

Rouzer's Empty Words

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Congressman David Rouzer's Feb. 28 newsletter rings hollow to veterans like me. Rouzer says it's "inspiring" to see Ukrainians "fight so hard for their homeland." He says we must "get them what they need" and calls it "regrettable" we didn't do more before now. Fine words, but empty, coming from someone who turned his back on Ukraine when it mattered.

Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, has inspired the world with his leadership and heroic resistance to Putin's unprovoked aggression. Zelensky was inaugurated in May 2019 and requested a White House meeting with Trump to show Russia that America supported Ukraine. Trump refused unless Ukraine first announced that it was investigating Joe Biden and his son. That didn't happen, and Zelensky only got his White House meeting after Biden became president.

The U.S. began military assistance to Ukraine in 2014, when Russian-backed forces rumbled in tanks through eastern Ukraine. On the news we see Ukraine's courageous people fighting those Russian tanks. They use Javelin anti-tank missiles when they have them, their bodies when they don't.

In July 2019, President Trump blocked \$391 million in already approved military assistance. In a phone call days later, Zelensky told Trump Ukraine needed to buy more Javelins. Trump said "I would like you to do us a favor, though," and again insisted Zelensky investigate the Bidens.

Trump's actions caused outrage, but his chief of staff said, "Get over it. There is going to be political influence in foreign policy." Another word for withholding arms to coerce political favors is "extortion," and it got Trump impeached.

Republican Sen. Romney said he voted to convict because Trump asked Ukraine "to investigate his political rival" and "withheld vital military funds from...an American ally at war with Russian invaders."

Rouzer defended Trump's conduct. His empty words of praise for Ukraine now cannot camouflage his lack of courage when it counted.

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