

Security Cannot Wait: Slovakia's Defense Strategy Amid Opposition Hesitation

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The situation Slovakia finds itself in requires decisive and responsible leadership. Security threats in our region are constantly increasing, and ignoring this reality would be a fatal mistake. Slovakia cannot afford inaction or unclear positions.

The opposition recently had the opportunity to present a clear and realistic alternative in response to the security challenges we face. Unfortunately, this opportunity was not adequately used. A lack of coordination, unpreparedness, and weak performances undermined their ability to formulate a concrete and achievable strategy, which damaged their credibility both at home and abroad.

The stakes have not been this high in a long time.

Today, the stakes are higher than ever. While NATO countries are strengthening their defenses in response to a rapidly escalating Russian threat, some leaders of the Slovak opposition are acting as if we lived in the safety of Luxembourg or Portugal. This illusion ignores the real geopolitical situation we are in – Slovakia directly borders Ukraine, which is on the front-line defending Europe against Putin's aggression. The threats are not hypothetical; they are real, and we must face them now.

What does the opposition propose?

Opposition parties PS, KDH, and SaS, in various forms, claim they will not support an increase in defense spending until all NATO countries reach 2% of GDP. This position is inadequate and ignores the fact that many of these countries do not face the same threats. Moreover, they demanded a detailed plan from Minister Kaliňák while offering nothing in return but conditional statements. This approach only highlights a lack of preparedness and concrete solutions.

That is why Future Slovakia Forum considers it essential to outline a concrete plan that can form the basis of Slovakia's security strategy. Our goal is not just to criticise, but to offer realistic and responsible solutions that will ensure the long-term security and stability of our country.

Future Slovakia Forum's Call: A Real Plan for Slovakia's Security

Delaying necessary steps in the field of defense is no longer acceptable. We propose the following measures:

1. **Increase defense spending to 3.6% of GDP (or more) by 2028:** Begin with an immediate increase to at least 2.6% in 2026 and continue to raise spending by at least 0.5% annually until the target is met. Anything less could prove dangerous in the future.
2. **Transparent oversight:** Establish a strong parliamentary committee (including defense, security, and foreign policy experts with security clearance) to ensure responsible and transparent oversight of funds. No political interference – only real security planning.

3. **Focus on military capabilities:** Dual-use projects should be limited to years when 100% of the defense budget cannot be invested in actual military capacities. The focus must remain on strengthening defense readiness, not vague infrastructure projects that artificially inflate numbers.
4. **Reject political games and unrealistic conditions:** No more delays or bureaucratic barriers. Slovakia's security strategy must be based on reality, not political calculations.
5. **Join the Coalition of the Willing:** Immediately join and actively participate in the "Coalition of the Willing" to raise our active military personnel ratio to match the average of the top 15 countries in this coalition by 2030.
6. **Double support for Ukraine:** Ukraine defends Slovakia's eastern border from Russian aggression. We will responsibly contribute on par with other "willing" countries on NATO's eastern flank.

We will double our military and financial support for Ukraine compared to the average of the past three years and continue this for another 3–5 years (as long as necessary). The budget for the coming year will be 1.5 times the average of the previous three. This support will consist of grants and loans linked to the EU's Ukraine Facility.

Slovakia also commits to contributing not only financially and materially but through military presence as part of extended cooperation with the Coalition of the Willing and allied forces to help monitor and protect any eventual ceasefire or peace.

7. **Total war on disinformation and Russian hybrid operations in Slovakia:** Increase Slovakia's defense against Russian disinformation and hybrid warfare fivefold. Just as the Czech Republic and its EU allies are taking concrete steps to limit the influence of Russian diplomats and hybrid operations, Slovakia must apply maximum effort to neutralize Russian influence.

Immediately engage top experts from Europe, the US, and Israel and deploy resources to dismantle propaganda and hostile influence with maximum precision and effectiveness. Like Minister Lipavský's efforts against Russian disinformation, we must pursue all available European-level measures while ensuring national security protection.

8. **Reactivate the V4 format – with Ukraine:** Create a new V4-UA format with Poland, the Czech Republic, and Ukraine. After a regime change, Hungary may also be invited.
9. **Reform public administration to fund defense:** Slovakia needs reforms to use public resources more effectively and fund national defense. The goal is to achieve savings by rationalising expenditures and increasing the efficiency of public administration, redirecting saved resources toward defense initiatives. This includes:
 - **Smart and efficient public spending:** Every public euro must be aimed at essential services.
 - **Clear distribution of responsibilities and funding:** Powers and resources must be transparently allocated across municipalities, regions, and central government.

- **A major restructuring of state and territorial administration** in response to new challenges and trends, including a reassessment of competence division – with the aim of slimming down the state and significantly reducing public spending within 3–4 years.
- **Tax and levy system reform:** The new system must be fair, balanced, and sustainable. Municipal and regional revenues must come from their own sources, not just central redistribution.
- **Strengthening local tax autonomy:** Introduce locally determined taxes that allow municipalities to manage their income more effectively and independently set priorities.
- **Privatize sectors that can function efficiently under private or NGO management:** Minimal and fair regulatory frameworks will ensure that only essential sectors remain under state management.
- **Reform financial equalization and create special funds:** Ensure balance between municipalities of different economic strength and create dedicated funds for urban center development.

These reforms will unlock resources and give the state and local governments greater flexibility to respond to the challenges of the modern era.

Conclusion: Slovakia can no longer delay the necessary steps to strengthen its security and defense capability. The time for stalling and false excuses is over. Future Slovakia Forum calls for a clear and decisive commitment that rises above party interests and political calculations. Our security strategy must be grounded in a realistic understanding of geopolitical threats and prepared to face them without compromise.

Slovakia has a choice: either we stand up for our sovereignty and security – or we allow ourselves to drift into aimless inaction. **The time to act is now.**