

Biden's budget for world war

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The budget legislation signed into law by President Joe Biden on Saturday provides the largest amount in history for US military spending. Of the \$1.2 trillion appropriated to six federal departments, the Pentagon claimed more than two thirds, about \$825 billion. The separate budget bill signed by Biden on March 8 for the other six federal departments includes \$23.8 billion for the US nuclear weapons programs run by the Department of Energy.

All told, when all other monies appropriated for military-intelligence operations through other departments and agencies are tallied, the cumulative total is likely to surpass \$1 trillion, although the actual figure remains secret, since much of the military-related spending on surveillance, military satellite launches, and other operations is classified.

Total US military spending, even based on the publicly available figures, dwarfs that of any possible combination of countries. The US alone accounts for 39 percent of total world military spending, equivalent to that of the next 11 countries combined. Compared to the US total of \$877 billion for 2022, the last year for which comprehensive global figures are available, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimated that China spent \$292 billion and Russia \$86.4 billion.

Russian military spending is a fraction of the combined spending by US NATO allies, more than \$300 billion, by the US Asian allies in the so-called Quad (India, Japan and Australia, \$160 billion combined), and by US client states in the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar and the UAE, \$130 billion combined). The combined military spending of the US and its major allies comes to well over \$1.5 trillion, two-thirds of the world total, and four times that of Russia and China.

Given these figures, there is no way to assess the American military posture as anything short of a

program for world war.

American imperialism has suffered a protracted historical decline in its economic position. From nearly 50 percent of world GDP at the end of the Second World War, the US fell to 40 percent by 1960 and 27 percent by 1971, when President Richard Nixon ended dollar convertibility into gold because of the rising balance of payments deficit. The US share fell to barely 15 percent of world GDP last year, with the expectation of a further decline in coming years.

But in the production of war materiel, of the weapons that can destroy human life both with pinpoint accuracy and by the millions, the United States has no peer.

This contradiction, between declining economic base and massive military buildup, explains the ferocity of American foreign policy. It is expressed in the unanimity of the two main capitalist parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, on the need to smash the growing threat of China—whose economy is on course to outstrip that of the United States—and subjugate China's potential allies in Russia, Iran and North Korea. As far as Wall Street and Washington are concerned, they must provoke confrontation with China as soon as possible, because the fundamental trends are against them. They have no time to lose.

The incessant claims by the Biden administration and its apologists in the corporate media that the US government is averse to the use of military force, or seeks to prevent the expansion of the conflict in Ukraine or restrain Israeli genocide in Gaza, do not bear up to the slightest scrutiny.

The true savagery of US imperialism is demonstrated in one key provision of the just-passed Pentagon budget. Democrats and Republicans in Congress agreed to bar a single penny of US aid for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which feeds millions of Palestinian refugees daily, including the bulk of the 2.3 million people in Gaza. Whatever the

election-year mudslinging between Biden and Donald Trump, both the Democrats and Republicans are united in supporting mass starvation as a weapon of war.

Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore declared in a posting on Twitter/X Monday:

The vote in Congress exposes the reality: The genocide in Gaza is made in Washington. It is being armed and financed by the United States and its NATO allies. It is backed by both the Democrats and Republicans. The Biden administration and the Democratic Party can never wash the blood from their hands nor cover up their culpability in mass slaughter.

Kishore concluded:

The fight against the genocide must be waged as a fight against the Democratic and Republicans parties, as a fight against the expanding imperialist war, including the US-NATO war against Russia, and as a fight against the ruling class and the capitalist system.

As the WSWS reported yesterday, the budget bill provides tens of billions for giant arms manufacturers, including Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Boeing, Raytheon and other war profiteers that manufacture warplanes, nuclear submarines, and missiles of all description.

The bill also includes \$300 million for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which keeps alive the stream of Pentagon contracts for weapons shipments to Kiev, pending the expected passage of a supplemental appropriation that would add \$60 billion in military and financial support for Ukraine, and \$14 billion more for Israel. The bill has been blocked by congressional Republicans at the urging of Trump, but House Speaker Mike Johnson has promised to bring the legislation to a vote after Easter, with the expectation of swift bipartisan approval.

The bipartisan passage of the record military budget

is an unarguable answer to all those who claim that it is possible to prevent World War III through pressure on the Democratic Party or appeals to such international agencies of imperialism as the United Nations. The only social force that has both the strength and the social imperative to oppose imperialist war is the world working class.

The WSWS and the Socialist Equality parties, the sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International, are fighting for the development of a global mass movement of the working class against imperialist war and against the capitalist system which is its cause, on the basis of an international socialist program.



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