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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Andre Damon

12.04.2021

Biden budget calls for record military spending, nuclear weapons and hypersonic missiles

Amid mounting tensions with both Russia and China, the Biden administration has requested the largest military budget in US history, demanding \$753 billion, or more than the next 10 biggest militaries combined, in annual military spending.

The budget calls for additional spending on nuclear weapons, the upgrading of the country's nuclear-capable ballistic submarine fleet, and the development of a whole new range of long-range weapons that military planners say are necessary for the US to fight a major war with Russia or China.

The budget exposes the hollow promises of the “progressive” wing of the Democratic party, including Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who claimed that a Biden presidency would be a departure from the militarism and warmongering of former president Donald Trump.



The Pentagon (Wikimedia Commons)

Instead, just months into his presidency, the Biden administration has poured gasoline on global flashpoints, creating the greatest period of tensions between the United States and Russia since the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and with China since the 1970s.

Following an announcement by the US proxy regime in Ukraine last month of a plan to militarily retake Crimea from Russia, relations between Washington and Moscow have been on a hair trigger. On Friday, the United States announced plans to deploy warships to the Black Sea, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned about the eruption of a “full-scale” war.

At the same time, the Biden administration has moved to deploy offensive weapons on the islands surrounding China and is discussing a military alliance with Taiwan, creating a standoff in both the strait of Taiwan and the South China Sea.

Biden’s budget proposal continues and accelerates the multi-trillion-dollar nuclear buildup initiated under Obama and continued under Trump, featuring the development of smaller, more “usable” nuclear weapons and nuclear-capable cruise missiles.

The text of the budget request says it will maintain “a strong, credible nuclear deterrent for the security of the Nation and U.S. allies,” adding that “the discretionary request supports ongoing nuclear modernization programs.”

The budget proposal firmly targets China and Russia, declaring, that it “prioritizes the need to counter the threat from China as the Department’s top challenge. The Department would also seek to deter destabilizing behavior by Russia.”

In order to carry this out, the budget explicitly endorses the so-called “Pacific Deterrence Initiative,” which aims to ring China with offensive, land-based missiles previously banned under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

“Leveraging the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and working together with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, DOD would ensure that the United States builds the concepts, capabilities, and posture necessary to meet these challenges.”

In addition to the development of new forms of previously-banned offensive weapons, the budget prioritizes the development of “hypersonic strike capabilities” capable of evading defenses to deliver nuclear payloads.

The budget declares that “Maintaining U.S. naval power is critical to reassuring allies and signaling U.S. resolve to potential adversaries,” adding, “the discretionary request continues the recapitalization of the Nation’s strategic ballistic missile submarine fleet, and invests in remotely operated and autonomous systems and the next generation attack submarine program.”

Coming after four consecutive years in which Trump increased the Pentagon’s budget, military officials had expected that Biden would keep military spending unchanged, or even cut it. Biden’s defenders among the “progressive” wing of the Democratic Party likewise promoted the belief that Biden would shrink the military budget. Instead, Biden has only intensified the massive inflation of the Pentagon budget.

But the defense budget is just one component of a massive increase in domestic spending aimed at countering China. Earlier this month, Biden announced a \$2 trillion infrastructure bill centrally aimed at “strategic competition” with Beijing.

Explaining the bill, Biden said China is “attempting to own the future—the technology, quantum computing,” he said. “That’s the infrastructure of a nation.”

“Do you think China is waiting around to invest in its digital infrastructure or in research and development? I promise you, they are not waiting. But they’re counting on American democracy to be too slow, too limited and too divided to keep pace.”

This week, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unveiled the “Strategic Competition Act of 2021.” The bill will be an “unprecedented bipartisan effort to mobilize all U.S. strategic, economic, and diplomatic tools for an Indo-Pacific strategy that will allow our nation to truly confront the challenges China poses to our national and economic security,” said Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez.

He added that “The Strategic Competition Act of 2021 is a recognition that this moment demands a unified, strategic response that can rebuild American leadership,” and “invest in our ability to out-compete China.”

Such flagrant misuse of society's resources for the preparation of reckless and destructive wars is doubly criminal while the world is in the grips of an out-of-control pandemic. While capitalist governments declare that the population must "live with" COVID-19 because containing it is too expensive, unlimited resources are made available to plan and prepare for wars that could potentially kill billions of people.

The rapid escalation of the US conflict with China and Russia raises immense dangers. Facing an enormous social crisis at home and a raging pandemic, the United States is desperately seeking to divert internal tensions outward.

But nothing about these war plans is inevitable. Workers must mobilize on the basis of a common, socialist and internationalist perspective, to stop the reckless war drive of the capitalists. The essential precondition for this development is the decisive repudiation of the Democratic party and all those who promote illusions in it.

World Socialist 10.04.2021