



## On Ukraine Aid, Mike Johnson and Hakeem Jeffries Must Do the Right Thing

### Description

**WORLD : Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) appears to be on the verge of separating aid to Israel from that of Ukraine and Taiwan. He would propose four separate supplemental bills, one for each of the three countries in question and one to seize Russian assets.**

The House Freedom Caucus has denounced the plan. In an April 15 statement on X (Twitter), the caucus asserted that “the House Freedom Caucus stands unequivocally with Israel.

Congress should provide aid to Israel—and the House had already done so and paid for it.

The Senate must act immediately to take up...the Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act to support our ally [which the Senate has previously rejected]....Under no circumstances will the House Freedom Caucus abide using the emergency situation in Israel as a bogus justification to ram through Ukraine aid with no offset and no security for our own wide-open borders.”

Johnson is walking a tightrope. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), who filed a motion to oust Johnson prior to the Congressional recess, had signaled a day earlier the direction that the Freedom Caucus would take. She asserted on X that “it’s antisemitic to make Israeli aid contingent on funding Ukrainian Nazis.”

Johnson has indicated on more than one occasion that he supports aid to Ukraine. So do the chairmen of the three House national security committees, Mike McCaul (R-TX) of Foreign Affairs, Mike Rogers (R-AL) of Armed Services, and Mike Turner (R-OH) of Intelligence.

McCaul, an outspoken supporter of Ukraine and, indeed, of NATO, has asserted that “Russian propaganda has made its way into the United States, unfortunately, and it’s infected a good chunk of my party’s base.”

Turner, who has served as President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the closest thing to a NATO legislative arm, has gone even further.

Responding to his view of McCaul’s remarks, not only did Turner agree with McCaul that “Russian

propaganda has made its way into the United States,” but also added that such messages had found their way to “being uttered on the House floor.”

Despite the support he has received from the three chairmen and other Republicans as well, given the bitter response from his right-wing, it is not clear that Johnson will succeed in having anything but his Israel proposal win House support unless the House Democrats join a handful of Republicans to pass the other three pieces of legislation.

Yet, the Democrats confront a dilemma of their own. Should the House pass only the legislation supporting aid to Israel, Democrats in both chambers would face a nasty choice.

They could defeat the proposal to aid the Jewish state in the immediate aftermath of the Iranian missile and drone onslaught, a politically risky prospect given overwhelming American support for Israel in the face of the Iranian threat.

A vote to block aid could have serious political consequences for legislators running for office in the November elections.

On the other hand, should the Democrats support a stand-alone bill to resupply the Jewish state, it could well guarantee that Ukraine will not receive the aid that it equally desperately requires.

Kyiv is running low on ammunition and weaponry. It is facing a personnel crisis as recruitment and retention are not fully compensating for Ukrainian losses on the battlefield. To make matters worse, Ukraine anticipates a major Russian offensive in the late spring and summer.

America’s European NATO allies are increasingly worried that the extreme Republican Right will prevail and that America will fail to maintain the level of military and economic support with which it has increasingly buttressed Kyiv since the onset of the Russian invasion.

Although the allies are committing increasing funds to Kyiv, and some, like Czechia, are scouring the world for ammunition and weapons to support the Ukrainian war effort, Europe is in no position to fill the gap that an American failure to provide further aid to Ukraine would create.

And Ukraine’s prospects, not merely for winning back its lost territory but for its very survival, would begin to dim.

It is, therefore, imperative that Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), the Democratic leader in the House, guarantee that Johnson will survive Greene’s motion to vacate if Johnson presses ahead with what appears to have been his original promise, namely to support the current Senate version that provides assistance not only for Israel but also for Ukraine and Taiwan, as well as for replenishing America’s own ammunition and weapons shortages.

An alternative but far more uncertain arrangement would call for Jeffries to throw Democratic support behind all four bills, thereby ensuring that they pass the House.

However, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) would also have to commit to winning passage of all four bills, which could prove to be too heavy a lift for him to manage.

Washington simply cannot reprise the isolationist impulse that governed its policies for much of the

1930s.

Should it do so, America may find itself caught in a war that would prove far more costly in terms of personnel, materiel, money, and especially national infrastructure than what is contained in the Senate legislation to assist America's allies and friends.

It is, therefore, up to both Johnson and Jeffries to do what is right not only for Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan but also for the best interests of the United States.

**by Dov S. Zakheim**

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