

Thirty Progressive House Democrats Urge Biden to Negotiate with Russia

In a letter to the president, the lawmakers call for the US to push for a diplomatic settlement to the war in Ukraine

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A group of progressive House Democrats [is urging President Biden](#) to negotiate with Russia and seek a diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine.

In a letter to Biden signed by 30 House Democrats, the lawmakers said they have supported Biden's Ukraine policy but that the risk of nuclear war and "catastrophic escalation" means that the US should be pushing for negotiations.

"We urge you to pair the military and economic support the United States has provided to Ukraine with a proactive diplomatic push, redoubling efforts to seek a realistic framework for a ceasefire," [the letter reads](#).

The letter was led by **Rep. Pramila Jayapal** (D-WA), the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. In a statement to *The Washington Post*, she said,

"The longer the war in Ukraine goes on, the greater the risk of escalation — to widespread, devastating effect."

The Biden administration has shown little interest in diplomacy with Russia despite the president's recent warning that there is a higher risk of nuclear "armageddon" today than at any time since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. *The Washington Post* [reported earlier this month](#) that US officials have ruled out pushing Ukraine to the negotiating table even though they don't think Kyiv can win the war "outright."

The lawmakers said in the letter that they agree with the administration's position that it's not the US's "place" to pressure Ukraine's government. But they added that "as legislators responsible for the expenditure of tens of billions of US taxpayer dollars in military

assistance in the conflict, we believe such involvement in this war also creates a responsibility for the United States to seriously explore all possible avenues.”

One avenue the lawmakers said Biden should explore is direct talks with Russia, and they said a framework for a ceasefire could include “some form of sanctions relief.”

The progressive Democrats concluded the letter by calling on Biden to “make vigorous diplomatic efforts in support of a negotiated settlement and ceasefire, engage in direct talks with Russia explore prospects for a new European security arrangement acceptable to all parties that will allow for a sovereign and independent Ukraine, and, in coordination with our Ukrainian partners, seek a rapid end to the conflict and reiterate this goal as America’s chief priority.”

In response to the letter, the White House rejected the idea of diplomacy with Russia. “It’s clear Mr. Putin is in no mood to negotiate,” [said National Security Council spokesman John Kirby](#). “We’re not going to have conversations with Russian leadership without the Ukrainians being represented.”

Some prominent signatories to the letter include **Reps. Barbara Lee** (D-CA), **Ro Khanna** (D-CA), **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** (D-NY), **Ilhan Omar** (D-MN), and **Rashida Tlaib** (D-MI). Each signatory voted in favor of spending tens of billions on the war, including the \$40 billion Ukraine aid bill that was passed in May, which only faced [opposition from a small group of Republicans](#).

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