



Hungary's Orbán Snubs Biden, Skips Major NATO 'Eastern Flank' Meeting

Description

Update(1539ET): It's been confirmed that Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán snubbed Biden on Wednesday. Orbán was invited to represent Hungary as the US president met with nine NATO 'eastern flank' countries, but Orbán was a no-show. Instead he sent Hungary's ceremonial president, Katalin Novák, in his place. As the AP reports:

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the right-wing populist leader who argued last week that the European Union is partly to blame for prolonging Russia's war in Ukraine, has balked at sanctions on Moscow and arming Kyiv. **Orbán was skipping the meeting with Biden, and President Katalin Novák was attending in his stead.**

Still, Klaus Iohannis, the president of Romania, insisted that **"The B9 is stronger than ever."**

On the same day Orbán's foreign minister Peter Szijjarto issued a fresh call for peace talks, saying at a press conference, "Having seen and listened to the speeches by the presidents of the US and Russia yesterday, I think they would have made humanity a much bigger service by talking to each other."

"It's necessary to put an end to this [conflict] immediately, because if a ceasefire and peace talks do not take place right at this moment, a huge problem will result," Hungary's top diplomat said. Szijjarto emphasized that "every single day" the conflict continues, "people die, families are torn apart, families have to flee," and the potential for nuclear war grows. "Don't make the situation worse, the war must end," Szijjarto added.

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President Biden on the segment of his 4-day Ukraine and Poland trip has met with the heads of state of the so-called NATO Eastern flank countries in Warsaw.

The New York Times quite dramatically frames the meeting as follows at the opening of its reporting: "If

Russian President Vladimir V. Putin were to order tanks into other European countries, **the nine nations along NATO's eastern flank would be the likeliest targets.**"



Biden conveyed reassurances that the United States is prepared to speed to their defense if they come under offensive action by Moscow. These nations include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

"These are largely the group of eastern flank NATO allies who are basically and, quite frankly, **literally on the front lines of our collective defense right now,**" National Security Council spokesman John Kirby had previewed.

He said the president's purpose in the meeting is to "reaffirm the United States' unwavering support for the security of that alliance and trans-Atlantic unity." It's also meant to send a message to Putin that his country can't intimidate these democracies, some of them relatively new and fragile.

While an "expansionist Russia" has been a key talking point in the West since the Russian invasion of Ukraine kicked off a year ago, **Russia has shown no signs that it wishes to expand the conflict to other countries.** The only country which has experienced significant political instability as a result of the war across its border is tiny Moldova.

President Biden in Warsaw meeting with the Bucharest Nine — eastern-flank NATO allies with proximity to Russia.

Those states include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. pic.twitter.com/GeQqBVB39N

— The Recount (@therecount) [February 22, 2023](#)

As for the latest on Moldova, *Reuters* reports that Putin “revoked on Tuesday a 2012 decree that in part underpinned Moldova’s sovereignty in resolving the future of the Transdniestria region – a Moscow-backed separatist region which borders Ukraine and where Russia keeps troops.”

Interestingly, Moldovan President Maia Sandu on Wednesday **invited President Biden to visit the former Soviet Republic** – something which is unlikely to happen, however.

by Tyler Durden

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Date Created

02/25/2023