

# Blinken in Poland to seek common cause after Ukraine jitters

AFP- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday meets Poland's leaders to forge common cause on Ukraine as upcoming US elections and Russian attacks raise new jitters.

The top US diplomat crossed into Poland by train after a joint solidarity trip to Kyiv with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, with the two pledging to swiftly review Ukraine's requests for permission to strike deeper into Russia.

Blinken will meet separately in Warsaw with Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Andrzej Duda, bitter rivals on the direction of the European Union member.

While split on domestic policy, Poland, with its dark historical memories of Moscow, has seen unity in backing Ukraine since its invasion by Russia in 2022.

Blinken hopes to use the final months of President Joe Biden's administration to work with allies to ensure broad and sustained support for Ukraine, which has received billions of dollars in Western military and economic support.

The November 5 US election could dramatically shift the stance of Ukraine's biggest backer, however, with Republican candidate Donald Trump declining to say in a debate on Tuesday whether he wants Ukraine to win.

Biden's political heir Kamala Harris referenced Poland – and the Polish-American vote in the politically crucial state of Pennsylvania – as she vowed to keep up the fight for Ukraine.

If the United States had not backed Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin "would be sitting in Kyiv with his eyes on the

rest of Europe”, Harris said.

“Why don’t you tell the 800,000 Polish-Americans right here in Pennsylvania how quickly you would give up for the sake of favour, and what you think is a friendship with what is known to be a dictator who would eat you for lunch?” she told Trump, referring to his past statements of admiration for Putin.

Poland, since the end of the Cold War an enthusiastic US ally, nonetheless sought to work with Trump during his 2017-2021 presidency.

Duda met with Trump in April in New York, and the two have praised each other’s records.

The European-oriented Tusk, who triumphed in elections last year, has spoken of restoring democracy after polarisation, a key priority for Biden.

Biden this year welcomed Tusk and Duda jointly at the White House, hoping to send a signal of bipartisanship on Ukraine.

Tusk has not shied away from calling out members of Trump’s Republican Party who oppose assisting Ukraine.

During a long delay in Congress approving new military aid to Ukraine, Tusk said that Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson bore personal responsibility for “thousands of lives”.

Blinken is expected to discuss further coordination with Poland, the key logistical gateway for Western military support into Ukraine.

Poland has also ramped up purchases of US weapons since the invasion of Ukraine.

Poland last month signed a deal with Boeing to buy 96 Apache attack helicopters for \$10 billion.

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