Sen. Rand Paul criticized for blocking $40B aid package to Ukraine

Jillian Smith

May 13, 2022

WASHINGTON (TND) — As the war wages on in Ukraine, a battle over funding is underway in the U.S.

One senator is holding up President Joe Biden's plan to send more aid to Ukraine, pumping the breaks on the $40 billion package the president promised.

"We'll end up giving more money to Ukraine than Russia spends for their entire military for a year," said Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky. "We're going to give them another $40 billion, no strings attached."

Part of his complaint is the amount being spent on foreign war as Americans struggle with record-level inflation and rising costs on everything from food to gas.

Paul also took issue with what he calls a lack of oversight on that money's use, calling for increased powers for an inspector general.

While not all in favor of that, the White House, acknowledges that scrutiny does matter.

"We agree oversight is critical that's why the package already includes millions of dollars to support additional oversight measures," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said. "We feel what's in there is sufficient."

There have been instances in the past that have called oversight into question.

Throughout the 20-year war in Afghanistan, the U.S. spent hundreds of billions of dollars — including on reconstruction — which was later diagnosed as full of waste, fraud and abuse. A hotel never opened, aircraft were bought that rarely flew and pricey uniforms weren't used.

"I think if anybody thinks aid is going to be provided in this perfectly business-like fashion, there's going to be some mistakes, there's going to be some money lost," said Justin Logan, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. "The question is how much of it is happening and we really don't have good answers to that."

Claiming there is too much at stake, both party's leaders have <u>expressed criticism</u> of any delay at the hands of one senator.

"All he will accomplish is to single-handedly delay, desperately needed Ukraine aid," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said.

"It's not just some kind of philanthropy. This conflict has direct and major consequences for America's national security," said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

The aid package, which has already passed through the House with wide bipartisan support, is still expected to get Senate approval. It's just pushed back, at least until next week, due to this delay.