

Germany Targeted for Not Capitulating to Anti-Russia Demands. Zelensky's Refusal to Allow Germany's President Steinmeier to visit Kiev

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*Ukrainian **President Vladimir Zelensky's** refusal to allow his German counterpart **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** to visit Kiev is the first major embarrassment to happen to a Western Head of State since the war in Ukraine began on February 24. The question, however, is what encouraged **Zelensky to show such disdain for the Germans?** [This decision was most probably taken in Washington, GR Editor]*

The German President, who met with his Polish counterpart **Andrzej Duda** in Warsaw on March 12, planned to travel with him and the leaders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania the next day in what he described as "a strong message of European solidarity with Ukraine." His request was denied by Zelensky because of Steinmeier's previously close ties to Russian **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** and his past advocacy for close economic relations between Russia and Germany.

"I was prepared to do this [go to Ukraine], but apparently, and I must take note of this, this was not wanted in Kiev," Steinmeier told reporters.

Bild quoted an unnamed Ukrainian diplomat as saying:

"We all know of Steinmeier's close relations with Russia here... He is not welcome in Kiev at the moment. We will see whether that changes."

Steinmeier is seen as someone who, as Chief of Staff during Gerhard Schröder's rule and as Foreign Minister under Angela Merkel, forged good relations with Russia and was very energetic in defending the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project. Before heading to Warsaw though, the German president said that insisting on the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline was his biggest mistake and accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of causing the war.

"I still hoped that Vladimir Putin possessed a remnant of rationality," Steinmeier told Der Spiegel weekly in an interview. "I did not think that the Russian president would risk his country's complete political, economic and moral ruin in the pursuit of an imperial delusion."

However, despite Steinmeier alluding that Russia is engaged in an imperialist war (rather than perhaps an anti-imperialist operation to halt NATO expansionism to its borders), it obviously did not change the Ukrainian view of him.

It is remembered that Steinmeier was previously attacked by Ukrainian **Ambassador Andrei Melnik** for forming a "web of contacts with Russia for decades. For Steinmeier, the relationship with Russia was and remains something fundamental – even sacred."

Steinmeier has now experienced what the German media calls an "embarrassment on the open stage" because he is the first Western Head of State that has been told that they are not welcome to Kiev. Cracks in Berlin-Kiev relations is not something new and has been emerging for years, especially because of Merkel's enthusiasm for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

However, the loudest criticism is certainly coming from the Ukrainian ambassador to Germany who is constantly in the media to accuse the country of cowardice, especially at the beginning of the war when Germany refrained from sending weapons to Ukraine. Although Berlin has made a major turn and is now sending weapons to Ukraine, further anger is caused by the fact that incumbent **Chancellor Olaf Scholz** is not bowing to American and Ukrainian pressure to close Russian gas taps altogether.

Russian gas is a matter of existential need for Germany, which due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, is threatened with achieving a lower than expected GDP. In fact, Germany would experience a devastating recession if it were to turn off the Russian gas taps.

Already due to the war, household products are missing from supermarket shelves and inflation, which particularly scares Germans, is recording the biggest jump in 40 years. If there is a complete shutdown of Russian gas to Germany, where American and Ukrainian media and political pressure is being put on the country to do this, the average German citizen will demand a change of government as inflation will worsen and the economy will sharply decline.

US pressure against Germany is increasing and the Ukrainians now have strong support from much of the West. It was ultimately these conditions that saw Germany decide to supply weapons to Ukraine and impose sanctions against Russia – but that is not enough for Kiev.

In this way, European citizens are also suffering from Kiev's decision to be uncompromising in their issues with Moscow as they now suffer the economic blowback, something that the

US and UK have little concern for. Since leaving the EU, the UK is attempting to revive 19th century imperial ambitions on the European and global political scene with tacit American support.

None-the-less, for Germany in the long term, regardless of the current situation, ties with Russia are important – both in terms of energy and trade. It is recalled that Scholz was entering the election campaign with a so-called new Eastern policy aimed at Russia, and even during his meeting with Putin, he declared that there was no European security without Russia.

Although it appears at the moment that reconciliation between Moscow and Europe is impossible, this is an inevitability, especially as the continent has overcome far worse wars and crises over the centuries. It is another thing how long it will take, and it depends largely on how long this war will last, but Berlin realizes that reconciliation is inevitable, and for this reason it is not willing to bend to every demand made by Kiev and Washington despite a constant campaign to shame Germany.

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