fast sealift ships	8	8	24
Afloat prepositioning ships (new)	8	8	24