

*The Defense Technology Base: Introduction
and Overview*

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THE
DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY
BASE

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

A Special Report of
OTA's Assessment on
Maintaining the Defense Technology Base



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

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Foreword

Keeping ahead of the Soviet Union technologically is a central element of U.S. national security strategy, and the Nation spends a large amount of money in order to do so. In recent years, however, there have been troubling indications that the U.S. technological lead is slipping, and that it is increasingly difficult to maintain a meaningful edge.

These concerns—expressed both by the Administration and within Congress—prompted the Senate Committee on Armed Services to request that the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) undertake a major assessment on “Maintaining the Defense Technology Base.” This special report is the first product of that assessment. It provides an overview of the subject, including specific concerns about the health of the defense technology base and the related issues before Congress. Subsequent reports will probe aspects of this immense problem in greater detail.

Concern centers on the health of those industries, both defense-oriented and civilian, that provide the technology that winds up in defense systems, and on the management of the Defense Department technology base programs and technology facilities. Within the Department, management is being reorganized in the wake of the Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act (Public Law 99-433). This report reflects the state of that management system as of February 1, 1988.

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