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IN THE NEWS

Tax Debate Could Delay Defense Budget Deal

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Katherine Blakeley, a research fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said there is “a lot of appetite” on Capitol Hill to pass defense spending legislation before the winter recess. But that doesn’t mean it will happen.

“Right now ... they’re focused on figuring out the parameters of tax reform. So much as people might like to get a full-year defense bill settled in December, that will take a backseat to tax reform,” she said...

When an appropriations deal for 2018 is eventually reached, Blakeley expects to see an increase in defense spending.

“At a bare minimum it will be larger than the fiscal ‘17 continuing resolution level,” she said. It could reach as high as the president’s \$667 billion request, she added.

However, members of the Senate Armed Services Committee who are calling for \$700 billion for defense shouldn’t get their hopes up. “The \$700 billion figure is legislative fantasy absent some sort of shocking big deal” to repeal the Budget Control Act, Blakeley said.