

# United States Senate

## BACKGROUND GUIDE FOR DELEGATES

<b>Committee</b>	United States Senate
<b>Agenda</b>	The Debt vs. Dominance Debate: Re-evaluating Long-Term Military Aid Packages to Foreign Allies amidst a Domestic Fiscal Crisis
<b>Conference</b>	SCIMUN 2026 · The Eighth Edition
<b>Venue</b>	The Scindia School, Fort Gwalior
<b>Dates</b>	April 10-13, 2026
<b>Theme</b>	Pretia Imperii: The Cost of Power

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## C H A P T E R I

# Letter from the Chair

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Distinguished Senators,

Welcome to the United States Senate at SCIMUN'26. The Background Guide before you has been prepared to introduce the fiscal, constitutional, and strategic dimensions of the agenda under discussion. While it outlines key areas of concern relevant to the debate, it is not exhaustive. Delegates are expected to conduct independent research using primary legislation, Congressional Budget Office projections, Congressional Research Service analyses, Department of Defence publications, and peer-reviewed academic scholarship.

Under no circumstances may this Background Guide be quoted as evidence in committee proceedings. It is intended solely as an academic starting point. The quality of debate will depend upon the depth and rigour of your preparation. The Executive Board will remain strictly neutral on matters of substance. All rules will be applied consistently. Minority positions will be protected, and debate will be conducted in accordance with procedural discipline and institutional respect.

*We look forward to a serious and well-researched legislative simulation.*

*Ms. Lovisha Jindal, Chairperson · Mr. Rajvir Agarwal, Vice Chairperson*

## C H A P T E R I I

## Constitutional and Institutional Authority

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The authority of the United States Senate is rooted in Article I of the United States Constitution (U.S. Constitution, 1787). Article I vests legislative power in Congress and assigns to it specific fiscal and defence-related responsibilities directly relevant to the provision of military assistance abroad. Under Article I, Section 8, Congress holds the power to lay and collect taxes, to borrow money on the credit of the United States, and to provide for the common defence. These clauses collectively establish Congress as the primary institution responsible for raising revenue and determining how federal funds are allocated, including expenditures connected to national security and foreign assistance.

In addition to its taxing and spending authority, Congress controls federal appropriations. No funds may be drawn from the Treasury except pursuant to appropriations made by law. This constitutional requirement places the Senate, alongside the House of Representatives, at the centre of decisions concerning the authorisation and funding of military assistance programs. The Senate also performs an oversight function, reviewing the executive branch's implementation of spending legislation and ensuring that appropriated funds are used in accordance with statutory intent.

Beyond fiscal powers, the Senate possesses the constitutional authority to provide advice and consent on treaties and to confirm senior executive officials, including defence and diplomatic appointments (U.S. Constitution, 1787, Article II, Section 2). Foreign military assistance is primarily governed by statutory frameworks such as the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act. Under these statutes, Congress authorises and appropriates funds for programs including Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Presidential drawdown authorities (CRS, 2023a). Even where multi-year commitments are articulated, continued funding remains contingent upon congressional appropriations and periodic legislative review.

## C H A P T E R   I I I

# Fiscal Context: Federal Debt and Budgetary Projections

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## | 2.1 Current Debt Position

As of 2024, gross federal debt exceeds \$34 trillion (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2024). The Congressional Budget Office projects that debt held by the public will increase from 99 per cent of GDP in 2024 to 166 per cent of GDP by 2054 under current law (CBO, 2024). These projections indicate sustained primary deficits over the coming three decades. Net interest outlays are projected to grow significantly over the long term. Independent fiscal analysis further suggests that interest costs may exceed defence spending within the coming decade (CRFB, 2023).

## | 2.2 Composition of Federal Spending

Federal outlays are primarily composed of mandatory spending programs, including Social Security and major health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. Defence spending accounts for approximately 13 per cent of total federal outlays (CBO, 2024). Within this broader fiscal structure, long-term military aid commitments fall under the discretionary budget category. While defence spending is not identified as the principal driver of projected long-term debt growth, additional commitments increase cumulative borrowing requirements under persistent deficit conditions.

## | 2.3 Macroeconomic Considerations

Elmendorf and Mankiw (1999) note that prolonged high levels of government borrowing may influence long-term interest rates and capital formation, depending on prevailing economic conditions. Rising debt service obligations may reduce fiscal flexibility during periods of economic contraction or crisis. Projections from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget indicate that interest payments on the federal debt may surpass defence spending within the coming decade if current trajectories persist (CRFB, 2023).

## C H A P T E R I V

## Structure of United States Military Aid

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United States security assistance is administered through statutory frameworks enacted and overseen by Congress. The primary legislative authorities governing military assistance include the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act, under which specific programs are authorised and funded (CRS, 2023a).

One of the principal mechanisms is Foreign Military Financing (FMF), a grant-based program that enables partner governments to procure U.S. defence articles and services (CRS, 2023a). FMF constitutes a core component of long-term bilateral security cooperation arrangements. In circumstances deemed emergencies, the executive branch may utilise Presidential Drawdown Authority, which allows the transfer of defence articles and services from existing U.S. stocks, subject to statutory notification and reporting requirements to Congress (CRS, 2024a).

Since February 2022, multiple supplemental appropriations measures have been passed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, totalling over \$170 billion in assistance commitments (CRS, 2024a). Long-term security assistance arrangements may also be structured through multi-year frameworks. The United States and Israel signed a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding covering fiscal years 2019 through 2028, committing \$38 billion in military assistance (U.S. Department of State, 2016). Security cooperation with Taiwan has expanded through recent authorisation legislation passed by Congress (CRS, 2023b). All such assistance mechanisms remain subject to congressional appropriations and statutory authority.

## CHAPTER V

# Defence Expenditure and Strategic Environment

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## | 4.1 Global Military Spending

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the United States military expenditure reached \$877 billion in 2023, representing the highest level of military spending globally (SIPRI, 2024). SIPRI further reports that China continued to increase its military expenditure, while Russia maintained elevated levels of defence spending amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The 2022 United States National Defence Strategy identifies strategic competition with China as the pacing challenge for U.S. defence planning and describes Russia as an acute threat to international security (U.S. Department of Defence, 2022).

## | 4.2 Strategic Rationale for Military Aid

One body of scholarship frames sustained military assistance as a strategic investment within a broader deterrence architecture. Proponents argue that external assistance may contribute to the deterrence of adversarial expansion by strengthening the defensive capacity of partner states, thereby reducing the likelihood of direct United States military involvement in future conflicts. Brands (2022) argues that assistance to allied states may function as a form of forward defence. Ikenberry (2011) contends that consistent engagement and support contribute to the durability of alliance systems. Analyses of the U.S. defence industrial base further indicate that military assistance programs can contribute to sustaining production capacity and technological continuity within domestic defence sectors (CSIS, 2023).

## CHAPTER VI

## Competing Strategic Interpretations

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### | 5.1 Aid as Strategic Investment

Within this framework, military aid is interpreted as a component of systemic stability, intended to support alliance structures and maintain deterrent credibility. Proponents contend that the costs of sustained assistance are substantially lower than the costs of direct military engagement, and that the strategic dividends — in deterrence, intelligence cooperation, and industrial base sustainability — outweigh the budgetary burden. Historical analyses of the Cold War period have described indirect balancing strategies as mechanisms by which major powers supported their partners in containing adversaries (Gaddis, 2005).

### | 5.2 Aid as Fiscal and Strategic Overextension

Alternative scholarship emphasises the potential risks associated with sustained external commitments. Kennedy (1987) argues that great powers may encounter structural decline when external obligations expand beyond underlying economic capacity — the concept of overstretch, whereby strategic commitments exceed available fiscal and material resources. Posen (2014) advances a strategy of restraint, suggesting that extensive security guarantees may reduce incentives for allied burden-sharing and generate long-term strategic liabilities. From a fiscal standpoint, rising debt service obligations may constrain future policy flexibility (CBO, 2024). Under this interpretation, long-term military aid commitments must be evaluated in relation to projected budgetary trajectories and the sustainability of national economic capacity.

## CHAPTER VII

## Congressional Oversight and Legislative Precedent

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The United States Congress retains the constitutional authority to authorise, appropriate, modify, condition, or terminate foreign assistance programs pursuant to its powers under Article I of the Constitution. Within this framework, the Senate exercises oversight over executive implementation of military assistance through hearings, reporting requirements, statutory conditions, and sunset provisions embedded in authorising legislation.

Recent supplemental appropriations enacted in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine have included reporting and oversight provisions requiring executive branch accountability to Congress regarding the use and distribution of funds (CRS, 2024a). Similarly, while the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel establishes a ten-year framework for military assistance, funding under this arrangement remains subject to annual congressional appropriations (U.S. Department of State, 2016). Legislative deliberation concerning long-term military aid packages therefore requires assessment of programme effectiveness, consistency with articulated national defence strategy, and projected fiscal implications.

Within its constitutional authority, the Senate may evaluate a range of legislative approaches including designing multi-year appropriations structures, incorporating conditionality mechanisms linked to allied burden-sharing commitments, establishing enhanced reporting and auditing requirements, statutory sunset clauses requiring periodic review and reauthorisation, and the inclusion of debt sustainability assessments in future authorisation and appropriations legislation. Any modification, continuation, or restructuring of military aid packages requires passage by both chambers of Congress and presentation to the President for approval.

## C H A P T E R   V I I I

## Points for Discussion

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Delegates are expected to approach this agenda through both fiscal analysis and strategic evaluation. The following questions must guide research and debate:

- How should projected debt-to-GDP increases influence long-term military aid authorisations (CBO, 2024)?
- At what threshold do rising net interest payments begin to constrain national security flexibility (CRFB, 2023)?
- Does sustained military assistance function as cost-effective forward defence, or does it risk strategic overstretch (Brands, 2022; Kennedy, 1987)?
- How do historical precedents, including Cold War-era assistance, inform current policy design (Gaddis, 2005)?
- To what extent do recipient states meet burden-sharing expectations relative to their own defence expenditures (SIPRI, 2024)?
- Should multi-year aid commitments be conditioned upon measurable performance, reporting, or fiscal benchmarks (CRS, 2024a)?
- How does long-term aid interact with domestic defence industrial capacity (CSIS, 2023)?
- What oversight mechanisms are currently in place, and are they sufficient to ensure accountability under supplemental appropriations (CRS, 2024a)?
- How should strategic competition, as outlined in the 2022 National Defence Strategy, shape future allocation priorities (U.S. Department of Defence, 2022)?
- What are the long-term macroeconomic implications of sustained borrowing to finance discretionary commitments (Elmendorf and Mankiw, 1999)?

## C H A P T E R I X

# The Executive Board

## CHAIRPERSON

**Ms. Lovisha Jindal**

Postgraduate scholar pursuing an M.A. in Law, Politics and Society. Explores constitutionalism, political authority, and global justice, drawing on thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci and Judith Butler. Particularly interested in peacebuilding, humanitarian frameworks, and the role of international institutions in fostering accountable and inclusive global governance.

## VICE CHAIRPERSON

**Mr. Rajvir Agarwal**

'Experience is the teacher of all things.' — Julius Caesar. Views the committee room as a chamber where ideas confront reality. Approaches the dais with neutrality, analytical depth, and composure. Committed to a culture where discipline guides discussion and diplomacy supersedes disruption.

## A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This Background Guide is a starting point for research — not an exhaustive account, and not a document that may be cited or used as evidence in committee. Delegates are expected to undertake independent research, verify facts through primary sources, and develop well-researched positions. The quality of preparation will directly shape the depth and direction of debate.

The United States Senate at SCIMUN 2026 is designed to develop the capacity for reasoned argument, diplomatic sensitivity, and genuine engagement with the issues at hand. Arrive prepared. Argue with precision. Engage with integrity.

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