

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

Stef

Dissanayake

AS

Pete Hegseth

Current US Secretary of
Defense



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Stef Dissanayake as Pete Hegseth (Nominated US Secretary of Defense by 2024 President-Elect Donald J. Trump)

Press-Briefing on Strategy for War in Ukraine at the Pentagon

Context

I will be impersonating Pete Hegseth, a prominent Fox-news reporter and a former veteran who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. Hegseth is the unconventional appointed nominee by president-elect Donald Trump for the position of Secretary of Defense, the second highest executive in the US defense department behind the president. Since the US by and large represents the most important source of military support for Ukraine, this nomination is crucial in impacting regional dynamics of Ukraine. Pete Hegseth is a proud Christian, neo-conservative and self-proclaimed patriot. He holds dear a strong ethos in warfare and has surprisingly advocated a much fiercer US military response against Russia compared to his commander-in-chief Trump.

The speech will be part of a press-briefing at the Pentagon before several journalists and cameras broadcasting Hegseth as the new Secretary of Defense live on national television. He announces the main lines of the US's new foreign policy with regards to Russia's war on Ukraine. We are living in January 2025, a week after his official appointment. A press briefing is organized to address the call from several EU states for more US military support in the light of a backing down of Ukrainian forces facing an increasingly powerful Russian aggressor.

Good afternoon, everybody and good afternoon to all the American patriots watching me at home! It is a great pleasure to meet some of you for the first time. My team and I just had a meeting on our proposed foreign defense policies regarding the war in Ukraine. I would like to announce to you all that it will constitute a significant break with former US policies on this war.

Since the Russian invasion, the Ukrainians have shown the world an unpredicted military and emotional resilience to the Russian aggressors that is to be strongly commended. It testifies of real patriotism. The kind of patriotism that our nation – in particular our military – must rebuild after the former administration's policies. For Ukraine, our former foreign defense policy has translated in insufficient military support undermining a victory for Ukraine. Our national defense budget has been endlessly spent feeding a war with no clear military strategy. We will therefore provisionally cut down military support for Ukraine yet ensuring to maintain a strong deterrent force present on Ukrainian soil against Russia.

Even though I strongly believe military campaigns should not be characterized by cautiousness where we constantly lay our military actions along normative frameworks set by multilateral institutions, a maximization of US military support for Ukraine is everything but a sustainable strategy for now. This would pose too great of a risk of drawing the United States in an immediate deepened conflict with nuclear-capable Russia, which must be precluded. First and foremost, our military necessitates a significant enhancement of morality and a renewed emphasis on the military's core principles.

This will further entail a reversal of implemented reforms regarding our military to reinstate the historical strength and international leadership that it used to embody. The United States will reassert its dominant military position in the world once it has reinvigorated its national military. This means that our nation will maximize military support for Ukraine as soon as our military is adequately equipped to engage in combat prescribed by a refined military strategy to defend America's most endeared values of liberty and sovereignty against those of repression and imperialism.

Let me at the same time make clear that the world should not expect from us, a nation 6000 miles afield from the combat zone, to take ultimate responsibility in defending NATO's borders or Ukrainian territory from Russia when numerous of NATO's European member states in Ukraine's vicinity have not met contribution targets for decades. Naturally, with our provisional cut in military support, we will call on the Europeans to take on their responsibility in becoming Ukraine's future main support line.

By taking the American nation serious, we will reassert American leadership, providing long-term security for our nation and more efficient strategic alliances.

I thank you today, and may God bless the United States of America.