# Dutch PM Rutte seeks Hungary's support for NATO secretary-general bid



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte met with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Monday night in Brussels, aiming to secure support for his bid to become NATO's secretary-general. Rutte, who holds backing from 29 of NATO's 32 member countries, including the US, UK, France, and Germany, faces opposition from Hungary. During their discussion, Rutte offered Orbán a deal allowing Hungary to opt out of NATO activities supporting Ukraine. This offer comes as Hungary, which has opposed western support for Ukraine amid Russia's invasion, has been blocking Rutte's proposed appointment.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg had previously reassured Orbán that Hungary could opt out of NATO’s plans for increased military support for Ukraine. Following this promise, Rutte voiced support for Hungary’s option to abstain from certain alliance commitments if he is appointed.

Rutte’s pursuit of the NATO role coincides with him potentially leaving office in July. While he has garnered substantial international backing, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania have yet to publicly support his appointment.

Separately, US President Joe Biden met with Stoltenberg on Monday to discuss the upcoming NATO summit scheduled for July 9-11 in Washington, D.C. The summit will bring together numerous heads of state to discuss NATO’s future direction, specifically its stance on Ukraine amid ongoing tensions with Russia. The alliance's expansion, bolstered by recent additions like Finland and Sweden, and increased defense spending, were highlighted as key discussion points. Despite broader support for Ukraine, Biden has faced criticism for limitations on Ukraine's military actions and his unwavering stance on supporting Israel's actions in Gaza, drawing potential for protests during the summit.