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Freedom Caucus is a threat to Ukrainian freedom

Far-right Russian sympathizers oppose Reagan conservatism

By Robert Weiner and Olivia Ardito

While the U.S. House recently passed a Ukraine funding bill on April 20, 112 Republicans voted against the \$61 billion Ukrainian package, putting in danger the lives of Ukrainians and the sovereignty of their nation. This vote was representative of the new anti-Ukraine sentiment that is gaining prominence among the far-right GOP members, led by the Freedom Caucus.

When speaking on the House Floor in opposition to HR 8035, Congressman Chip Roy (R, TX), a leader of the Freedom Caucus, justified his stance by saying that “people are dying in Ukraine, yes. The problem is they are being funded with American debt. There is no skin in the game for the American people...the truth is Americans are dying, not just Ukrainians, at the hands of the wide open borders.”

American support for Ukraine is more critical than ever. Russia bombed Ukraine’s largest children’s hospital on July 8. Luckily, these Republicans are in the minority. The rest of the GOP, who follow a more traditional approach, do not share the same mentality of “America First.”

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, in particular, represents this opposing Republican view and considers the Ukrainian aid bill passing a significant win. However, as a presidential election looms, it is clear that if Donald Trump were to win, Ukraine would be at far greater risk.

Historically, Republican foreign policy has prioritized hawkish interventionism to prioritize global democracy. The Freedom Caucus stands out from traditional Republican values. The group is known for their relentless and unconditional support of Trump, right-wing extremism, and a lack of decorum on the House floor. They perpetuate the idea that Putin is unstoppable, so sending Ukraine aid is simply a waste of American taxpayer dollars. These avid Trump supporters have been quietly increasing their support for Russia since

Trump won the 2016 election, but have become very blatant in their Russian sympathy as of late.

In particular, Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor-Greene (R-GA), also known as “Moscow Marjorie” according to the conservative tabloid *The New York Post*, has been starkly anti-Ukraine. The congresswoman has spread false conspiracy theories that Ukrainians are Nazis, claimed that Ukraine is waging a war against Christianity, and credited Ukrainian aid as worsening problems at the US-Mexico border. She has praised Putin for his policies that harm the LGBTQ community and prioritize Christian conservatism. Her outlandish claims have garnered criticism from Democrats and fellow Republicans alike. Even Speaker Johnson has opposed her by being avid in his support for Ukrainian aid and Reagan-style foreign policy in a speech hosted by the Hudson Institute on July 8: “Conservatism was considered by many to be an out-of-date and discredited philosophy. Ronald Reagan didn’t buy that. Instead, he reminded us all why America is exceptional. He reminded us that we can be that shining city on a hill and so important to the entire world.”

Greene’s pro-Russia attitude connects to how the Freedom Caucus has addressed the issue of the border crisis. She made the connection blatantly at an Iowa rally on November 3, 2022, when she said “Democrats have ripped our border wide open, but the only border they care about is Ukraine, not America’s southern border. Under Republicans, not another penny will go to Ukraine. Our country comes first.”

When Democrats and Republicans in the Senate put together a strong, bipartisan border bill that included conservative provisions, House Republicans and, in particular, the Freedom Caucus agreed with Trump, who had called to kill the border bill “to deny President Biden a legislative win,” according to *The Hill* on January 28.

Trump and the Freedom Caucus combined create a tangible threat of stopping all aid to Ukraine depending on the outcome of the Presidential election in the fall. The danger against supporting Ukraine in the fight for its sovereignty is MAGA extremists overpowering the normal consensus against Russian aggression.

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