

Following bipartisan vote, Biden signs \$1.2 trillion budget bill devoted to war, genocide

Jacob Crosse
24 March 2024

After a bipartisan vote in the House Friday, and then again in the Senate on Saturday, US President Joe Biden signed a series of spending bills that included the largest appropriation for the military in US history. The centerpiece of the \$1.2 trillion budget bill signed into law by the war criminal president is the massive \$825 billion earmarked for the Department of Defense.

This figure represents the largest ever military budget in US history, topping last year's record by \$27 billion, and \$100 billion more than in fiscal year 2022.

The passage of the bills, demanded by Biden before he signed it Saturday, underscores that the central priority of the Biden administration and the US ruling class as a whole is imperialist war. Out of the \$1.2 trillion appropriated by Congress and signed into law by Biden, the vast majority of it, over 70 percent, is earmarked for military spending.

Minutes after signing the spending bill, Biden demanded that the House take up the National Security Supplemental bill previously passed by the Senate, which includes over \$60 billion for the Ukrainian military, over \$14 billion for Israel and billions more for Taiwan and future conflict with China.

"But I want to be clear," wrote Biden on Saturday. "Congress's work isn't finished. The House must pass the bipartisan national security supplemental to advance our national security interests."

Biden also demanded passage of the "bipartisan border security agreement," which he called "the toughest and fairest reforms in decades to ensure we have the policies and funding needed to secure the border."

The far-right border bill would virtually eliminate the right to asylum, greatly expand the border police, enlarge the border wall, and grant the president new executive powers to "shut down" ports of entry if certain low thresholds of migrants seeking asylum are met.

The spending bills signed on Saturday which are almost

six months late, reflecting the ongoing political crisis in the heart of global imperialism, also provide funding for the rest of the year for the departments of Homeland Security, Labor and Health and Human Services, as well as other agencies.

Included is funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to expand its facilities to 42,000 detention beds, an increase of about 8,000. The bill also provides funding for 2,000 more Border Patrol agents, bringing the total number to some 22,000.

While increasing the repressive state apparatus, the bill cuts funding by 20 percent to nongovernmental organizations that provide social services for immigrants.

In a statement released following the passage of the package in the House, Republicans boasted that the spending bills represented "the first overall cut to non-defense, non-VA spending in almost a decade."

In their statement, Republicans on the Appropriations Committee emphasized that "countering the People's Republic of China" was a top priority. To this end, the bill doubles military financing to Taiwan, from \$150 to \$300 million. It provides another \$400 million for the "Countering the [People's Republic of China] Influence Fund."

Defense News reported the bill "includes \$33.5 billion to build eight ships," while allocating billions more towards the construction of 86 F-35 and 24 F-15EX fighter jets, as well as 15KC-46A tankers.

Another \$2.1 billion is earmarked for the "Army's Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon" and the "Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike Hypersonic Weapon System."

Defense News noted the bill also provides "multiyear contracts" for six advanced missile systems: "the Naval Strike Missile, the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, the Patriot Advanced Capability-3, the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, the Joint Air-to Surface

Standoff Missile and the Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile.”

Breaking Defense reported that in addition to multi-year contracts for advanced missile systems, the bill provides Department of Defense officials latitude to negotiate multi-year contracts for the Columbia- and Virginia-class submarines. While the Virginia-class is focused on anti-ship/anti-submarine warfare, the Columbia-class is slated to replace the Ohio-class nuclear strike platform and will be equipped with 16 missile tubes for launching Trident II D5 ballistic missiles.

In addition to preparing for war with China, the bipartisan bill “fully” funds “our annual security commitment” to the Israeli government.

This includes \$3.3 billion through the State Department, while another \$500 million is earmarked for Israel through the Pentagon budget. At the same time, the law prohibits “any taxpayer funding from going to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)” and eliminates funding for the “United Nations Commission of Inquiry against Israel.”

This includes barring funding for the United Nations Human Rights Council until the Council takes “significant steps to remove Israel as a permanent agenda item.” It also blocks funding for the “United Nations International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel.”

While the bill places no restrictions on the US money to Israel, more than 160 days and over 40,000 bodies into the US/Israeli genocide, it does require the secretary of state to submit a report within 90 days “detailing steps taken by the Palestinian Authority to counter incitement of violence against Israelis and to promote peace and coexistence with Israel.”

The legislation also compels the Palestinian Authority not to initiate or support *any* International Criminal Court inquiry against Israeli nationals “for alleged crimes against Palestinians” if it wants any economic support from the United States.

Support for this genocidal war bill among both big business parties was overwhelming. Both the House and the Senate votes were bipartisan affairs, with the House voting 286–134 on Friday, followed by the Senate voting 75–24 in favor early Saturday morning. In both chambers, the Democratic Party provided the bulk of the votes, with all but 22 Democrats in the House voting in favor, with only two senators who caucus with the Democrats voting against the war bill.

The vast majority of the 112 House Republicans and 22 Senate Republicans who voted against the bill did so on the grounds that it did not include sufficient cuts in social spending or provide enough money for the military.

The only Democratic senator who voted against the bill was Michael Bennet of Colorado. In a statement released after the vote, Bennet explained that he objected on the grounds that it did not provide enough funding for the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine. Bennet claimed, incorrectly, that the bill did not provide “any financial support for Ukraine,” adding that “they are running out of bullets and artillery.”

In fact, in order to facilitate fighting Russia to the last Ukrainian, the bill earmarks \$300 million for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which, according to *Defense News*, “allows the Pentagon to place contracts for new equipment” to send to Kiev.

In a statement posted on Twitter/X, Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore denounced the genocide package, writing:

Both the Democrats and Republicans are committed to providing unlimited resources to fund an escalating global war that risks nuclear annihilation, while there is supposedly no money for basic social services.

“The vote,” Kishore added, “expresses the essential class interests defended by the two parties. The ruling class is waging war abroad and it is waging war at home. These are two sides of the same war, the war of the capitalist ruling elite to defend its profits and wealth.”



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact