
LEGISLATION AND POLICY

President Obama's Requests for \$83.4 Billion for War

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The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) submitted President Obama's \$83.4 billion fiscal year 2009 war funding request to Congress yesterday. The request includes \$75.5 billion in defense funding. It also includes another \$7.1 billion for the State Department to support foreign operations. OMB officials briefed House and Senate Appropriations Committee staffers on the request yesterday and told them that the Administration needs the supplemental signed by Memorial Day. Last week, a spokesman for House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee (HAC-D) Chairman John Murtha (Democrat-Pennsylvania) said that the full HAC [House Appropriations Committee] tentatively plans to mark up the supplemental on 30 April, with floor consideration expected around 5 May 2009. Presumably subcommittee mark ups would take place the week before the full committee marks.

In his cover letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Democrat-California), President Obama emphasized that the request will be the last planned war supplemental submitted by the Administration and that all future war funding will be included in the President's regular budget. The President asked that lawmakers not use the supplemental to pursue "unnecessary spending" and that Congress quickly send him a bill focused on the needs of the troops.

[The request includes:]

- \$38 billion to fund the incremental costs of ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during the remainder of fiscal year 2009
- \$3.1 billion for classified activities in support of ongoing counter-terrorism operations—these activities include support to military operations, intelligence collection and analysis, and overseas law enforcement efforts
- \$400 million for the new Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund which would allow Central Command to provide training and equipment to build the counterinsurgency capability of Pakistan's military, Frontier Corps, and irregular security forces
- \$500 million for the Commander's Emergency Response Program
- \$3.6 billion to expand and improve capabilities of the Afghan security forces
- \$1.5 billion for the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Fund
- \$50 million within the DOD Iraq Freedom Fund and \$30 million in Department of Justice funding for the costs associated with the President's Executive Orders to close the Guantanamo Bay detainee facility and review U.S. detention and interrogation policies
- \$1.05 billion for Coalition Support Funds
- \$3.607 billion for the Afghan Security Forces Fund
- \$98.4 million of Foreign Military Financing for Lebanon
- \$2 million of International Military Education and Training for Iraq