

Boost for hot spots in State Dept. budget

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The Department of State's budget allocation for fiscal year 2009 would enhance security, reduce poverty and respond to global crises, the White House said. The budget, released Monday, targets some of the State Department's budget on Mideast hot spots to help stabilization and peace processes -- \$400 million to Iraq, \$1.1 billion to Afghanistan, \$75 million to the Palestinian Authority and \$142 million to Lebanon -- budget documents released by the White House indicated. In addition, about \$830 million would be slotted to help Pakistan achieve stability, security and economic development, and combat terrorism in the country's western frontier regions. The State Department budget also includes President George W. Bush's international AIDS project, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, seeking \$6 billion which would generate a matching pledge from other G-8 nations. The budget includes \$300 million for Bush's Malaria Initiative, a program to reduce malaria-related deaths by 50 percent in 15 target African countries by 2010. Closer to home, the budget allocates \$550 million to support a new initiative with leaders in Mexico and Central America to address common security concerns, the White House said.

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