

Testimony of the Hon. Jim Cooper

Before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

April 17, 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Himes, and really all the members of the Committee, because it takes leadership and followership to succeed.

You have rescued this Committee from what could have been oblivion. The fruit of your labor is passage of 702, FISA. Thank God.

The fruit of your labor needs to be saving Ukraine.

This is the first day I've been back since I was gerrymandered out of office. It's sad to me that it's potentially such a tragic day for America.

I hope that April 17, 2024, does not go down in history as the day that America made perhaps the gravest betrayal in its history, by having committed to a staunch friend and ally like Ukraine, and then having stopped aiding our ally right in the middle of a war.

Who could do that to people who are fighting so fiercely and valiantly, not only on their own behalf, but on the free world's behalf?

Franklin Roosevelt talking about a day that would live in infamy. That's when we were blindly attacked at Pearl Harbor. But this could be worse because we could be inviting attack, as my colleagues have mentioned. Not only of other parts of Ukraine, but of NATO allies. That is stunning, and it not only betrays America's heritage, it betrays great leaders like President Ronald Reagan, who simply would not recognize what is happening today. And for the few advocates on the crazy other side, whatever it is, to be repeating Putin memes, disinformation, and lies, and calling that somehow American policy is wrong. But it's even worse for leaders to yield to that.

I'd like to submit my testimony for the record.

Thank you to HPSCI for having rescued bipartisanship, it's not easy to do. It's hard, once you're in the ditch, it's hard to pull out. To me, the fundamentals here are actually pretty simple because the vast majority of Americans, the vast majority

of Members of Congress are pretty sensible fair people. You are good people, caught in a bad system. There are ways to fix the system.

In a week, the University of Pennsylvania is going to convene a dozen or several former members to try to offer some guidance, because it used to be better, and it can be better again. The first rule is, please don't quit, if you do you will be replaced by someone way worse.

I wish that were different but that seems to be the rule these days. And see, even the best newcomer, it takes them a long time to learn the ropes. It's complicated. It's hard, and what this Committee does, to have people show up who care deeply about the subject matter even though they can't talk about it, and who are committed to strengthening America instead of playing in the ruins. You are saving our country.

This Committee is a great model for the rest of Congress. Congress used to be better. I came when Tip O'Neill was Speaker. He would fight President Reagan during the day and drink beer with him at night. His best friend was a Republican leader, Bob Michael.

He decried the Tuesday/Thursday club of members who just live in and out. Wednesday was the only day you could do anything. They were not serious legislators in Tip's book, and he was right.

When I was here, we all belonged to the Tuesday/Thursday club because everybody left. It can and must be different, if we are going to continue to lead the world. American power is declining, and other nations are rising.

The main fault is what we've done to ourselves. We are slipping. And we've got to stop that slip. The fundamental problem is minority rule. We let the various rules, and my testimony goes into the details, a tiny group of people run the House of Representatives, and that is wrong. The majority needs to run things and we need to protect minority rights, always, but the majority should speak for the House of Representatives.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.