

Biden's to blame for the Ukraine aid mess — not Trump and the GOP



President Joe Biden meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office of the White House, Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023, in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

When it comes to national security, the only skill the Biden administration has mastered is blame-shifting. Abetted by their allies in the media, who, in their fear of [Donald Trump](#), would not dare whisper the slightest criticism, Team Biden presides over a disastrous Ukraine non-policy — with their only accomplishment pinning the blame on Republicans.

Squandering public opinion

Despite all the caterwauling, Republicans are most certainly not supportive of [Vladimir Putin](#) and Russia. YouGov has consistently polled on this issue for the past two years, with their [March 19](#) survey showing Republicans view Putin negatively at 80 percent unfavorable against only 10 percent favorable. These results are consistent with polling in [2023](#)

(75 percent unfavorable, 17 percent favorable) and [2022](#) (82 percent unfavorable, 11 percent favorable).

Russia is viewed badly as well, with 85 percent of Republicans considering Russia “unfriendly” or an “enemy,” and just 6 percent considering Russia “friendly” or an “ally.” As with views of Putin, Republican views are marginally different from that of Democrats. In fact, it is independent voters and voters 18-29 who have the softest view of Putin and Russia. But, when the polling skews 50 points or more in one direction, any difference is splitting hairs.

One month into the war, majorities of both parties supported aggressive aid. GOP voters were more hawkish than Democrats, with 58 percent supporting a “get tougher” policy by Biden against 46 percent of Democrats. Sending arms was supported at 66 percent each, with 16 percent of Democrats opposed and even fewer Republicans opposed (13 percent). Sanctions were supported by 74 percent of Democrats and 67 percent of Republicans. Independents and 18- to 29-year-olds were weakest.

But in the past two years, polling support for military aid has fallen significantly, taking on the trappings of the partisan divide that exists on most issues. Against an overall evenly split divide at 30 percent for more military aid versus less aid (26 percent, remain the same), 51 percent of Democrats support more aid against 49 percent of Republicans who want less (a plurality of independents support reducing aid).

It is not supporting Russia driving this change — it is indifference. Majorities of Republicans and independents are still sympathetic to Ukraine at 59 percent and 56 percent, respectively (55 percent for 18-29s). But the percentage who support neither side has risen to 29 percent for both. Sympathy has remained low for Russia at 7 percent in the GOP and 2 percent independent — essentially nothing.

Biden's non-strategy is costly

Despite all the rhetoric from Team Biden, their policy on the war is a non-strategy with no clear end game, a floating craps game of diplomacy and incoherent military strategy. The only constant has been the profusion of bumper stickers, blue and yellow flags on Twitter bios, and other ego-satisfying virtue signaling that have all the impact of a Change.org petition. All the while his fumbling non-strategy undermines American public support — not to mention it is a humanitarian, military and moral catastrophe for Ukraine.

Over the past two years, Team Biden has been fooled by Putin's nuclear bluff, stalling aid and blocking the provision of even [used Soviet jets](#). Petrified by imagined Putin "red lines," Team Biden [micromanages](#) and handcuffs Ukraine. There is little sign of real cooperation among Biden and America's putative NATO allies. If there is a joint working group directing policy and pursuing an end game, it is invisible and impotent. As far as limiting Russia's military capabilities, the [sanctions](#) are about as effective as a screen door in a hurricane.

Of course, Putin has no red lines himself, bombing and massacring civilians, looting and engaging in any propaganda that works. Team Biden is only bailed out by Russian corruption and backwardness. Russia engages in its own shadow war against America with impunity while NATO [debates whether](#) to shoot down missiles over NATO territory. It is this weakness that emboldens Putin, not that anyone in the mainstream media is willing to call that out.

Ukraine is in a fight for survival; Russia is clearly determined to bring maximum force to bear to achieve its aims. Yet, Team Biden displays barely a scintilla of urgency. [Historically](#), Russia has had to be forced to the bargaining table — and only does so when the cost of war is intolerable. Russia will most certainly not be forced to negotiate in the face of an ambivalent, schizophrenic, flighty West. Team Biden has a

strategy all right — throw money at the problem and hope for the best.

Biden message to GOP: Drop dead

Republican voters have become heavily focused on immigration and border security. They look at the cost of aid in the face of stubborn inflation and pull back from sending more money to Ukraine. Republican support showed signs of weakening as early as [fall of 2022](#). Yet Team Biden, in typical dilatory, non-anticipatory fashion has done nothing to head off GOP voter concerns.

Immigration has gone from the top issue for 10 percent of Republicans in March 2023 (with 62 percent citing the issue as “very important”) to 33 percent in March 2024 (81 percent calling the issue “very important”). Inflation remains a top concern as well, with 90 percent of Republicans listing it as “very important” along with 81 percent calling taxes and spending “very important.”

Republican reticence over military aid is not limited to Ukraine. Despite 65 percent of Republicans sympathizing with Israel against 4 percent for Hamas, just 35 percent support sending more military aid against 53 percent advocating for the same level or less. And Republican support for Israel runs 38 points ahead of independents and 51 points ahead of Democrats.

But Biden’s ham-handed White House staff seems to think it can ride overall popular support for Ukraine and not address any Republican concerns. They seem totally unaware that the Republican Party is in the majority in the House (for now) and that members of Congress from both parties are more at the mercy of their partisan vote bases than ever.

When offered a trade by Speaker Mike Johnson in December, border security for Ukraine aid, Team Biden stiff-armed Johnson, only to find out Johnson wasn’t bluffing (another [terrible poker read](#) by Biden). Since

then, Johnson's position has become less tenable and the politics over the border have become more difficult for Biden.

Even more unconscionable is the fact that there is \$300 billion in [frozen Russian assets](#) moldering away, untouched by the West. Setting aside that keeping these assets in suspended animation sends the message to aggressive despots that there is always hope they can get their money back regardless of destruction and war crimes, tapping those funds would directly address GOP voter concerns and knock out the top criticism from conservative circles.

The outcome of the war in Ukraine is uncertain, as are the consequences. But if there is one conclusion all Americans can make, it is that the Democrats' foreign policy establishment cannot be trusted with national security.

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