



## Poland Forges Strategic Alliance With Romania

On March 28, Poland and Romania declared plans to boost military ties, in an indication of changing loyalties in light of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and the fracturing of the Visegrad Four alliance, a coalition of four eastern and central European states — Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

At a press conference in Bucharest, with his Romanian counterpart Nicolae Ciucă, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki declared that both countries would explore potential joint purchases of military equipment to obtain better prices on the open market. With Poland and Romania contributing significantly to the conflict in Ukraine, both countries have seen a depletion in their military arsenals over the past months.

Previously, Morawiecki had unveiled his hopes to set up a new economic community in Central and Eastern Europe including Romania and Ukraine. The Polish leader also decried Western countries for destabilizing the region for many years.

At the Polish-Romanian intergovernmental talks in Bucharest, Morawiecki highlighted that cooperation between Poland and Romania is vital to ensure that the countries have a say in regional geopolitics.

“We cannot look at the European Union as those who must be listened to and must always have the best solutions transported in a suitcase to Bucharest or Warsaw,” he said, based on reports by broadcaster *TVP*.

Morawiecki added that regional countries were taken advantage of by stronger countries in the West and the East, stating that following the fall of the Soviet Union and the gradual transition of Eastern Europe into capitalism, “the West was making use of us for its own goals.”

In March this year, in an address at Heidelberg University in Germany, Morawiecki stressed the significance of sovereign nation-states against a European federation amid Brussels’ assaults on Poland’s pro-life laws. “Nothing will safeguard the freedom of nations, their culture, their social, economic, political and military security better than nation states,” Morawiecki said, adding that “other systems are illusory or utopia,” and cautioning against a greater federalization of the EU.

Romania has supported Ukraine due to its fears of Russian aggression, and Romania has hitherto run into tensions with Moscow over the vulnerability of the largely Romanian-speaking Moldova to Russian incursions. As part of a NATO cooperation agreement, a Polish garrison has already been deployed to Romania on security grounds.

Admittedly, the Ukraine conflict has splintered the Visegrad group, which aimed to rally conservative-



AP Images

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki (left) and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis



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minded nations against Brussels' globalist hegemony. Visegrad member states such as Poland and Hungary harbor differing stances on the Ukraine conflict and sanctions against Russia.

On one hand, Poland has leveraged the Ukraine crisis to boost its regional clout, sending arms to Ukraine and lambasting NATO members such as Germany that have hesitated to do so. Owing to its pro-NATO stance and strong backing of Ukraine, observers have speculated that Warsaw could emerge as a future Central European forerunner, taking charge of regional security should Russia be ultimately defeated. Moreover, power shifts from Western NATO members such as France and Germany to the East have added to Poland's post-war ambitions to entrench itself as NATO's primary European power. Indeed, the Global Fire Power (GFP) index ranked the Polish army as the world's 20th most powerful military.

To a considerable extent, Poland's response to the Ukraine conflict can be attributed to the country's historical experiences of Russian influence and incursions in both Czarist and Soviet forms. Ever since it became an EU member state, Poland has been pointing out what it claims to be a threat from Russia.

Many Polish politicians were outspoken critics of German partnership in Russia's Nord Stream II gas pipeline project. Polish politicians posited that this project reeked of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that triggered the Nazi and Soviet invasion of Poland. Thus, even before the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict last February, Poland had warned that the pipeline permitted Russia to bypass Ukraine's gas transit system and leave European nations reliant on Russian energy.

A report by *Al-Jazeera* stated that as of December 2022, Poland had deployed more military aid to Ukraine than any country besides the Baltic states in per capita terms (0.5 percent of its GDP). Such aid has encompassed hundreds of tanks and other key arms. In contrast, the United States, the world's largest economy, supplied Ukraine with aid that amounted to less than a quarter of a percent (0.23) of its GDP.

On the other hand, in his regular weekly Friday morning interview to public *Kossuth* radio on March 31, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán called the EU's credibility as a force for peace into question amid the increasingly violent nature of the Ukraine conflict.

Urging for a ceasefire, Orbán pointed out that the EU's belligerent stance toward Russia differed from Hungary's calls for peace. Elaborating, Orbán stated that while EU members had debated on whether it was right to deploy lethal weapons a year ago, EU leaders have sent increasing amounts of lethal arms to Ukraine.

"We are now close to the point where it is becoming reasonable for European leaders to send some peacekeeping forces to the front," he asserted.

Since the onset of the crisis last February, Orbán posited that he has been spending considerable time trying to fathom the thinking of politicians in countries surrounding Hungary. He commented that only a few countries have comprehended the ramifications of participating in the Ukraine conflict, with the United States being one of those.

"They stood at the edge of the well and looked into it. Nevertheless, they boldly and proudly plunged into the war. There were some countries like this, but most did not decide this way. The Germans were typically among those who wanted to stay out of it, did not want to go further, but were always pressed further. There are many countries that did not want to be where they are now. The war supporters endangered the EU," Orbán declared.



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If such a situation persists, the world may witness a third world war, he cautioned somberly.



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