EDITORIAL

Needed Now: A New Defense Policy

O f all the grim developments in recent months, one of the most disturbing has been the sharp increase in the cost of national defense. The high cost of maintaining an ever-growing military establishment is a matter of grave concern to all Americans. And yet, the need for a strong national defense remains a matter of supreme importance.

The result is a dilemma. On the one hand, there is a strong feeling that the country cannot afford to cut back on its defense budget. On the other hand, there is a growing feeling that the country cannot afford to continue spending so much on defense.

The answer to this dilemma is not easy. But it is clear that some form of national defense policy is needed to guide the country in the years ahead. The policy must be based on a careful analysis of the country's security needs and the cost of meeting those needs.

The first step is to take a close look at the current defense budget. The budget must be examined in detail to see where savings can be made without sacrificing the country's security needs.

The second step is to consider alternative defense policies. These could include a reduction in the size of the armed forces, a shift of emphasis away from conventional forces to nuclear forces, and a reduction in the cost of military equipment.

The third step is to consider alternative defense spending priorities. The defense budget must be realigned to give more priority to research and development, to homeland security, and to strengthening the nation's civil defense capabilities.

In short, the need for a new defense policy is urgent. The country cannot afford to continue spending so much on defense. But the country also cannot afford to cut back on its defense budget. The answer is a careful analysis of the country's security needs and the cost of meeting those needs. The result will be a defense policy that is both effective and affordable.