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**Strengthening the Arsenal of Deterrence:
Modernizing the DoD Munitions Requirements Process to
Include Allied Equipping**

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Strengthening the Arsenal of Deterrence: Modernizing the DoD Munitions Requirements Process to Include Allied Equipping

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Abstract

The Department of Defense Munitions Requirements Process provides the analytical foundation for identifying and prioritizing joint force munitions needed to execute approved war plans, yet its historical focus on U.S.-only operational demand limits its ability to account for the increasingly coalition-dependent character of contemporary conflict. This paper argues that the existing framework is insufficient and should be expanded to incorporate two critical dimensions: allied and partner equipping, and co-production of key munitions with trusted foreign defense industries.

Drawing on a comparative assessment of established analytical methodologies and emerging policy guidance on industrial base resilience and partner capability development, this paper identifies seams and statutory constraints that complicate integrating allied and partner considerations into munitions planning. It evaluates how incorporating allied and partner demand signals and co-production capacity could affect demand forecasting, risk/burden sharing, and resourcing trade-offs within resource allocation cycles.

The analysis also examines the distinct strategic considerations associated with defense articles provided under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 and emerging bilateral and trilateral initiatives, given their role in deterrence, industrial surge capacity, and regional stability. This paper concludes by proposing an expanded, coalition-integrated munitions requirements framework to improve analytical coherence, strengthen industrial resilience, and support credible collective deterrence.

Introduction: Institutional Design and the Credibility of Deterrence

Modeling and simulation outputs and recent wargames consistently reveal a recurring operational vulnerability: U.S. and allied munitions stockpiles are depleted far faster than current planning assumptions anticipate, exposing a growing gap between operational demand and industrial capacity (Center for Strategic and International Studies [CSIS], 2025). This divergence between projected requirements and available inventories raises fundamental questions about the adequacy of existing munitions planning frameworks.

Recent analyses have highlighted declining stockpile depth, limited industrial surge capacity, and extended production timelines for high-demand precision munitions (Clark et al., 2025; Fusco et al., 2025; Greenwalt & Patt, 2025). While much of the current literature emphasizes resourcing and industrial capacity constraints, far less attention has been paid to how the architecture of the requirements generation process itself shapes demand signals and conditions industrial response. In practice, what appears downstream as industrial shortfalls often originates upstream in the institutional design of planning methodologies.

This dynamic is increasingly reflected in analysis of the defense industrial base, which argues that U.S. munitions strategy has overemphasized *depth*—the ability to produce large quantities of narrow sets of systems—at the expense of *breadth*, or the diversity of munitions,



suppliers, and production pathways required for resilience (McGinn, 2026). Rather than mitigating risks, a depth-centric approach can reinforce structural fragility by concentrating production and limiting the system's ability to respond to disruption or shifting operational demands.

These limitations are particularly consequential in coalition-dependent and logistically contested environments. Emerging initiatives such as AUKUS and the trilateral security partnership among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States illustrate how expanding production across allied networks can enhance resilience, adaptability, and operational reach (Lehn, 2026). Recent conflicts reinforce these concerns: Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrated how quickly precision-guided munitions and critical enablers can be depleted and exposed the fragility of global production pipelines (GAO, 2024). In the Indo-Pacific, U.S. strategy anticipates sustained, multi-domain operations against a peer adversary; a depth-centric industrial model risks proving insufficient in both scale and flexibility (Paparo, 2025).

ADM Paparo's characterization of the region's time–distance challenge further underscores the urgency of these issues, highlighting how the ability to act inside the adversary's decision cycle—through accelerated sensing, movement, and weapons delivery—directly intersects with the industrial and coalition-based reforms this paper evaluates (Paparo, 2026). As he emphasizes,

Deterrence doesn't start at the shoreline—it starts with the ability to integrate, train, secure, sustain, and scale what the fight requires—at speed, at scale, and with allies and partners. Faster than the problem changes and faster than the competitor can adjust. And that's why we're operationalizing readiness.

This suggests that improving industrial resilience is not solely a matter of increasing production, but of redesigning the institutional mechanisms that generate and structure demand in the first place.

To understand why these vulnerabilities persist and how they intersect with coalition and industrial reforms, it is necessary to examine the historical and institutional context of U.S. munitions planning, including the intricacies of the munitions requirements-generation process and industrial base structures.

This paper asks, *How can the Department of Defense (DoD) modernize the Munitions Requirements Process (MRP) to incorporate coalition demand and allied industrial capacity while preserving the institutional separation between Title 10 operational planning and Title 22 security cooperation authorities?* Addressing this question requires examining how institutional design shapes demand signals, industrial planning, and coalition readiness in an era of coalition-dependent deterrence.

Research Design

This paper offers a qualitative policy analysis drawing on existing literature on defense industrial base resilience, munitions planning processes, and security cooperation authorities. It compares the structure of the DoD MRP with statutory frameworks governing partner equipping to identify structural seams that affect demand forecasting and industrial planning. The analysis synthesizes policy guidance, congressional reports, and defense industrial base studies to develop recommendations for a coalition-integrated planning framework.

Foundations and Enduring Limitations of the Munitions Requirements Process

The DoD MRP is the primary analytic mechanism used to estimate the quantity of munitions required to execute approved operational plans. The U.S. MRP, as it exists today,



traces its formal establishment in the late 1990s (Kress, n.d.). Codified in DoD Instruction 3000.04, the MRP cycle begins with the DIA threat assessment. It is structured around the Combatant Command (CCMD) Phased Threat Distribution (PTD) conference, during which threats are allocated among the theater components. Following the PTD conference, each military service conducts independent modeling and simulation (M&S) and convenes an internal Munitions Requirements Process Review Board (MRPRB) to validate and adjust to account for planning constraints, including projected force posture, weapon effectiveness, range, and magazine depth. The service then produces a sufficiency assessment report, intended to inform its Program Objective Memorandum (POM) investments, and provides a copy to the CCMDs. The CCMD assesses the service's quantitative and qualitative data to inform their Operational Risk Assessment (ORA), which is subsequently submitted to the Joint Staff to inform the POM cycle (DoD, 2018).

Although designed to support POM decisions and enhance collaboration among CCMDs, it fails to achieve either objective effectively (GAO, 2002). The mechanics of the process are clear; the strategic assumptions embedded within it are less visible but far more consequential. The consequences of these embedded assumptions extend beyond planning mechanics—they shape how risk is defined, absorbed, and transmitted through the broader defense system.

The MRP evolved within a planning paradigm that emphasized U.S.-centric operations, predictable timelines, and available surge capacity. It is implicitly premised on linear escalation dynamics and relatively static weapons employment concepts—assumptions increasingly misaligned with contemporary warfare, which is often characterized by distributed operations, contested logistics, and rapid consumption rates (CSIS, 2024). These limitations are particularly consequential in coalition-dependent theaters, where U.S. munitions planning is closely intertwined with allied demand, interoperability requirements, and shared production capacity. They are further complicated by statutory and policy frameworks governing the provision of defense articles to partners, with the most notable in the Pacific being the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which generates additional operational and strategic demand signals not fully captured within existing requirements models.

Emerging technologies further destabilize forecast-based planning. Rapid adaptation of long-range precision weapons, integrated countermeasures, adaptive targeting systems, and the use of attritable systems compress technology cycles and accelerate expenditure rates. Cost asymmetries between relatively inexpensive offensive systems and more costly defensive responses compound these pressures (Black, 2025).

Greenwalt and Patt (2025) argue that requirements systems remain oriented toward a forecast-centric model of conflict that assumes stable threats and predictable trajectories. In munitions planning, this orientation incentivizes organic optimization against static scenarios while discounting rapid technology adaptation, learning competition, and accelerated expenditure rates. Adversaries operating on technology cycles measured in months rather than decades can thus explore assumptions embedded in requirements models, contributing to persistent underestimation of demand and erosion in deterrence credibility (Greenwalt & Patt, 2025).

Without structural adjustments, current munitions requirements methodologies risk underestimating both the scale and duration of consumption in high-intensity conflict. The result is not simply an inventory imbalance, but diminished deterrence credibility and reduced capacity to sustain decisive operations.



The Evolution of the U.S. Defense Industrial Base: From Consolidation to Constraint

The U.S. defense industrial base as it exists today is the product of generations, shaped incrementally as the strategic landscape evolved. It reflects decades of institutionalized demand assumptions embedded within the MRP, which in turn informed procurement and shaped production decisions. Major changes in the international security landscape have historically driven cyclical fluctuations in U.S. defense spending, marked by periods of boom and bust. While it inadequately forecasted recent shifts, it also lacked the agility to respond to the demands of modern strategic competition (Sullivan, 2024).

Figure 1 demonstrates the shrinking pool of U.S. defense prime contractors between 1990 and 2025, precipitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which initiated a sustained decline in companies operating across all major defense systems (e.g., fixed-wing aircraft, missiles, ships, munitions). As a result, major defense firms merged over the last two decades, falling from 51 major companies to only six large prime contractors – Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, RTX (formerly Raytheon), Huntington Ingalls Industries, and General Dynamics (CSIS, 2025).

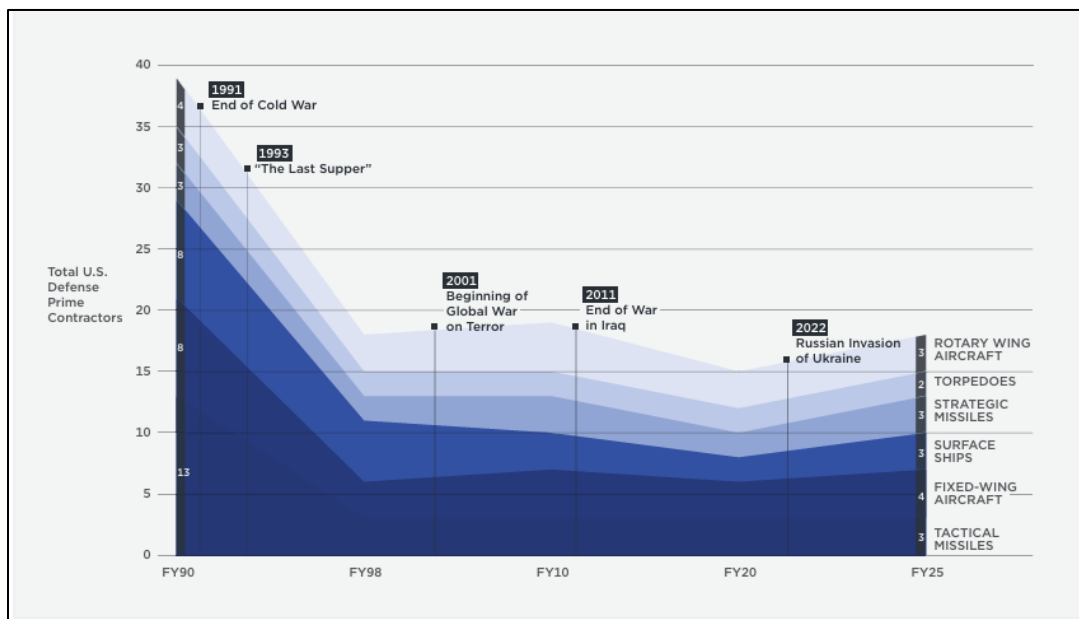


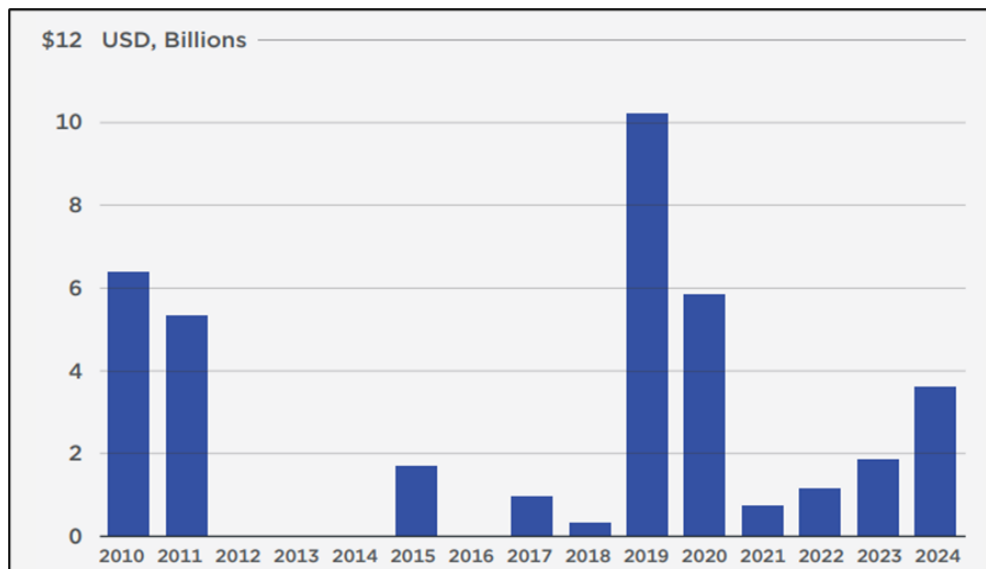
Figure 1. U.S. Defense Prime Contractors, 1990–2025
(Wasser & Sheers, 2025)

Table 1 illustrates the stark mismatch between annual and peak production rates for key U.S. munitions, revealing the extraordinary time and investment needed to procure 10,000 units even under maximum surge conditions. High-end weapons such as the SM-6 and JASSM-ER demand particularly lengthy timelines—with approximately \$33 billion and 80 years for 10,000 SM-6s, and \$10 billion and 19 years for the same quantity of JASSM-ERs—especially when contrasted with simpler, short-range munitions like SDBs and JDAMs.

**Table 1. Estimated Production Timelines and Costs for Selected U.S. Munitions
(Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, 2023)**

Weapon	Average annual production rate	Highest one-year production rate	Cost to acquire 10,000 weapons	Time to acquire 10,000 weapons at the highest one-year production rate
SM-6	115	125	\$33 billion	80 years
JASSM-ER	257	525	\$10 billion	19 years
Notional new stand-in weapon	2,500	5,000	\$3 billion	2–4 years
SDB II	1,716	2,910	\$1.86 billion	3 years
SDB I	2,500	6,878	\$.040 billion	1.5 years
JDAM	16,780	43,594	\$0.30 billion	0.2 years

Figure 2 underscores the broader strategic implications of these constraints. If “production is deterrence,” then enabling Taiwan to withstand potential aggression from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) requires an industrial base capable of surging munitions output not only for U.S. forces but also for allies and partners who rely on these systems to maintain deterrence postures and promote regional stability.



Note. Pilot training, contractor support, and select logistics services are omitted.

**Figure 2. Sales to Taiwan Containing Platforms or Products Sourced from the U.S. Defense Industrial Base
(Wasser & Sheers, 2025)**

The RAND Commission on the National Defense Strategy (2024) notes that allies and partners are foundational to U.S. security, and effective deterrence requires integrated capabilities, interoperability, and collective resolve. The Commission highlights co-production, coordinated industrial base investments, and streamlined technology sharing to turn coalition plans into actionable capability. Achieving this depends on modernization in the Federal



Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to reduce regulatory friction, rapidly adapt commercial practices, and create predictable demand signals. This recently implemented reform—coupled with procurement practices like steady demand signals and multiyear procurement plans—will enable small and middle-tier suppliers to scale production and better support joint requirements (CSIS, 2026).

The resilience of the defense industrial base depends not only on funding levels but on the stability and credibility of demand signals generated by the requirements process. Small businesses—critical suppliers of specialized components, advanced manufacturing capabilities, and emerging technologies—rely on predictable procurement pathways and multiyear planning horizons to scale production (CSIS, 2026). Fluctuating requirements or fragmented decisions disproportionately affect these firms, eroding surge capacity and weakening the innovation ecosystem that underpins long-term military advantage.

Despite significant changes in the global security environment over the past three decades, the MRP has not fully adapted. It does not systematically account for munitions needed to support allies and key partners, nor does it incorporate co-production initiatives that could expand industrial capacity and reduce risk. This narrow focus risks miscalculating aggregate demand, undermining coalition readiness, and constraining deterrence options.

Title 10 and Title 22: Institutional Seams or Structural Fault Lines in Coalition Munitions Planning?

Under Title 10, the DoD is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping U.S. forces to execute approved war plans, a mandate codified in the statutory missions of the military departments and rooted in the post–Goldwater-Nichols division of responsibilities (United States Congress, 1986). The MRP is embedded within this construct, deriving demand from force-planning scenarios, threat assessments and physics-based modeling, producing analytically coherent, sufficiency-oriented requirements for U.S. forces (DoD, 2018). Through the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process, these requirements signal the defense industrial base to sustain the operational demand generated endogenously within the DoD’s force-development system.

In contrast, Title 22 authorities govern the provision of defense articles and security assistance to foreign partners. These authorities authorize foreign military sales (FMS), security assistance, and defense article transfers, including those executed under Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA). Managed primarily by the Department of State and implemented through statutes such as the Arms Export Control Act, Foreign Assistance Act, and TRA, these mechanisms are transaction-based, politically mediated, and subject to congressional notification and diplomatic prioritization (Congressional Research Service, 2020; Kane, 2016). As a result, allied and partner demand enters the system exogenously through security cooperation channels rather than through the forecast-based modeling processes that inform the DoD’s internal requirements.

Although both Title 10 and Title 22 systems are designed to mitigate risk, they operate in fundamentally different domains—operational versus political—creating structural misalignment in how demand is generated. Title 10 focuses on reducing risk in executing contingency operations, while Title 22 is designed to manage diplomatic, escalation, and political risks associated with security assistance. Despite these divergent logics, the industrial capacity that supports both systems is unitary: the same industrial base and production lines must supply U.S. operational requirements and partner-equipping programs. Although Title 10 and Title 22 authorities operate under distinct legal and bureaucratic frameworks, they ultimately rely on the same industrial base and production lines. This creates a structural condition in which operational demand and partner equipping are governed separately but remain industrially



interdependent. Table 2 illustrates these institutional distinctions between Title 10 and Title 22 authorities that generate these parallel signals, while Table 1 formalizes their underlying structural framework. The resulting bifurcation manifests as bureaucratic friction but also generates parallel signals that distort industrial planning, obscure coalition requirements, and shift critical trade-offs from analytical planning processes to political decision points.

Table 2. Title 10 and Title 22 Institutional Seams in Munitions Demand Generation

Dimension	Title 10	Title 22
Purpose	Equip the U.S. Joint Force to achieve operational objectives	Enable partner capacity and support strategic deterrence
Strategic Objective	Mitigate operational risks in executing contingency operations	Mitigate diplomatic and escalation risks
Time Horizon	Forecast-based expenditures in executing approved war plans	Case-by-case transfers driven by real-time contingencies
Demand Source	Combatant Command Operational Plan (OPLAN) requirements	Partner requests and political prioritization
Budgeting	PPBE / POM processes	Security assistance and assistance accounts
Decision Authority	Military Departments and the Secretary of Defense	State Department with congressional oversight

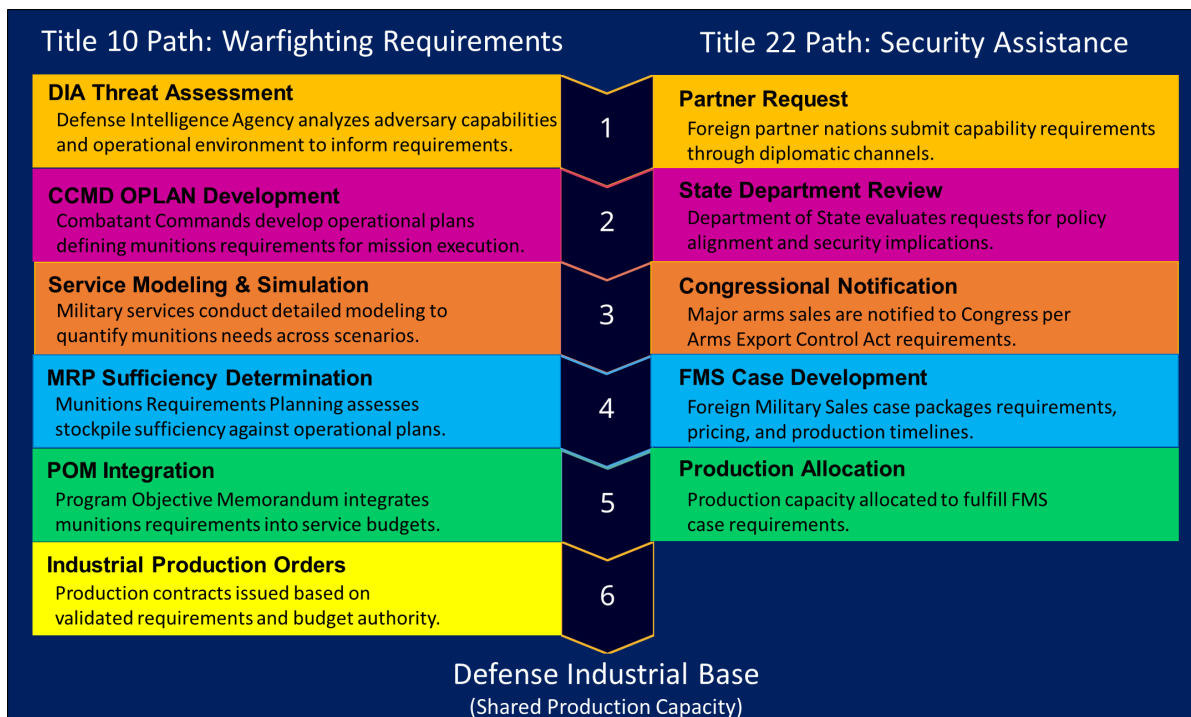


Figure 3. Title 10 and Title 22 Institutional Seams in Munitions Demand Generation

U.S. policy governing the provisions of defense articles to Taiwan illustrates the implications of this divide. The TRA directs that the United States “make available to Taiwan such defense articles and services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to



maintain a sufficient self-defense capability” (Taiwan Relations Act, 1979). This statutory language establishes a strategic obligation rather than a discretionary or episodic policy choice. Subsequent legislation has reinforced this requirement by directing the DoD to support the acceleration of Taiwan-related defense articles, many of which are munitions-intensive and constitute a predictable and recurring demand signal.

Despite this statutory clarity, Taiwan-related munitions demand is generally treated as external to the formal MRP and is often addressed through ad hoc security cooperation mechanisms rather than integrated into demand forecasting. The absence of these requirements in core munitions planning risks understating total demand and misaligning industrial capacity with legally mandated policy objectives, reinforcing the structural disconnect between operational planning and partner equipping that characterizes the Title 10–Title 22 divide.

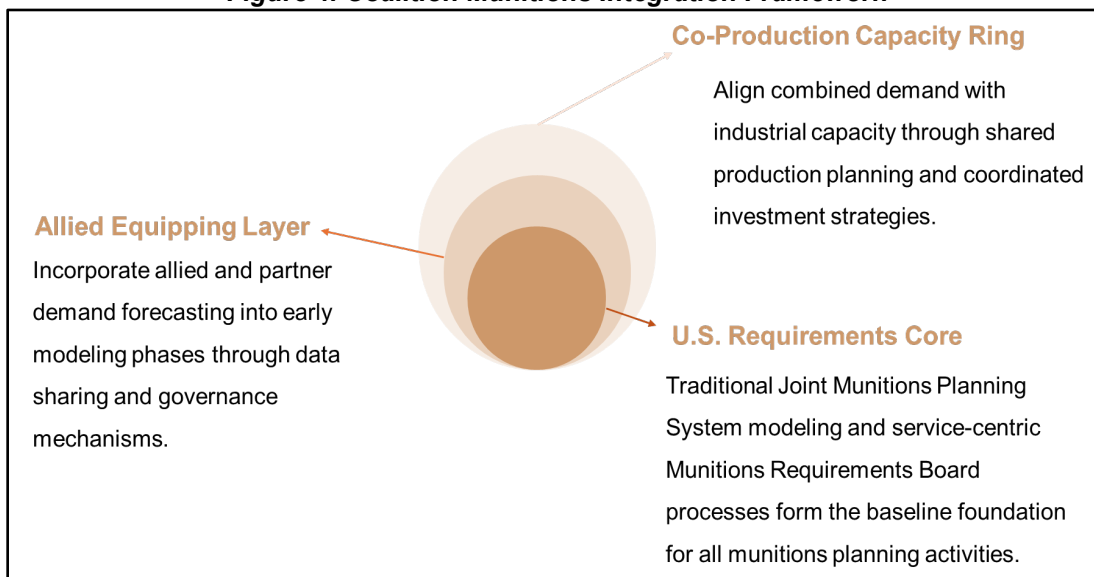
Rearchitecting the Munitions Requirements Process for Coalition-integrated Deterrence

The limitations of the current MRP are not solely a function of resource constraints, but of how demand itself is defined and generated. To address this structural shortfall, this paper introduces the Coalition Munitions Integration Framework (CMIF)—a demand-generation and industrial-alignment model designed to integrate U.S., allied, and partner munitions requirements into a unified analytical structure.

The CMIF departs from the traditional U.S.-centric sufficiency model by explicitly incorporating coalition demand signals and distributed production capacity into early-stage planning. Rather than treating allied equipping and co-production as external or reactive considerations, the framework embeds them within the core analytical processes that shape requirements, resourcing, and industrial planning decisions.

Conceptually, the CMIF is organized across three interdependent layers. The U.S. Requirements Core retains primacy, anchoring the framework in validated operational plans and Title 10 responsibilities. Surrounding this core, the Allied Equipping Layer integrates partner demand signals into modeling and simulation outputs, enabling planners to estimate aggregate coalition consumption requirements. The outer Co-Production Capacity Ring captures the contributions of allied and partner industrial bases, enabling a more accurate assessment of surge capacity, supply chain resilience, and distributed manufacturing potential. Together, these elements form a coalition-oriented demand and production framework (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Coalition Munitions Integration Framework



Operationalizing the CMIF requires three institutional adjustments. First, allied and partner demand signals must be incorporated into early-stage modeling inputs within the MRP cycle, enabling estimation of total coalition requirements rather than U.S.-only demand. Second, co-production arrangements with trusted partners must be integrated into industrial capacity models to reflect the realities of distributed manufacturing and allied surge capacity. Third, governance mechanisms—potentially coordinated through existing security cooperation structures—must enable structured data sharing among the services, combatant commands, and key partners.

Importantly, the CMIF does not collapse the statutory distinction between Title 10 and Title 22 authorities. Instead, it preserves their legal separation while analytically integrating their effects at the point of demand generation. In doing so, the framework reduces the current reliance on ad hoc political decision-making to reconcile competing demands on a shared industrial base.

By aligning operational planning, coalition requirements, and industrial capacity within a single analytical framework, the CMIF enables more accurate demand forecasting, more efficient resource allocation, and more credible deterrence outcomes. In contrast to the existing model—where industrial shortfalls are often discovered only after requirements are validated—the CMIF allows planners to identify and mitigate risk upstream, before crisis conditions force reactive adjustments.

Implications and Expected Outcomes

The CMIF has significant implications for accelerating credible deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and beyond while advancing U.S. strategic primacy. Current processes estimate only U.S. requirements, overlooking coalition demand and shared operational needs, creating a coalition demand gap. This gap is magnified in the Indo-Pacific by contested logistics, extended lead times, the tyranny of distance, and limited replenishment options. Expanding U.S. domestic industrial capacity to a collaborative production network with allies and partners addresses these constraints, strengthens partnerships, enhances supply chain resilience, and mitigates production bottlenecks that contribute to long-lead times and costly sustainment.

Third, the framework enables the United States to demonstrate rapid response, delivering prompt defense articles that signal commitment and strengthen deterrence. Lastly, enabling coordinated, data-driven planning enables the model to generate predictable demand signals for industry and allied partners, fostering preparedness and aligning coalition readiness with broader, shared strategic objectives. Collectively, this model institutionalizes an integrated planning framework that strengthens U.S. leadership and maximizes coalition effectiveness.

Conclusion

This paper argues that the institutional separation between Title 10 warfighting planning and Title 22 security assistance authorities produces structural distortions in munitions demand forecasting. In an era where coalition capability is integral to operational success, this separation is no longer a minor bureaucratic inefficiency, but a strategically consequential limitation.

The contemporary security environment—shaped by the People’s Republic of China’s rapid military modernization, emerging patterns of cooperation among revisionist states, and the proliferation and militarization of low-cost technologies—demands a more integrated approach to deterrence. As the strategic landscape evolves, the United States must leverage the defense industrial base not only as a procurement system but also as an instrument of statecraft. This requires targeted investments, predictable demand signals, and deeper cooperation with trusted allies and partners to sustain the balance of power.

In the Indo-Pacific, where deterrence depends on distributed operations, contested logistics, and coalition integration, munitions planning can no longer remain a national



sufficiency exercise. Treating allied and partner requirements as external to formal planning processes risks underestimating total demand, misaligning industrial capacity, and weakening deterrence credibility.

The CMIF provides a path forward by integrating allied demand forecasting and co-production capacity into the existing MRP. By aligning operational planning, coalition requirements, and industrial realities, this framework would allow planners to model total coalition demand, manage industrial risk more efficiently, and synchronize production capacity with operational plans before crisis conditions force reactive political decisions.

Ultimately, strengthening deterrence in the Indo-Pacific requires institutional alignment between operational planning, industrial capacity, and alliance commitments. Modernizing the MRP to incorporate coalition demand signals is therefore not merely a procedural reform but a strategic adaptation to the realities of contemporary coalition warfare.

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