

Hungarian PM warns EU may discuss sending “peacekeeping” troops to Ukraine

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31 March 2023

On Friday, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that European powers are close to discussing the deployment of “peacekeeping” forces in Ukraine as the US-NATO war with Russia escalates.

It is “close to a legitimate, accepted, well-established question in the conversation between European leaders as to whether or not the member states of the European Union can send peacekeeping troops in some form or not,” Orbán said.

“We are close to this border that was previously thought to be impassable,” he added.

Orbán continued, “I am convinced that the threat of world war is not a literary exaggeration. So when European and American leaders say that if this continues, we may end up in the Third World War, this seems like an incredibly exaggerated sentence at first. But where I work and where I see the events, this is a real danger at this moment.”

Orbán made these remarks in an interview with Hungarian radio station Kossuth Rádió, and his statement was cited by *Newsweek* and Yahoo News.

Orbán is the first leader of a NATO country to publicly raise the prospect of the deployment of troops from NATO countries into Ukraine.

Earlier this year, the US pledged to “go on the offensive to liberate Russian-occupied Ukraine.” But Ukraine has suffered enormous casualties, and it is becoming clear that this goal cannot be achieved without the direct involvement of NATO in the war.

Responding to Orbán’s comments, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, “If we are talking about some kind of serious negotiations, then this is a potentially extremely dangerous discussion.”

Former Russian President Dimitri Medvedev added, “In Europe, a new false idea is being discussed to send some kind of ‘peacekeepers’ to Ukraine under the

auspices of NATO. ... It is clear that the so-called NATO peacekeepers are simply going to enter the conflict on the side of our enemies.”

Medvedev said that such an action would “bring the situation to the point of no return” and “unleash the very Third World War, which is so feared in words.” He added, “It remains only to clarify whether Europe is ready for a long line of coffins for its ‘peacekeepers’?”

While Orbán has clashed with the US over the extent of Hungary’s support for the NATO war drive, Hungary is a member of NATO and appeared on a list of “unfriendly” nations published by the Kremlin on Thursday.

Explaining the decision, Russia’s envoy to Budapest, Yevgeny Stanislavov said, “Hungary has signed all the anti-Russian sanctions packages of Brussels and is forced to strictly comply with them.”

While Orbán raised the prospect of discussions of the deployment of “peacekeepers” as a hypothetical question, the United States and its allies are massively expanding their direct involvement in the conflict.

To date, the US has provided more than \$30 billion in weapons to Ukraine, Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said Friday. This is in addition to more than \$70 billion in financial and economic aid.

Meanwhile, over 10,000 Ukrainian troops are being trained in the US, Germany and other NATO allies, Ryder said.

“Since Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in 2022, US European Command, US Army Europe and Africa and Security Assistance Group Ukraine have trained more than 7,000 members of the Ukrainian armed forces.”

He continued, “Just this week, 65 Ukrainian air defenders completed Patriot training at Fort Sill,

Oklahoma and have now arrived back in Europe.”

Ryder provided an update on the thousands of Ukrainian troops being trained in Germany alongside US-NATO armored vehicles and tanks. “At the close of this month, more than 4,000 Ukrainian soldiers in two brigades—one equipped with M2 Bradleys and one equipped with Strykers—will have completed combined arms training and have returned to Ukraine.”

At this moment, Ryder said, over 11,000 Ukrainian soldiers are receiving training in 26 different countries.

On Friday, Reuters reported that the US will imminently announce yet another weapons package for Ukraine to the tune of \$2.6 billion, including radars, rockets and tank munitions.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko both raised the prospect of deploying Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus, bringing the weapons closer to the borders of NATO.

“I and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin can decide and deploy strategic nuclear weapons here, if need be,” Lukashenko said, pledging to defend Belarus’s “sovereignty and independence.”

These developments take place as the war in Ukraine is accelerating. US General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the battle in Bakhmut a “slaughter-fest.” In response to ongoing losses in the war, Putin on Thursday authorized a new draft of 147,000 men.

On Thursday, Finland won approval from Turkey to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, massively expanding NATO’s land border with Russia. It is also considering the deployment of up to 300,000 troops to its border with Russia, *Politico* reported.

In a report dated March 18, *Politico* wrote, “In the coming months, the alliance will accelerate efforts to stockpile equipment along the alliance’s eastern edge and designate tens of thousands of forces that can rush to allies’ aid on short notice—a move meant to stop Russia from expanding its war beyond Ukraine.”

It continued, “The numbers will be large, with officials floating the idea of up to 300,000 NATO forces needed to help make the new model work.”

The initial layer of troops, comprising roughly 100,000 soldiers capable of mobilizing within 10 days, could be sourced from Poland, Norway, and the Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.



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