

BY **JAMES BILLOT**

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**> Reaction** 16:07

## The Squad nowhere to be seen as Ukraine package sails through

AOC, Ilhan Omar and others have been curiously silent on the issue

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The Squad has toed the line on Ukraine. Credit: Getty

It passed in the House by 358 votes to 57 and would have sailed through the Senate unopposed were it not for a [single Republican dissenter](#). The \$40 billion foreign aid package to Ukraine — the second and largest aid package proposed by the Biden administration — nearly shuttled through Congress at a speed not seen since the New Deal era.

In a pre-Ukraine, post-9/11 era, this level of bipartisan support for a foreign aid bill of this size might have roused some apprehension, not only from the Trumpist nat-cons or Libertarian Right, but from the anti-war Left too. And yet, members of The Squad, the Democrats' most prominent progressive group in Congress, have been curiously silent on the issue.

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Following the passage of the bill through the House, no members of the Squad (or any Democrat) voted against. It was only Cori Bush, who, in a [tersely worded statement](#), admitted that 'a large percentage...[will] go directly to private defense contractors'. Only she chose to speak out about the bill.

There has been a Ukraine-shaped blind spot for most of The Squad since war broke out. Aside from a few limited interventions, Left-wingers in the Democrat Party have largely refrained from challenging the Biden administration on its deepening involvement in the war. Indeed, it was Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who first commented on the war in February 23 when she [tweeted](#):

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Russia's invasion of Ukraine is indefensible. The U.S. is right to impose targeted sanctions on Putin & his oligarchs. We also must work with our allies to prepare for a refugee crisis on a massive scale. Finally, any military action must take place with Congressional approval

- ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

Other Squad members subsequently joined in calls for sanctions, while Jamaal Bowman [released a statement](#) condemning Russia's "imperialism and fascism". Ilhan Omar dissented, [fearing](#) that, 'A lot of progressives have abandoned their principles of being anti-war, anti-broad-based sanctions, anti-harmful policies that not only impact us here in the United States, but inadvertently impact the civilians of our adversary regime.' Still, Omar toed the line when it came to the vote.

To date, the US has spent over \$10bn on aid to Ukraine (\$2bn of which has been military assistance), [dwarfing](#) the next nine donor nations (all EU countries combined have provided 12.8 billion Euros). Why, then, has the anti-war Left been so acquiescent? It was only four months ago that AOC was [decrying](#) how much the US Government was hiding the true cost of war in Afghanistan and, months before that, the Squad acted in unison to stonewall a [spending bill](#) because of a provision to give Israel \$1bn for its iron dome system.

Now, all that remains of the anti-war resistance in Congress (along with some other lesser-known Republican quantities) is a lonely fiscal hawk in the Republican party. As Rand Paul [asserted](#): "This is the second spending bill for Ukraine in two months. And this bill is three times larger than the first... Congress just wants to keep on spending, and spending."

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