



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on October 31, 2023

Slovakia to Stop Arms Deliveries to Ukraine, Hungary Says More Sanctions Against Russia Pointless

On October 28, Slovakia's newly appointed defense minister, Robert Kaliňák, declared that his country was hoping to recalibrate the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with the United States to ensure that the deal remains "mutually beneficial," and as a consequence would cease weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

"When things ain't working out you need to fix it," Kaliňák posted on his Facebook page after a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Gautam Rana, where he stated that "mutual interests and current security challenges were discussed."



AP Images
Robert Kaliňák

"Slovakia's foreign and defense policy has experienced failure after failure and Slovaks can no longer pay for the mistakes of their leader," Kaliňák proclaimed, adding that the present arrangement was "ill-formulated" and made Slovakia obliged to part with "much-needed military equipment and ammunition."

While Kaliňák highlighted that Slovakia valued collaboration with its "Western partners," the newly elected Slovak government would not imitate the hitherto "servile government" and will instead act in the interests of Slovak citizens.

"We conveyed to the US Ambassador at the meeting the position of the pro-Slovak Government — we will not send new shipments from Slovak ammunition depots to Ukraine and the defense agreement will have to be modified," the defense minister announced.

Slovakia has officially halted any military aid to Ukraine after the Slovak Social Democracy party emerged triumphant in parliamentary elections in September. Prime Minister Robert Fico pledged that not "a single round [of ammunition] will be sent to Ukraine."

On October 27, Fico again disputed the EU's funding to Kyiv, dismissing the proposed new tranche of 50 billion euros and saying that Slovakia will only assent to increased contribution to the EU if assured that the funds would not be "embezzled" by the Kyiv regime under President Volodymyr Zelensky, already known for its widespread corruption.

In an interview with Fox News released on October 26, newly elected U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson also claimed that the Biden administration has made its intentions clear as to what it hoped to attain by providing billions of dollars in support to Ukraine, signaling that Republicans may opt to separate future aid from financial help meant for Israel.

Johnson, a Louisiana Republican who is widely regarded as a Trump ally and a critic of Ukraine aid, said the American people "are demanding some real accountability" on the issue.

He pointed out that although Republicans were not against helping Kyiv in the conflict with Moscow,



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“we want to know what the object is there, what is the endgame in Ukraine.”

“The White House has not provided that,” Johnson continued, adding that he has elucidated his stance to top administration officials.

Additionally, Johnson mentioned that the consensus among House Republicans was that they “need to bifurcate” aid to Ukraine and Israel, the latter which has been embattled with an escalating conflict with the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas in the past month.

Johnson’s comments came after the Biden administration asked Congress recently to authorize a huge new \$106 billion assistance package, with more than \$60 billion of that sum set aside for Kyiv. The remaining sum was meant to tackle the security demands of Israel and Taiwan, as well as the chaotic situation on the southern U.S. border.

Meanwhile, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó stated in an interview with RIA Novosti published on October 28 that Budapest would not back Brussels’ next round of sanctions on Moscow if it encompassed restrictions on Russia’s energy sector.

Szijjártó insisted that any embargoes on Russian energy would go against Hungary’s national interests.

“I can tell you for sure: If the next package contains something that contradicts our national interests, we will definitely not agree to its adoption. The red line for us obviously concerns energy, gas, oil, nuclear energy, and any other aspects which could harm our nation’s economy,” Szijjártó stated.

He reinforced previous statements that Western sanctions were not working the way countries wanted them to, and he found a continued pursuit of such a move pointless.

“The sanctions policy simply does not work. Sanctions may harm Russia ... but they definitely cause greater harm to the European economy, to European countries. And if the sanctions cause more harm to those who impose them than to those against whom they are directed, then what’s the point of continuing with them?” the Hungarian foreign minister said.

Szijjártó also pointed out Russia has been providing Hungary with natural gas according to a 15-year contract with Russian state energy major Gazprom. The Hungarian diplomat elaborated that Budapest hopes to continue purchasing Russian gas even if Ukraine, through which it obtains the fuel, opts not to extend its transit agreement with Russia.

“I’m not entirely sure that Ukraine is ready to lose so much income, [but] if necessary, we are ready to discuss the alternatives, because we consider this a technical issue. It’s not about delivery. It’s not about the quantity, but about the route. Which doesn’t matter to us.”

Moreover, Szijjártó revealed that Hungary recently procured its third shipment of nuclear fuel from Russia for the Paks Nuclear Power Plant this year. At the moment, Russia’s Rosatom is constructing two new power blocks at the plant, which are scheduled to become operational by 2032. Besides, Szijjártó hailed collaboration with Russia in the nuclear-energy sphere as “excellent,” highlighting the high quality of Russia’s nuclear fuel and Rosatom’s strict observance of delivery deadlines.

“And if I understand correctly, other Central European countries, despite persistent entreaties from the West, also continue to work with the Russian nuclear fuel supplier,” he continued.

Budapest has repeatedly emphasized that it would not permit the EU to enforce sanctions on organizations and enterprises associated with Russia’s nuclear-energy industry. Szijjártó stated that to run a nuclear power plant, “fuel cells, not political statements,” were required, hence there was “no



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place for politics, geopolitics, or sanctions.”

Meanwhile, Hungary has not authorized Sweden’s bid to join the NATO military bloc, with Gergely Gulyás, minister of the Hungarian Prime Minister’s Office, urging Sweden to explain the worsening of bilateral ties between the two countries in recent months ahead of any possible “yes” vote on the issue in the Hungarian parliament.

On October 25, Gulyás stated at a press conference that a Hungarian approval of Sweden’s application to join the NATO alliance was not as clear as it used to be, broadcaster SVT [reported](#).

“The Swedes have to explain what has happened recently,” he said, noting that Swedish politicians have slammed Hungary’s political landscape: “If they think their opinion is a mistake, let them make it clear. If they think they were right, I don’t know why they want to be in a club with us.”

Sweden has long been a skeptic of Hungary, especially within the EU. In April 2023, Stockholm joined an EU lawsuit against Budapest attacking Hungarian laws protecting children from leftist homosexuality or gender ideology.

On his end, Balázs Orbán, a Hungarian member of parliament and political director for Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, collected [various past quotes](#) from Swedish politicians who are current ministers in the cabinet of Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson to explain why some Hungarian MPs had a bone to pick with the present Swedish government.

Orbán cited Swedish minister for Employment and Integration, Johan Pehrson, who stated in 2022 that “Hungary’s xenophobic and nationalist government continues to violate the principle of rule of law and waivers in supporting Ukraine.” The Hungarian politician also cited the current Swedish Minister for EU Affairs Jessika Roswall, who had declared in 2021 that “it is now required that the EU act clearly and that the new conditionality mechanism stops payments to Hungary.”

Bilateral ties took a further nosedive last month when Swedish public broadcaster Utbildningsradion published a [video](#) portraying Hungary as an anti-democratic country, sparking an outcry among the Hungarian public.

In response, Hungary’s Szijjártó wrote a letter to Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström in which he decried, “You urge our parliamentarians to ratify your accession to NATO while you continue to accuse them of destroying democracy in Hungary.”

Balázs Orbán also objected to the video, [saying](#), “shocking Swedish government-approved educational video attacking Hungary! How do we convince Hungarian MPs to support Sweden’s [NATO] membership when our democracy is repeatedly questioned, insulting both our voters and the entire country? Actions like this will definitely make negotiations more challenging.”

Sweden applied to join NATO at the same time as neighboring Finland, but has yet to obtain the greenlight from Hungary or Türkiye, the latter which has also blasted Sweden in recent months for permitting demonstrations in which copies of the Quran have been burned.



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