

The pseudo-left goes to war

“Progressives” and Democratic Socialists of America members vote to fund imperialist war against Russia, China

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In a highly revealing vote Saturday in Washington, not a single Democratic member of the House of Representatives registered opposition to a \$60.8 billion Ukrainian weapons package, the largest of three global war bills demanded by President Joe Biden.

The House, in bipartisan fashion, also passed a military bill appropriating \$24 billion to Israel and “humanitarian” causes in Ukraine, Gaza and elsewhere, while a separate \$8.1 billion weapons package focusing on preparing for war against China also received bipartisan support.

A fourth bill, which combined economic sanctions on Iran and Russia with the banning of the social media app TikTok unless its China-based parent company Bytedance LLC. divests within a year, also passed with bipartisan support.

While the passage of all the bills by wide margins was significant, the fact that all of the 210 Democrats present for Saturday’s vote supported H.R. 8035, the “Ukraine Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024,” deserves special attention. The bill will provide billions of dollars worth of artillery shells, advanced long-range missiles and other military equipment to the far-right government in Kiev. Following the passage of the legislation in the House, Democrats in the gallery erupted into cheers of “Ukraine! Ukraine! Ukraine!” while waving blue and yellow Ukraine flags.

The billions spent on the US/NATO war against Russia have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of mostly working class Ukrainians and Russians, while enriching the coffers of military contractors and war profiteers the world over.

Since February 2022, Congress has appropriated \$113 billion in support of the war against Russia, according to the Institute for Study of War, a US imperialist think tank based in Washington. Over the same time period, European Union member states have pledged slightly more to Ukraine, \$148.5 billion.

Russia’s military budget for 2023 was roughly \$84 billion, nearly \$20 billion more than it spent in 2021, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

After the Ukraine bill passed on Saturday, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (Democrat-New York) declared, “This is a moment where the Congress is required to stand up for

democracy, freedom, and truth and push back against aggression in a bipartisan way.” Jeffries thanked “traditional conservatives, led by Speaker Mike Johnson, for doing the right thing.”

Notably, every single member of the “Squad” voted to continue the US/NATO war in Ukraine against Russia. The “Squad” is comprised of current and former members of the Democratic Socialists of America such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Greg Casar (Texas), Cori Bush (Missouri), Jamaal Bowman (New York) and other self-declared progressives, such as Ilhan Omar (Minnesota), Ayanna Pressley (Massachusetts), Summer Lee (Pennsylvania) and Delia Ramirez (Illinois).

As Saturday’s vote shows, the elevation of DSA members and “progressives” to Congress has not altered the social character of the Democratic Party, which has shed any pretense of being “anti-war” and has instead become the preferred party of the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency.

A small contingent of Democrats voted against Israeli funding while supporting the Ukraine/Taiwan military package. There was not a single Democrat who voted against all of the military bills.

Prior to the votes on Saturday, DSA member Ocasio-Cortez lobbied in support of the Ukraine weapons package, writing on her X/Twitter account:

For 738 days, Ukraine has been fighting back against Putin—a battle global democracy cannot lose... It’s time for Congress to vote on stand-alone aid for Ukraine.

Following the votes, a who’s who of “progressive” Democratic representatives issued a joint statement explaining their “no” vote on the Israel war package. The statement was signed by Democratic Socialists of America members Ocasio-Cortez and Casar, as well as the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus Pramila Jayapal (Washington) and the national co-chair of the 2020 Bernie Sanders presidential campaign, Ro Khanna (California).

Other Democrats who signed the statement included: Barbara

Lee, Mark Takano and Judy Chu (California); Jesús “Chuy” García and Jonathan Jackson (Illinois); Earl Blumenauer (Oregon); Hank Johnson (Georgia); André Carson (Indiana); Joaquin Castro and Lloyd Doggett, (Texas); Nydia Velázquez (New York); Rebecca Balint (Vermont); James McGovern (Massachusetts); and Bonnie Watson Coleman (New Jersey).

In the statement, the representatives made clear that they supported the Zionist state of Israel politically and militarily. They wrote:

We believe strongly in Israel’s right to self-defense and have joined colleagues previously in affirming our shared commitment. All of us support strengthening the Iron Dome and other defense systems and we are committed to a sovereign, safe, and secure future for Israel.

In order to “protect” Israel’s “future,” the representatives called for a temporary ceasefire, while placing the blame for the mass slaughter of Palestinian civilians solely on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This lie is meant to obscure the fact that the Israeli government’s policy of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing has been endorsed and supported by the US government for over 75 years.

Several other “progressives” and phony socialists released their own statements justifying their votes. Rep. Jamaal Bowman wrote on Saturday:

Our government has a moral obligation to protect peace, dignity, and our shared humanity in everything we do. I was proud to vote in support of Ukraine and Taiwan’s efforts to uphold democracy.

Bowman added that “we were able to register our unwavering support for Ukraine and Taiwan with separate bills. The nearly \$70 billion in assistance to these nations is a critical step towards preserving democracy at home and abroad.”

Rep. Ilhan Omar, like Bowman and Ocasio-Cortez, voted in favor of nearly \$70 billion for Ukraine and Taiwan, while voting against the Israel war package. Speaking out of both sides of her mouth, Omar wrote that she could not support Israel military funding because the “continued escalation of violence and civilian casualties, including many children, is unacceptable.”

After declaring she would “always be on the side of peace,” Omar wrote:

I also voted to provide Ukraine and Taiwan critical aid... this bill provides urgently needed support to the Ukrainian people in their fight to preserve their democracy.

Rep. Cori Bush also voted against Israel funding while backing

Ukraine and Taiwan military spending. In a statement issued Saturday, Bush wrote:

I refuse to allow the Ukrainian people to suffer at the hands of the murderous Putin regime. St. Louis overwhelmingly stands with Ukraine, and I voted to support the Ukrainian people in their struggle against Russia’s illegal invasion.

While Bush, Ocasio-Cortez and a handful of other Democrats registered their supposed opposition to US policy in Israel by voting against the Israel military aid, nearly all of them have already pledged their support to Joe Biden’s reelection campaign--the same Biden who has funneled billions of dollars to the Israeli military and supported the Zionist state politically for decades.

A statement issued by Joseph Kishore, Socialist Equality Party (SEP) candidate for president, denounced the “lesser evil” politics advanced by the DSA:

That every single DSA member of Congress voted to escalate the war in Ukraine is highly instructive. It confirms the SEP’s insistence that the DSA is not a socialist organization, but a faction of the Democratic Party.

Workers and youth must draw political conclusions. The movement against imperialism and genocide will not be fought within the Democratic Party or its appendages. The central question upon which everything depends is the development of an independent political movement of the working class against both capitalist parties, on the basis of a socialist, revolutionary and international program.



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