



Defense & Foreign Policy

What to Watch For

Defense

National Defense Authorization Act

After Congress finalizes the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act during the Lame Duck session, FY 23 work will begin, which will likely exceed \$840 billion. Lawmakers want include greater DOD contracting flexibility, inflation adjustments for military personnel, abortion-related language relating to military health care services, and various proposals governing the nuclear stockpile.

Space & Missile Defense

National security challenges and commercial opportunities in space will continue to attract attention and funding. Expect Congress to continue the evolution of the Space Force and funding of critical technologies including hypersonics, secure optical communications, counter-UAS, and missile defense. NASA will continue to urge development of commercial capabilities in space communications, launch, human space flight, and more, to support government and commercial needs.

Foreign Policy

Ukraine

Congress has already provided \$28 billion in supplemental appropriations for security assistance to Ukraine (on top of more than \$30 billion in economic and food security assistance). Some House Republican leaders have suggested there will not be a “blank check” for this going forward, but strong bipartisan support remains as the U.S. leads the international coalition against Russian aggression. Congress will likely focus increasing attention on efforts by foreign adversaries like China and Iran to assist Russia.

China and Taiwan Policy

Incoming House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman McCaul (R-TX) will make assistance to Taiwan a top priority, including increasing Taiwan's military capabilities, strengthening U.S.-Taiwan bilateral relations, and supporting Taiwan internationally. The NDAA contained new authority for foreign military sales to Taiwan, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier passed a broader Taiwan Policy Act. Bipartisan support for these initiatives is expected in 2023.

Afghanistan Oversight

House Republicans early in 2023 likely will initiate a series of hearings on events surrounding the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in Aug. 2021, and focus on events leading up to withdrawal, implications for the region of Taliban rule, budgetary implications, and the impact on future U.S. military policy.

Pacific Islands

The Biden administration has invested political capital and diplomatic resources into strengthening relations with Pacific Islands nations, in the hopes of countering China's presence in the region. Look for this trend to continue as the U.S. continues to press China on myriad fronts.

NATO

The U.S. has worked extensively with NATO allies in dealing with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Sweden and Finland have sought NATO admission, which will bolster NATO. On Aug. 3 the Senate approved Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of both countries, as ratified by President Biden on Aug. 9.

Iran Nuclear Deal

Diplomatic efforts to renew an arms control agreement that involves Iran thus far have failed. Recently, the White House has said that a deal is not imminent, though diplomatic efforts will continue.

Iran/Iraq Unrest Following Sept. 16, 2022

Under Republican leadership, the next Congress will be laser-focused on Iranian activities targetting U.S. interests and allies in the Middle East, including in Iraq, particularly in light of Saudi Arabia's recent report of a potential imminent attack by Iran on the kingdom, as well as the Sept. 16 murder of a Kurdish-Iranian woman (Mahsa Amini), whose murder has spawned widespread protests.

Congressional Leadership Changes

Rep. Mike McCaul (R-TX) is expected to chair the House Foreign Affairs Committee, with Rep. Greg Meeks (D-NY) as Ranking Member. The majority party of the Senate is currently undetermined. If Democrats retain control of the chamber, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) is expected to keep his post as Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee. A Republican majority would make Sen. James Risch (R-ID) the likely Chairman. The House Armed Services Committee will likely be chaired by Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), with Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA) as Ranking Member.

A Democratic majority in the Senate would likely mean that Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) will continue to serve as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee. If Republicans win control of the chamber, Roger Wicker (R-MS) would likely serve as Chairman.

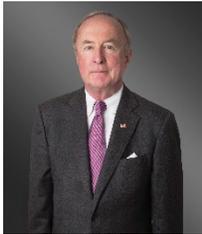
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