



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on December 22, 2023

## Slovakia to Veto Ukraine's NATO Bid, Will Not Seize Russian Property

Slovakia will not permit Ukraine to become a member of NATO, Prime Minister Robert Fico declared in an interview with the Slovak outlet InfoVojna on December 19.

In June, the U.S.-led military alliance refrained from offering Kyiv an actual invitation at the summit hosted by Lithuania. According to the [joint communiqué](#) from the Vilnius meeting, NATO would only be in a position to offer membership "when allies agree and conditions are met."

"We will not agree with Ukraine's membership in NATO, because that would be the start of World War Three," Fico said.

He highlighted Bratislava's opposition to such a scenario, indicating a readiness to exercise its veto power within NATO to stop Kyiv from joining if necessary.

"As long as I have the opportunity to influence the Slovak political scene, I will use the right to veto such a decision," he added.

The Ukrainian government has made NATO membership a key aim since 2018. Moscow has repeatedly cautioned that such a step would threaten Russian national security, and has singled out Ukrainian neutrality as one of the goals of its military operation that started in February 2022.

Fico, a social democrat, hitherto held power in Bratislava from 2006 to 2010 and from 2012 to 2018. He became prime minister again in October, leading a three-party coalition government. Fico's latest government has adopted a notably stringent stance on the Ukrainian conflict compared to most other EU members.

During his campaign trail, Fico had pledged that he would not send "a single bullet" to Kyiv.

Upon assuming power, Fico speedily undid the pro-EU policies of his predecessor when it came to Ukraine, stopping deliveries of free weapons to Kyiv and encouraging a peaceful solution of the conflict with Russia.

For instance, Fico last month rejected a proposal to send €40.3 million (\$43 million) worth of military equipment to Ukraine.

After his government announced in November that Slovakia would stop supplying Ukraine with military aid and only provide humanitarian support, Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok said that "we want peace, not war," at that time.

Moreover, the Slovak leader lambasted EU policies of backing Ukraine, sanctioning Russia and adhering to "fanatical" environmentalist standards as destructive.

"If we can't tell the truth at the Brussels table that, for example, anti-Russian sanctions didn't work,



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that further destruction of Ukraine and killing Ukrainians is going nowhere, that the fanatic implementation of the Green Deal is killing our economies, that 20 thousand casualties in the Gaza Strip cannot be overlooked just because Israel causes them, we are on a slippery slope that can be not only politically, but also economically destructive for Europe,” Fico posted on Facebook.

Taking pains to highlight that while Slovakia was not against Ukraine’s EU membership, Fico also told InfoVojna that such a process would take years, as Kyiv would need to abide by the standards outlined by Brussels.

Additionally, Fico elaborated that unlike the Czech Republic, Slovakia does not plan to seize real estate owned by the Russian government.

The Czech Republic had formerly announced that its sanctions package was aimed at various Russian-owned properties.

The Slovak leader said he was cognizant of Prague’s moves, although he did not have “exact information” on the Czech government’s actions.

On the other hand, Fico posited that Slovakia will “certainly not go the same way.”

Prague has adopted a tough stance on sanctions against Moscow, freezing assets worth millions of euros belonging to Russian business people since the outbreak of the conflict between Moscow and Kyiv in March 2022.

In November, the Czech government included Goszagransobstvennost, Russia’s agency overseeing state-owned real estate abroad, in its blacklist. Czech authorities later sealed around 70 properties owned by the Russian government. Moscow blasted such actions as illegal and warned of a reciprocal response.

Slovakian Foreign Minister Juraj Blahar also castigated the EU’s sanctions policy against Moscow by questioning its efficacy.

“The 11 packages of sanctions failed to stop Russia while the EU economy is moving towards recession,” the diplomat said at that time, maintaining that Bratislava would block the 12th sanctions package under certain circumstances.

However, the EU’s 27 member states still adopted the package on December 18.

Meanwhile, neo-Marxist politician Ľubos Blaha wrote on social media after a meeting with Russian ambassador Igor Bratchikov that Slovakia was seeking peaceful ties with Russia.

“Slovakia wants to have good relations with countries from all sides of the world. I have always considered Russia a friendly nation,” Blaha wrote, highlighting the two countries’ Slavic heritage.

“I am sure that most Slovaks feel the same way,” Blaha continued. “Russia is not our enemy. I personally will do everything to return Slovak-Russian relations to normal again. That’s what ordinary Slovaks want.”

As a member of the EU, Slovakia is part of the bloc’s sanctions on Russia. The country’s two previous governments also sent 13 packages of military aid to Ukraine, worth more than \$700 million. Armored vehicles, air-defense missiles, and MiG-29 fighter jets were some of the equipment donated.

Blaha said that his meeting with Bratchikov was “cordial,” but that the Russian ambassador warned him of a plan by Kyiv’s Western backers to provide Ukraine F-16 fighter jets, which would operate from



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airfields in neighboring countries.

“For the Russian Federation, this is a red line and they warn that there would be an open conflict,” he wrote, adding that “escalation could lead to the third world war.”

“Slovakia must stand on the side of peace,” he urged. “Does anyone really want a nuclear war?!”

Slovakia’s position on the Ukraine conflict reflects Hungary’s stance as well. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has made repeated calls for a ceasefire and refused to offer weapons to Kyiv. Besides, Orbán has denounced Kyiv’s persecution of ethnic Hungarians on Ukrainian territory, blocked joint EU arms purchases for Ukraine, and forced Brussels to give Hungary its frozen funds in exchange for backing economic aid for Ukraine.

Officials in Budapest and Bratislava have been pessimistic regarding Ukraine’s bid for EU membership, contending that Kyiv’s ongoing conflict with Moscow should disqualify the former from accession talks.



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