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The West's Strategy Then and Now

While we know a lot about the grand strategy of the Hungarian government, we barely know the grand strategy of the West, which is, in short: the revision of the strategy followed in 1956.



The Hungarian prime minister said in an interview that it would be in his and his government's interest to have a European strategy that Hungary could go along with. But there isn't one right now.

It is very likely that what the Hungarian prime minister sees as a lack of strategy is in fact a European strategy. For example, consistent and unhesitating support for Ukraine. Orbán may reject this (he speaks clearly about it in his interviews), but it might be worth thinking through the Western strategy, which – at least officially – everyone outside Hungary shares.

The following is the basis of the Western strategy. Ukraine, like Hungary in 1956, was attacked from the outside. Incidentally, in both cases, the attacker is the same, only the name of the country is different. In 1956, the West (for many reasons, which are irrelevant here) failed to provide assistance. Now (having learned from its mistakes), it is not failing to do so; on the contrary, it is trying to help with great effort, even putting itself in a difficult position.

Let's look at this basic situation from the other side. In 1956, Hungary criticized the West's behavior at the time, saying that it had thrown a small nation to the wolves.

Finally, there is the question of motive: why did the West not help Hungary, and why is it helping Ukraine now?

The answer is sad, but we have to say it. Hungary in 1956 (considering that it was a communist country, and before that a

right-wing authoritarian country) was not particularly favored by the West. Trianon was not far off when the West dealt an almost fatal blow to the country. Of course, 36 years passed between Trianon and 1956, but this time was not enough to change the West's image of Hungary.

Ukraine is different. When it comes to this country, even if there are reservations among Western powers, they tend to relate to details rather than the whole. In their eyes, Ukraine is a democratic, thoroughly Western country. Help is therefore almost obligatory here, because it is a matter of principle.

The Hungarian prime minister must also take this into account when he asks the European Union for a strategy that Hungary can go along with.