



Ukraine War Support Shifting: Upcoming Slovakian Election Shows Changing European Sentiments

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Ever since the 2022 Russian invasion, there has been a large consensus among Western populations supporting their government's financing and sending arms to the government of Ukraine in order to fight against the Russians. It was very predictable that this would happen. We examined the very emotionally effective propaganda that emerged very early on that you could see in real time was really grabbing people and playing on their best interest in order to get them to believe that the intention of this Western war or the West's involvement in this war was to spread democracy and protect the Ukrainian people from aggression. And even though it was obvious that the exact opposite is true, that the goal was to sacrifice Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in order to promote the West's own geopolitical interests of weakening Russia, it had nothing to do with defending Ukraine, it was going to destroy Ukraine and they were going to fight to the last Ukrainian, the propaganda was quite effective. There was an attempt to censor any dissent from it, a very effective and aggressive one, especially by the EU. And anyone offering any kind of opposition at all was immediately stigmatised as a Putin apologist or a Kremlin agent.

And as a result, from the beginning of the war, including the United States, large majority supported it, but was also predictable and as we predicted from the start, once this the realities of this war became manifest, once it became clear that none of the goals that were presented were the real goals of the war – that this is just yet another endless war that the United States found six months after it finally ended the war in Afghanistan– the public would start to question why it is that we're sending billions of dollars of their taxpayer funds to this conflict on the other side of the world where very little is at stake other than who will govern various provinces in eastern Ukraine. And they all began asking the obvious question, which is given: How much economic deprivation we suffer here at home, why are we sending our resources to fuel this endless war that has nothing to do with our lives except that it severely escalates the risk, the real risk of a nuclear war? Even Joe Biden, the champion of

this policy from the start, acknowledged that the world has not faced the risk of nuclear annihilation the way it does now from this war in Ukraine since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, where the world really came a half an hour or so away from nuclear apocalypse. And that's exactly what is happening.

We've shown you the polling data that is really scaring Democrats headed into the 2024 election, that majorities of Americans now oppose sending any further funds to the war in Ukraine, even though Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a surprise visit to Kiev today and announced another billion dollars in funding. And even though the Biden administration's most recent demand for another \$25 billion to fuel the war further on top of the \$120 billion it's already authorised, can't even get a house vote and faces a very difficult struggle in Congress, they ignored all that and they said to keep here's another billion dollars and they flew to Ukraine, Secretary of State Blinken did to do it. But what they're really worried about is that they see the same polling data as we've reported on, and they know that if the Republican Party has a nominee who can credibly claim to be opposed to this war, Americans will have a choice. Do you want to continue to fund billions and billions of dollars of American money to the point where we're depleting our own stockpiles, a war that has no end in sight and it doesn't really affect your life or the Republican Party nominee will argue, it's time to end this war. This war has no benefits to the American people and is straining them of their resources. That's one of the reasons, as we documented when we got back from the GOP debate in Milwaukee, there is such a desperate attempt to ensure that the Republican nominee isn't somebody like Donald Trump or Vivek Ramaswamy or even Ron DeSantis, who has been kind of tepid but a little bit more in the direction of opposing Biden, but instead, is somebody like Nikki Haley or Mike Pence or Asa Hutchinson or Chris Christie or Tim Scott, people who are fully supportive of the Biden administration's war policy so that you go to the polls next year and you have no choice. You can vote Democrat. You can vote Republican. And the war in Ukraine will continue exactly as it is because both political parties fully support it; that's what they love, is to turn words in particular into bipartisan consensus.

It isn't just in the United States where polling that is started to become of great concern, but also in Western Europe and even Eastern Europe. The New York Times today has an article about the fact that in Slovakia, which was part of Czechoslovakia before the two countries split up, part of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe more or less, Central Europe, a country that has been steadfastly pro Ukraine and anti-Russian, very aggressively offering support to Ukraine in the war that the frontrunner for its election next month is a right wing candidate who is now very vocal about his opposition to having Slovakia continue to support Ukraine in the war. Instead, he wants to turn Slovakia into a neutral country. He's using very much that similar discourse I just referenced about why are we in Slovakia involving ourselves in this war? Why are we sending all our money and weapons to the war in Ukraine? It's not helping anything. It's retracting this war. It's killing Ukrainians and it's risking the spread of war into our countries as well. And Western policymakers are now petrified that this will be an example showing that politicians who run against the war in Ukraine are able to command

the majority because that's where the sentiment of the even people in Central Europe are now headed. There you see a headline from today. Quote, "It's One of Ukraine's Fiercest Allies. But an Election Could Change That". "The vote in Slovakia this month will be a test of European unity on Ukraine and of Russia's efforts to undermine it". Note there the implication, which is about to get more explicit, that if this candidate wins, it's going to be because Russia interfered in the election. The United States is interfering in almost every one of their elections. Tucker Carlson recently interviewed Viktor Orban, who talked about the huge amounts of money the United States spent to defeat him in the last Hungarian election. George Soros' son, Alex, issued what was more or less his foreign policy manifesto, now that was taking over his dad's multibillion dollar foundation where they involved themselves in every foreign country. And he essentially mocked the Hungarian government, made clear his animosity toward them and affirmed their intention to continue to interfere, obviously always align with the US government in the internal affairs of virtually every country in Central and Eastern Europe, including heavily in support of the Ukrainian government and the war in Ukraine. So of course, it can't be that the people of this country legitimately decide that they're going to make a decision on their own that contravenes the Western agenda. It can only be that they were manipulated by Russia into doing so.

Here is the article, quote, "The mayor of a remote Slovak village, as the ambassador announced last September, had bulldozed Russian graves from World War I". So he was clearly anti-Russian. "Ambassador Igor Bratchikov demanded that the Slovak government, a remote but robust supporter of Ukraine, take action to punish the 'blasphemous act'. The Slovak police responded swiftly, dismissing the ambassador's claims as a 'hoax', but as fabrication took flight amplified by vociferous pro-Russian groups in Slovakia and news outlets notorious for recycling Russian propaganda. A month later, the mayor of the village, Vladislav Cuper, lost an election to a rival candidate from a populist party opposed to helping Ukraine. Today, the same forces that helped unseat Mr. Cuper have mobilised for a general election in Slovakia on Sept. 30 with much bigger stakes. The vote will not only decide who governs a small Central European nation with fewer than six million people, but will also indicate whether opposition to helping Ukraine, a position now mostly confined to the political fringes across Europe, could take hold in the mainstream".

I don't really think that opposition to supporting Ukraine in the war is relegated to the fringes across Europe. In Germany, for example, we interviewed the leader of the long-time leftist party, Sahra Wagenknecht, I think back in March or April about her steadfast opposition to German involvement in that war. She talked about how reckless it was for Germany of all countries to be sending their tanks, German tanks, back to the Russian border through Ukraine by furnishing all kinds of weaponry to Ukraine to be used against Russia. Remember, Russia lost tens of millions of Russians in two world wars. That involved Germany attacking it through Ukraine. That's one of the reasons why that part of the Russian border is so sensitive to the Russians. And she described how traumatic it is for Russians to now see German tanks and German weaponry again being deployed to Ukraine and used

against it. But we showed you polling data from Germany about how she's become very, very popular, including among a lot of right wing populists for her opposition to the German role in the war in Ukraine.

So The New York Times is correct that up until now, as we said at the start, majorities in most countries have supported the same policy and posture the Biden administration has adopted, but increasingly support is eroding. Quote, "The front-runner, according to opinion polls, is a party headed by Robert Fico, a pugnacious former prime minister who has vowed to halt Slovak arms deliveries to Ukraine, denounced sanctions against Russia and railed against NATO despite his country's membership in the alliance. A strong showing in the election by Mr. Fico and far-right parties hostile to the government of Kiev would likely turn one of Ukraine's most stalwart backers – Slovakia was the first country to send in air-defence missiles and fighter jets – into a neutral bystander more sympathetic to Moscow. It would also end the isolation of Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary as the only leader in the European Union and NATO speaking out strongly against helping Ukraine. Thanks to widespread public discontent with the infighting between pro-Western Slovak politicians who came to power in 2020, and deep pools of genuine pro-Russian sentiment dating back to the 19th century, Russia has been pushing on an open door. A survey of public opinion across Eastern and Central Europe in March by Globsec, a Bratislava-based research group, found that only 40% of Slovaks blame Russia for the war in Ukraine, while 51% believe that either Ukraine or the West is, quote, 'primarily responsible.'" That is the critical context here: The EU, the US, NATO know that public opinion is eroding. That's why they're getting more aggressive in both their propaganda, but also in their censorship push to ensure that no opposition, no dissent to their war policies in Ukraine be permitted to spread on the Internet.

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