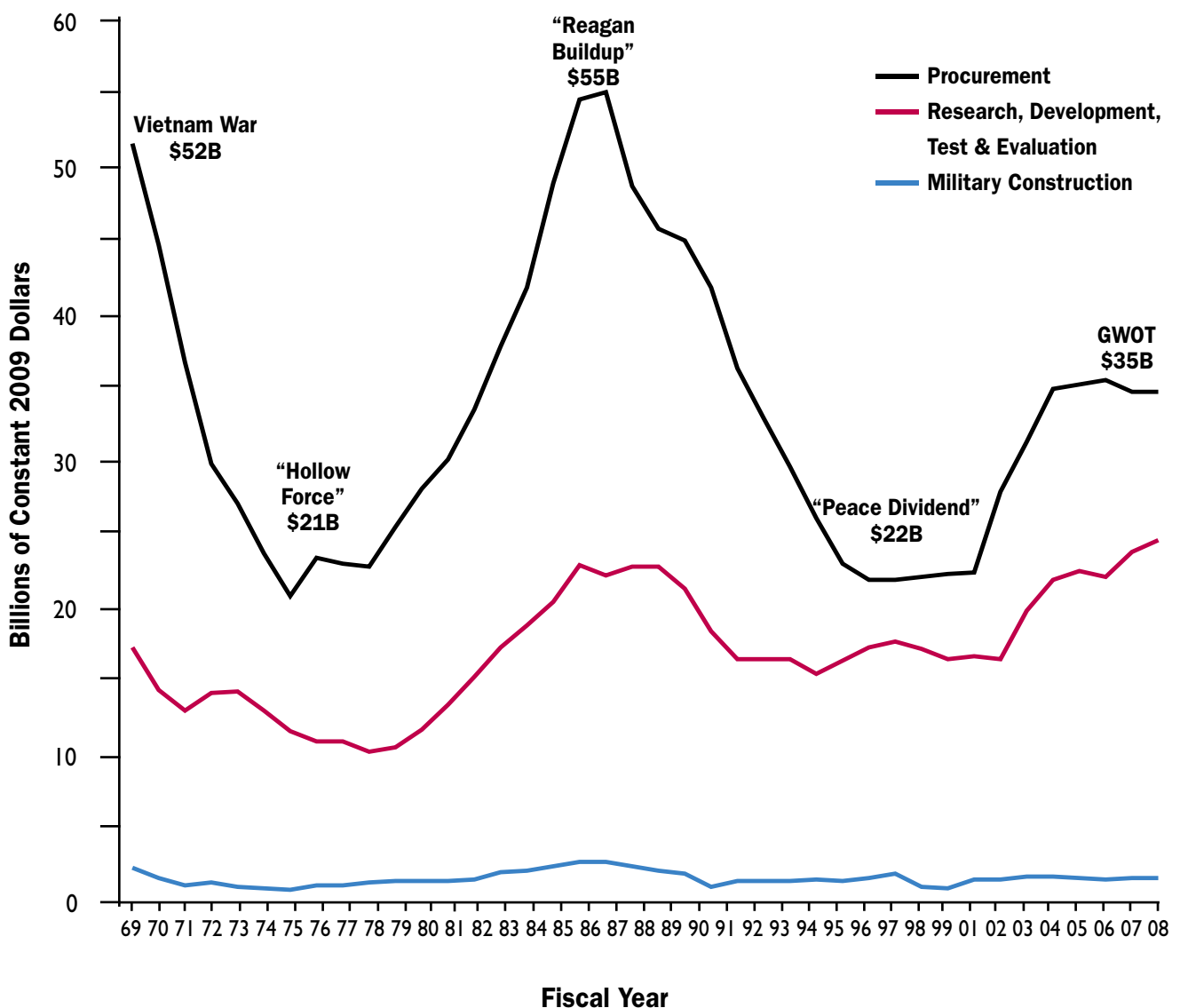


Forty Years of Air Force Investment

“Anemic” is the word that best describes Washington’s investment in today’s wartime Air Force. Investment comprises three main accounts—weapon procurement, RDT&E, and military construction. The problem is procurement, as seen here. In the wake of the Vietnam War, weapon buying sagged. However, it rebounded strongly in the Cold War

face-off of the Reagan years. Then, in the 1990s, investment again plummeted. However, the “bounce” of the Global War on Terror has been feeble. While high Air Force optempo is wearing out aircraft, there is little money to replace them, which is the reason the USAF fleet is the smallest, oldest, and most problem-prone in service history.

Forty Years of Air Force Investment



Source: “National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2009,” March 2008, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C. Data from Table 6-24, p. 197-201.