

Military 101: Additional Materials

1. Congressional Research Service (CRS) National Security Reports

Link: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/index.html>

An invaluable collection of nonpartisan, objective analysis reports prepared specifically for Congress on defense and national security topics. CRS regularly publishes reports on topics such as privatized military housing, defense spending by district, overseas basing, and military transition assistance programs. These reports provide the detailed background information and policy analysis that congressional staffers need to understand complex military issues. The reports are updated regularly and written in accessible language for policy professionals who may not have military backgrounds. Essential for understanding current legislative debates and policy implications.

2. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Defense Budget Analysis

Link: <https://www.cbo.gov/topics/defense-and-national-security/defense-budget>

CBO provides independent, nonpartisan analysis of defense spending and force structure that complements your course's budgeting section. Their analysis includes detailed breakdowns of military construction costs, personnel expenses, and long-term budget implications. The site features comprehensive reports on the Future Years Defense Program, military compensation analysis, and cost estimates for major defense programs. Recent analysis shows total military compensation at \$600 billion in the 2025 budget request, representing a 162% increase since 1980 after adjusting for inflation. Critical for understanding the fiscal realities behind defense policy decisions.

3. Department of Defense Budget Materials (Comptroller)

Link: <https://comptroller.defense.gov/Budget-Materials>

The official source for detailed Defense Department budget documentation, including justification books, budget highlights, and historical data. This resource provides the primary source materials that congressional staff need to understand exactly how DOD structures its budget requests within the PPBE system covered in your course. Includes both current year budgets and historical trends, enabling staffers to track spending patterns across different administrations and congressional sessions. Essential for conducting oversight and understanding the technical details of defense appropriations.

4. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Defense Programs

Link: <https://www.csis.org/programs/international-security-program>

CSIS provides nonpartisan policy analysis on defense strategy, military modernization, and emerging security challenges. Their research covers topics like military readiness, force structure debates, and civil-military relations that directly relate to your course's discussion of current challenges. The organization's reports and briefings help congressional staff understand the strategic context behind military organizational decisions and budget priorities. Particularly valuable for understanding how military structure and capabilities relate to broader national security strategy.

5. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Defense Reports

Link: <https://www.gao.gov/reports-testimonies?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A251>

GAO conducts oversight of military programs and provides detailed analysis of defense management issues, acquisition problems, and program effectiveness. Their reports are specifically designed to inform congressional oversight and often recommend legislative or policy changes. GAO's work is essential for understanding implementation challenges in military programs and identifying areas where congressional action may be needed. Their analysis of weapon system acquisitions, military readiness, and personnel issues provides the empirical foundation for informed policy decisions.