

Pentagon Requests \$7.8 Billion in Missile Defense Funding

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The Pentagon announced February 1 that it is asking Congress for \$7.8 billion in missile defense funding for fiscal year 2003, approximately the same amount it received in December 2001 for current missile defense spending.

If fully approved by Congress, the bulk of the funding request, roughly \$6.7 billion, would be allocated to the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency (MDA), formerly known as the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. Another \$817 million would be distributed to the Army for the Patriot theater missile defense system and the remaining \$300 million would be used for theater and tactical missile defense operations planning by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The \$7.8 billion total does not include a requested \$814 million for research and development of the Air Force's Space-Based Infrared System-High, which will employ four satellites to provide early warning of global ballistic missile launches.

All MDA funding is for research and development and testing activities. Once a particular system or technology is deemed ready for procurement, one of the military services will take responsibility for the funding and fielding of the proven hardware and software.

About half of the MDA funding request, \$3.2 billion, is geared for developing systems to intercept missiles during the midcourse of their flight, when they are moving through space. Of that amount, \$534 million is targeted for expanding the current missile defense testing area by building a new missile interceptor site in Alaska.

Almost \$800 million was requested for exploring systems to intercept missiles during their boost phase, when the rockets are still firing, while the Pentagon wants only about \$170 million to research interception during the terminal stage, after the missile's warhead has re-entered the Earth's atmosphere.

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