

# [***China Hits Back at Mike Johnson***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV3-0FF1-DY68-10M6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Micah McCartney

**Highlight:** The embattled House speaker says China's Xi, Russia's Putin and Iran have formed an "axis of evil."

**Body**

China issued a stern rebuke to the U.S., after House Speaker [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mike-johnson?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) (R-LA) referred to the country's leader [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/xi-jinping?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, and Iran as an "axis of evil."

"The Chinese side firmly opposes and strongly protests the serious wrong remarks made by some people in the U.S. against the Chinese leader and has lodged stern representations with the U.S. side," Chinese embassy spokesperson Liu Pengyu told *Newsweek* when reached for comment.

The embattled speaker [*made the remark*](https://www.newsweek.com/mike-johnson-impassioned-ukraine-speech-defies-maga-1891569?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on Wednesday as he spoke to reporters about his decision to put $90 billion in aid for Ukraine, Israel and the Indo-Pacific region to a vote after previously ruling out assistance for Ukraine.

The move has angered hardline [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) who, as Johnson previously did, insist any new assistance for Ukraine, now running short of air defense munitions amid [*Russian missile strikes*](https://www.newsweek.com/johnson-aid-congress-ukraine-war-1891221?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), be tied to increased security at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The speaker told reporters on Wednesday: "I believe Xi [Jinping] and [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/vladimir-putin?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and Iran really are an axis of evil. I think they are in coordination on this."

He added he believes Putin would "continue marching through Europe" and even "have a showdown" with [*NATO*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nato?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) ally like Poland if permitted.

Chinese embassy spokesperson Liu told *Newsweek* that rhetoric like Johnson's threatens the state of U.S.-China relations.

"We urge the U.S. to abandon its ideological bias and Cold War mentality, stop smearing the Chinese leaders and Communist Party of China, stop irresponsible political manipulation, and take concrete actions to restore the momentum of stability in China-U.S. relations, not the opposite," Liu said.

Despite tensions on many fronts, from Taiwan to exports, Washington-Beijing ties have seen some stabilization in recent months, for example this week's talks between Defense Secretary [*Lloyd Austin*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/lloyd-austin?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and his Chinese counterpart, their first in [*nearly 18 months*](https://www.newsweek.com/us-defense-secretary-lloyd-austin-china-minister-dong-jun-talks-1891078?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

Considering the GOP's razor-thin majority in the House (218 seats to 213), the fate of the bills, and Johnson's speakership, will now likely depend on support from Democratic colleagues.

A mutiny is already looming, with two republican members of congress having publicly called for Johnson's ouster. Representative [*Marjorie Taylor Greene*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/marjorie-taylor-greene?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) (R-GA) last month filed a resolution to remove Johnson from the chair, and Kentucky congressman [*Thomas Massie*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/thomas-massie?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has voiced support for it.

Johnson told reporters that [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) can't "play ***politics***" with the aid funding, adding: "I'm willing to take personal risk for that because we have to do the right thing and history will judge us."

"I could make a selfish decision and do something that's different but I'm doing here what I believe to be the right thing," Johnson said. He called aid to Ukraine "critically important" and said he has faith in the intelligence and briefings Congress has received on the conflict.

The House is expected to vote on the aid bills on Saturday. President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has said he would sign the legislation if the lower chamber and [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) pass their respective versions.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2380646/mike-johnson-speaks-press-conference.jpg)

**Graphic**

Mike Johnson Speaks At Press Conference

Win McNamee/Getty Images

U.S. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) speaks during a press conference at the U.S. Capitol on April 16 in Washington, DC. Johnson has called the China, Russia, and Iran "an axis of evil" as he pushes for new aid to Ukraine and Israel.

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