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IN THE NEWS

Military Sends Congress \$32B Wish List Heavy With Procurement Items

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Kate Blakeley, a defense budget analyst at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said the services have had modest success in winning additional funds for UPL items. "It's a mixed bag, with a lot of new asks," she said. "Overall, the services asked for just over \$20 billion in procurement in the FY-17 [UPLs], and got about \$5.5 billion from Congress in the FY-17 additional appropriations." For instance, she said the Navy UPL in FY-17 sought \$3.4 billion for shipbuilding, but "got basically nothing." The service did not include shipbuilding requests in its FY-18 UPL. Blakeley said she was also struck by the fact the UPLs were light on readiness requests, which military leaders have uniformly said is their top budgetary priority. "Would the services agree that the [president's FY-18 budget] request just about meets their overall readiness, training and maintenance needs?" she said. "The only readiness-related item in the Marine Corps and the Navy is additional money for facilities sustainment. The Air Force is just requesting modest sums for more reserve training days. The Army is the only service asking for serious money -- \$590 million for [brigade combat team] readiness."