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Hungary: Is Ukraine Style Coup Possible in EU and NATO Member-State?

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The atmosphere is tense in Budapest. It's not the first time anti-government protests hit the streets of the capital with people chanting "More Democracy!" and "Orban, Go Away!" The last demonstration took place on January 2. The next one is slated for February 1 – the day of Angela Merkel's visit. The Victor Orban's opponents say they want to make the German Chancellor see that Hungarians choose Europe, not Asia (meaning Russia).

Besides economic failures, the opposition accuses the Prime Minister of "geopolitical arbitrariness" or his pivot to the East including the plans to develop cooperation with Russia and China. Russia is an important Hungarian trade and economic partner outside the EU. The both countries have signed a general framework agreement to build two new units of the Paks nuclear power plant located 100 km from Budapest. The plant accounts for 42% of all energy produced in the country. Hungary signed a 10-billion-euro credit agreement with Russia for an upgrade of Paks. The loan's repayment period is set at 21 years.

From the very start Hungary took a cautious stand on the anti-Russia sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union. According to Orban, Europe "shot itself in foot" with the punitive measures.

The Hungarian Prime Minister backed South Stream. He expressed his regret that the gas pipeline project fell prey to the ongoing geopolitical games. He harshly criticized the EU, for instance he said that “The project we call the European Union is stalled.” As a Catholic believer and a father of five he rejects the freedom of non-traditional sexual relationships spread around Europe and comes out in support of traditional family values.

It did not take long for the United States to respond. Senator John McCain said Hungary was an “important country” where Orban concentrated too much power in his hands. Then six Hungarian individuals allegedly involved in corruption and close to the Prime Minister were banned from entering the United States.

The Budapest’s rapprochement with Beijing caused a negative reaction from Washington.

Hungary is a bridgehead in Chinese-European cooperation, China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi said meeting his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjártó in October. Budapest is the largest Central European recipient of Chinese investments (around \$4 billion). The China’s Foreign Minister emphasized that the Orban’s pivot to the East perfectly matches the China’s “New Silk Road” diplomacy. The China-Hungary trade turnover has increased 6 times. Washington decided that Budapest went out of control and broke the rules established for the members of Euro-Atlantic community.

The leaders of anti-government movement pin their hopes on Gyurcsány Ferenc, the leader of the so-called Democratic Coalition, who never tried to hide his plans to topple the current government, “...if this regime is not overthrown, sooner or later it will bury all of us under itself”, he said. “Hungarian parliamentary democracy is almost dead, and all that is left for us is direct democracy and resistance”, he said at the party’s conference in Budapest held in November. US Chargé d’Affaires in Hungary André Goodfriend was seen among the protesters. Asked about the six Hungarians banned to enter the United States he said that too many people of the Victor Orban’s team were involved in corruption. According to him, this fact negatively affected the US-Hungary relationship. Western media outlets openly state that Hungary may follow Ukraine and face a regime change because of Orban’s dictatorial propensities with power abuse becoming an alarming trend.

Germany aspires to the regional leadership in Central and Eastern Europe. It has its own game to play when it comes to Hungary. Perhaps, the Angela Merkel’s visit to Hungary on February 1 will become one more step on the way of implementing the policy.

The doctrine of Atlanticism prevailing among the ranks of US and European establishment makes the countries of Central and Eastern Europe – Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Serbia and Slovakia – keep away from the Eurasian vector of cooperation even when economic expediency is obvious. These states must align their activities with the goal of US domination in Europe. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a new instrument to carry out the mission.

Hungary is in for dramatic events to take place pretty soon. Neither the NATO, nor EU membership guarantee the European states from attempts to topple legal governments in case

they go beyond the defined limits of political independence.