

Biden's \$1 trillion budget for world war

Patrick Martin
9 March 2023

The White House unveiled its budget request for the 2024 fiscal year Thursday, with the largest ever proposed spending on the military. It is a \$1 trillion budget for world war. The Biden administration wants the resources to fight Russia in Ukraine, intensify its buildup towards war with China in the Far East and sustain US military aggression in the Middle East.

Besides \$842 billion for the Pentagon, which will undoubtedly be pushed even higher in Congress, there is \$24 billion for the Department of Energy, which maintains the US nuclear arsenal, and \$20 billion for military-related programs in the State Department, CIA and other agencies, bringing the total official military spending to \$886 billion.

To this must be added the real cost of the war in Ukraine, which is listed as only \$6 billion for the 2024 fiscal year, which begins October 1. In the previous fiscal year, the Biden administration requested \$6.9 billion but ended up spending \$114 billion. Given that there is no sign of the war ending—on the contrary, it is escalating rapidly—the cost of US support for the otherwise bankrupt regime in Kiev is likely to surpass the current level. This would swell total military outlays well above the \$1 trillion mark.

Since Biden took office, the budget for the Pentagon alone has jumped from \$718 billion in fiscal 2022, the first full year of his administration, to \$816 billion last year. The \$842 billion requested for this year could rise past the \$900 billion mark once Congress and lobbyists for the weapons manufacturers have their say. Congressional Republicans have already denounced the budget for providing too little funding for the military.

The name “Department of Defense” is itself a gross distortion since there is not an inch of American soil that needs to be defended against an external enemy. It is rather the world which is under threat from the Pentagon. The US government maintains a global military presence without precedent in history, with

more than 700 US bases worldwide, while its main targets, Russia and China, have only one base each outside their own borders.

The department should be renamed the Department of Maintaining America's Global Empire, or perhaps more simply, the Department of World Destruction. Some \$38 billion of the Pentagon budget will go to nuclear weapons modernization, bringing the total spending this year on the US nuclear arsenal, to carry out the worldwide annihilation of civilization and perhaps all life on the planet, to more than \$60 billion.

Much of the “non-military” budget also contributes to the US capacity to wage war around the world. One White House statement declares that the budget “invests in key technologies and sectors of the U.S. industrial base such as microelectronics, submarine construction, munitions production, and biomanufacturing.” It also includes “the recapitalization and optimization of the four public Naval Shipyards to meet future submarine and carrier maintenance requirements.”

Much of last year's \$250 billion CHIPS Act was funding routed through the Department of Commerce to underwrite the transfer to the United States of production of key semiconductor chips that are vital for high-tech weapons.

The Energy Department budget will support “the strong technical and engineering foundation” for the anti-China AUKUS agreement between the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Biden will host British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at an AUKUS summit in San Diego on Monday.

There are billions more in the budget for police repression, including \$25 billion for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and \$14.5 billion for other anti-immigrant activities of the Department of Homeland

Security, including immigration courts and the vast network of detention facilities. Tens of billions more go to the FBI and other Justice Department agencies, and in grants that go directly to state and local police departments.

Military violence and police repression constitute the bulk of the \$1.7 trillion in discretionary spending, the amount that Congress must authorize and appropriate each year, as opposed to automatic outlays from the Treasury for interest payments and entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The budget request issued Thursday by the Biden administration is a political perspective, not just a spending plan. It is shared by both capitalist parties, Republican and Democrat, whatever their tactical differences about where and how much to spend. American imperialism seeks to maintain its global domination, and it is now focused on defeating what it regards as its main adversaries, Russia and above all China.

The proxy war against Russia in Ukraine is only the antechamber to an even greater conflict with China, which now takes the form of a rapid military buildup towards what one top general suggested would be open warfare by 2025. The corporate media is doing its part to suppress popular opposition to these wars, seeking to shift public opinion with a propaganda blitz over Russia's reactionary invasion of Ukraine, and whipping up hysteria over alleged Chinese "spy balloons" and the social media app TikTok, depicted as a nefarious scheme by Beijing to collect intelligence on ordinary Americans.

It was noteworthy that in Biden's first campaign-style appearance to "sell" his budget to the public, he made no mention of military spending, instead greatly exaggerating the level of spending on health care, education and other social welfare programs, which will inevitably be slashed rather than increased in the course of budget negotiations with the Republicans.

This was accompanied by populist demagogic over proposals to raise taxes on corporations and the super-rich, which he knows will go nowhere in Congress. The White House could not get a few hundred billion in tax increases on the wealthy through a Democratic-controlled Congress in 2021-2022. To suggest that a Republican-controlled House of Representatives will pass \$5 trillion in such levies on the financial

aristocracy is a blatant lie.

Biden proceeds like a crude carnival barker, holding up the shiny objects of tax increases for the wealthy and increases in social spending, which are popular among working people, to distract from the real essence of his program, which is to continue and escalate the war with Russia in Ukraine and to prepare the impending war with China.

This is the central axis of the policies of the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, which has long ago abandoned any genuine connection to policies of social concessions to working people. Biden's only dispute with the Republicans is over whether to target Russia or China first. But this conflict is secondary. Both parties uphold the worldwide interests of the American oligarchy.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact