

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken
Written Statement
American Diplomacy and Global Leadership: Review of the FY24 State Department
Budget Request
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, committee members: thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about the Administration's proposed FY 2024 budget for the State Department and USAID.

We meet at an inflection point. The post-Cold War world is over, and there is an intense competition underway to determine what comes next. The United States has a positive vision for the future: a world that's free, secure, open and prosperous.

This budget will help us advance that vision, and deliver on the issues that matter most to the American people, by preparing us to meet two major sets of challenges.

The first set is posed by our strategic competitors – the immediate, acute threat posed by Russia's autocracy and aggression, most destructively through its brutal war against Ukraine... and the long-term challenge from the People's Republic of China.

The second set is posed by shared global tests, including the climate crisis, migration, food and energy insecurity, and pandemics, all of which directly impact the lives and livelihoods of Americans and all peoples around the world.

With this Committee's leadership and support across two State Department authorization bills, the United States is in a stronger geopolitical position than we were two years ago.

We've drawn enormous power from investments we've made in our economic strength and technological edge at home, including through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Our unmatched network of alliances and partnerships has never been stronger. We're expanding our presence in critical regions, like the Indo-Pacific. And we're leading unprecedented coalitions to confront aggression and address humanitarian crises worldwide.

The President's FY 2024 Budget Request for the State Department and USAID meets this moment head on.

This budget will sustain our security, economic, energy, and humanitarian support for Ukraine to ensure President Putin's war remains a strategic failure.

This budget will also strengthen our efforts to outcompete the PRC. President Biden and I share the Chairman and Ranking Member's commitment to the Indo-Pacific, which is why this proposal asks for an 18% increase in our budget for that region over FY 2023. The Budget

contains both discretionary and mandatory proposals for new innovative investments to outcompete China – including by enhancing our presence in the region, and ensuring what we and our fellow democracies have to offer, including maritime security, disease surveillance, clean energy infrastructure and digital technology, is more attractive than any alternative.

This budget will help us push back on advancing authoritarianism and democratic backsliding by strengthening democracies worldwide – including through supporting independent media, countering corruption, and defending free and fair elections. And it will allow us to pay our contributions to international organizations, because the United States needs to be at the table wherever and whenever new international rules that affect the livelihoods of our people are debated and decided.

This budget will allow us to continue leading the world in addressing global challenges, from food and energy insecurity to climate and health crises. On that last point: we’re celebrating the 20th anniversary of PEPFAR, which has helped us save 25 million lives worldwide. This budget will help us continue the fight against HIV/AIDS, while advancing health security more broadly through a new Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy, which I look forward to working with Congress to establish this year.

This budget will advance our efforts to modernize the State Department, including by expanding our training float, updating our technology, and carrying out diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility initiatives, including to make our overseas missions more accessible. I’m grateful for the progress we’ve already made together, including Congress’ support in updating the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act and Accountability Review Board to give us the flexibility to open new missions and better manage risks. We know there’s more to do, and we’re looking forward to working with Congress to accelerate modernization efforts, so the Department can better attract, retain, and support our first-rate workforce as they advance US interests in a complex and fast-moving landscape.

Finally, this budget will further a personal priority for me, and I know for many of you: supporting Enduring Welcome, our whole-of-government effort to resettle our Afghan allies. Keeping our promises to those who served the U.S. remains an unwavering priority, and this budget will help us continue to make good on that commitment.

When I began this role, I committed to restoring Congress’s place as an equal partner in our foreign policymaking.

I’m looking forward to continuing our close coordination, and I’m grateful for the chance to answer your questions. Thank you.

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