

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Reacts to Biden's remarks, Congress must hold emergency session to support Ukraine

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Following President Joe Biden's remarks on Putin's invasion of Ukraine, Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI), a member of the House Armed Services Committee and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, today urged called on President Biden to kick Russia off the SWIFT system, to impose crippling sanctions on Russia's energy sector, and to unleash America's energy potential by ending his administration's war on domestic energy production. Gallagher also called for Congress to immediately convene an emergency session to swiftly pass a strong sanctions passage, expedite sending arms to Ukraine, and to pass a full defense budget so the Pentagon no longer operates under a Continuing Resolution. In a [video](#), Gallagher said, "This is a time when there are a lot of people in Congress who want to work together. We want this to be a bipartisan show of American strength. But these half measures, doubling down on the failed approach that hasn't worked thus far, causes a lot of doubt. And again, I think these project further weakness at a time when we need to learn the right lessons from our failure so that we are not doomed to repeat it."

Watch the congressman's video [HERE](#) or read the full transcript below:

President Biden just gave a speech on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. First, let's start with the good. The President called out what Russia is doing on the ground, making clear that this is not a minor incursion. I also liked that he talked about the idea of fortifying NATO's eastern front, and pushing NATO to harden its defenses also makes sense to me. And I appreciate the reinforced commitment to Article Five. Moving on to the bad. The Biden administration's approach thus far has been the idea that using sanctions and hashtag diplomacy will deter Putin. The problem is that this approach has obviously failed. This was perhaps the most fair and best test of that idea and this idea of gradual deterrence via the threat of sanctions. So what gives us any hope that more sanctions now will succeed? Especially since the President concedes it might take months, if not longer, for them to have any effect, and since Biden seems unwilling to kick the Russians off the SWIFT system, or to really target Russia's energy sector. Biden said our sanctions are tougher than SWIFT, while acknowledging the Europeans don't want to take the step of kicking them off SWIFT. That really doesn't add up. It doesn't make sense. And respectfully, either the President is misinformed or he's not telling the truth. Importantly, how will these modestly tougher sanctions help Ukrainians on the ground, who right now are fighting for their lives? That really leads me to the ugly part of this whole thing.

We need to ask: what are we doing on the ground in Ukraine to make this painful for Putin, to turn this into his Afghanistan, into a total quagmire for the Russians? And this is the biggest lesson we need to learn and that the Administration thus far seems unwilling to learn. Deterrence does not just happen with slap on the wrist sanctions or Twitter hashtags from the White House. Deterrence happens because of hard power. And I think our liberal political class just doesn't understand that predators like Putin and Xi are willing to write their names into the history books with the blood of innocent people. And until we understand that uncomfortable reality, and use hard power to prevent it, our enemies will advance, the free world will retreat, and more innocent people will die. You know, one part of the speech that struck me, on that point, is that Biden said he promised that Putin will be a pariah on the international stage. Do you think Putin cares about that? Do you think Putin cares about not getting invited to Davos or not being able to hang out with Prince Harry at COP 26? Also, he won't be a pariah because the authoritarians, his fellow authoritarians like Xi, are working more closely with him. The President also talked about "principles" upholding the global peace. Well, principles don't uphold the global peace. American power, hard power, upholds those principles, and by extension, the global peace. Put differently, freedom won't prevail unless we actually are willing to fight for it. And thus far, we have not shown that we are willing to fight for it.

So what I would propose the President do is to call for an emergency session of Congress. Call us into session this weekend. I mean, he has a State of the Union on Tuesday, why not bring us into town early and put the ball in our court to pass legislation to expedite arms to the Ukrainians? Javelins, stingers, mines, since they're invading from the North in Belarus, to really turn this into a quagmire for Putin. Think about other ways we can fortify NATO's eastern front with intermediate range ballistic missiles in eastern front countries. Or how we can build the Navy to reestablish control of the Mediterranean where Russia has dangerous influence. Force us in that emergency session to pass a defense budget. The Pentagon is still operating under a Continuing Resolution, which is devastating for the United States military. At a time when we need to be projecting military strength, our budgetary dysfunction is doing the opposite. It's projecting weakness.

And on the economic front, although I don't think sanctions alone will deter Putin, let's actually pass a mother of all sanctions bill. Go after the Russian energy sector, kick them off SWIFT. Even some Democrats are calling for that. But honestly, what would be more devastating to Putin than sanctions is to end this administration's war on American energy and unleash the true power of American energy. Activating the strategic petroleum reserves is not going to do anything. We've got to have a broader approach, starting with reactivating Keystone, and really turbocharging American energy production. Over the long term, that would undermine Putin's position.

This is a time when there are a lot of people in Congress who want to work together. We want this to be a bipartisan show of American strength. But these half measures, doubling down on the failed approach that hasn't worked thus far, causes a lot of doubt. And again, I think these project further weakness at a time when we need to learn the right lessons from our failure so that we are not doomed to repeat it.