



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on November 20, 2023

Biden Signs Funding Bill Omitting Ukraine

On November 16, President Joe Biden signed a stopgap spending bill into law, thus forestalling an impending government shutdown. The limited appropriation of funds, which excluded aid to Ukraine, passed the Senate on November 15.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, proposed the legislation, depending on Democrats to push it through the chamber notwithstanding resistance from more conservative factions of Republicans. The next day saw the Democrat-controlled Senate pass the bill in a 87-11 vote.



AP Images

Notably, the stopgap bill excluded spending on controversial issues such as border security and foreign aid. Rather, the bill concentrated on keeping government departments operational at their present levels. The two-tier plan provides funding through January 19 and February 2, according to various agencies.

“Because of bipartisan cooperation, we are keeping the government open without any poison pills or harmful cuts to vital programs — a great outcome for the American people,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer declared after he and his fellow senators voted on the bill.

The contentious matter of Ukraine aid led to political turmoil in September, causing the historic ouster of Speaker Johnson’s predecessor, Kevin McCarthy. Critics of Biden’s Ukraine policy lambasted the then-speaker for inking a secret deal with the White House to ensure that the Kyiv regime would eventually obtain the money.

Some Republicans are in favor of a revision of U.S. support for Ukraine, arguing that such aid programs lack transparency. Moreover, many feel that more pressing U.S. priorities, such as the security issue along the southern border, are more vital than backing the corrupt regime of Volodymyr Zelensky.

Johnson hitherto sparked the ire of the White House when he declined Biden’s request to link Ukraine aid with assistance to Israel and Taiwan, as well as domestic security and emergency relief spending. Senior U.S. officials have cautioned that without American help, Kyiv may soon lose in its conflict with Moscow.

Instead, Johnson framed the bill as the last one he would agree to before a possible major clash with the Senate over the U.S. budget for 2024.

“Each week that passes [without a new bill], our ability to fully fund what we feel is necessary to give Ukraine the tools and capacities it needs to both defend its territory and to continue to make advances, that gets harder and harder,” White House national-security advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters on November 13.

Amid the intense U.S. congressional debates this week over spending, Andriy Yermak, Zelensky’s closest advisor, traveled to Washington to lobby for more aid for the Kyiv regime, meeting with White House officials and lawmakers. Moreover, Yermak spoke on November 13 at the Hudson Institute, a



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conservative-leaning think tank, to rally for more support from a Republican audience.

Congress last authorized funding for Ukraine in December 2022, when it passed the yearly U.S. spending bill that contained \$45 billion in military, financial, and humanitarian aid for the country. The funding was scheduled to run out by September 30.

As that date approached, Biden submitted a supplemental spending bill in August this year that included an additional \$24 billion for Ukraine to get the country through early 2024, while U.S. lawmakers continued to debate the yearly spending bill.

While the proposal was soon reduced to \$6 billion, it did not pass, as a group of Republicans in the House of Representatives connected any new Ukraine aid to more U.S. border security funding, which Democrats vehemently object to.

Republican opponents to the bill said Johnson was wrong to be allying with the Democrats, but agreed to give him some leeway during his “honeymoon” period as House speaker.

At the moment, the Biden administration still has about \$4 billion in military aid it can use for Ukraine under the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA), based on statements from the Defense Department. The PDA is a policy tool that permits Biden to quickly send weapons and equipment from Defense Department stocks to a foreign country.

Last month, the left-wing news outlet Politico reported, quoting unnamed sources, that the Biden administration might use State Department grant money for arms purchases for Ukraine, as well as reprogram Pentagon budget money if a new Ukraine aid bill does not pass in time.

On October 19, Biden addressed the country for the second time during his nearly three years in office to garner public support for aid to Ukraine and Israel.

A day later, Biden submitted a [\\$106 billion national-security spending package](#) that would offer emergency funding for Ukraine and Israel, along with measures to tackle rising Chinese military pugilism in Asia. The package also entailed funding to counter the rise of illegal immigration through the U.S.-Mexico border, a Republican request.

Out of Biden’s proposed package in October, Ukraine would obtain \$61 billion, an amount large enough to meet its needs through 2024, a key U.S. election year. Since the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in February 2022, the Biden administration has already allocated \$113 billion for Ukraine while [pushing](#) for a Ukrainian victory over Moscow.

U.S. public support for Ukraine, especially among Republicans, has declined as the conflict with Moscow drags on with no end in sight. Former President Donald Trump, who is currently the leading Republican candidate to challenge Biden, has not come out in support of Ukraine, and Republican voters and lawmakers seem to be taking their cue from him, observers have pointed out.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on November 17 that efforts by the West to “cancel” Russia with economic and cultural sanctions have failed and were all along doomed to fail.

Speaking at the International Culture Forum in St. Petersburg, the Russian leader slammed the collective West for trying to “cross out” everything that did not align with its “falsified history.”

“Entire layers of history — the art of Western Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America — are being silenced, as if they never happened, and lately they have been trying to cancel our culture in general,” Putin stated.



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“I say ‘trying’ because we understand that this is by definition impossible,” the president continued. “But still, they are trying to abolish culture, which is based on true freedom, mercy, love of fellow man and spirituality. The policy of canceling Russia is by itself inherently anti-cultural, neo-colonial, and racist.”

In reality, Putin contended, attempts to eradicate Russia’s culture and destroy its economy with “so-called sanctions” did not work out as its authors had planned.

“One of many examples of this is the huge interest in the Tchaikovsky Competition, for example,” the Russian president said. “Its online audience has exceeded 50 million people. In the modern world, it is impossible to undo such things, simply impossible. It’s strange that people who try to do this don’t understand it. By the way, of these 50 million people, more than half are Europeans who do not want anyone to decide for them what music to listen to, what to watch and what to read.”

Putin then claimed that some of the key driving factors for current global tensions were “the claims of certain forces to exclusivity — including cultural exclusivity — their disdain for other customs, spiritual values, the desire to subject everyone and everything to unification, and according to their own template, which they consider the best and most universal.”

He portrayed such efforts as “vulgar globalization” and “cultural conquest,” which has led to the repression of cultures and “multiplied the potential for conflict many times over.”



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