

**ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
August 29, 30, 31, 2023**

**Resolution No. 48: Rebuilding the U.S. Defense Industrial Base**

**Origin: Virginia**

**Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security**

WHEREAS, The United States is facing growing threats from near-peer adversaries like China, and history shows wars between major powers often expand into protracted conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Current U.S. military planning focuses too much on short, sharp battles instead of the demands of an enduring war; and

WHEREAS, The defense industrial base (DIB) resiliency required to sustain the U.S. in great power conflict was sacrificed as part of the 1990s peace dividend; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. can no longer rely on mobilizing the "Arsenal of Democracy" like in WWII due to decades of deindustrialization and globalization, with 75 percent fewer defense companies today compared to 1993; and

WHEREAS, Small business participation, including those owned and controlled by veterans and service-disabled veterans, in defense procurements as prime and subcontractors is vital to the defense mission, competition, and health of the DIB; and

WHEREAS, The powerhouses of industrial readiness – stable and predictable budgets, an experienced and specialized workforce, diversified and modern infrastructure, manufacturing innovation; and sufficient, including idle, capacity – have all atrophied under the combined transition to a services-based economy with a premium on just-in-time commercial supply chains; and

WHEREAS, The advanced technologies and weapons platforms that underpin American military superiority depend on fragile global supply chains vulnerable to disruption; and

WHEREAS, Critical industries like machine tools, forging, and foundries have seen 50 percent or more of businesses disappear, and manufacturing employment has declined by 75 percent since 1950; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. share of global rare earth production and refining capacity has declined precipitously, posing risks for advanced systems like hypersonic missiles; and

WHEREAS, The war in Ukraine demonstrates the continued importance of industrial capacity, production, and logistics for victory in modern warfare; and

WHEREAS, The United States must rebuild its industrial base and make sustained investments to prepare for the possibility of a protracted conflict with a near-peer adversary; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 29, 30, 31, 2023, That The American Legion recommends the U.S. government should map industrial capabilities against long war scenarios, wargame with industry, and invest in expanding capacity; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, Congress should fund programs to re-shore and expand key defense industries, including rare earths production, while developing synergies between the U.S. industrial base and that of its allies; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, Congress should consider measures to diversify the domestic defense industrial base, including increased oversight of mergers, changes to intellectual property provisions in defense contracting, acquisition reform, and strengthening incentives for small businesses and new defense industrial base entrants, including those owned and controlled by veterans and service-disabled veterans; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, Public-private partnerships should be strengthened to enable rapid industrial mobilization; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, Congress should modernize the Defense Production Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to enable holistic solutions for critical manufacturing facilities, such as targeted visa approvals for STEM talent, direct project financing, and automatic fast-tracking of permits; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, Congress should scale up workforce development programs to credential more workers and veterans for high-demand trades; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That educating the public about the importance of a robust, secure industrial base is a critical homeland security issue.**