U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance in Budapest: Open Interference in Hungary's Elections and the Dismantling of International Law



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An Event That Is Not «Ordinary Diplomacy»

On April 7, 2026, U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance arrived in Budapest and publicly stated his intention to "help" Viktor Orbán in Hungary's parliamentary elections scheduled for April 12.

This is not diplomacy. This is not "support for an ally."

This is an open, demonstrative, and deliberate political interference by a globally influential state in the internal electoral process of a sovereign country—carried out without any attempt at concealment and with a de facto disregard for the norms of international law.

And it is precisely this that makes the situation not merely problematic, but systemically dangerous.

A Direct Violation of International Law: No «Grey Areas»

The fundamental norms of contemporary international law are unambiguous:

- The Charter of the United Nations (Articles 2(4) and 2(7)) — prohibition of interference in the internal affairs of states;
- The 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law — inadmissibility of influencing the political choice of states;
- The principle of sovereign equality of states.

In this case, all the elements of classical interference are present:

- a high-ranking official — the No. 2 figure in the United States government;
- a visit during the active phase of an electoral process;
- participation in political events and de facto election campaigning;
- a public call to vote for a specific candidate.

This is not “soft power.” This is hard political interference.

Any attempts to portray this as «freedom of expression№ are legally unfounded and politically manipulative.

Political Cynicism and the Collapse of Principles: When Rules Are Abandoned

The danger lies not only in the act itself, but in its broader political context.

For years, the same political forces in the United States have accused:

- the Russian Federation, China, and Iran of interfering in elections.

However, in this case:

- open election campaigning is conducted on the territory of another state;
- direct influence is exerted on voters;
- and this is carried out by one of the highest-ranking officials of the United States of America.

This is no longer a matter of double standards.

This is the actual degradation of international standards themselves.

A new dangerous norm is taking shape:

- «the strong are allowed everything».

Geopolitical Reality: Hungary as an Instrument of Geopolitical Influence and Internal Destabilization of the European Union

The support for Viktor Orbán by the current political leadership of the United States and the administration of Donald Trump is not accidental.

Under present conditions, Hungary is gradually transforming from a full-fledged actor in European politics into an instrument of external geopolitical influence on the European Union, as well as a factor of its internal destabilization.

Viktor Orbán's political course exhibits clearly defined systemic characteristics:

- the blocking of consolidated decisions of the European Union, particularly in the areas of security and sanctions policy against the aggressor—the Russian Federation;
- the obstruction and undermining of decisions aimed at supporting Ukraine in the context of the Russia–Ukraine war;
- political and economic cooperation with war criminal Vladimir Putin, which contradicts the common position of the majority of European states;
- the use of the rhetoric of "sovereign democracy," which in reality serves as a cover for the concentration of power, the weakening of institutions, and the restriction of democratic standards.

In this context, Hungary is effectively being used:

- as a channel for external negative and disruptive influence on the internal politics of the European Union;
- as an instrument for blocking decisions critical to Europe's security;
- as a platform for weakening the unity of the West;
- as a component of a broader external strategy aimed at destabilizing the European space.

This is precisely why support for Viktor Orbán from certain political centers in the United States is not an expression of solidarity or a defense of democracy.

It is an element of a geopolitical strategy aimed at:

- reshaping the political balance in Europe;
- weakening the institutional capacity of the European Union;
- reducing the effectiveness of collective security;
- creating favorable conditions for the actions of authoritarian regimes.

Thus, support for Viktor Orbán is not about democracy or the rule of law.

It is about the systemic weakening of Europe, its institutions, and its capacity for self-defense.

The War Factor: When Interference Becomes a Threat to Survival

This event is not taking place in «peacetime».

The world is already in a phase of deep global confrontation, which is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of a hybrid global conflict, the epicenter of which is the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

This confrontation extends beyond the military sphere, encompassing political, economic, informational, and ideological dimensions, thereby shaping a new and unstable architecture of international security.

In this context:

- Viktor Orbán's political course objectively creates favorable conditions for advancing the interests of the Kremlin and weakening European unity;
- any strengthening of his position implies not only domestic political changes in Hungary, but also an expansion of the aggressor's ability to influence the policy of the European Union;
- open interference by the current administration of Donald Trump in support of Viktor Orbán, under such conditions, takes on the characteristics of a strategic influence on the balance of power in Europe, undermining Western unity, devaluing international law, and weakening the principle of the rule of law.

As a result, this goes far beyond the internal politics of a single state.

It becomes an element of global security that simultaneously generates new systemic risks and threats.

The Erosion of Democracy: Form Without Substance

The most alarming aspect is the transformation of the very essence of democracy.

In effect, a new model is emerging, which can be defined as «managed (manipulated) democracy under external influence» or «democracy with limited sovereignty».

This is a model in which democratic institutions are formally preserved but lose their real substance.

Its key features include:

- elections are formally conducted and retain the appearance of legitimacy;
- the electoral process is subject to external political, informational, and diplomatic influence;
- outcomes are shaped not solely by the free will of the people, but under the influence of external pressure, foreign political campaigning, information manipulation, and indirect imposition of choice.

In such a system, democracy gradually loses its fundamental essence — to serve as an instrument of a nation's independent expression of will.

Instead, it is transformed into:

- a mechanism for advancing external geopolitical interests through a state's internal political processes.

In this case, the geopolitics in question is not about the development of democracy or the protection of rights and freedoms, but rather about:

- the redistribution of political influence in Europe;
- the weakening of the institutional unity of the European Union;
- shifts in the balance of power in the Euro-Atlantic space;
- the creation of favorable conditions for the strengthening of authoritarian regimes and policies.

Thus, democracy is no longer used as a value, but as an instrument — and this is one of the most dangerous trends in contemporary global development.

The Decomposition of the West: The Internal Front

The situation indicates not merely isolated political deviations, but a deeper systemic crisis within the Western political space, one that is taking increasingly dangerous forms.

Its key manifestations include:

- a segment of the political elites in the United States of America, including certain representatives of the Republican Party, demonstrating support for or tolerance of political agendas that effectively contradict the declared principles of democracy, the rule of law, and international obligations;

- the growing influence of populism, isolationism, and political cynicism within the political process, accompanied by the devaluation of international law, the principle of state sovereignty, and the rules governing international relations;
- emerging tendencies toward the ideological justification or normalization of authoritarian practices, including through certain political and societal environments.

Particular attention should be drawn to the fact that such tendencies are also receiving support or endorsement within segments of the religious sphere, thereby providing additional legitimacy to these processes.

In this context, a dangerous analogy emerges.

In the Russian Federation, the political system has long been sustained through a combination of:

- centralized political power, institutionally structured through the political party United Russia;
- ideological and symbolic reinforcement provided by religious institutions, including the Russian Orthodox Church, Islam, and other confessions.

Similar elements—albeit in different forms and at a different level—are beginning to manifest in Western societies as well.

In particular, there is a growing tendency toward:

- the ideological justification of political pragmatism at the expense of principles and democratic values;
- the blurring of the boundaries between democratic values and political expediency;
- a gradual departure from the unconditional observance of international law and the rule of law.

This does not imply the equivalence of these processes, but it does indicate a dangerous evolution in political thinking, in which principles are gradually yielded to interests.

Global Negative Consequences: The Erosion of the International Order and the Shift Toward the «Law of Force»

If such actions do not receive a proper, clear, and principled legal and political assessment at the international level, the world will inevitably enter a new and significantly more dangerous phase in the development of global relations.

This is not about an isolated incident, but about the formation of a new practice capable of transforming the very nature of the international order.

The main consequences of this process include:

1. The De Facto Legalization of Interference

There is a gradual normalization of blatant interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, whereby any politically or militarily powerful state gains the ability to:

- openly support candidates favorable to its interests in elections;
- exert direct or indirect influence on electoral processes;
- shape desired political regimes beyond its own territory.

2. The Domino Effect in International Politics

Such actions create a precedent that will be used by other global actors—including the United States of America, China, the Russian Federation, and others—as justification for similar interference in different regions of the world.

As a result, an environment of mutual interference emerges, in which no state can any longer consider its political processes to be secure.

3. The Erosion and Devaluation of International Law

International law is gradually losing its regulatory function and is being transformed into a declarative system that:

- fails to provide effective restraint;
- is ignored when politically expedient;
- is applied selectively.

In such circumstances, the principle of the rule of law at the international level is replaced by the practice of:

- the «law of force» — where what matters is not the norm, but power and influence.

Forecast: What Comes Next

In the coming years, provided that the aforementioned trends persist and continue to develop, significant transformations in the system of international relations and global security are likely to occur.

This involves a complex set of interrelated processes, among which the most probable include:

- the gradual fragmentation of the European Union, the growth of internal contradictions, and a decline in the effectiveness of collective decision-making;
- the weakening of NATO as an instrument of collective security due to political disagreements among allies;
- the devaluation of democratic institutions and the erosion of their historical achievements under the influence of both external and internal factors;
- the strengthening of authoritarian tendencies and the consolidation of regimes oriented toward the concentration of power and the restriction of political competition;
- an increase in the number of international conflicts, including those of a hybrid nature;
- the loss of trust in electoral processes as a mechanism of legitimate expression of the people's will;
- systemic violations of human rights and freedoms, as well as the narrowing of the sovereign rights of states and nations;
- the further devaluation of international law and the principle of the rule of law at the global level.

The cumulative effect of these processes is shaping a trend toward a transition of the world into a state that, in analytical and academic terms, can be described as:

- «controlled instability» or "managed turbulence" of the international system.

It is important to emphasize that such processes are not the result of the actions of a single state or political center, but rather emerge from the interaction of multiple global actors, including the United States of America, China, Israel, the Russian Federation, and others, as well as their political elites.

As a result, the world is gradually shifting from a model of relative stability to one in which:

- conflicts become a permanent factor;
- rules are applied selectively;

- the balance of power prevails over the norms of law.

The Backfire Effect of Interference: A Blow to Orbán Instead of Support

Such demonstrative, overtly unlawful, and intrusive behavior by J.D. Vance—accompanied by direct statements such as “I’m here to help” and de facto calls to vote for Viktor Orbán—is highly likely not only to fail to deliver the desired outcome for him in the April 12 elections, but to produce the opposite effect.

For a significant portion of Hungarian society, this objectively appears as blatant external interference and a political affront to state sovereignty and national dignity, inevitably provoking internal resistance. Hungarians are historically sensitive to any form of external dictate—whether it originates from Moscow, Brussels, or Washington.

In this context, a classic political-psychological mechanism of rejection comes into play: voters do not accept being told how to vote, especially by foreign high-ranking officials. Instead of mobilizing supporters, such actions generate a counter-reaction.

Moreover, such public endorsement may be perceived as a sign of Viktor Orbán’s political vulnerability—suggesting that he relies on external leverage rather than solely on the trust of his own society. This undermines his image as a self-sufficient national leader.

As a result:

- part of his electorate may become demotivated;
- the mobilization capacity of the Fidesz party declines;
- meanwhile, protest voting intensifies, along with the consolidation of opposition forces.

Thus, instead of strengthening Viktor Orbán’s position as expected, such «support» may objectively work in favor of the opposition—particularly the political environment associated with Péter Magyar—enhancing its legitimacy as a genuine alternative to a government perceived as externally dependent.

Ultimately, the actions of Donald Trump’s administration and its representatives risk producing the opposite effect—not strengthening, but significantly weakening Viktor Orbán’s position.

This, in turn, may indirectly affect those external political forces that are interested in maintaining his political course, including the regime of Vladimir Putin.

The Ukrainian Dimension: A Matter of Survival

For Ukraine, this issue is not merely political—it is existential in nature.

It is not about isolated risks or challenges, but about the fundamental conditions of the state's existence within the system of international relations.

If:

- international law loses its effectiveness and ceases to function as a real instrument of deterrence against aggression;
- allies act primarily in a situational manner, guided by their own political considerations rather than by principles and commitments;
- democratic values and norms are devalued and cease to serve as the foundation of international politics;
- then Ukraine finds itself in a fundamentally new and significantly more dangerous environment.

In such an environment:

- security guarantees effectively lose their substance;
- diplomatic mechanisms weaken and become less effective;
- international support becomes unstable and unpredictable;
- the risks to Ukraine's existence as a sovereign state increase exponentially.

Under such conditions, the issue of Ukraine's security goes beyond the framework of traditional diplomacy and shifts into the realm of:

- the survival of the state amid the weakening of the international legal order and the return to power-based politics.

Conclusion: A Return to the «Law of Force»

The visit of J.D. Vance to Budapest, aimed at openly campaigning for Viktor Orbán while simultaneously sharply criticizing the institutions of the European Union, is not a random political episode.

It is a clear symptom of the systemic разрушення міжнародного порядку, in which the following are coming under attack:

- democracy as a system of values and institutions;
- the unity of the European Union and NATO;
- the principle of the rule of law as the foundation of international relations.

Under such conditions, the world is gradually but steadily returning to a model in which:

- force replaces law, and law loses its binding nature;
- interests dominate over principles, values, and norms of international law;
- interference in the internal affairs of states and the “law of force” become a practical norm of international politics.

If such actions do not receive a timely, firm, and principled assessment and are not stopped, the world risks losing the key achievements of the post-war period, including:

- the international order established after the Second World War;
- the effective functioning of the principle of the rule of law;
- a viable democracy and its historical achievements;
- guarantees of human rights and freedoms;
- the relative stability and security of the international environment.

In such a case, international relations will ultimately shift into a domain governed by a single logic:

- it is not the one who is right who prevails, but the one who has greater power and is willing to use it.

At the same time, in the strategic perspective, an alternative scenario of development remains possible.

Provided that the political balance in the United States of America changes—both in Congress and at the level of the President and his administration—and that there is a return to policies grounded in international law, democratic values, human rights and freedoms, the rule of law, and responsible pragmatism, processes of stabilization in the international system may be restored.

This could lead to:

- the restoration of the real role of international law;
- the strengthening of democratic institutions;
- the restoration of trust in electoral processes;
- the reinforcement of Western unity;
- the consolidation of the European Union and NATO.

However, this is a prospect for tomorrow.

Author’s Position

Without embellishment. Without illusions.

The event described is not an isolated episode, but a dangerous, cynical, and destructive precedent that undermines the very foundations of the international order.

Its essence is simple:

- when powerful actors at the international level begin to openly interfere in the sovereignty and rights of other states, disregarding international law and the achievements of democracy—the rules and the rule of law cease to function.

And if the democratic world accepts this, the next targets of such interference may be any states.

Including Ukraine.