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Slovakia's Foreign Policy in Stopping Military Aid Shipments to Ukraine

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Abstract: Foreign policy refers to a series of decisions and actions taken by a country to establish relations with other countries. The change in parliamentary positions in Slovakia influenced its foreign policy. Slovakia's internal political turmoil made Slovakia's foreign policy play a significant role in halting military aid deliveries to Ukraine, reflecting the complex geopolitical dynamics in Eastern Europe. This decision is reflected in Slovakia's foreign policy analysis, emphasizing the importance of maintaining diplomatic balance among regional powers. Involving both security and diplomatic aspects, this policy reflects Slovakia's discomfort in getting directly involved in regional conflicts, especially given the detrimental impact it could have on relations with neighboring countries. Abstaining from sending military aid to Ukraine demonstrates Slovakia's efforts to maintain neutrality and avoid confrontation amid tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Despite international pressure to participate in efforts to assist Ukraine, Slovakia's foreign policy affirms its priority on regional stability and maintaining sustainable diplomatic relations. As such, it reflects a long-view strategy considering long-term regional stability and security implications.

Keyword: Geopolitics, Foreign Policy, Slovakia.

INTRODUCTION

Slovakia's foreign policy plays a vital role in the global geopolitical context, especially in dealing with security issues in Eastern Europe (Denca, 2009). One significant aspect of Slovakia's foreign policy was its decision to stop sending military aid to Ukraine, which raises profound questions about the factors that influenced it. This event illustrates the complex dynamics of interstate relations, especially in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that has shaped the foreign policy foundations of many countries in the region (Szalai, 2017).

Slovakia's foreign policy background of refusing to send military aid to Ukraine demonstrates the Slovakia government's discernment and wisdom in managing its position amid geopolitical tensions. This decision raises the question of what factors motivated Slovakia to take this stance and how it affected regional dynamics and bilateral relations with related parties (Bátora & Pulišová, 2013). Therefore, to understand the context and

implications of this policy, it is essential to delve into the historical background, regional geopolitical dynamics, and internal and external factors that shape Slovakia's foreign policy.

The history of relations between Slovakia and Ukraine is worth noting. Slovakia and Ukraine have a long history, including under the Soviet Union. The establishment of diplomatic relations post-separation from Czechoslovakia, and later with the collapse of the Soviet Union, played an essential role in shaping these two countries' outlook and foreign policy. Over time, mainly after Ukraine gained independence in 1991, bilateral relations between the two countries underwent various changes, including economic and security cooperation (Kořan, 2010).

Regional geopolitics is also a key factor influencing Slovakia's foreign policy about Ukraine. Tensions between Russia and Ukraine, especially since Russia's annexation of Krim in 2014, have created a complicated security landscape in the region. Eastern European countries, including Slovakia, must consider the impact on regional stability and security (Deegan-Krause, 2013). Slovakia's geographical position adjacent to Ukraine makes it a key player in managing the increasingly complicated regional dynamics.

Active involvement in regional organizations such as the European Union (EU) and NATO also shapes Slovakia's foreign policy. As a member of the EU and NATO, Slovakia is bound by the principles and commitments of these organizations, which include the principles of solidarity and common security. The decision to refrain from sending military aid to Ukraine can be seen as a response to a balance between international obligations and national policy that must be carefully considered (Najšlová, 2011).

Internal factors also played a role in shaping Slovakia's foreign policy towards Ukraine. Public opinion, internal political dynamics, and national policy shifts can influence government attitudes and decisions. Considerations regarding domestic political stability and efforts to maintain consistency in foreign outlook are essential factors for policymakers to consider. In this context, Slovakia's foreign policy to stop sending military aid to Ukraine offers an exciting and complex case study (Marušiak, 2013). An in-depth analysis of the factors that motivated this decision will provide valuable insights into regional geopolitical dynamics and food for thought for other countries facing similar dilemmas. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively investigate the background and implications of Slovakia's controversial foreign policy.

METHOD

The research was conducted using the literature study method (literature research), which was reviewed with descriptive analysis techniques and carried out with qualitative research methods. The author collected data using the internet-based method initiated by John H. Krantz. Meanwhile, various theoretical literature is reviewed based on secondary data from sources, including research reports, books, and articles. Then, the author processes and analyzes all the facts, data, and information found to obtain an explanation of Slovakia's foreign policy towards sending military aid to Ukraine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EU policy in sending military aid to Ukraine

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, until now, the European Union has continued to assist Ukraine. In addition to economic, humanitarian and civil protection assistance, the EU provides military assistance to Ukraine. On November 15, 2022, the EU Council adopted a €16 million aid measure to support capacity building among Ukraine's armed forces. This military assistance aims to strengthen the capabilities and resilience of the Ukrainian armed forces, protecting the civilian population from ongoing military aggression. The agreed aid measures will finance the provision of equipment and supplies such as personal protective equipment, first aid equipment and fuel, as well as military equipment

and platforms designed to provide lethal force for defence purposes. Together with the military support provided by EU member states, the overall EU military support to Ukraine is estimated at nearly €12 billion. This assistance is provided through the European Peace Facility mechanism.

The European Peace Facility mechanism is an off-budget instrument that aims to enhance the European Union's ability to issue policies or act as a global security provider organization to maintain peace, prevent conflict, and strengthen international security.¹⁴ The expenditure of financing policies and the delivery of weapons by the European Union to a country that is in a state of invasion or security crisis is the first policy carried out by the European Union previously, sending military assistance was considered a tricky thing and contrary to the identity of the European Union as an organization that upholds the values of peace, and so far the assistance provided by the European Union to various countries that are experiencing crises is limited to humanitarian assistance.

The policy of providing military assistance by the European Union seems different from the policies of the European Union in dealing with conflicts that occurred in other European regions, such as the Georgian conflict, Crimea, and even Syria. In addition, in the context of defence and the European Union military, it is difficult to find common ground, given the differences in historical preferences and the definition of threats among EU member states, making it difficult to find political will in defence and security policies. However, in response to the invasion carried out by Russia into Ukraine in 2022, EU member states agreed to provide a large amount of military assistance to Ukraine.

Slovakia's stance on military aid before the change of prime minister

Before the change of prime minister in Slovakia, the country provided multifaceted military aid to those in need, focusing on military equipment and technical support. One type of military aid delivered military equipment, including small arms, ammunition, combat aircraft and other support equipment. Slovakia also provides military training to recipient forces, increasing their capacity to manage and use the equipment provided. Within the framework of military aid, Slovakia also provides technical support involving the transfer of military technology, equipment maintenance, and expert consultancy to ensure the effective and sustainable use of the equipment. The dynamics of military aid are not only limited to equipment and technical aspects but also involve diplomatic and strategic aspects. Before the change of prime minister, Slovakia actively established relations with Ukraine as an essential partner in providing military aid. This bilateral relationship can include strategic cooperation, intelligence sharing and security policy coordination, which are crucial in securing mutual interests in the region. It is important to note that the type of military aid provided by Slovakia before the change of prime minister reflected their commitment to regional security and political stability. This aid directly impacted the recipient's military capabilities and symbolized Slovakia's involvement in supporting efforts to maintain peace and security in the region.

The two countries have a history of strong relations, especially in security and defence. As a country experiencing geopolitical tensions, Ukraine strategically approached Slovakia for vital military support. Some of the military assistance provided by Slovakia includes equipment and resources that can strengthen its national defence capacity. This relationship created stability in the region and cemented Slovakia's position as a reliable regional partner. The provision of military aid before the leadership change also reflects a shared perception of the security threats both countries face. Slovakia recognized the importance of maintaining stability in the Eastern European region and responded positively to Ukraine's need to improve its defence capabilities. This created a collaborative framework involving exchanging information and strategies, strengthening the standard position on

regional security challenges. As a result, providing military aid is not only an individual act but also a manifestation of mutually beneficial bilateral relations.

Slovakia's stance on the termination of military aid after the change of prime minister:

The change of prime minister in Slovakia significantly impacted the country's foreign policy, particularly in providing military aid. A shift in foreign policy priorities was one of the critical factors that led Slovakia to discontinue military aid after a change in leadership. The new Prime Minister may have a different political vision or emphasize certain aspects of foreign policy that are not in line with the policies of his predecessor. This could include a focus on diplomacy, negotiations, or a different security strategy that leads to a review of the military assistance provided by Slovakia. In addition, internal factors such as changing political dynamics and public opinion in Slovakia may influence such decisions. Changes often follow leadership changes in political views and public preferences. The desire to respond to or reflect such shifts may motivate the Slovak government to change the direction of its foreign policy, including military assistance. In addition to internal factors, regional and international considerations may also be key drivers. Terminating military aid may reflect Slovakia's adaptation to geopolitical dynamics or changes in international relations that affect its foreign policy.

The termination of military aid significantly impacted bilateral relations between Ukraine and Slovakia, creating a complicated dynamic in the context of a change of leadership in Slovakia.

1. Terminating military aid could lead to diplomatic tensions between the two countries. The economic and security difficulties Ukraine may face due to the withdrawal of military support could fuel disagreement and frustration, affecting bilateral cooperation in other areas.
2. Changes in regional security perceptions. Cancelling military aid could create uncertainty in the region, especially if Ukraine faces potential threats or conflicts. This could worsen relations between Ukraine and Slovakia, as different approaches to foreign and security policy could result in a strategic imbalance in the region.
3. Terminating military aid could affect both countries' economies and defence industries, potentially affecting economic stability and prosperity. This could raise questions about readiness and shared responsibility for maintaining stability in the region, creating challenges for both sides in responding effectively to such changes.

Slovakia's Internal Political Factors Against Sending Military Aid to Ukraine

Internal political dynamics in Slovakia played a crucial role in shaping the decision to provide military aid to Ukraine. It should be noted that this decision was inseparable from internal political battles of interest in Slovakia. Political parties in the country can have different views on the urgency and necessity of providing military support to Ukraine. This can include ideological considerations, political popularity and public views on international issues, all of which can influence internal political dynamics. Furthermore, economic and financial aspects can also be decisive in providing military aid. A change in leadership in Slovakia may bring about changes in state budget allocations and foreign policy priorities. If there is disagreement at the internal political level regarding spending on military aid, this may hinder or accelerate the decision. In addition, considerations related to internal political stability and relations with trading partners can also play an essential role in the dynamics of political decisions at the national level. In this context, a change in leadership in Slovakia could trigger a shift in foreign policy, including a decision on military aid to Ukraine. Dynamic internal politics, where political parties compete for public support, creates an environment where foreign policy can be an instrument to strengthen the legitimacy of a new government or respond to the demands of public opinion.

Shifting internal political attitudes in Slovakia have played a vital role in the dynamics of military aid to Ukraine, particularly with the change in leadership. Before the change of prime minister, Slovakia may have shown strong support for Ukraine in providing military aid. Internal political factors, such as parliamentary composition, public perceptions, and the government's political orientation, play an essential role in determining Slovakia's attitude towards military aid. Shifts in internal political orientation, for example, could create uncertainty regarding Slovakia's commitment to military support for Ukraine. A change of leadership in Slovakia can also significantly impact the country's foreign policy. The new head of government may have different priorities and views on relations with neighbouring countries, including Ukraine. In some cases, a change in leadership may trigger a revision of foreign policy that could affect Slovak military involvement in regional conflicts.

Aspects of Slovak-Ukrainian Relations

Prior to the change of prime ministers, military cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine reflected their close involvement in regional security initiatives. Several collaborative projects involved exchanging military experience, joint training, and cooperation in developing military technology. During this period, Slovakia also provided military aid to Ukraine to support security and stability in the region. This assistance involved the transfer of military equipment and logistical support to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities. However, with the change of prime minister, the dynamics of military cooperation between the two countries changed significantly. Internal political conditions in Slovakia, influenced by a shift in leadership, impact foreign policy, including its relations with Ukraine. A change in leadership can change policy priorities and geopolitical orientation, which may affect the commitment and level of military support provided to Ukraine. Changes in military cooperation following a change in prime minister could create uncertainty regarding the sustainability of Slovakia's military support to Ukraine. Moreover, this could also affect the dynamics of bilateral relations between the two countries, creating new challenges in achieving a mutually beneficial balance of interests.

History and political factors are central in shaping relations between Ukraine and Slovakia, especially regarding military aid. Historically, both were part of the Soviet Union and after the bloc collapsed, each country underwent political transitions and changes in national identity. These historical factors create a complex and intertwined context for bilateral relations. Ukraine, the historical successor of the Soviet Union, and Slovakia, which has also felt the impact of geopolitical changes, find themselves bound together by their shared past. In the political context, the dynamics of relations between Ukraine and Slovakia are reflected in leadership and foreign policy changes. Each change of leadership brings a shift in the direction and priorities of national policy. For example, a change in the prime minister may create new impetus for strengthening bilateral relations or, conversely, may bring new challenges that could undermine cooperation. These political factors can influence attitudes towards providing or discontinuing military aid, given that national interests and internal political dynamics often guide foreign policy. With the change in leadership, it is also worth considering the role of international actors in shaping relations between Ukraine and Slovakia. Their membership in international organizations, such as the European Union and NATO, adds dimension to regional dynamics. Pressure from international actors can influence foreign policy and decisions regarding military aid, creating a framework within which the dynamics of bilateral relations can develop.

Regional Engagement and Security Impact

As an integral part of the Eastern European region, Slovakia faces significant challenges in the context of the conflict in Ukraine. In assessing the security impact, it is essential to understand that Slovakia's decision to refrain from sending military aid to

Ukraine raises questions regarding the regional consequences and security dynamics that may arise (Tabosa, 2020).

Slovakia's move could substantially affect regional security in Eastern Europe. In assessing its impact, it is worth considering that the conflict in Ukraine is not an isolated issue but is closely linked to geopolitical dynamics involving surrounding countries. By refraining from military involvement, Slovakia may face criticism from some allied countries and raise questions about cohesion and solidarity within the regional alliance. The impact of Slovakia's policy can also be seen in its relations with neighboring countries. (Strážay, 2005) As a member of the European Union and NATO, Slovakia is responsible for considering the implications of its decisions for regional integration and stability in Eastern Europe.

In bilateral relations with neighboring countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, Slovakia's policies can shape its perception of credibility and reliability as a security partner. Not only that, but Slovakia's decisions can also provide solid political signals related to the country's geopolitical orientation. It is important to note that the impact of Slovakia's policy is not limited to military aspects but also involves political, economic, and social dimensions. In the long run, these decisions can affect the country's investment climate, trade, and diplomacy at the international level (Wlachovský et al., 1996). Therefore, it is essential to analyze how regional involvement or unavailability of military assistance from Slovakia can shape the country's image and position in global dynamics.

As part of the regional security impact evaluation, it is worth noting whether Slovakia's decision stimulates diplomatic dialogue or exacerbates tensions (Haughton, 2004). Interested parties need to consider whether the country has alternative strategies to contribute to the resolution of the conflict in Ukraine without involving a military presence. In facing this challenge, Slovakia must also consider the international community's reaction to its policies. As a country at the center of Europe, the regional security impact of Slovak policy is not only local but also global (Marušiak et al., 1998).

Thus, Slovakia's regional engagement in the Ukraine conflict includes security and the complexities of international relations, diplomacy, and foreign policy. Ultimately, the impact of this policy can shape Slovakia's image as a critical player in maintaining regional stability or, conversely, create uncertainty and tension in Eastern Europe (Aairs, 2000).

Economic and Political Cooperation

The extent to which Slovakia's foreign policy towards Ukraine affects economic and political cooperation between the two countries is complex and requires in-depth analysis (Trebesch et al., 2023). Slovakia's decision to refrain from sending military aid to Ukraine significantly impacts trade relations, investment, and bilateral political cooperation. In the economic sphere, suspending military aid may stimulate uncertainty and hamper the investment climate. It may create concerns among investors regarding the stability of the region, which may affect their decision to invest in Slovakia or trade with the country (Bilčík, 2004). In addition, the cessation of military aid may also affect business risk perceptions, so companies may become more cautious about engaging in long-term projects in Slovakia.

The impact can also be felt in bilateral trade relations between Slovakia and Ukraine. The cessation of military aid may trigger a response from the Ukrainian government, which may re-evaluate economic relations with Slovakia (Antezza et al., 2022). Although trade between the two is not entirely dependent on military aid, controversial foreign policies can create political uncertainty, destabilizing trade relations.

This uncertainty can also affect trade and investment agreements in process or planned between the two countries. Parties involved in such negotiations may consider political and security factors arising from Slovakia's foreign policy regarding Ukraine (Burant, 1995). Countries disagreeing with such policies may be reluctant to enter economic agreements involving Slovakia. In addition, political risk assessment may also affect the trade

and investment sectors in both countries. Companies operating in Slovakia or Ukraine may have to re-evaluate their business strategies to deal with the emerging political uncertainty. This could involve restructuring supply chains, postponing investment decisions, or withdrawing existing investments (Lanoszka & Becker, 2023a).

In the context of bilateral political cooperation, Slovakia's foreign policy can also create tensions and change the relationship dynamics between the two countries. As a country that may have hoped for support from its regional partners, Ukraine could be disappointed and feel neglected by Slovakia. This could complicate political cooperation efforts at the bilateral level, especially on issues that require coordination and mutual support. The impact of this policy may also involve reactions from the international community. Other countries, especially those with different foreign policies regarding Ukraine, may evaluate their relations with Slovakia (Lanoszka & Becker, 2023b). This can create complex dynamics in the context of regional and international diplomacy.

Changes in political cooperation and tensions may affect Slovakia's participation in international organizations such as the European Union and NATO. Discrepancies in the approach to the conflict in Ukraine could stimulate internal debate in the EU or change the dynamics of military cooperation at the NATO level. However, it is essential to remember that the impact of Slovakia's foreign policy is sometimes positive. It is possible that the decision to refrain from sending military aid could strengthen relations with certain countries that share similar views on Ukraine (Kotoulas & Pusztai, 2022). This could create new economic, political, or security opportunities with partners supporting Slovakia's policy.

Slovakia's foreign policy towards Ukraine has a broad and complex impact on economic and political cooperation between the two countries. The decision not to send military aid affects regional security stability, creates economic uncertainty, changes the dynamics of bilateral trade and investment, and affects political cooperation at the regional and international levels (Marušiak, 2015). An in-depth evaluation of these implications is essential to fully understand the dynamics of relations between Slovakia and Ukraine in a challenging contemporary framework.

International Response to Slovakia's Policy

International reactions to Slovakia's foreign policy related to the conflict in Ukraine have been a significant focus of attention. The policy had a local impact and triggered responses from members of the international community, including the EU, NATO, and other global actors (Karolewski & Cross, 2017). How the world responded to Slovakia's actions provides a broader picture of the international consequences of such foreign policy.

The European Union, as a regional alliance that promotes solidarity among its member states, responded to Slovakia's policy with mixed reactions. Some EU members may feel that Slovakia's policy needs to be consistent with the alliance's shared values and goals. The impact could create internal disagreements and raise questions about how solidarity can be maintained in the face of regional security challenges (Karolewski & Cross, 2017). Moreover, Slovakia's policy could also trigger a debate at the EU policy level regarding a collective approach to international conflicts. Will it encourage the EU to formulate a more assertive approach to the crisis in Ukraine, or will it destabilize the cohesion and effectiveness of EU foreign policy? (Nicolini, 2001) Reactions from EU institutions and members are essential in shaping the direction of the alliance's standard foreign policy.

On the other hand, the response from NATO is also crucial in understanding the international reaction to Slovakia's policy. As a transatlantic military alliance, Slovakia's policies can influence the dynamics of military and security cooperation at the NATO level.

The wider international community has also responded to Slovakia's policy. Countries outside the EU and NATO may evaluate their relations with Slovakia based on their views on the conflict in Ukraine. Reactions from regional and global countries may create new

dynamics in international diplomacy and shape global perceptions of Slovakia's position in the current geopolitical context.

International organizations and peace institutions may also be involved in responding to Slovakia's policy. How does this impact peace efforts in Ukraine and international support for a diplomatic solution? The reactions of these international institutions may shape the global narrative about Slovakia's role in facilitating peace and stability in the region. Global perceptions of Slovakia's actions may also affect the country's image on the international stage. How has the international media covered this policy, and how has world public opinion responded? Slovakia's reputation as an EU and NATO member could be affected by the global narrative of the country's contribution and consistency in dealing with regional security challenges.

International reactions to Slovakia's policy could create diplomatic pressure, forcing the country to elaborate and explain its approach in more detail. Dialogue with international partners, especially those with different views (Tabosa, 2020), can be key to managing tensions and finding adequate solutions. Therefore, Slovakia's actions in response to international reactions are also necessary to shape the direction and depth of its foreign relations. The international reaction to Slovakia's foreign policy regarding Ukraine has had widespread and complex repercussions (Deegan-Krause, 2013). The European Union, NATO, the international community, and world public opinion responded with diverse views, collectively shaping Slovakia's policy's global narrative. In the context of current geopolitical and security dynamics, it is essential to continuously monitor the development of these international reactions and understand their long-term implications for Slovakia's position on the world stage.

Russia's influence in Slovakia's decision

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the relationship between Slovakia and the Soviet Union has created a complex historical footprint and influenced the geopolitical dynamics of the Central European region. Historical factors involving political regime change, economic transformation, and the dynamics of global change have contributed significantly to Russia's influence on Slovak decisions (Denca, 2009). It should be emphasized that Slovakia has undergone a striking political transformation, especially during the World War II era and after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The history of Slovakia's relations with the Soviet Union can be traced back to the World War II era when Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia, which was broken up by Nazi occupation policies. At that time, Slovakia was ruled by a fascist regime that supported Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union's involvement in World War II and its role in destroying the Nazi fascist regime in Europe played an important role in strengthening relations between Slovakia and the Soviet Union. After the war, Czechoslovakia was restored and became a socialist state under the influence of the Soviet Union (Strážay, 2005).

During the Cold War, the relationship between Slovakia and the Soviet Union continued to develop in line with the socialist ideology adopted by both countries. The Soviet Union became the leading partner in implementing a planned economy in Czechoslovakia, reflecting the historical and economic relationship between Slovakia and Russia. However, in 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall and political changes in Eastern Europe triggered significant changes in Slovakia.

The process of the Soft Revolution in Slovakia resulted in the removal of the socialist regime and the emergence of a more democratic government. In this transitional period, relations with the Soviet Union significantly decreased, and Slovakia moved towards political and economic independence (Marušiak et al., 1998). Therefore, Russian influence in Slovakia decreased along with the loss of economic and political dependence on the Soviet Union. Although Slovakia gained political independence, historical factors still played an essential

role in its relationship with Russia. At the beginning of the 21st century, there was a shift in geopolitical dynamics in Europe. Under Vladimir Putin's leadership, Russia adopted a more proactive foreign policy and strengthened ties with surrounding countries. Therefore, although the historical relationship between Slovakia and Russia has changed, it still impacts Slovakia's foreign policy.

In the economic sphere, cooperation between Slovakia and Russia remains relevant. Particularly in the energy sector, Slovakia imports most of its natural gas from Russia (Wlachovský et al., 1996). This dependence creates close economic ties between the two. At the same time, this dependence also influences Slovakia's foreign policy, as economic decisions can directly impact political and strategic policies.

It is important to remember that the dynamics of relations between Slovakia and Russia are influenced by history, economics, and global geopolitical developments. The Ukraine crisis, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and tensions between Russia and the European Union have created new uncertainties in bilateral relations. As an EU member, Slovakia responds carefully to these issues and balances economic interests and EU values.

Thus, the extent to which Russian influence plays a role in Slovakia's decisions results from a combination of historical, economic, and geopolitical factors (Lanoszka & Becker, 2023a). Although Slovakia has broken away from the influence of the Soviet Union and achieved political independence, historical and economic ties still provide an essential foundation in shaping its foreign policy. At the same time, changing global geopolitical dynamics also shape Slovakia's response to Russia. Therefore, to fully understand Russia's influence on Slovakia's decisions, it is necessary to see it as a complex narrative involving various aspects of history, economics, and geopolitics.

CONCLUSION

In examining Slovakia's foreign policy to stop sending military aid to Ukraine, it can be identified that this move was not an isolated decision but rather the result of complex dynamics that include the history of bilateral relations, regional geopolitical factors, involvement in international organizations, and internal considerations. As a country in Eastern Europe, Slovakia has a vital role in ensuring regional stability and security. The decision to refrain from sending military assistance to Ukraine reflects a careful diplomatic balance in dealing with regional conflicts but also involves serious consideration of the long-term implications for relations with neighboring countries, broader geopolitical dynamics, and responsibilities as a member of the European Union and NATO.

With its foreign policy favoring regional stability, Slovakia has faced a significant challenge in managing its position amid tensions between Russia and Ukraine. The history of bilateral relations between Slovakia and Ukraine provides an essential foundation for understanding the complexities of this policy. Historical influences, economic interactions, and political dynamics have shaped Slovakia's perspective on Ukraine. Therefore, the analysis must involve the broader historical context to understand this foreign policy fully.

In the context of regional geopolitics, Slovakia's foreign policy also reflects the realities faced by Eastern European countries. The decision to refrain from sending military aid to Ukraine can be interpreted as a strategy to maintain balance and avoid becoming entangled in conflicts that could harm regional stability. Through economic and historical ties, Russia's influence significantly shapes Slovakia's foreign policy dynamics.

Considering this context, suggestions for Slovakia's foreign policy development could include enhancing bilateral dialog and cooperation with Ukraine to understand common interests and build trust. Strengthening Slovakia's role in various regional and international diplomacy forums could also improve its capacity to contribute to conflict resolution in Eastern Europe. Domestic support and a better understanding of foreign policy can be

achieved through transparent communication and educating the public about the complex considerations involved in foreign decision-making.

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