UKRAINE WAR UPDATE: TRUMP AND PUTIN AGREE TO TALK WAR & PEACE. SEE PAGES 18-19.



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• America-firsters voice concerns over future entanglements with Ukraine, bloated budget bill

By the Staff of AFP

Pollowing the passage of the GOPbacked 2025 budget resolution, traditional conservatives took to the airwaves and the Internet to blast the Republican leadership's massive spending plan, saying it is possible that this massive measure bankrupts the country in the next five years.

AFP covers the budget bill in depth on page 11 in this week's issue, but it's worth highlighting the inherent problems with it—especially considering President Donald Trump won the popular vote last year with a mandate to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse inside the government. At the very least, that should include auditing and reducing the bloated military budget not increasing it by \$100 billion as Republicans seek to do.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) was the only Republican to vote against the measure. His position was a principled stance against the reckless spending that has plagued Washington since at least Bill Clinton was in office.

"Over 10 years, this budget will add \$20 trillion to U.S. debt," Massie told a reporter in the basement of the Capitol building only moments after the House voted on party lines to pass the 2025 budget resolution.

Massie clarified his views, adding:



STEVE BANNON "Just walk away" from Ukraine.

If the Republican [budget] plan passes under the rosiest assumptions—which aren't even true we're going to add \$328 billion to the deficit this year. We're going to add \$295 billion to the deficit the year after that, and \$242 billion to the deficit after that under the rosiest assumptions. Why would I vote for that?

Those rosy assumptions, said Massie, involve predicting that the

U.S. economy will grow by nearly 3% every year for the next decade. According to the Federal Reserve, U.S. growth has only averaged around 2.1% over the course of the last decade.

If the GOP's projections do not materialize, the country is looking at nearly doubling the national debt in the next 10 years.

The battle over the budget happens at a time when Trump is trying to negotiate a peace plan for the war in Ukraine, a positive move that would save U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars but also stop the slaughter of even more Ukrainian and Russian men.

The problem is, as AFP goes to press on Feb. 27, Trump is trying to secure a deal that would get Ukraine a security guarantee from the United States in return for rights to Ukraine's rare earth minerals, gas, and oil.

Following his speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference, former Trump advisor and popular populist commentator Steve Bannon had choice words for any deal the White House may be willing to make with Ukraine.

"Walk away," was Bannon's advice to the president.

Telling journalist Michael Tracy in no uncertain terms, Bannon added, any agreement between Ukraine and the United States will only lead to further costly entanglements like what the United States saw happen in Afghanistan and Iraq.

If Trump and the GOP are sincere when they say they want to put America first, then they should stick to the promises the president made on the campaign trail to balance the budget, cut the government, bring jobs back to the country, and, yes, make America not Ukraine, Gaza, Canada, or Panama—great again.

THE INSIDE SCOOP



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See page 8



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