



Hungary blasts 'leftist activist' speech by US envoy

Description

US : A keynote speech by the US ambassador to Hungary, David Pressman, sounded more like a "leftist activist" talk than a statement "worthy of an ambassador," State Secretary at Budapest's foreign ministry Tamas Menczer has said.

Pressman delivered the controversial speech on Thursday at the Central European University (CEU) in the capital at an event to mark the 25th anniversary of Hungary's accession to the US-led NATO bloc.

The envoy gave a long list of grievances plaguing ties between Washington and Budapest, ranging from Hungary's stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict to its refusal to allow US troops stationed in the country to get local license plates for their family vehicles.

Budapest is now finding itself "increasingly isolated" from the NATO "community of democracies," the ambassador claimed, insisting that links between the two countries should not depend on their "temporary" leaders.

"We should be mutually concerned for the well-being of democratic values, institutions, and of our relationship – regardless of who has the privilege of temporarily leading either of our governments," the envoy stated.

Pressman also took personal jabs at Prime Minister Viktor Orban, criticizing him for viewing the US as Hungary's "adversary," as well as accusing the country's government of interfering "in a very blatant way" in the internal affairs of others, "all while decrying foreign interference here at home."

"PM Orban, who on the one hand baselessly claims the US government is trying to overthrow his government, publicly calls for the political defeat of the President of the United States and actively participates in US partisan political events," Pressman stated.

The envoy also appeared to issue a thinly-veiled threat aimed at the Orban government, stating that while it "may want to wait out the United States government, the United States will certainly not wait out the Orban administration."

“While Hungary waits, we will act,” Pressman warned.

The speech was poorly received in Budapest, with Foreign Ministry State Secretary Menczer taking to Facebook to criticize the American envoy, suggesting his hostile remarks were not appropriate for his role at all, as international relations should actually be based on “mutual respect.”

“Hungary has always had great respect for the United States, and it always will. However, today’s speech was not a speech worthy of an ambassador, but rather a speech by a leftist political activist,” Menczer wrote.

Pressman has been US ambassador to Hungary since late 2022, repeatedly finding himself at odds with the local government and making harsh statements about its policies. In January, for instance, he accused Budapest of harming the entire NATO bloc while helping Moscow with its actions.

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