



The Bizarre, Unanimous Dem Support for the \$40b War Package to Raytheon and CIA: “For Ukraine”

Description



at the U.S. Capitol on August 03, 2021 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

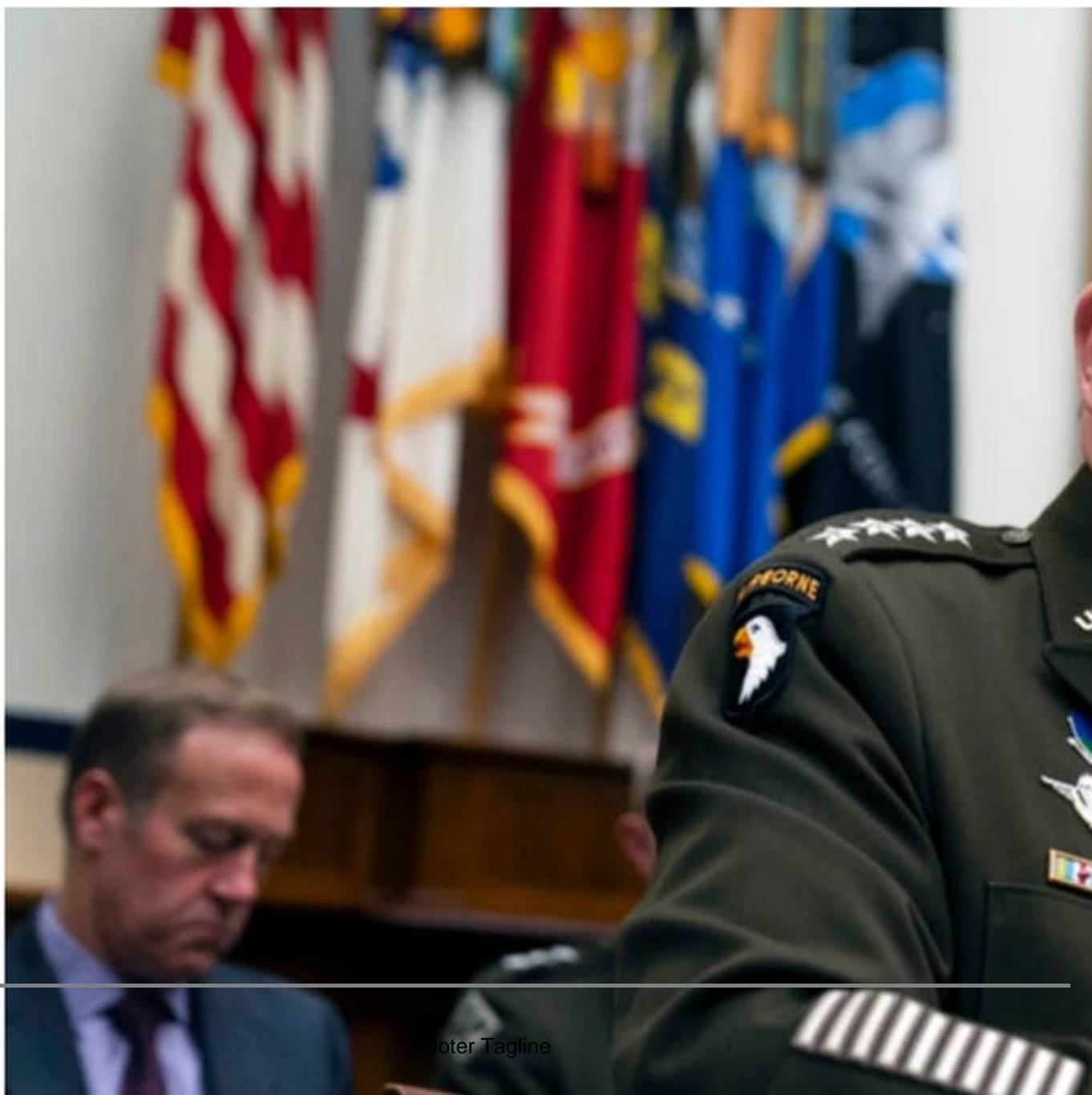
After Joe Biden announced his [extraordinary request for \\$33 billion more](#) for the war in Ukraine — on top of the \$14 billion the U.S. has already spent *just ten weeks* into this war — congressional leaders of both parties immediately decided the amount was insufficient. They arbitrarily increased the amount by \$7 billion to a total of \$40 billion, then fast-tracked the bill for immediate approval. As we [reported on Tuesday night](#), the House overwhelmingly voted to approve the bill by a vote of 388-57. *All fifty-seven NO votes came from Republican House members.* Except for two missing members, all House Democrats — every last one, including all six members of the revolutionary, subversive Squad — [voted for this gigantic war package](#), one of the largest the U.S. has spent at once in decades.

While a small portion of these funds will go to humanitarian aid for Ukraine, the vast majority will go into the coffers of weapons manufacturers such as Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and the usual suspects. Some of it will go to the CIA for unspecified reasons. The extreme speed with which this was all approved means there is little to no oversight over how the funds will be spent, who will profit and how much, and what the effects will be for Ukraine and the world.

To put this \$54 billion amount in perspective, it is (a) larger than the average *annual* amount that the U.S. spent on its own war in Afghanistan (\$46 billion), (b) close to the overall amount Russia spends on its entire military for the year (\$69 billion), (c) close to 7% of the overall U.S. military budget, by far the largest in the world (\$778 billion), and (d) certain to be far, far higher — easily into the hundreds of billions of dollars and likely the trillion dollar level — given that U.S. officials insist that this war will last not months [but years](#), and that it will stand with Ukraine until the bitter end.



Ukraine War Likely to Military Officer Says



Voice of America, Apr. 6, 2022

What made this Democratic Party *unanimity* so bizarre, even surreal, is that many of these House Democrats who voted YES have spent years vehemently denouncing exactly these types of war expenditures. Some of them — very recently — even expressed specific opposition to pouring large amounts of U.S. money and weaponry into Ukraine on the grounds that doing so would be unprecedentedly dangerous, and that Americans are suffering far too severely at home to justify such massive amounts to weapons manufacturers and intelligence agencies. Here, for instance, is the [shocking-in-hindsight warning](#) of Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) on March 8 — *just two months* before she voted YES on this \$40 billion weapons package:



Ilhan Omar ✓
@IlhanMN

The consequences of flooding Uk
dollars in 🇺🇸 weapons, likely not
military-specific equipment but a
arms + ammo, are unpredictable

Specially when they are given to
w/out accountability.

11:08 AM · Mar 8, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

4,224 Retweets **2,036** Quote Tweets **30.6K**

Just as stridently, her progressive House Democratic colleague, Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA), [appeared on Democracy Now](#) on February 8 to discuss the imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine, and he explicitly and repeatedly demanded that no lethal arms be sent by the U.S. into Ukraine. Indeed, Khanna, while repeatedly denouncing Putin's aggression, heaped praise on former President Obama for long [resisting bipartisan demands](#) to send lethal arms to Ukraine — based on Obama's [oft-stated belief](#) that Ukraine is and always will be a vital interest to Russia, *but will never be to the U.S.* — and argued that such a move would be dangerously escalatory:

I certainly join [House progressives] in the concerns of having increased aid, **lethal aid, into that area. That will only inflame the situation.** I also join them in the concern that we need restraint, that **the last thing the American people want is an escalation which could lead us to some long war in Ukraine with Russia, that that's a very dangerous situation,** and no one in this country — or, very few people in this country would want that. **There's a reason President Obama didn't send lethal aid into Ukraine and had a greater restraint in his approach.** So, I do think we should do everything possible not to escalate the situation, while having the moral clarity that Putin is in the wrong in this case....

The arguments Khanna was endorsing from House progressive leaders came in the form of [a January 26 press release](#) from co-caucus-leaders Reps. Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA). The progressive duo argued: “There is no military solution out of this crisis — diplomacy needs to be the focus.” Then they added this: “We have significant concerns that **new troop deployments, sweeping and indiscriminate sanctions, and a flood of hundreds of millions of dollars in lethal weapons will only raise tensions and increase the chance of miscalculation.** Russia’s strategy is to inflame tensions; the United States and NATO must not play into this strategy.” Just over three months later, both Lee and Jayapal voted *not* for a “flood of hundreds of millions of dollars in lethal weapons,” but to flood Ukraine with *tens of billions* of dollars in lethal weapons.

One would think that when a member of Congress engages in such a remarkable and radical shift in their position, they would at least deign to provide some explanation for why they did so. In the case of the Squad and dozens of House progressives, one would be very wrong. On Friday morning, I emailed and/or texted the press representatives of the five Squad members who have said nothing about their vote (only Rep. Cori Bush (D-MO), in a doozy of a statement discussed below, bothered to explain), and directly texted both Omar and Khanna. Other reporters also have requested statements. More than seventy-two hours after they cast this enormously consequential war vote, they still have refused to explain themselves or even issue a cursory statement as to why they supported this **(see update below)**.

This vote, and their silence about it, is particularly confounding — one could, without hyperbole, even say chilling — given how rapidly Democrats’ rhetoric about Ukraine is escalating. As we noted on Tuesday, many leading Democrats, such as Rep. Jason Crow (D-CO), have begun speaking about this war not only as an American proxy war — which it has long been — but as “our war” that we [must fight to the end in order for “victory”](#) to be ours, while Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) [vows](#) that there be “no off ramps” to end the war diplomatically, since the real goal of the war is *regime change in Moscow*.

Even worse, the eighty-two-year-old House Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), now in his *twentieth* term in Congress, went to the House floor on Friday to *twice* say that “we are at war” — meaning *the U.S is now at war with Russia* — and that it is therefore [inappropriate to heavily criticize our president](#):

As the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* has spent decades pointing out, there is nothing more dangerous to humanity than a war between the two nations with the planet’s largest nuclear stockpiles. One might think that those who just voted to dangerously escalate such a war would at least deign to explain themselves, especially those who have repeatedly made recent statements violently at odds with the YES vote they just cast. Even Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), who has thus far said nothing about this

House vote, [warned in *The Guardian*](#) in early February, that while Putin is immoral and tyrannical, the West bears some blame for provoking this war with reckless NATO expansion and, more importantly, warned of the grave and unpredictable dangers of having the U.S. pursue a strategy of fueling the war rather than trying to solve it diplomatically.

So exceptional is this headlong rush into this war that *even The New York Times* — usually loyally supportive of U.S. war policies and the Democratic establishment — published [a highly unusual news article](#) about the House vote which repeatedly and harshly criticized Congress for being too frightened to ask questions or express skepticism about Biden's war policy. The *NYT* took the members of Congress voting YES in both parties to task for being cowed into submission, meekly falling into line. The headline of the article told the story — “House Passes \$40 Billion More in Ukraine Aid, **With Few Questions Asked**” — as the Paper of Record all but called these YES-voting members of Congress cowards and abdicators:

The escalating brutality of the war in Ukraine has dampened voices on both the right and left skeptical of the United States' involving itself in armed conflict overseas, **fueling a rush by Congress to pour huge amounts of money into a potentially lengthy and costly offensive against Russia with few questions or reservations raised....[L]awmakers in both political parties who have previously railed against skyrocketing military budgets and entanglements in intractable conflicts abroad have gone largely silent about what is fast becoming a major military effort drawing on American resources....**

That total — roughly \$53 billion over two months — goes beyond what President Biden requested and is poised to amount to **the largest foreign aid package to move through Congress in at least two decades....**But stunned by the grisly images from Ukraine and leery of turning their backs on a country whose suffering has been on vivid display for the world, **many lawmakers have put aside their skepticism and quietly agreed to the sprawling tranches of aid, keeping to themselves their concerns about the war and questions about the Biden administration's strategy for American involvement.....**

And as Mr. Biden's requests to Congress for money to fund the war effort have spiraled upward, leaders in both parties **have largely refrained from questioning them.....**The result has been that, at least for now, Congress is quickly and nearly unanimously **embracing historic tranches of foreign aid with little public debate about the Biden administration's strategy**, whether the volume of military assistance could escalate the conflict, or whether domestic priorities are being pushed aside to accommodate the huge expenditures overseas.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of this surreal episode is the [statement issued by Rep. Bush](#), ostensibly explaining and justifying her YES vote. If you are able to discern some sort of cogent explanation from this statement, it means that you have better reading skills than I. While Rep. Bush at least deserves credit for bothering to try to explain her vote — in contrast to her fellow Squad members who have thus far refused to do so — by far the clearest and most significant part of what she says are her *admissions* of the horrible and dangerous parts of this bill, for which she just voted YES. Behold these admissions:

Additionally, at \$40 billion, this is an extraordinary amount of military assistance, **a large percentage of which will go directly to private defense contractors**. In the last year alone, the United States will have provided Ukraine with more military aid than any country in the last two decades, and **twice as much military assistance as the yearly cost of war in Afghanistan, even when American troops were on the ground**. The sheer size of the package given an already inflated Pentagon budget should not go without critique. I remain **concerned about the increased risks of direct war and the potential for direct military confrontation**.

Imagine saying this about a bill — recognizing how wasteful and dangerous it is — and then snapping into line behind Nancy Pelosi and voting for it anyway to ensure Democratic Party unanimity in support of this war. Credit to Rep. Bush for candor, I suppose.

One person whose name has not yet appeared in this article is Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY). That is because we published on Wednesday a [comprehensive video report on Rumble](#), documenting how AOC's YES vote on this war package so violently contradicts virtually everything she has ever claimed to believe about questions of war, militarism and military spending. AOC, needless to say, has not bothered to reconcile this vote with the drastically divergent body of statements she has uttered her entire adult life because her blind followers do not demand anything of her, let alone explanations for why she does what she does (which is why she knew she could, in the middle of the COVID pandemic, attend the Met Gala — the nation's most gluttonous celebration of capitalist excess and celebrity culture — and [attended to indoors by a team of masked servants](#) while she and her boyfriend remained comfortably and glamorously unmasked, and then show total contempt for her fans by hilariously spray-painting a banal, inoffensive phrase on the back of her designer gown, knowing this would make them not only accept her behavior but celebrate her heroic subversiveness).

The full video about how the Squad and AOC just permanently killed whatever was left of the U.S. left-wing anti-war movement can be [seen on our Rumble page](#), or watched on the video player below. A full transcript of that video appears below for subscribers only.

Only two months ago, those who observed that this was not a war between Russia and Ukraine, but really a proxy war between Russia and the U.S./NATO, were vilified as Kremlin propagandists. Now, U.S. leaders openly boast of this fact, and go further, claiming that the U.S. is actually *at war* with Russia and must secure full victory. That there is not a single Democratic politician willing to object to or even question any of this speaks volumes about what that party is, as well how dangerous this war has become for Americans and the world generally.

UPDATE, May 14, 2022, 6:56 a.m. ET: Rep. Khanna provided the following comment in response to our question of how he can reconcile his argument in his February 8 *Democracy Now* interview that the U.S. should not send lethal arms to Ukraine with his vote on Monday to send lethal arms:

I wanted to do everything we could to prevent conflict through diplomacy and so did not want to escalate prior to invasion. But once Putin invaded and has been barbarically destroying towns and cities, I believe it is morally justified to stand firmly with Ukraine in defense of their territory and provide them with military and economic assistance. We at the

same time need to be aggressively encouraging diplomatic talks and a ceasefire and enlisting countries who can play a mediating role to help us bring this brutal war to an end.

Note that the assumption of that entire was interview was that Russia would invade Ukraine. Indeed, the first question to which Rep. Khanna responded, when arguing that the U.S. should not send lethal aid to Ukraine, was this one: "And do you support the threat of devastating sanctions against Russia in the event of any kind of Russian invasion of Ukraine?" Nonetheless, in contrast to many of his House colleagues, at least he is willing to account for the vote he cast. We will add any further comments in response to our requests for comment if and when we receive them.

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